

**SOCIAL CAPITAL & SUSTAINABILITY:  
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF  
COMMUNITY LEADERS IN THE CONSERVATION ECONOMY**

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## ABSTRACT

The lack of rigorous intellectual understanding of social capital within the sustainability literature provided the motivation for this qualitative study. The purpose of this study is to create a grounded theoretical model of social capital that is based on qualitative data from community leaders in sustainability. This report includes a literature review of the concept, profiles of those leaders who participated in the study, articulations and perceptions of the qualities of, and measurement/assessment tools for social capital, and a grounded conceptual model of social capital.

This study finds that social capital exists within three phenomena: *The Individual*, *the Community*, and *Social Institutions*. This study presents a framework of the concept that is dynamic and non-linear. These findings reinforce some of the conceptual fundamentals of social capital that are presented in the sociological literature (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1995, 2000; and Woolcock, 1998); however, the findings dispute the assertion that useful articulations of social capital must differentiate between the sources and outcomes of social capital.

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## **PREFACE**

A qualitative study of social capital, conducted in the community of people and organizations working to foster a sustainable bioregion would have been very difficult without the assistance and backing of a central and critical organization in that community. Ecotrust's role in this community provided a rationale and the recognition needed to achieve the goals of this research study. Ecotrust's background and bioregional context are an important component to understanding this research into the qualitative nature of social capital among community leaders interested in sustainability.

This study began to take form in January of 2002 (See Appendix A for the research consent letter). Since then I have worked with Stuart Cowan, who is the Conservation Economy research director at Ecotrust, and Dyanne Sheldon, research instructor at Antioch University in Seattle. Having only brushed with the concept of social capital in a book on building sustainable communities, I was both excited and nervous to undertake a qualitative interview study with community leaders in the region. Before fully developing a methodology to conduct this study or analyze my data, I found it necessary to give a comprehensive review to the existing literature on the concept. That review turned up two major findings. First, an inexhaustible amount of work has been published regarding social capital in a number of disciplines. Second, very little rigorous research or theorizing has been conducted regarding social capital with respect to sustainability.

Spending months working out the details of the research proposal and familiarizing myself with a copious amount of literature wasn't enough for me to really understand what I was studying. It was only after conducting, transcribing, and coding the interviews that I really was able to paint a true picture of what I was studying. Credit for this picture belongs almost exclusively with the methodology for conducting grounded theory, first developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. This methodology gave me the tools I needed to sift through hundreds of pages of interview transcripts in search of common patterns and themes. What has emerged is both a set of vignettes of my interview subjects and to the extent possible the organizations with which they work, as well as a model diagramming social capital in its application to sustainability.

In the pages that follow the reader will first find an introduction that outlines the motivation for the study, the objectives, and brief background to Ecotrust. This chapter is followed by a review of the existing literature on the concept of social capital across the many disciplines in which it has proven useful or at least theoretically appealing. The third chapter will describe the methods used to conduct this study and how the data was analyzed. Chapters four, five, and six present the findings of the research by objective. Chapter four offers profiles of the interview participants. Chapter five delivers the building blocks of social capital as derived from the interviews. Chapter six explains how participants described assessing and measuring social capital. The seventh chapter provides a discussion of the data and presents a conceptual model of social capital visually depicted in two formats, one derived directly from the data and a second augmented to visually fit within Ecotrust's existing conservation economy framework.



## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Pacific Northwest's rainforest coast is a haven for progressive thought, policy, and action (Durning, 1999; Ecotrust, no date a; Roseland, 1998, p.203-205). Academic institutions, government, and private for- and non-profit corporations have all contributed to research on the wealth and diversity of the regions natural and economic capital. In the past decade there has begun to be interest in cataloging the nature and status of the region's social capital as well (Ecotrust, no date b; Sustainable Seattle, 1998; Northwest Environment Watch [NEW], 2001). However, no rigorous research has been conducted to define exactly what the term social capital means in the context of building sustainable communities or a sustainable bioregion. The lack of a formal grounded model with which social capital can be assessed has provided the major motivation for this research study. This has been a cooperative effort between the Portland-based non-profit Ecotrust and Antioch University Seattle to conduct a grounded research study of social capital in the bioregion by interviewing community leaders who have an interest in sustainability.

### ***1.1. Study Objectives***

The objectives of this research project were defined by the author and Stuart Cowan, Ecotrust Conservation Economy Research Director. In February 2002 we identified four main objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive literature review of the concept of social capital.
2. Identify some important experts on and practitioners of social capital in the Conservation Economy.
3. Determine how social capital is being measured in the Conservation Economy.
4. Catalogue and model the patterns of social capital.

To achieve the last two objectives we chose to use qualitative interview methods for data collection and grounded theory methodology for data analysis. The second objective was met by asking biographical questions as well as organizational content oriented questions during the interviews. (See Chapter 4 for a complete overview of research methods.) However, before performing any research I conducted a comprehensive review of the relevant sociological literature on social capital. Chapter Two is a summary of that review.

### ***1.2. Ecotrust Background***

The Portland, Oregon based non-profit organization Ecotrust is focusing on research and consulting that assists a transition to a sustainable bioregion (See Appendices B & C for rich descriptions of the bioregion). The organization was founded in 1991 by Spencer Beebe and a small group of colleagues, whose goals it was to “characterize the region, articulate a more enduring conservation strategy, and grow the capacity to practice sustainability in real places with real people” (Ecotrust, 2001, p.3). The strong and growing capital base of Ecotrust and its partners Ecotrust Canada, ShoreBank Pacific, and ShoreBank Enterprise Pacific has backed these goals. Furthermore, these goals have been articulated into Ecotrust’s broad mission to:

... [Support] the emergence of a conservation economy along North America's rain forest coast, the region from San Francisco to Anchorage... We work in urban and rural areas to support entrepreneurs whose work improves environmental, economic, and social conditions (Ecotrust, no date a).

The conservation economy is a concept that Ecotrust is operationalizing. It is also a theory of interrelated concepts for which Ecotrust is working to create a conceptually comprehensive sustainability framework (See Appendix D for the graphical depiction of the framework). The articulation of this framework began in 1999, and it is fully documented and defined on the website [www.conservationeconomy.net](http://www.conservationeconomy.net). Ecotrust (no date c) explains their work on this theory in the following two paragraphs:

In a Conservation Economy, economic arrangements of all kinds are gradually redesigned so that they restore, rather than deplete, Natural Capital and Social Capital. This will create extraordinary opportunities for those who foresee and drive these changes. The needs of people - and the ecosystems which sustain them - are the starting point for a different kind of economic prosperity which can endure generation after generation... Even in a globalizing economy, bioregions with diverse local economies, which are more self-sufficient in meeting their own needs, will be more competitive and less vulnerable.

Individuals and organizations flourish in a Conservation Economy by seeking to align their interests with those of the communities and ecosystems around them. Instead of seeing tradeoffs between equity, economy, and ecology, they find new ways of functioning that support all three. In the long run, and most obviously, this involves getting price signals right by instituting a Social and Ecological Tax Shift. In the short-run, this means creating new business models (e.g. Products as Service), adopting new strategies (e.g. Resource Efficiency), transforming legal or

institutional frameworks which evolved before natural and social capital were fully recognized, or looking at multiple benefits in a holistic manner (e.g. Green Building).

Furthermore, a manuscript further detailing and documenting the conservation economy framework is due to be published in 2003 (S. Cowan, personal communication, Jan. 22, 2002). This manuscript and website will attempt to fully address the complexity, emergent patterns, and benefits of an enduring conservation economy.

The conservation economy model is based on three types of capital: economic, natural, and social. Both natural and economic capital have been thoroughly researched, documented, and modeled. However, the third component, social capital, is lacking in its depth, and structure. I assert that this imbalance in the conservation economy model is characteristic and reflective of much of the powerful sustainability research, which has focused on understanding the economic and ecological meanings of sustainability (Daly, 1996; Todd & Todd, 1993; Benyus, 1997).

Therefore, the goal of this project has been to assist Ecotrust in the development of a qualitatively based conceptual model of social capital that richly describes social capital. This framework will continue to build upon and test the practicality of Ecotrust's conservation economy.

## CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SOCIAL CAPITAL

After many years of incubation the concept of social capital has now found widespread popularity among academics, politicians, and development experts. Social capital has also recently found its way into the sustainability literature (Roseland, 1998; Ecotrust, 2002). Due to the concept's multitude of definitions, which emerge from the broad export of this sociological theory to other disciplines, there is a need for clarity of purpose and discriminating critique within new applications (Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998).

To provide a comprehensive review I shall begin with a brief discussion of the origins of the term *social capital*. Second, I will address the classical foundations that a number of scholars have used to ground the concept of social capital. I will then chronologically build the different conceptualizations of social capital until arriving at the current sociological understanding, combined with a brief discussion of its many applications. Finally, I will approach the measurement of social capital by citing three specific examples. This review should provide the reader with a substantive background in social capital significant to understand as well as critique this study.

### ***2.1 Origins***

Although Portes (1998) has pointed out that social capital provides no new ideas to the discipline of sociology – citing that benefits of group participation “is a staple notion” (p. 3),

which dates to the creation of the discipline in the mid-nineteenth century – he does accept that the concept’s organization and applications are a new evolution of old ideas. In its current form the idea of social capital is cited by both Putnam (2000) and Woolcock (1998) as being first used by L.J. Hanifan in 1920. According to both authors Hanifan referred to social capital as, “tangible assets... namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse” (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 1998, p.192, en.13). Hanifan also spoke of the need for investment in such aspects of social life. This early notion of social capital stood alone and in obscurity for nearly half a century.

Jane Jacobs is widely recognized as the first to identify social capital in its current form (Longo, 1999; Putnam, 1995; Roseland, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). In her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs independently puts forth a concept by stating, “[Neighborhood] networks are a city’s irreplaceable social capital” (Jacobs, 1961, p. 138). Her discussion of social capital goes on to discuss the resulting income that occurs from this type of capital investment. Although Jacobs may have first identified the concept, her book does little to elaborate a theory to stand behind her social capital concept. Over the past two decades there have been a handful of scholars that have tackled this challenge, some explicitly and others indirectly. Before developing the currently accepted academic conceptualization of social capital it is helpful to understand the classical sociological foundations from which the concept originates.

## ***2.2. Classical Foundations of the Social Capital Concept***

The concept of social capital is well grounded in both empirical phenomena and classical sociological theory (Coleman, 1986; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998; Woolcock,

1998). Social capital is derived from ideas that reach back to the nineteenth century foundations of sociology and before to philosophers examining the dynamics of the individual and social structure. I will use the typology suggested by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) to explore four specific foundations of social capital.

### **2.2.1. *The Rift***

The mid- to late-nineteenth century rift among scholars of the social sciences over the study of economic life and social influence forged two distinct roads. Both roads continued the pursuit, illuminated by the natural rights philosophers, to reconcile the actions of individual actors with macrosocial repercussions (Coleman, 1986). The classical political economists and utilitarians forged one school of thought by pursuing Adam Smith's arguments for greater welfare produced by the market, which Smith published in *The Wealth of Nations*. Following this perspective, noted Woolcock (1998), were the academic pursuits led by Bentham, Mill, and Ricardo, which pioneered the form of social science that has evolved from neoclassical economic theory to individualist neo-liberal economics.

A different branch of thought was forged by a group of scholars critical of the individualist perspective of economic decision making. Portes (1998) observed that the theories of these critics, specifically Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, and Weber, became the foundations of the sociological tradition of social science. These proto-sociologists broke ground in searching for the effects of the macrosocial structure on individual decision making. Furthermore, their contributions to modern knowledge are at the heart of social capital (Coleman, 1986; Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). This capital, therefore, revives the socio-

economic debates of the nineteenth century by embedding macrosocial context within the structure of the individual decision-making mechanism.

### **2.2.2. Value Introjection**

Portes and Sensenbrenner have specified different types of social capital by identifying four major theoretical concepts found in the classical literature. First, drawing on Durkheim and Weber, the authors address *value introjection*, which highlights the moral precepts learned during socialization that regulate economic transactions, as a source of social capital. Specifically, they have cited Durkheim's "noncontractual elements of contract", which focuses on the socialization process that underlies and qualifies the regulation of contracts (1993). Even more basic evidence for *value introjection* is the natural moral sensibilities found in Locke's social contract theory. *Value introjection*, is distinctly a source of social capital defined by the internalized norms that whole communities or societies may use for the collective benefit (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998). Social capital of this form exists with the entire group, culture, or society (hereafter collective) that adhere to that socialization process.

### **2.2.3. Reciprocity Transactions**

The second source of social capital noted by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) originates with Georg Simmel's early twentieth century work on social exchange. Simmel and other social exchange theorists focused on the structure of non-market or informal social transactions that occur within collectives. Supported by the norm of reciprocity, *reciprocity transactions*, state the co-authors, are exchanges of "favors, information, [or] approval" (p. 1325) that occur because prior experience grounds an expectation for the future credit of an often intangible item



of social value, from one group member to another (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). *Reciprocity transactions* do not occur for the higher motive of beneficence. Social exchanges of this sort are a form of social capital precisely because group members have access to social and sometimes market resources stemming from their Simmelean norm of reciprocity (Portes, 1998). However, this dimension of social capital differs from *value introjection* in that it exists between an individual and the collective rather than as an inherent property of the collective.

#### **2.2.4. Bonded Solidarity**

Marx and Engles' exploration of class structure in the *Communist Manifesto* leads to a third source of social capital. *Bonded Solidarity*, as described by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993), is principled group action arising from common group conditions. While examining the proletariat consciousness Marx and Engles ([1848] 1986) comment that as the proletariat, "becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more.... Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trade Unions)..." (p.89). This quote highlights the group dimension of social capital that Portes and Sensenbrenner have attributed to individuals in a collective experiencing common conditions, which causes self-interests to coalesce into the higher level collective interests theorized by Marx and Engles.

#### **2.2.5. Enforceable Trust**

The fourth source of social capital identified by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) is *enforceable trust*. Derived from Weber's discourse on substantive rationality, *enforceable trust* credits group members with benefits for remaining in good group standing. Furthermore, Coleman (1988) has alluded to Weber's notion of social obligation derived from group

membership in his discussion on the power of *closure* within the social structure to provide effective norms for sanctioning. The sanctioning power of a collective has similarities with *reciprocity transactions* in that they both inhere between individuals and a group.

### ***2.2.6. The Classical Critiques***

These classical sociological foundations led to Dennis Wrong's 1961 *oversocialized* critique, which complained the sociological tradition placed too much importance on the embeddedness of social structure in economic decision frameworks (Granovetter, 1985). On the other hand, Talcott Parsons' 1937 voluntary theory of action has been recognized as a critique of the neoclassical economic tradition based on the *undersocialization* of humans as individualistic economic rationalists (Coleman, 1986; Granovetter, 1985). Social capital stands between these two critiques by dealing directly with the concerns of the nineteenth century debate that created the divide between economics and sociology. This concept, therefore, has the potential to be a theory of action based on the embedded individual – or more simply put a theory of how individuals and collectives mutually influence and reinforce each other.

### ***2.3. The Evolution of a Concept***

The concept of social capital has evolved from the usefulness of neighborhood networks (See Jacobs, 1965) to dilemmas of development (see Woolcock, 1998). Social capital has become a complex notion of benefits or consequences derived from different aspects of social organization. Five scholars stand out as the main contributors to the development of the concept of social capital; many others have provided a significant but less critical influence. To offer a

comprehensive understanding of social capital I will begin, in this section, by focusing on the five main contributors and their definitions, and I will utilize the work of two others: Bourdieu, Coleman, Portes, Putnam, and Woolcock; and Burt and Loury, respectively.

Pierre Bourdieu is cited as the first to introduce the concept into the sociological literature (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998). Although the introduction received no major attention, as it appeared in a 1980 French language journal and later was translated into a text on the sociology of education, Bourdieu's treatment of social capital is thorough and useful. Portes (1998) quotes from Bourdieu who defines social capital as, "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (p. 4). Bourdieu begins the nexus between social capital and economic capital in his definition. Furthermore, Portes (1998) makes clear in his analysis of Bourdieu that though the outcomes of social capital are fundamentally economic, the process by which social capital is acquired is not. Bourdieu's contribution to social capital theory is limited mainly to this somewhat obscure article.

In 1988 James Coleman, building on Bourdieu's work, developed a theory of social capital that he applied to the creation of human capital in high schools. To do this he focused on two of Bourdieu's main points: 1) individuals may be able to appropriate resources held by those with whom they have social relationships because of that bond alone; and 2) the type of resources, as well as the number, are important. Coleman then claims that social capital exists not within the individuals, but within the constitution of the relationship (1988). In this sense, Coleman's social capital is nearly intangible.

Coleman is credited with the developing the theoretical framework of social capital. In this first development Coleman defines social capital as, "a variety of entities with two elements

in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure” (Coleman, 1988, p. S98). He then breaks the concept into two main branches. The first, “the forms of social capital,” is further divided into “obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures”; “information channels”; “norms and effective sanctions” (p. S101-104). The second branch Coleman identifies is “social structure that facilitates social capital,” which is then further divided into “closure of social networks” and “appropriable social organization,”(p. S105-108).

In an earlier article Coleman (1986) lays the groundwork for the development of social capital theory by assessing the current state of sociology in its attempts to bridge “individual actions to macrosocial functioning” (p. 1309). Coleman calls for a theoretical model that can explain system functioning with microsocial actions, and claims that this topic shows the most potential for the frontier of research and theory.

In an article titled “Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action,” co-authors, Alejandro Portes and Julia Sensenbrenner, refine Coleman’s definition in response to two main inadequacies. First, they point out, Coleman fails to describe what entities facilitate social capital and where in society they are found. Second, they state that Coleman’s treatment of social capital is overly positive, and therefore fails to recognize the consequences that social capital can have in some of its forms (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). Revising Coleman’s definition of social capital Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) define it as, “those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behavior of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere” (p. 1323). The authors then break social capital into four main sources: value

introjection, reciprocity transactions, bounded solidarity, and enforceable trust. Portes' attempts to clarify the concept have made a large contribution to social capital.

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) achieve their goal of explaining the sources of social capital, which the co-authors critiqued Coleman for omitting; however, they fail to address the patterns that are necessary to build social capital. On the other hand the co-authors thoroughly address the potential negative consequences of social capital, and Portes continues his concern in an article titled, "The downside of social capital".

In this article Portes and Landolt (1996) identify three main negative possibilities. First is the potential for *conspiracies against the public*. Social relationships that create strong bonds can serve to exclude other individuals. The authors cite immigrant communities that control certain occupational trades to the exclusion of other ethnicities. Second, *Restrictions on individual freedom and business initiative*, are created when community interests place undue burdens on individuals and businesses. To illustrate, the authors cite sociological and anthropological studies, again mainly from immigrant communities, that focus on the sanctioning abilities of strong collectives against individuals and businesses that don't conform. The final negative aspect of social capital, *Downward leveling pressures*, is described in two ways. Social networks can be utilized either to enforce a negative social construct like a city gang. Or, second, social networks can provide social support, but none of the resources commonly associated with lifting one's economic constraints. Loury (2002) pointed out this phenomenon in his studies of poverty entrenched communities and racial inequality. All three negative aspects of social capital imply that economic consequences are embedded within social relationships and vice versa. Furthermore, they all imply that some extent of individual freedom is necessary for healthy social relationships and economic transactions to occur.

In another treatment, Robert Putnam (1993a; 1993b; 1995; 1996; 2000) has appropriated social capital to political science and civics. Putnam's approach, which views social capital as a concept that can be applied to whole societies rather than a type of capital that inheres between individuals or between an individual and a group, has led to the concept being popularized outside of academia. This popularization even motivated former President Clinton to include the concept in his 1995 State of the Union address (Portes, 1998); it could also be associated with President Bush's push for greater levels of volunteerism as well as his Faith-based programs initiative.

Putnam (1993a, 1995) defines social capital as, “[those] features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (pp. 35-36; p. 3). Drawing on his experience studying regional governments in Italy over a twenty-year period he concludes that networks of social engagement that are built upon past successes can help to overcome economic and political collective action problems (Putnam 1993a, 1995, 1996, 2000). To assess his hypothesis Putnam (1995, 1996, and 2000) analyzes trends of associational membership, women in the workforce, residential mobility, demographic transformations, and technology transfer in American culture. Short of creating his own theoretical formulation of social capital, Putnam's main contribution is analyzing how social capital affects American society for better or for worse. Portes (1998) delivers a serious critique to Putnam's derivation of social capital by challenging it with the charge of logical circularity. The fundamental critique is that social capital in Putnam's view is both the cause and the effect – “it leads to positive outcomes, such as economic development and less crime, and its existence is inferred from the same outcomes” (p. 17).

Although Putnam's treatment of the term is instrumental, it provides at least three important insights. First, Putnam (1993a, 1995) makes a strong case for social capital to be a concept that is intimately linked with civic engagement. This is significant in that civic engagement is well known to be an important part of a proper and healthy functioning democracy. Second, according to Putnam (1993a), social capital exhibits behavior very much like a public good. Notable is the economy of public goods, which are underinvested in and open to free riding. Finally, he equates social capital to philosopher Albert Hirschman's *moral resource*, a resource that appreciates rather than depreciates in value with increasing use (Putnam 1993a, 1993b). Putnam's overall handling of the social capital concept is therefore critical because it links social capital to democratic functioning and macrosocial investment, despite its theoretical shortcomings.

Last of the major contributors, Michael Woolcock adds to the conceptual body in his 1998 article, "Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework." In this thorough article Woolcock (1998) defines social capital as, "the norms and networks [that facilitate] collective action for mutual benefit" (p. 155). The article not only provides a thorough review of the relevant literature on social capital and its weaknesses, but also it adds to that concept by rightly addressing an old debate over micro versus macro applications and implications. Woolcock builds upon Portes and Sensenbrenner's four main sources of social capital by setting up a matrix of sources and outcomes based on fulfilling both micro and macro concerns as well as balancing individual and group characteristics.

Woolcock uses the terms *embeddedness* and *autonomy* set on one axis of the matrix and microsocial and macrosocial on the other axis (Figure 1). The intersections of this matrix are

|              | Micro              | Macro                           |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Embeddedness | <b>Integration</b> | <b>Synergy</b>                  |
| Autonomy     | <b>Linkage</b>     | <b>Organizational Integrity</b> |

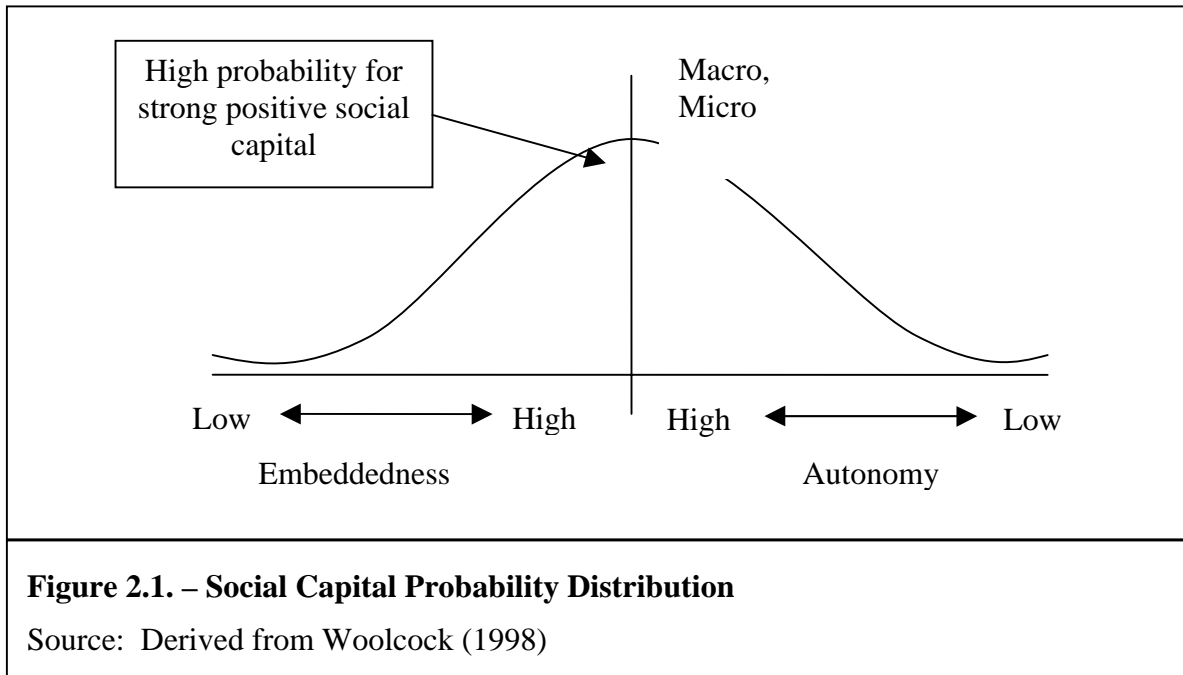
**Table 2.1. - Social Capital Matrix with Indicators (occurring low to high)**

Source: Woolcock (1998)

deemed indicators of social capital. Woolcock (1998) identifies these indicators as, *integration*, *linkage*, *synergy*, and *organizational integrity*. These four dimensional indicators occur on a continuum from high to low and may be formed in combination to create sixteen dynamic outcomes. The outcome of “collective action for mutual benefit” – or strong positive social capital – (Woolcock, 1998, p. 155) is highly probable in situations where, first, individuals associate strongly with their communities (microembeddedness – integration) while retaining access to extra-community resources (microautonomy – linkage). Second, social institutions are well networked with communities and businesses (macroembeddedness – synergy), while retaining institutional formalization such as the rule of law (macroautonomy – organizational integrity).

Woolcock’s matrix can be mapped graphically as a probability distribution with embeddedness and autonomy coexisting on one axis, and microsocial and macrosocial conditions on the other axis (Figure 2). The tail on the embeddedness side of the distribution represents a predatory state at the macrosocial scale and atomized or elitist communities at the microsocial scale. This may be best described as a society governed by fascism and factionalism. On the other hand, the tail of the side marked autonomy represents a weak state at the macrosocial scale and anomie or the lack of any coherent community or collective identity at the microsocial scale. Modern social anomie combined with extreme bureaucratization is exemplar of this condition.



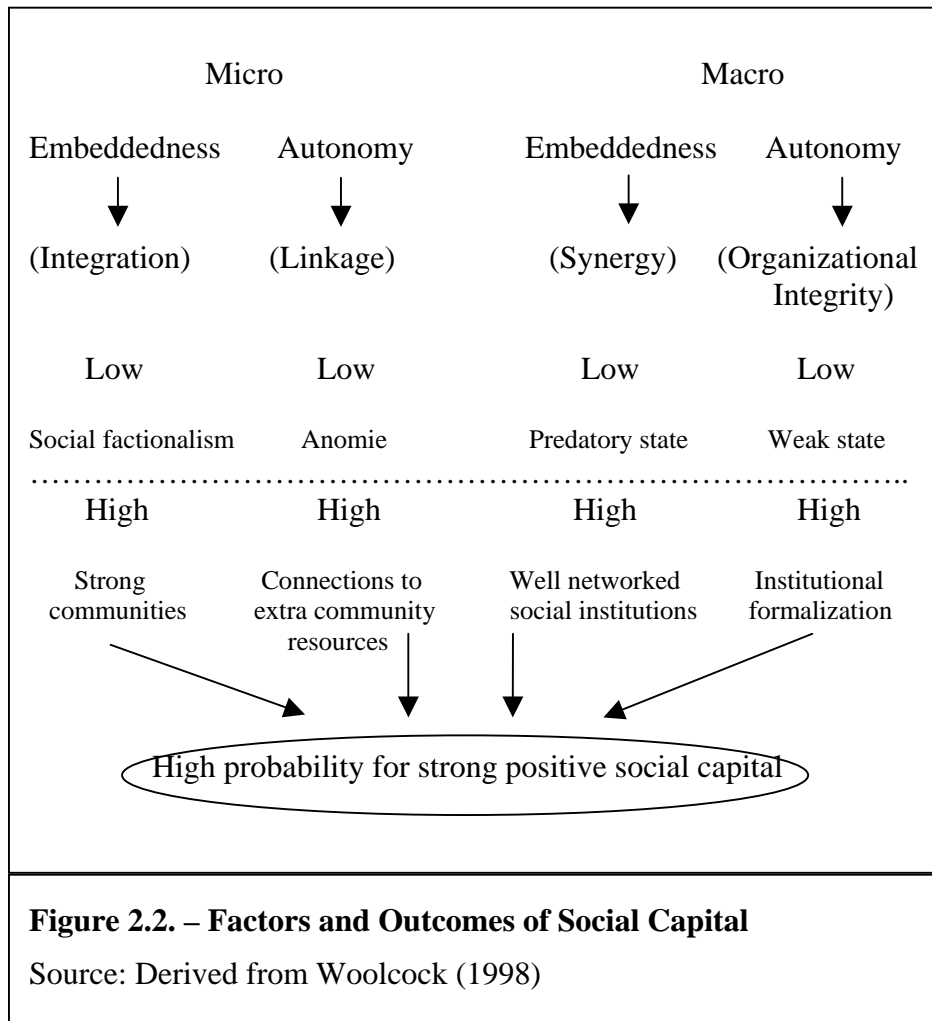


In each of these conditions the probability of having high positive social capital is low. These conditions reflect the negative aspects of social capital that Portes often calls to attention.

In contrast, the center of the above distribution represents the probability for high positive social capital. Woolcock (1998) describes this condition as the developmental state with social opportunity. Figure 3 shows a more detailed sketch of the factors and outcomes of Woolcock's condition in the light of social capital.

Finally, two other contributors worthy of mention are Glenn Loury and Ronald Burt. Loury, an economist, came across the term in his 1977 critique of neoclassical racial income inequality. In observation of inherited poverty among black parents Portes (1998) quotes Loury stating:

The merit notion that, in a free society, each individual will rise to the level justified by his or her competence conflicts with the observation that no one travels the road entirely alone. The social



context within which individual maturation occurs strongly conditions what otherwise equally competent individuals can achieve. This implies that absolute equality of opportunity...is an ideal that cannot be achieved. (p. 5)

Although, according to Portes (1998), Loury does not apply more than a tentative treatment to the concept of social capital, his acknowledgement of the benefits or consequences determined by social context is an important contribution to the concept from the realm of economics. In an endnote Woolcock (1998) quotes Loury defining social capital as, “naturally occurring social relationships among persons which promote or assist the acquisition of skills and traits valued in

the marketplace...” (p. 189). Loury’s early approval of the concept from the economic discipline certainly helped create fertile theoretical ground for later scholars like Coleman and Portes, as well as open the door for practical applications in sociological economics.

Last, Ronald Burt’s (1992) notions of structural holes and weak ties provide another situation in which social capital forms. Burt views the holes in networks and the weaker relational ties as opportunities where social capital has the greatest potential to grow. In this light Burt defines social capital as, “friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and human capital” (1992, p. 9). The notion of weak ties parallels Woolcock’s (1998) *linkage* indicator, which is a dimension of social capital that occurs in, “more extensive albeit ‘weaker’ extra-community networks” (p. 180). Burt’s contribution, therefore, is significant in that it highlights the opportunity to appropriate resources from social relationships based on weaker ties rather than the dense networks of strong ties emphasized by Bourdieu, Coleman, Portes, and Putnam.

These five main and two lesser contributors have, with the help of others, brought the concept of social capital into the heart of not only socio-economic thought, but also into political discourse. Not all connotations of social capital are positive ones however. There are many critiques and logical cautions that the discerning scholar of social capital must heed as well.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

The origins, the foundations, and the development of the concept of social capital have been comprehensively explored in this review. However, further reading on this concept is well worth exploring (See Appendix E for a bibliography of sources not cited in the list of references). Certainly the papers and books reviewed here do not exhaust the spectrum of issues

surrounding social capital; yet they provide a valid and functional grounding for understanding the many aspects of social capital. Two areas that I have not explored here are the applications and measurement of social capital.<sup>1</sup>

The most exciting characteristic of social capital that I can report on is its certain relevance to the concept of sustainability and to bioregional philosophy. Social capital stands to balance the well-researched civic benefits of economic capital and the necessity of ecologically robust natural capital with an understanding of how information and resources flow through community structures. In this light social capital truly becomes the third piece of the puzzle of creating sustainable socio-economies; the first two pieces being healthy economic and natural capital. Understanding the dynamic relationship between social, natural, and economic capital is certainly a challenge for future sustainability researchers

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<sup>1</sup> Two issues that I have not covered here are the applications of the concept and the methods for measuring social capital. In an endnote on the broad relevance of the concept, Woolcock (1998) notes that there are six major applications of social capital aside from sociology. These are economic development, educational theory, community development, democracy studies, collective action dilemmas, and sustainability. Measuring social capital is one deficiency in the research that has been done on social capital. Although three methods for measurement on the macrosocial scale are available, there is no general consensus on the efficacy of these methods, nor are there any accepted methods for measuring social capital on the microsocal scale. The first macrosocial measurement method uses analysis of common social and economic variables as proxy variables from which social capital can be inferred. The other methods use social surveys. Deepa Narayan and Michael Cassidy (2001) have developed the Global Social Capital Survey to conduct direct measurement on a national scale. And other researchers have used existing social surveys to infer the existence of social capital (Inkeles, 2000; Kunioka & Woller, 1999).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The research methods for this study are entirely qualitative. This chapter is divided into the subsections of: the participants, data collection, and data analysis.

### *3.1. Participants*

Participants for this study were sampled using a purposive sampling method. According to Patton (2001), “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* [original emphasis] for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p. 230). Data on the concept of social capital was collected through a series of qualitative interviews. Purposive sampling was selected to maximize the interview participants’ knowledge regarding social capital. To begin, we selected six likely “information-rich cases.” The criteria for selecting these six were that the participants were:

1. involved with sustainability issues in the bioregion,
2. publicly recognizable either as an author, activist, or leader of an organization (four of the original six met all three of these sub-criteria), and
3. demonstrating particular interest in social capital or, more generally, social issues through their writing, activism, or work.

Following the identification of these likely “information-rich cases,” the researcher contacted each via telephone or email and scheduled one hour, in-person, recorded interviews. To expand the list of participants I used a snowball sampling method with the original six participants. Snowball sampling uses key informants to suggest other candidates for the study. Patton (2002) describes a well snowballed sample as one in which, “The chain of recommended informants would typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over” (p.237). Asking the original six participants questions like, “Whom else should I be talking to?” and “Who else knows a lot about social capital?” yielded a list of close to 30 more potential participants. As that list emerged, I took note of which names were “mentioned over and over.” Anselm and Strauss (1996) note that the researcher must have a certain *theoretical sensitivity* to what concepts and statements are relevant to their grounded research. The same is true in purposive sampling. Although I placed no quantitative criteria on which potential participants would be critical to interview from the snowball sample, the combination of repeat mention of a name and *how* that name was mentioned – *sampling sensitivity* – led to me selecting twelve of the potential participants to contact. Of those additional twelve, I was able to interview eight at length, making a total of fourteen recorded interviews.

Participants for this study range from executive directors of non-profit and for-profit organizations, to visionary organizers for local and regional movements, to an international development expert. They are both men and women, and they range in age from mid 30s to mid 60s. All participants signed informed consent forms that asked participants for permission to disclose identity and workplace in this paper. This request was universally accepted. Often

acceptance was given with enthusiasm. A human subjects application requesting this method was filed and accepted by Antioch University's Human Subjects Committee.

Although identifying research participants in the study breaks with the norms of social science research, it is appropriate in this particular study for two main reasons. First, and foremost, the second objective of the research is to, "Identify some important experts on and practitioners of social capital in the Conservation Economy." Accomplishing this objective without identifying at least some of the participants would be nearly impossible. Second, the study hinges on the knowledge of some critical individuals, who are involved both actively and passively in building pockets of sustainability and strong social capital in the region. The identities of these individuals, therefore, lend credence to the study's results. Finally, the identities of the participants allow them to own their own stories, which in the world of conventional social research is rarely done. In a passage on informed consent Patton (2002) asks a particularly germane question about the nature of confidentiality that challenges the norms of social research. "Is it patronizing and disempowering for a university-based human subjects committee to insist that [participants] are incapable of understanding the risks involved" (p. 411)?

### ***3.2. Data Collection***

Prior to the interview, participants were emailed a brief description of the research, which is quoted below:

I am conducting this study as a part of my Masters degree at Antioch University Seattle and in conjunction with Ecotrust in Portland. Ecotrust is building a conceptual and practical model for regional sustainability that is based on a necessary balance of natural, economic, and social capital. I am using qualitative research methods to evaluate patterns in the way people use their

social resources like networks, norms, and trust (collectively known as social capital) to better their conditions. I look forward to speaking with you more about your experiences and how they relate to this topic.

The purpose of this email was to inform participants of my affiliations as well as my generalized intentions for the interview.

Interview locations were determined by convenience for the participant. Locations ranged from participant's homes, to workplaces, to coffee shops and other public spaces. Interviews were recorded on a Sony Microcassette Recorder and interview length ranged from 50 minutes to nearly 2 hours. Field notes were also taken to record observations. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format with an interview guide. As patterns began to emerge from the interviews, the interview guide was updated in order to focus on particular patterns of relevance to the research objectives. This non-rigid process is standard grounded theory procedure. Strauss and Corbin<sup>2</sup> (1998) describe the evolution of interview questions in the following paragraph:

Once data collection begins, the initial interview or observational guides ... give way to concepts that emerge from the data. To adhere rigidly to initial guidelines throughout a study, as is done in some forms of both qualitative and quantitative research, hinders discovery because it limits the amount and type of data that can be gathered. It has been our experience that if one enters the field with a structured questionnaire, the persons will answer only that which is asked and often without elaboration. Respondents might have other information to offer, but if the researcher does not ask, then they are reluctant to volunteer, fearing that they might disturb the research process (p. 205).



Figure 3.1. shows the initial interview guide. Figure 3.2. shows the guide after several updates. Not all guideline topics were addressed in each interview. Occasionally, due to a participant's particular knowledge or background in a specific area, interviews were focused on a subset of the guideline topics. Occasionally time became a factor that limited the extent of the interview. On a couple of occasions interview subjects were contacted after the interview via phone or email to ask follow-up or clarifying questions.

In order to achieve the second and third research objectives each interview guide starts with a set of questions and probes that focus on biographical and organizational information and ends with a set of questions and probes that focus on eliciting participants' feelings on and methods for measuring social capital. Responses to these questions were catalogued. Also documentation was collected on each organization with which participants were affiliated so that profiles could be constructed of key leaders (both individuals and organizations) in sustainability and social capital in the conservation economy.

### ***3.3. Data Analysis***

To achieve the fourth objective (cataloging and modeling the patterns of social capital in the conservation economy) an in depth microanalysis of the interview data was conducted using grounded theory methodology. The methodology for grounded theory was selected for three primary reasons, which are formulated as attributes of grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1998). First, grounded theory analysis provides a rigorous structure for

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<sup>2</sup> The late Anselm Strauss and Barney Glazer first developed a method for Grounded Theory research in the late 1960s. More recently Juliet Corbin and Strauss have co-authored a number of books and papers that update and revise Strauss and Glazer's original methodology for conducting grounded theory research.

managing and analyzing large amounts of data. Second, the method provides the researcher a framework for micro-inspection of abstract concepts. Third, abstract concepts are guided into theory or models that closely reflect the reality of the study subject. Grounded theory has provided this researcher with a methodology that closely fit Ecotrust's main goal for the study.

The analysis consisted of three processes: transcribing interviews, coding transcripts, and constructing a model. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the author, with two exceptions. In these two cases interviews were annotated rather than transcribed verbatim due to time restrictions. The two cases provided data for the analysis, however, verbatim quotations are not available. The author then coded the transcripts using three coding methods called open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). All coding was done by hand.

### ***3.3.1. Open Coding***

Open coding involves making hand written notes in the transcript margin, as well as using different colored highlighters to draw attention to specific passages of text that refer to emerging categories. The intent of open coding is to label the conceptual phenomena that the research process uncovers. Grounded theory can be completed, and therefore data collection finished, only when the conceptual phenomena that revolve around the research subject are labeled to the point of conceptual exhaustion (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore, open coding provides meaning to the concepts by organizing categories that are explained by a set of properties and dimensions, which allows for breadth and variance within a category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During preliminary analysis this researcher noted and standardized categories on an organized code sheet. This code sheet was then used to open code all interview transcripts.

## Interview Guide for Social Capital Research Project

**Goals:**

1. Create a brief bio on the participant.
2. Paint a picture of the (*organization*), and participant's role with the (*organization*).
3. Elicit the dimensions of social capital that are embedded in the (*organization*)'s programs.
4. Understand how participant and (*organization*) measure social capital/social resources

**Interview Guide:**

1. A little bit about you
  - ✓ Where from
  - ✓ Age
  - ✓ Past experiences in work, school, organizations, etc.
  - ✓ Your work at (*organization*)
  - ✓ How did you get interested in this?
2. Let's talk about (*organization*)
  - ✓ philosophy
  - ✓ goals/programs
  - ✓ activities of (*organization*)
  - ✓ How do these activities help accomplish (*organization*) goals?
  - ✓ How does the (*organization*) go about building community?
3. How (*organization*) helps to build social capital or resources such as social networks, norms, and trust
  - ✓ Community benefits
  - ✓ Social resources
  - ✓ Social benefits institutionalized in (*organization*)'s activities
  - ✓ Changes in communities or individuals involved in (*organization*)'s activities
  - ✓ Building social resources/capital
  - ✓ How do you describe social resources/capital?
4. Obstacles to creating social resources as a product of (*organization*) work
  - ✓ Describe obstacles
  - ✓ Getting around these obstacles
5. (*Organization*)'s commitment to community natural, economic, and social resources
  - ✓ Improving these resources
  - ✓ Social effects of the (*organization*)'s activities on natural or economic benefits
  - ✓ Are there measurable indicators of the social, natural, and economic effects? What?
  - ✓ How do you measure the value of the (*organization*)'s work?
  - ✓ How do you assess the successes or failures of the (*organization*)'s activities?
6. In my literature review of the concept of social capital I found four major patterns to emerge: solidarity, access, cooperation, and certainty. How are those ideas represented in the (*organization*)'s work?
  - ✓ Solidarity
  - ✓ Access
  - ✓ Cooperation
  - ✓ Certainty
7. A couple last things.
  - ✓ Anything else I should be asking?
  - ✓ Anyone else?
  - ✓ You've been incredibly helpful, would you mind if I have follow-up later this summer?
  - ✓ Thank you.

**Figure 3.1. Initial Interview Guide**

## Interview/Discussion Guide used in the Conservation Economy's Social Capital Assessment

### Background

- How long have you been involved in sustainability issues?
- Where did your interest in sustainability begin?
- What is your job/occupation?
- How does your work contribute to a sustainable society?

### Sustainability

- Please describe your understanding of a sustainable society in terms of the following:
  - Economics
  - Environment
  - Culture/Society
- What are some changes you see happening in the sustainability movement?
- Talk about sustainability in the future?

### Social Capital – Networks, Norms, & Trust

- The value of the term social capital
- How do you personally use social capital?
- Social capital has been identified as a critical factor in fostering a sustainable society. Could you comment on each of the following institutions contributions to social capital; and then discuss any benefits you feel they may have for a sustainable society?
  - Government
  - For-profit entities
  - Non-profit entities
  - Academic institutions
  - Alliances of interest
  - Communities of place
- *If the respondent mentions any specific negatives ask them to address them in terms of the following:*
  - How do we find a better way for that type of institution?
  - What would you propose to change in the structure of that type of institution?

### Creating Tangible Outcomes

- How does strong social capital help create a sustainable society?
- What do you think is the best way to measure or evaluate the effects of social capital?
- Can you describe any good anecdotal evidence of the effects of social capital?
- How do you think about the negative aspects of social capital?

### General/Other Comments

- Is there anything else you would like to add that you think would help me understand how networks, norms, and trust are created and used in a sustainable society?

**Figure 3.2. Interview guide after several iterations**

Occasionally the code sheet was updated as certain categories were found to be too broad or too narrow or without significant substantiating evidence.

The coded interview transcripts reveal a very complex concept. To give the reader a sense of how the concepts were organized and with what developmental variance they occurred, one well developed concept, *Awareness*, and one less well developed concept, *Dropping Fear*, are presented.

Beginning with the first interview, it was apparent that participants felt that the amount of awareness that a person has of his or her social, environmental, and economic context is an important factor in that person's capacity to have and grow social capital. Speaking about the underlying context for a teach-in that brought together many people to discuss and learn about economic globalization, David Korten remarked that, "It was a sense of concern that something was going badly wrong, that people were not really sure they understood it, but were looking for understanding." The fundamental importance of this quote is the awareness that was necessary, in the form of a "sense of concern," which helped pull together the event about which he was speaking. David Korten then went on to say, "That was a key event on broadening the understanding and engagement." Conceptually the analyst is again drawn back to the underlying awareness that was present that allowed for "understanding and engagement."

Mary Embolten described the indirect benefits of the Cascade Harvest Coalition's on farm harvest celebrations in the following terms:

They are considerable. One is just the increased awareness on the part of local citizen. They learn, and then they'll take the next step. That's the best thing that can happen, you foster interest in someone and they take action.

Again here the analyst is driven to the awareness needed for someone to engage in an activity. Furthering the conceptual need for awareness to foster social capital is Molly Cooley's description of the women with whom she worked prior the formation of the Neighborhood Pride Team:

He had an article called, "The future of low income neighborhoods and the people that reside in them." The low-income women read it and one of them said, 'we don't want to be no client community!' And it just resonated with her because she was living in a housing project, and she could see how people were putting her down, not respecting her, and being bureaucratic, not ever tapping her talents!

The transcript goes on to point out that after reading that article, the "low-income women" went on to bond together, and eventually to build bridges to other women in the neighborhood. The network was eventually used to undertake neighborhood improvement projects and build community dignity, culminating with the creation of the non-profit Neighborhood Pride Team.

The concept of becoming aware of one's context as a precursor for some sort of personal enlightenment and personal or community action is significantly represented in the data. Furthermore, the concepts' properties and dimensions were identified and are catalogued in Appendix F. All statements that dealt with this concept were highlighted and coded with the word *awareness* in the margin. Later in the analysis process, when the coded transcripts were photocopied and cut along the coded highlights, all statements coded for *awareness* were grouped and paperclipped together. The concept of *awareness* is relatively well developed in the data.

On the other hand, *dropping fear* is a concept that has relevance to the creation of social capital, but which, as a concept reflected by the data, is less well developed than *awareness*.

Nonetheless, *dropping fear* stood out in as an important component of the data. Fear as some sort of barrier to relationships or action is mentioned numerous times throughout the data. David Yudkin states, “Globally, a lot of the obstacles are coming from a fear based society. I think people believe that if they don’t do unto others they’ll be left out on the curb. Fear drives greed.” Victor Bremson also comments on fear; he says, “not being afraid” is critical to ensuring that individuals have a positive influence on their communities. Later in the interview with David Yudkin, he continues, “I think it goes back to the fear based society...The base line safety net has to be risen to reduce the fear.” The “safety net,” according to Yudkin appears to play an important role in determining the level of fear. However, the level of fear in a society or community appears to be a factor in the strength of the safety net also. Fear according to the participants inhibits positive social traits and instead results in “greed” or other negative social influences.

Less direct, albeit still important to the development of the concept of *dropping fear*, Rebecca Slak, comments on the process artists go through in publicizing their work:

Any artist has at some point, and most of the time throughout their career, whether they’re professional, whether they’re an out artist or not, has the challenge of taking something that is so internal and personal and therefore *guarded* [emphasis added] and putting it out in the public.

The implication is that the “guarded” nature of the artwork produces an inhibition in the form of a “challenge” to publicizing one’s artwork. Using an analytic tool Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe as the “flip-flop technique” of turning the statement inside out, it can be inferred that if the artist is able to drop this fear that the challenge may be overcome and the desired outcome of publicized artwork may be achieved. The question the analyst is left with is what would allow the artist to drop that fear and thereby overcome the inhibition. Rebecca continued the thought

by concluding with a statement about Trillium Artisans' work to help community members build a physical and metaphorical space that encourages the corollary to *dropping fear*. A mirror concept began to emerge with the following statement, which this analyst labeled *opening up*:

So that's really the first step that many of the folks in Trillium experience. Once you take that... you are putting everything out there, and you're opening yourself up. So it's people doing that in a safe place, where you're respected and you know that that's part of the work that's going on here.

By providing a "safe place" Trillium is giving artisans the social capital they need to overcome the challenge of publicize their talents.

### **3.3.2. Axial Coding**

Open coding of the concepts and categories provides a framework for the data to be reorganized. Axial coding, as described by Chicchi (2000), is, "the reorganization of data so as to obtain connections between the categories (and between the categories and any subcategories) that have been formulated" (p.13). This reorganization of data allows researchers to place multiple conceptual categories that are related through their properties and dimensions into the heading of one underlying concept – the axis. The importance of axial coding is not the conceptual headings themselves, but the nature of the relationship between the categories that collectively formulate a concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin have developed a coding methodology to allow researchers to identify the relationships between categories. This method involves creating an explanatory framework by coding the phenomena found in analysis according to six different themes that give the phenomena depth and dynamics. Table 3.1. shows Straus and Corbin's method for axial coding, along with examples from this research.



**Table 3.1. – Strauss & Corbin’s (1998) Axial Coding Procedure**

| Code                          | Explanation  | Example  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Phenomenon                    | The pattern that is addressed by a specific category   | <i>The Community</i>   |
| Causal conditions             | Those conditions that influence the occurrence of the phenomenon.  | The reciprocity and identity of persons in the community   |
| Intervening conditions        | Those conditions that alter the effects of the causal conditions on the phenomenon. These are often referred to as the structural conditions that affect the actions and interactions of the phenomenon. | The type of organizational structures that the community is built upon, i.e. hierarchical, bureaucratic, or collective                   |
| Contextual conditions         | Those patterns that result from the interaction of causal and intervening conditions. Contextual conditions provide variance to the phenomenon.  | Degree to which the community is based on place or on values or both, i.e. a neighborhood or the community of global civil society       |
| Strategic Action/Interactions | Intentional actions taken to address a specific problem that influences the phenomenon   | Programs or social institutions within the community that are oriented at civic development, i.e. mentoring or service learning programs |
| Consequences                  | The results to the phenomenon of strategic actions/interactions  | The amount of meaning or culture that exists in a community  |

To accomplish the reorganization of the data, this researcher photocopied the open coded transcripts and cut the photocopies along the lines of the open codes. This allowed the bundling

of open coded concepts. With the text collected in individual concept piles, the author was able to compare and contrast the different concepts and look for similarities, differences, and relationships between the concepts. Prior to cutting and grouping, each statement was also given a code that corresponded to the interview participant. Categories were created and axial codes assigned.

### ***3.3.3. Selective Coding***

Finally, Strauss and Corbin (1998) define selective coding as, “the process of integrating and refining the theory” (p. 143). The main point of integration in grounded theory is selecting a central theme that defines the essence of the research. The central theme must be able to be easily related to the all the major categories, and it must occur frequently in the data.

Furthermore, the central theme must be abstract enough that researchers in other areas can apply the grounded theory in an effort to build a more general theory of social action. Selective coding helps the researcher understand what it is that he or she *is really studying*. In the course of this research selective coding was of particular importance due to the conceptual nature of the inquiry. Therefore, finding a concrete central theme was important for grounding the concept in reality.

### ***3.3.4. Constructing a Model***

In the process of coding data, patterns and relationships emerge. Concurrent with data coding the researcher may begin experimenting with piecing together different categories or patterns to construct a model (Soulliere, Britt, & Maines, 2001). In an article on conceptual modeling and grounded theory Soulliere, Britt, and Maines (2001) state that:

[Models] are merely organizing devices for a continuing cycle of dialogue. They should be seen as a vehicle for disciplining three critical dialogues between data and assumptions... Each of these dialogues pushes researchers continually to rethink the nature of the dynamics of the situation they are investigating. [1] The important concepts may change over time as researchers gather new data and consider just what is of sociological import in these situations. [2] The nature of each concept may change over time as researchers come into contact with a greater variety of potential indicators, with the essential dialogue being a discussion of what concepts are and what they are not. [3] The nature of how concepts relate to one another also may change over time. All of these dialogues take place simultaneously and have implications for one another. Accordingly, conceptual modeling may be thought of simply as a methodology for keeping track of and recording the outcomes of these dialogues in diagrammatic form (p. 255).

The process of these three dialogues is a creative one. The researcher must assemble the model with great humility, understanding that not only may the relationships between concepts change as data collection and analysis continue but also that the concepts themselves may change.

The construction of the model of social capital that is presented in this paper relied on the author's theoretical sensitivity as well as testing conceptual relationships in dialogues with interested parties. Construction of the model began by organizing conceptual categories in ways that reflected the relationships present in the data and testing those relationships in subsequent interviews and dialogues with Ecotrust and Antioch. Then, patterns were organized by open and axial codes, and put into a table that describes the concepts, categories, properties, and dimensions (Appendix F). Finally, in November of 2002, I delivered two presentations, which included a draft conceptual

model. One presentation was delivered at Ecotrust and was attended by Ecotrust staff and a number of interview participants. The second presentation was delivered at Antioch and was attended by faculty and other colleagues. Both presentations were enthusiastically received, critiqued, and useful feedback with which to fine-tune the model was given. The findings presented in this paper reflect the authors data analysis as well as subsequent input and critique from colleagues and interview participants alike.

### ***3.4. Study Limitations***

This is an exploratory study that attempts to develop a grounded model that is based upon a sample of expert opinion. The findings presented in the following chapters describe how this particular group describes the nature of social capital. The model presented in Chapter Seven is not intended as an endpoint for discussion on social capital, but rather a starting point from which other researchers and interested individuals can test, build upon, refine, or reject in their own pursuits to understand the concept.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS – PROFILES OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

In this chapter the reader will find brief profiles of each interview participant; participant information are used with their permission, which was granted verbally and by signed informed consent forms that were approved by the Antioch University Seattle Human Subjects Committee. These profiles offer context to the findings presented in the following two chapters. For those participants that are closely associated with an organization, the profile will address both the person and the organization. The data presented here is a compilation from interview transcript data and field observations.

### **Janet Hammer, Community Food Matters, founder**

Portland, Oregon

The state of Portland's food system is better off because of Janet Hammer. "My background is in planning and policy, and I was working on the effort for farmland protection. You find out very quickly that it's not enough to just zone land for protection." With three Masters degrees and a substantial amount of her Ph.D. finished, Janet is a force for understanding issues that affect western Oregon's regional food system. Community Food Matters, a non-profit that Janet recently started, is convening and collaborating with individuals

and other groups interested in sustainable food issues for eaters in the Portland metro region and growers that serve the region within about a half-day drive of the city. Janet has also played an important role in publishing *Portland's Bounty: A Guide to Eating Regionally and Seasonally*, as well as helping to start a “student-run sustainability-oriented cafe” called Food for Thought on the Portland State University campus.

**Daniel Bohn, Community Cycling Center, Executive Director**

Portland, Oregon

Under the leadership of Daniel Bohn, the Community Cycling Center has transformed from a “hole in the wall” on the brink of bankruptcy to a vibrant community based non-profit. The organization teaches what Daniel describes as, “the whole bike philosophy,” which he translates to mean everything from where the bike comes from, how it is used, why it’s used, how to fix it, and what are the benefits from bicycles. The benefits, Daniel offers, include everything from less pollution to more self-confidence. He proudly proclaims the Center’s goal, “that no bikes be thrown away in the metro area in two years,” although he cautions that realism may affect his timeline. Plastered on one wall of the Community Cycling Center is the organization’s recycling report: “15 school buses by volume,” of bike parts have been recycled by the organization in the past year. The Center offers bike maintenance classes, bike clubs throughout the neighborhood’s middle schools, a Create-a-Commuter program for low-income adults, as well as a work experience program for high school students. The center is vibrant and bustling, and after only a year in it’s new space is already running out of space.

**Victor Bremson, Business Alliance-Local Living Economies (BALLE Seattle)**

Seattle, Washington

Since retiring from the career of corporate turn-around consulting, Victor Bremson has taken up two new pursuits: a Doctor of Ministry degree in Creation Spirituality, and chartering an organization called BALLE Seattle. BALLE is a nationwide network of autonomous chapters whose mission is, “to create an alternative economic structure.” BALLE according to Victor has attracted business leaders from “the real economic world,” who see the need for sustainability, community development, and economic and environmental justice. These men and women, “see that you can make a decent profit and living without being the biggest, the cruelest, and the greediest.” BALLE Seattle is a new chapter and is just getting off the ground. Victor is spending the first year, “seeding the idea of a local living economy in the heads of the progressive leadership cadre.” Phase two, according to Victor, will involve inviting the businesspeople from a neighborhood with a critical mass to define what a local living economy is to them, and then attempting to create a values-based proposition to act as a foundation for neighborhood business practices. Then, says Victor, “it’s off to the next neighborhood.”

**David Korten, International Forum on Globalization**

Bainbridge Island, Washington

From the back deck of his island home, David Korten explains his work; “The issue that I work on is the larger set of systems and relationships among enterprises, organizations, and people. How we’ve organized to make decisions on a global scale.” The Washington native,

with an MBA and a Ph.D. from Stanford, worked for over a decade for the Ford Foundation in the Philippines and Indonesia on rural development issues. While working there, David joined with the Filipino delegation to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which he characterized as a “a massive gathering of global civil society” and an “incredible experience.” At the summit he authored a couple of the overview documents, one of which can be found in the appendix to his book *When Corporations Rule the World*. David is also author of *The Post Corporate World*, and is a cofounder of the International Forum on Globalization, which is a loose knit group of thinkers and activists from across the globe who have bonded together to form an intellectual response to globalization. Most recently the group published the consensus document, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*.

**Mary Embolten, Cascade Harvest Coalition, Executive Director**

Seattle, Washington

Mary Embolten is a like a giant clearinghouse for western Washington’s agricultural issues. The Cascade Harvest Coalition, which Mary directs, is the result of a year and a half visioning by the agricultural community based on the question, “Does this region need an initiative to sustain agriculture?” She views the work as, “a community effort, we’ve always made the effort to reach out to other organizations or other individuals because of what they have to offer. We figure that will be of benefit to people who come to our programs.” The coalition serves as an information resource center, as well as a support entity for regional programs like Washington Farm Link and Puget Sound Fresh. Mary’s tireless work also helps with harvest celebrations. “We promote harvest celebrations.... We’re the regional umbrella.” The coalition



works with smaller county-based organizations to put on the activities. Mary and the coalition are defining sustainable agriculture by “the earth, the economy, and the human condition.”

**George Atiyeh, Friends of Opal Creek, founder**

Lyons, Oregon

In the heart of Oregon’s Cascade Mountains sits the 35,000-acre Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area. That the ancient trees still stand is due in no small part to George Atiyeh. As a boy George spent summers living at his grandfathers 1920s built mining camp, Jawbone Flats, exploring the vast expanse of ancient forest. In the early 1960s the Forest Service planned to log in the Opal Creek canyon and twelve-year-old George vowed to save it. Over the next thirty years, and through careers of logging and mining, the Oregon native continuously fought to preserve the watershed as a park or some other environmental reserve. In the early 1990s George shut down his Shiny Rock Mining Company and began Friends of Opal Creek. Friends, lobbied for protection, created coalitions with other environmental organizations, and started environmental education programs at Opal Creek to teach people about the values and wonders of an old-growth ecosystem. In 1998 federal protection came to Opal Creek at George’s delight, but only after years of lawsuits, politics, activist organizing, and community conflict. Now that his work is done, George serves in an advisory capacity for Friends, but he proudly proclaims, “We’ve created a legacy here, out of what would have been a sea of stumps.”

**David Yudkin, Hot Lips Pizza, owner**

Portland, Oregon

David Yudkin took over Hot Lips Pizza in the late 1980s from his father in law. Since then David and his crew have turned the company into a leader for Portland's sustainable businesses. "I got this reputation as being EcoPizza Man, and people saw it was a profitable, positive thing, and we put out a quality product." David, whose new Pearl District store boasts the latest in sustainable materials, describes himself as a, "tactile, touch, feel type of person. That one of the reasons I got into food, because I'm a nurturer." The nurturing pizza man remembers that at first he took the company this direction because the pizza market was getting saturated – a business decision – but then, "I came to the conclusion that if my competitors never go there, we're screwed. People have been very generous and open with their knowledge, and I will do the same as more and more people get on board." David is constantly trying to balance values with profits and relationships. He tries to purchase as much of his product as his business model will bear both locally and organically. "You can be profitable by doing good things."

**Mark Lakeman, City Repair Project, founder/director**

Portland, Oregon

Portlander Mark Lakeman founded the City Repair Project after traveling and soul searching in Europe, North Africa, and Central America. An architect by trade, Mark says, "The contradictions" between the creativity of design and the reality of the profession, "helped me to make a break from that trajectory." The excitement in his explanations is contagious. In all

seriousness, Mark exclaims, “sustainability is the only thing I’ve ever cared about.” City Repair is the avenue for Mark’s creativity. “Everything City Repair does has to do with giving people a chance to walk into an environment and experience patterns that awaken something really wonderful.” City Repair has a number of projects, all with some element of architectural creativity. The organization helps to create community spaces like the traveling Tea-Horse, a winged portable coffeehouse shaped like a horse that City Repair helps to set up in parks and other public spaces for people to gather around and share ideas, experience, talk, work, and drink hot beverages. “Whether it’s that or natural building, all the projects depend upon people communicating, and sharing, and leaving something that demonstrates possibility.” That “possibility,” Mark hopes, will radiate outward communicating itself across the globe. “But I don’t think about changing the world. I understand the world’s got the same problems we do, I just focus on Portland, Oregon. Our town is just big enough and just small enough to be relevant and to be connected.”

**Molly Cooley, Neighborhood Pride Team, founder**

Portland, Oregon

Sitting in her living room, Molly Cooley reflects on nearly forty years of community organizing. The words flow out of her mouth like stories from a populist history book, the Civil Rights movement in Chicago and in rural Louisiana, the Anti-war movement, and the women’s movement. Molly’s Portland neighborhood has undergone its own social movement, certainly due in part to her experience. As a teacher Molly didn’t last long, “two years and in that time I could see that the parents needed a lot more help than they were getting. They needed a lot of

support.” She left and started the first parenting outreach that had been done in the neighborhood. In the late 1980s the county came with funding from the Center for Disease Control for HIV education and hired her.

“They hired me because I already had the trust of the women in the neighborhood, and they wanted me to go set up educational house parties and stuff, and nobody from outside the neighborhood could do it. Oh sure, you’re going to have a stranger come into your house to talk about sex with your friends!”

Molly’s work built a strong network of neighborhood women, who then formally organized into peer support groups, and eventually a non-profit called the Neighborhood Pride Team [NPT]. NPT helped build the neighborhood’s capacity through computer training classes, micro-enterprise workshops, and events like potlucks oriented at building more community in the neighborhood. The results of their work are both tangible and intangible. The psyche of the neighborhood is a difficult thing to put a finger on, but Molly is adamant about how it has improved. “Well, I wouldn’t say it was easy that’s for sure. It’s really twelve years of building trust in the community. I had to just walk around the streets for three years just so people would know my face.”

**Rebecca Slak, Trillium Artisans, Program Director**

Portland, Oregon

Piles of salvaged fabrics and other materials surround Rebecca Slak’s desk at Trillium Artisans. “354 pounds,” she says pointing at one particular pile. The organization gleans waste

materials from interior design showrooms and other Portland businesses, “often sample fabrics, which are usually tossed out because their lines are changing,” and puts them to use making dolls, purses, toys, and other artisan crafts. An outgrowth of Neighborhood Pride Team, Trillium is a neighborhood artisan operated marketing collective with a sustainability-oriented mission. “We talk about the triple bottom line, basically people, planet, profit,” says Rebecca, Trillium’s program director, who came to the organization from working at an interior design showroom. Part of the mission is to create meaningful work for the neighborhood, which can often go missing in low-income or disenfranchised neighborhoods. Trillium’s artisans add business skills to their artistic talents. As a collective, the organization empowers its artisans by holding monthly business meetings where members make decisions about budgets, funding, new positions, anything that the business needs. “We’re building from within the community on the strengths that are already here.”

**John Haines, ShoreBank Pacific, Commercial Lender**

Portland, Oregon

John Haines rolls into the coffee shop beneath ShoreBank Pacific with a big smile on his face for a good reason. He is a commercial lender for a bank that finances organizations like Friends of Opal Creek for outfitting their new education center cabin, to an organic farmer that delivers to Hot Lips Pizza. The approach, he proclaims, is “to integrate the dimensions of environmental performance with financial performance and social performance.” John’s has experience working in North America and in Europe developing finance programs, from small micro-enterprise development with immigrant and inner-city women in New Jersey to large

USAID environmental finance programs in the Czech Republic. Building financial programs oriented toward sustainability is about developing a networks and trust. “We don’t screen out any businesses. We’re going to have a big impact by having the old guard transform, as well as supporting a new regime,” John says after explaining a program he started to get capital in the hands of auto repair shops to help them transition from chemical to water solvents. The bank also employs a “bank scientist” who ranks businesses on their financial, social, and environmental performance. John says businesses react to the ranking “positively, most appreciate being asked deeper questions about what they do.” A lot of what John does is about building relationships. “You don’t make headway by screening people away from your relationship.”

**Shelly Bowe, Community Action Resource Enterprise, Food Security Program Coordinator**

Tillamook, Oregon

Shelly Bowe runs the Community Action Resource Enterprise’s [CARE] food security programs, of which a major part is developing community gardens in Tillamook County. The County is bounded between the Oregon Coast Range and the Pacific Ocean, has fertile soils and a moderate climate. The county has experienced economic declines since environmental regulations slowed the timber industry. The other major industry, dairy farming, experiences the financial pressures common to farming in an age where multinational agribusiness seems to be the only part of the market that is well off. The result according to Shelly, is a county with an extremely large gap between rich and poor, which goes unacknowledged by many. “The denial piece is huge.” She illustrates an example of a man she recently spoke with:

I explained to him that Oregon has is the highest in the nation for hunger and food insecurity, and I gave him the numbers who visited the local food bank in the last three months. He looked at me and said, ‘that can’t be, I just don’t believe it, I don’t know anyone...’ and I’m thinking, well this guy’s probably pulling down sixty thousand a year. He probably doesn’t.

To combat these problems Shelly has undertaken the task of developing community food security programs through outreach, education, and service learning. With the help of Community Food Matters and others, Shelly is creating a network of agricultural producers, community gardens, and educational programs that will raise the county’s safety net for the hungry. Now Tillamook has a farmers market, a number of community gardens, a farm gleaning network, a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, an Orchard at the junior high, and a well-supported emergency food program. “It’s relationships, in a word, it’s about the quality of relationships that you build in trying to affect change.”

**Shane Endicott, Our United Villages/Rebuilding Center, Executive Director**

Portland, Oregon

Shane Endicott is executive director for a non-profit called Our United Villages. The organization is based in a multicultural, lower socio-economic neighborhood in Northeast Portland. According to Shane, Our United Villages is planning to bring people together to facilitate dialogue about how to better the neighborhood socially. The idea is, “to create a more human based culture by exploring the possibilities of people.” Our United Villages is currently exploring just how to do that. However, in the meantime and for the past four years, Our United Villages has been running Portland’s Rebuilding Center, which serves as a revenue base to

support the more socially oriented mission. Shane is quick to point out that the Rebuilding Center, which sells reclaimed and recycled building materials that are donated or that are inventoried by the center's deconstruction business, provides forty living wage neighborhood jobs and provides environmental benefits to Portland by reducing the city's waste stream. Both entities address problems with concrete answers. Shane's vision is that given the space, time, and place for sharing ideas, people will improve the quality of their lives and build healthy relationships.

**Karma Ruder, Center for Ethical Leadership, Director of Community Collaboration**

Seattle, Washington

“How do you make cities great places to live?” That's the question Karma Ruder has been asking for some time. Before working at the Center for Ethical Leadership, Karma worked in Seattle's Neighborhood Planning Office empowering communities to implement Washington's Growth Management Act. Now at the Center for Ethical Leadership Karma is addressing cultural change. One of the Center's major programs is addressing change in a unique way. The annual Confluence event provides a forum for leaders, activists, and community members to explore a particular issue in an in-depth three-day retreat. This year's Confluence topic, *Exploring the Common Good: Making Community that Works*, allowed the 60 participants to build bridges with one another, experience the creation of community, learn and share tools for building community, and identify activities and lessons to bring back to each of the participants' communities. Karma is not only passionate about community building, “inner work.” parallels the need for community building she says pointing a finger back towards her own body.



## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS – BUILDING BLOCKS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The findings in this chapter outlines the building blocks, or patterns, of social capital and is grounded in the transcript data. The data is presented in two forms. First, the coded and organized data are presented in table form. Second, the table is explained by raw data that is introduced in the form of verbatim quotations from interview participants. Again, participant names are used with their permission granted verbally and by signed informed consent forms that were approved by the Antioch University Seattle Human Subjects Committee.

In the past decade sustainability has become a growing concern for communities and community leaders both nationally and globally (Roseland, 1998). Sustainability leaders and advocates have identified social capital as a critical factor for achieving their goals. Although social capital is often referred to enthusiastically in the sustainability literature, the concept is rarely given rigorous substantive treatment. My hope is that the reader will find in the following pages not only inspiration to continue focusing on social capital, but also an applicable framework for understanding social capital and incorporating the concept with the movement toward a sustainable society.

### 5.1. Definitions

The definitions given by study participants can be grouped into two primary categories. First, social capital is defined as a part of a relationship between people and organizations. Second, participants define social capital as an “it” – an entity unto itself, which is derived from the context of a community. These two categories are captured in a statement made by Rebecca Slak at Trillium Artisans in Southeast Portland:

I basically think of social capital as something that’s been built... that’s built between people and [at] other times between groups of people that allows you to progress in a really positive way. It allows you to kind of...When you think of it in terms of capital, it’s something that allows you to... It’s an investment. It’s something that allows you to build and trade. And it’s something that’s, fortifying. That’s kind of the concept of it.

The first category of definitions, which pertains to relationships, is touched on in the first sentence of the above paragraph. John Haines at ShoreBank Pacific called it, “the dimension of... human capital, human relationships, human interactions, human benefit and downside to any other human enterprise.” Participants often focused on the level of trust or the network of relationships that an individual with a certain amount of social capital has. Trust and networks were defined as not only outcomes of social capital, but also they were defined as the factors that help build social capital between individuals, supporting a non-linear definition of the concept. Similar to the non-linear nature of complex systems, Mark Lakeman at the non-profit City Repair Project described social capital as, “[having] to do with the *economy of relationships*.”

In the other category, the “it,” Mark Lakeman described social capital as, “...the oil that makes culture...,” while Shelly Bowe in Tillamook, Oregon referred to it as, “the glue” in a community. When participants like the two quoted in the previous sentence referred to social

capital in a manner that fit the “it” definition, the momentum or flow of the “it” was a common topic. Rebecca Slak in Portland said of the momentum:

So I guess that’s the other piece of social capital. It just keeps building, there’s no limit to it. [The more] you use it, the better it is. The better it is, the more you make. The pay-off is as good as the... The deposit is as good as the withdrawal.

Another manner of defining the “it” described social capital as a type of place. That place was often referred to in terms of its safety, its commerce, and what happens when social capital is lacking or not present. Molly Cooley, a long-time community activist in Southeast Portland described the “place” in the following terms:

A place where people know and trust each other. Where people buy from each other and they’re essentially a self-sufficient unit. And that unit is so strong that it can incorporate new people and it can tolerate the loss of people too.

I don’t think there’s a community without it. That’s the definition of community. If you don’t have it then you have isolated, vulnerable people. And you have situations where violence and dysfunction are perpetuated and never brought to light.

Both definition categories appeared often in the transcripts. One definition was mentioned repeatedly. “Networks, norms, and trust,” which the researcher used in the pre-interview email, also commonly appeared in the transcripts. However, those participants that used this definition did not attribute it to the researcher, but rather to its originator, Robert Putnam. Often, however, participants who used Putnam’s definition would later give a definition of their own. One participant went so far as stating, “I was thinking I was going to have to read up on my Robert Putnam stuff before going into this. And then I thought, ‘no that’s cheating.’”

**5.2. Categories and Subcategories**

The analysis of the interview transcripts discovered 54 concepts that reoccurred in the data, which ranged broadly across a spectrum of different issues. Those concepts were reorganized to develop categories and subcategories that reflect the axes of the relationships among concepts that the data offered. The 54 concepts that emerged in varying degrees of development and the analyst-constructed categories and subcategories are listed Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1. – Research Findings: Concepts, Subcategories, and Categories**

| <b>CONCEPTS</b>            | <b>SUBCATEGORIES</b>  | <b>CATEGORIES</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Personal Relationships     | <b>RECIPROCITY:<br/>RELATIONSHIPS,<br/>INTERACTION</b>          | <b>INDIVIDUAL</b> |
| Meaning from Relationships |   |                   |
| Understanding              |   |                   |
| Get Togethers              |   |                   |
| Duration of Interaction    |   |                   |
| Common Ground              | <b>IDENTITY:<br/>PERSONAL INTEGRITY,<br/>SPIRIT,<br/>VALUES</b> |                   |
| Expressing Values          |   |                   |
| Symbols                    |   |                   |
| Standing for Something     |   |                   |
| Role Modeling              |   |                   |
| Seasons                    |   |                   |
| Treating Others Justly     | <b>SECURITY</b>   |                   |
| Opening Up                 |   |                   |
| Dropping Fear              | <b>SELF-ESTEEM</b>  |                   |
| Small Wins                 |   |                   |
| Feeling Valued/Valuable    |   |                   |
| Internal Capacity          |   |                   |
| “I Can” Attitude           | <b>HOPE</b>   |                   |
| Positivism                 |   |                   |
| Deeply Held Motivation     |   |                   |

**Table 5.1. – Research Findings: Concepts, Subcategories, and Categories (cont’d)**

| <b>CONCEPTS</b>          | <b>SUBCATEGORIES</b>   | <b>CATEGORIES</b>              |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Meeting on Middle Ground | <b>OPENNESS:<br/>INCLUSIVITY,<br/>DIVERSITY</b>                                  | <b>COMMUNITY</b>               |
| Diverse Representation   |  |                                |
| Positive Exposure        | <b>CIVIC<br/>DEVELOPMENT:<br/>CHILDREN,<br/>SOCIAL CAPACITY</b>                  |                                |
| School                   |  |                                |
| Role Models              |  |                                |
| Neighborliness           | <b>PLACE:<br/>PIAZZA,<br/>ART &amp; PLAY,<br/>COMMUNITY CHARACTER</b>            |                                |
| Fun                      |  |                                |
| Space                    |  |                                |
| Identity                 |  |                                |
| Technology Change        | <b>KNOWLEDGE:<br/>ACCESS TO INFO,<br/>INFO &amp; REFERRAL,<br/>COMMUNICATION</b> |                                |
| Information Exchange     |  |                                |
| Learning from Others     |  |                                |
| Meetings                 |  |                                |
| The Right People         | <b>STRUCTURE:<br/>PROCESSING,<br/>CONTINUITY</b>                                 |                                |
| Norms of Doing           |  |                                |
| Organizational Structure |  |                                |
| Long Term Outlook        |  |                                |
| Multiple Issues          |  |                                |
| Diversity of Actors      | <b>NETWORKING:<br/>EXCHANGE,<br/>SUPPORT</b>                                     | <b>SOCIAL<br/>INSTITUTIONS</b> |
| Nodes and Connections    |  |                                |
| Partnerships             |  |                                |
| Local Issues             | <b>MULTIPLE<br/>SCALES</b>   |                                |
| City-Regional            |  |                                |
| National                 |  |                                |
| Global                   |  |                                |

**Table 5.1. – Research Findings: Concepts, Subcategories, and Categories (cont'd)**

| <b>CONCEPTS</b>           | <b>SUBCATEGORIES</b>   | <b>CATEGORIES</b>                                |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Understanding the Context | <b>COMMON<br/>UNDERSTANDING:<br/>AWARENESS,<br/>CULTURAL<br/>CONSCIOUSNESS</b> | <b>SOCIAL<br/>INSTITUTIONS<br/><br/>(CONT'D)</b> |
| Thinking About Others     |  |  |
| Learning Values           |  |  |
| Awareness                 |  |  |
| Communicating             |  |  |
| Pushing Boundaries        | <b>ACTION:<br/>CATALYST,<br/>COLLABORATION,<br/>TRANSITION</b>                 |  |
| Making Things Happen      |  |  |
| Doing New Things          |  |  |
| Programs                  |  |  |
| Working Together          |  |  |

Three main categories result from the analysis of the concepts and their associated properties and dimensions. *The Individual*, *The Community*, and *Social Institutions* are the categorical constructs that best describe the concepts. When participants spoke about their experiences and about social capital, these three categories were easily inferable from their words. Responding to a question about creating sustainability, Rebecca Slak addresses the three categories:

I guess the first thing is the human relationships, that those are actually happening and they're happening in a positive nurturing way... It happens on a personal level, it happens on an organizational level and then at the larger systemic level. That kind of caring and nurturing can happen.

Her treatment of the categories *personal*, *organizational*, and *systemic* is representative of a significant quantity of the data and the three constructed categories. Dissecting these categories into subcategories has resulted in a set of fourteen, each related in a specific manner to the three

main categories. Moreover, the subcategories have specific relationships with other subcategories, thereby reinforcing the non-linear definition and nature of social capital.

### ***5.2.1. The Individual***

The phenomenon of *The Individual* deals fundamentally with the capacity of a person to invest in social capital, and is the result of the internal nature of that person. For a person to invest in relationships and community actions, participants categorically stated that a vital level of welfare and self-image must be met. Sitting in the office of his community bike shop, Daniel Bohn talks about the baseline self-esteem kids build while learning to ride and care for their bikes:

Kids feel good, 'I rode my bike, my bike broke, I fixed it, and I road it home....' They perceive themselves as someone who is able to work at things that they value, that they think are practical, that matter to them, and they're fun, and they have a better perception of themselves. So if they like bicycling and they find out they can fix a flat tire, that increases their image as somebody who's competent, who can deal with the world, and be successful in the world. That's what it's about. Trying to help people be successful in positive things.

The psychological foundation of a *competent self-image* is a critical component of building the individual base for social capital.

The data supports the conceptual division of *the Individual* into five subcategories that build upon that base: *Identity, Security, Reciprocity, Self-Esteem, and Hope*. Each of these subcategories relates to *the Individual* along the lines of their properties and dimensions.

*Identity*

Mark Lakeman provided support for the subcategory *Identity*:

If people are not allowed to have identity in it... That one great role, their contribution needs to be acknowledged. If it is subsumed by the identity of a larger character or figurehead then it doesn't work. Then that social capital doesn't flow because people don't want to give and they don't identify with it.

Although the above statement provides conceptual support for a link between *identity* and *the Individual*, it provides little practical explanation of the nature of that nexus. That nature is defined deeper within the data. For instance, a person's values, integrity, spirituality and other personally constituting properties comprise the identity of that individual. Although those attributes may be contextually created or supported, ultimately they inhere in that person's individual identity. George Atiyeh talked about how his identity at first inhibited and then supported his plight to have the forests of Opal Creek preserved:

Here's this miner from a logging family who had mills, who wants to save this little piece of the forest, down there at the U of O law conference hanging around with a bunch of enviros. They didn't know if I was a spy, they didn't know what the hell! But eventually they realized how serious I was, giving my testimony in front of Hatfield and all this stuff.

According to Atiyeh, his perseverance to define his identity beyond shallow labels was important to gaining acceptance and respect from the environmental community, and therefore being allowed to enlist its network of social capital in his cause.



Participants define a person's identity having a variance from strong to weak, from being actively created to being suppressed, from being deeply permeating to shallow. The notion of identity that is found in the statements of Atiyeh, Lakeman, and others helps to explain how, with whom, and with what consequences an individual's social capital can be created.

### *Security*

The second subcategory of *the Individual* is *Security*. Both a person's physical and emotional security constitute the term. The new age local living economy movement that is championed in the bioregion by Victor Bremson gives involved business owners a sense of, "security in their lives." At least that is part of the evolving idea. That "security" is also related to *Identity*. Bremson offers that community members benefit from a local living economy by, "feeling a part of something [meaningful]."

Physical security is also important to an individual's ability to afford the effort and energy to build social capital. In a tongue-in-cheek statement about physical security and the security of property, George Atiyeh discusses the baseline level of security he felt in his community during a tumultuous time period and now:

When all that stuff was going on and I was being harassed so severely in my community, I used to joke that, 'they may shoot me, but they would never steal from me.' I still don't have to lock my door. I've lived in this community my whole life and I don't even know where the key is to the door. I don't take the keys out of my car, to do so might mean that somebody might not be able to move it when they needed to.

The strength of the norm that Atiyeh hints at, to exist in good times as well as bad times, is a component of an individual's capacity to build social capital. Without that norm, it can be

inferred, that the emotional energy an individual could afford to social activities would be less; and, therefore, the welfare of the community would be less as well. According to participants, security provides certainty, safety, health, and holism to individuals. Each property directly contributes to an individual's social capital building and maintenance capacity.

### *Self-Esteem*

Third, *Self-Esteem* also is strongly connected to the *Individual*. Participants consistently commented on the value of self-esteem to an individual's ability to make progress in their lives. Molly Cooley addressed the issue of self-esteem and its effects while talking about the community capacity inventory she and the neighborhood women conducted:

We had a grant from the Bureau of Housing and Community Development to do it in our neighborhood. That was good for the women because most of them were very shy and isolated. The one that said, 'we don't want to be a client community,' she would stay in her nightgown in her house until three or four in the afternoon. She didn't get out much at all. In fact she told me later that the first day I'd come to see her, I was working for Portland Impact, 'If I would have known you were educated I never would have let you in the door, bureaucrats or educated people!' Now she's very successful working for the housing authority of Portland, managing two complexes.

Prior to conducting the inventory, which involved interviewing over 120 neighborhood families about what would bring opportunity to the family, Cooley says, "We would meet around their kitchen tables to practice interviews." The self-esteem built from practicing at the kitchen tables, according to Cooley, provided the confidence needed to go out into the neighborhood. The successes that Molly Cooley calls, "small wins," which undoubtedly built self-esteem among this

group of women, increased not only their capacity to create social capital, but also invested the women in dynamic social interaction that did not exist beforehand.

George Atiyeh contributed to *Self-Esteem* as well, using the term, “self-motivation.” “Thirty years ago,” said Atiyeh, “there was dignity, and the community rallied around stuff.” Atiyeh maintains that the declines in the timber economy, mixed with the local conflict over forest preservation has badly damaged the psyche of persons in the community, and the community’s social structures as well. On turning around the trend he says, “[We] have the potential and opportunity, but I just don’t know if we have the self-motivation.”

Clearly social capital, and its contributions to individual and community life, is inhibited by a lack of self-esteem. *Self-Esteem* is further described by comfort with oneself, decision-making ability, confidence, and ownership of one’s actions. Further depth is added to *Self-Esteem* by the variance that exists in the data from developed to undeveloped, to growing or shrinking, and to liking or disliking oneself. There is significant evidence in the data to support that *Self-Esteem* is strongly linked to an individual’s capacity to build and maintain social capital.

### *Reciprocity*

The fourth subcategory to revolve around the phenomenon of *the Individual* is *Reciprocity*. Although few participants specifically used the word *reciprocity*, the majority talked about the mutual exchanges that occur in relationships and interactions. Talking about her work building a sustainable regional food system in western Oregon, Janet Hammer discussed some of the relationships that have grown:

It's been about a year that the core group of us twenty or thirty folks has been meeting and talking, the relationships have been built. There are people that I didn't know before that I can now pick up the phone and ask them, 'what do you think of this' or 'what do you think of that.' And I'm sure there's still some of feeling each other out, deciding how much we trust each other or what we're about. But mostly there's a lot of increasing my understanding of some of the factors of the food systems and the realities to a grower or a restaurateur.

In Janet Hammer's example, the reciprocal exchange that results from the relationships her work creates is that of trust and understanding. Whether the mutual exchange that defines reciprocity occurs with physical items, ideas, or awareness, the exchange is an important property of *Reciprocity*. Mutual exchange – reciprocity – is also a building block for the community.

Architect Mark Lakeman framed the “neighborhood squares” and other public space projects that his organization designs in terms of interaction:

Every public space that we create is a shell for interaction. It in itself is not more precious than the people who are alive. They need to be able to honor the contributions of those of before. They need to be able to make it and remake it, or add to it over time.

The interaction has to be ongoing. With City Repair it's not the physical artifact that we're creating, it's the social capital, literally. That's what we're building.

Central to Mark Lakeman's statement is the exchange of interactions that occurs over time in his designs. The interaction that City Repair facilitates builds the capacity for the individual's networks to grow, to build new relationships, and to learn. Molly Cooley highlighted the core of healthy interactions and relationships in talking about how she learned to be a successful community advocate, “I learned about, just like you're listening to me, listening to people. Find

out what their strengths are, what their interests are and what your self-interest is, and then you go from there.” Listening, as this researcher has learned, is a gift. Listening is an exchange that strengthens the norm of reciprocity critical to an individual’s capacity to build networks and develop trust.

*Reciprocity* runs directly through the axis of *the Individual*. Furthermore, participants give *Reciprocity* a wide degree variance. *Reciprocity* can vary from the exchange of “big stuff to small stuff,” or a balanced exchange to an unbalanced exchange. Participants also give the category the properties of facilitating a connection, a flow of ideas or energy, and working together. The properties and dimensions of *Reciprocity* are well represented in the data.

### *Hope*

*Hope* is the final subcategory that strikes through the phenomenon of *the Individual* in his or her capacity to create or maintain social capital. *Hope* is less well developed than the other four subcategories, yet the feeling that a better future is possible and worth striving for is at the heart of all of the transcripts. Mary Embolten grounded her hope for a better future in the concrete improvements that have been made in her field; “Do I look into the future and see a better world for agriculture? Yes! Because so many of us are working so hard, making inroads, and we are seeing changes.” Embolten’s grounded hope for a better future is viewed from an angle faithful to the human capacity by Mark Lakeman, who discussed the nature of modern culture, which he sees as being highly unhealthy and unsustainable. “We are totally doomed,” he stated, “but at the same time we are human beings. And that means we are absolutely incredible. In spite of all the patterns and sickness and craziness that is layered and layered upon us, our essential nature is incomprehensibly powerful.” The deeply held motivation that Lakeman has

for building community upon humanity's "essential nature" is a critical component to his work and to the work of others.

Rebecca Slak provides another perspective on *Hope*. While discussing her thoughts on the attributes of a sustainable society Slak gloomily states:

We have to be honest in saying that we don't really know what it looks like. We also have to be honest and say that whatever it does look like, even those of us who are, myself for example, who are supposedly committed to that, I know there are things that I'm doing right now daily, every single day, as an individual, and as a member of a community, and my work that just don't cut it, that I should be changing right now. So those are some of the basic things that I think about in terms of day to day. I can also say that... I don't think that we are going to reach that state. *That in no way diminishes my commitment to it* [emphasis added].

Rebecca Slak's attitude is also exemplary of the participants' individual constitutions. It is inferable from the rich body of data that the investment in social capital that is attributable to the participants of this study would not have occurred without the deeply held conviction of hope that they exhibit. Hope, according to the participants, provides *the Individual* with motivation and solutions for the future. In a confident statement at the end of the transcript, Victor Bremson declared, "I am willing to understand the reality of the world. I'm going to see the solutions it's going to take, and I'm going to be hopeful that we can implement those solutions." The hope exhibited by the participants inheres deep within them, and rounds the edges of their persons.

The *Individual* is well defined by the data. The five subcategories described here, *Identity, Security, Self-Esteem, Reciprocity, and Hope*, provide a deep and dynamic explanation of the phenomenon of the *Individual*. The mutual obligations that groups of individuals create

constitute the *Community* as well as its arrangement of relationships that create social capital.

*The Community* is the focus of the next topic in the grounded model section.

### 5.2.2. *The Community*

*The Community* is a meaningful medium that incorporates the mutual obligations between specific individuals with the actions and exchanges of incorporated and associated groups of individuals. Every participant addressed the phenomenon of *the Community*, although the variance of the definitions of community and what builds community was high. At one end of that variance, Molly Cooley addressed community from the neighborhood scale:

Keeping the materials in the neighborhood... If somebody's got kids that are outgrowing their clothes then they can exchange the clothes, helping stuff to keep from getting wasted. I think it's sacred to be able to live and work and grow your own food and buy your stuff in the same neighborhood.

Cooley's vibrant neighborhood vision is one that is commonly reflected in the data. On the other hand, the neighborhood scale of community is contrasted by David Korten's global variant. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit exemplifies Korten's global community variant, which he referred to as global civil society:

It was an incredible experience because you had such diversity in that gathering. You had people from everywhere, every race, every religion, social class, etcetera. Out of the cacophony of voices, you're able to sense a deeply shared worldview and values that transcended all the various divisions and differences.

The variance in *the Community* spans from one that draws its meaning from the foundation of its place – the neighborhood – to one that is symbolized by its common ideals – the shared worldview. In both cases the core of *the Community* is the meaning drawn from the interaction of its members, both individually and as groups. The data supports the conceptual division of *the Community* into five subcategories: *Place*, *Structure*, *Civic Development*, *Openness*, and *Knowledge*.

### *Place*

The subcategory *Place* is developed from a number of *the Community's* properties. The data suggests that *Place* deals primarily with the manner in which a community uses and understands its conceptual and physical space. *Place*, whether physical or virtual, facilitates interaction among individuals. Architect Mark Lakeman offered a description of *Place* in the context of a town plaza in Italy:

If you live in Sienna with its great shell shaped piazza, curving perimeter road and all the apertures between the curving perimeter road on the crest of the hill and then the buildings that are in between that road and this great concave place, all the apertures looking in at this great tower that acts as a sun dial. It's this great mechanism. On the floor of the piazza, it's divided into this nine-part pie graphic that symbolizes the nine parts of the city. It's a huge reflection of the social structure of the city. But the key to it is that this is the great intersection of the city, and by leaving it open and unregulated, *the flow of culture will grow* [emphasis added].

Clearly, to Mark Lakeman, as well as most other participants, *Place* drives directly through the axis of *the Community*.



Lakeman's architectural approach to culture is balanced by Molly Cooley's very concrete example of the value of *Place* to a community, "The kids were just wandering aimlessly with nothing to do before," the new neighborhood Boys and Girls Club opened, "right here on the corner." The space that the neighborhood kids now have provides them with a place for healthy interaction where the capacity to build positive relationships can grow. The necessity of a healthy physical space to both individuals and organizations consistently occurs in the transcripts.

The notion of *Place* is also extended to the conceptual realm. Trillium Artisans has been able to build the social wealth that it has, in large part, due to its conceptual space. Rebecca Slak commented on that space:

The first thing was really time and a welcoming and respectful space. That was guided by our staff. The program director that had been hired, Nancy Yule, she has a very strong understanding of how to create that atmosphere of respect...

How *Place* is used is an important factor in the capacity of *the Community* to develop and maintain social capital. In Trillium Artisan's case, the "welcoming and respectful space" is critical to the success of the organization's mission.

According to Mark Lakeman, endeavors to build community spaces have other consequences. The successful effort to build Pioneer Square in downtown Portland, stated Lakeman, has catalyzed the city:

That public square symbolizes the life of the whole. Suddenly there's this plume of all these places, coffeehouses, and all these different variations on being together and experience throughout the city. Whether it's really great restaurants or cafes or different kinds of spiritual

gathering places, new age or whatever, people started to be inspired by that square, passing through it without even knowing it, and going away to create something.

Inspiration that can occur from a space, as Lakeman described, can catalyze healthy community responses. Some of those responses to *Place*, note the participants, include art and play, a neighborly feeling, and a sense of place. *Place* addresses the phenomenon of *the Community* from a fundamental level. Without it, there is no community.

### *Structure*

Originally this researcher labeled this subcategory *Creative Structures* because the data provide evidence that community structures that break conventional norms such as bureaucracy or hierarchy are more successful at creating social capital. However, the objective inference from the data is that all community structures facilitate social capital to a certain degree. The creative nature of the structure simply provides variance to the concept.

*Structure* is a notion that nearly all participants discussed during interviews. The structures that a community utilizes in its functioning determine the nature of how that community facilitates processing and the degree of continuity that exists in the community over time. One common structural theme that participants discussed was termed in a number of ways: open space, open design, and open structure. Several participants gave a semi-detailed structural overview of their organization or group. For example, David Korten mentioned the International Forum on Globalization's most recent document, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, included about twenty people in core membership, and sixty to eighty total people who worked on the document. *Alternatives to Economic Globalization* emerged after a period of about three years of, "people bringing in their different ideas and gradually weaving them together," through

a series of meetings and drafts that Korten described as, “A very open design.” Victor Bremson touched on the structure of the Seattle chapter of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies [BALLE]. According to Bremson, under the “open space model” the group has, “tried four times to create our organizational principles... each time is a success, each time the result is different.” Bremson noted that the process, however, is more important than the result because it creates trust among the group members.

The openness of a community’s structure is highly related to it’s ability to process. Janet Hammer talked about the importance of processing in her organization, Community Food Matters:

One of the things for me that’s difficult is I know the process part is hugely important. People think it’s not, they don’t want to spend time on that process, touchy feely things. They want to do product. *But process is product* [emphasis added]. If you don’t have good process you’ll never get good product. And that’s one of those other balances... not so much where people want to run away, but enough to keep things going.

Hammer’s treatment of process as product is an important note on the structures that communities utilize. Victor Bremson refined this idea in a statement about publicly declaring one’s values through business practices, “The process of talking about this raises the consciousness in human beings about these issues and calls the human being to a higher place. The process takes you there.” Again, it is the manner in which the process occurs that is an important factor in the success of the structure. However, *Structure* is more dynamic than its process. Continuity is another factor critical to the maintenance of a community’s structure.

Continuity was often pointed to as a critical component to the success of a structure.

George Aityeh points to the discontinuity that occurred in his forest-dependent community:

These people were doing what they'd always done and it was honorable. I mean Paul Bunyan, the whole thing, these were American heroes in the fifties and sixties. And in a short time frame they turned from American hero to American villain, cutting down the rainforests. Honestly, they weren't prepared for it. They didn't know what they'd done wrong. They were doing what they'd always done for generations. They were honorable one day, and scum the next. When all these communities were built on the promise that they would have a sustainable flow of natural resource coming off these forests that they could build their lives around, their communities around, in perpetuity. That was a guarantee, a promise, a governmental promise. All of a sudden that's ripped away from them.

Aityeh continues, discussing the damage this discontinuity has had on the community's social and economic structures. Examples of discontinuities that present major structural challenges are more prevalent in the data than successful continuous structures. Either way, the inference is easily made that investments in social capital are more likely in structures that present the community with the expectation of continuity into the future.

Outside of David Yudkin's Pearl District pizza shop, he ponders a question about the progressive nature of the region, "I ask myself, 'how is it that Portland and Oregon became this progressive place?' I think back to Tom McCall or if it predated Tom McCall, and if it was the ethos that was here coming from the Indians." Whether or not it is possible that an ethos from many cultures can be transmitted into the nature of another culture altogether is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the continuity that Yudkin is thinking about is important to the growth and maintenance of the region's progressive movement and its resources, which are often social.

*Structure* can vary from defined to abstract, from soft to rigid, and from established to new. Participants note that vision, meaning, objectives, terms of interest, evaluation, outcomes, institutional memory, and intergenerationality comprise *Structure*. Furthermore, noteworthy is that social capital appears to be strongest within structures that have creative processing designs and long term continuity. *Structure* is axial to *the Community*.

### *Civic Development*

*Civic Development* deals primarily with *the Community's* structural capacity to imbue its members with the ability to conduct social relations, as well as a sense of mutualism between the individual and the group. The subcategory is mostly concerned with the children and new members of the community. Rebecca Slak directly addresses *Civic Development*:

[P]ublic education, that is really an enormous piece, an enormous piece of building social strengths and social relationships. It clearly is not happening right now, certainly in Oregon where we live. It's a huge crisis, Portland Public Schools; it's a huge crisis. It's such a fundamental piece of building human relationships, and then providing the ability for people to go on and continue to develop. When something like that is not being addressed, that's when you have the first breakdown in the ability to make, to build social capital.

The ability to conduct social relations is a property that inheres with *the Individual*, however, as Rebecca Slak points out, that ability is a learned process and it is the job of *the Community* to teach that ability. This sentiment is common among the participants. Taking the notion one step further, George Atiyeh stated, "If the schools are bad, the community is going downhill." Two crucial factors in *the Community's* capacity to build social capital stem from this statement.

First, implied is that without successful schools children, in general, will not develop the social strengths needed to prosper in *the Community* or be able to maintain a prosperous community as they mature. Second, the statement also indicates that learning grounds of any group of mutually obligated individuals may be seen as an indicator of the health of *the Community*.

This subcategory's development does not extend significantly further beyond the realm of children. However, there is mention in a number of interviews about *the Community's* ability or lack thereof to incorporate and socialize new members, but the development goes little farther than brief mention. Even so, the data suggest that *Civic Development* is an important component to the phenomenon of *Community*.

### *Openness*

An explanation of *the Community* is also deepened by the subcategory *Openness*. Although clearly not all communities need be open, the degree of diversity, inclusivity, and middle ground (collectively, *Openness*) that exist in a community are greatly influential on its the state of social capital. The data is rife with examples of participants who are involved with organizations, or run organizations in which *Openness* is a critical factor. Rebecca Slak explains why the respectful space that she mentioned earlier is necessitated in the neighborhood in which Trillium Artisans:

So you think about all the different people coming from all over the world, with different experiences all over the community... So that's the other piece that really speaks to what we were saying earlier. When you have that respectful piece of it laid down, if that's the base. Then it's so much more welcoming to anyone from any walk, wherever they're from.

At Trillium Artisans *Openness* is not just lip service, it is necessitated by Trillium's context. The diversity and inclusivity that the organization epitomizes adds a broad base of strength to *the Community*. Janet Hammer refines some of the results of a community defined by *Openness* while discussing how to walk the fine line between two opposing points of view:

I think there are a lot of people who care about the quality of life in their community, in their world. And so how do we say, 'tell me about your world and your reality and why it is that way,' and then hear from the other folks too and begin to tease out a clearer picture and decide what that means to us and how we might want to respond.

*Openness* gives the community a "clearer picture" of the context in which a community exists. That picture, as Janet Hammer points out, can give *the Individual* a more complete understanding with which to make decisions.

Finally, *the Community* can also be challenged to be open by necessity. Sitting outside Seattle Pike Place Market, Mary Embolten, with the Cascade Harvest Coalition, discussed Washington's growth management initiative:

There's a lot of people challenging it because they view it as cheap land. They don't give the significance or importance to a local food supply that I do or the people I work with do. It forces you to lobby the cause because of a lack of common understanding.

In this instance Embolten goes on to describe how becoming more open, and working with groups she might not otherwise thought about working with, has increased her understanding of agricultural issues in Western Washington, and has increased the resources with which she can work.

Participants also defined *Openness* as the willingness to build bridges with others, seeing the gray areas, and reaching out. This subcategory rests on the axis of *the Community's* ability to bridge its meaning to others.

### *Knowledge*

The final subcategory to provide substantial explanatory depth to *the Community* is *Knowledge*. *The Community* is a space in which individuals and groups interact; *Knowledge* is the lubricant that facilitates that interaction and allows the mutual obligations to grow. This is affirmed by Janet Hammer, who stated, “We don’t get to good understandings if we don’t have the knowledge base in the room.” The “good understandings” that Hammer talked about come from two main conceptual sources according to participants: access to information and reference and information points. Both of which are facilitated by communication. Access to information is fairly straight forward. Access to information provides *the Community* with opportunities to learn and grow. Mary Embolten described the benefits of having local government officials on the Cascade Harvest Coalition’s board, “[T]hat helps us understand how they function, how decisions are made, when committees meet.” There is near consensus from the participants that a community can be empowered by understanding how other communities function and make decisions.

Reference and information points are more complex. These points are spaces or people within the community where one can go to obtain access to information. Molly Cooley directly spoke to reference and information points in a statement on ways for different organizations or associations to keep abreast of each other’s activities:



The easiest way for that to happen, the simplest version of that is what you call information and referral so that everybody knows about everybody else's programs...

The internet helps for us, but not for the people we serve. They don't have computers so you have tables at markets, and you go door to door, and they come to meetings, they come and ask. Each group has an info rack of stuff. When they come in and ask you can give them a brochure.

The different means of getting people information (tables, door to door, meetings, racks, etc.) are all reference and information points. These physical points provide individuals or other groups in need of information with the particular knowledge they need. Mary Embolten talked of a specific reference and information point that she is building that will provide a, "central forum for those people to exchange information. So hopefully that will help in networking and collaboration." Embolten has created an internet list serve to serve as a reference and information point for those interested in local agriculture in western Washington:

I have this forum where we can discuss things and share information, I'd like to invite you to join.

I don't know what kind of participation we'll get, but we can share ideas, or what they're doing.

So people can learn from other groups.

Mary Embolten's statement highlights one type of point, a virtual point, in *the Community* where individuals and groups can go to receive or share information. It is also evident from the data that communication is the medium by which *Knowledge* accrues to *the Community*. The *Knowledge* axis is the final significant explanatory component of *the Community* to be present in the data.

*The Community* is given depth and variance along the axes of *Place, Structure, Civic Development, Openness, and Knowledge*. These subcategories, which are grounded in the interview transcripts and answer the questions of where, how, why, and with what consequences does phenomenon of *the Community* occur. The interaction between *the Individual* and *the Community* brings meaning to the life of both. The *Social Institutions* that *the Community* is contextualized by constitutes the final set of social capital building blocks that participants described.

### 5.2.3. *Social Institutions*

*Social Institutions*<sup>3</sup> of society are the context in which *the Community* exists. *Social Institutions* define society's norms, and the interaction between society's institutions and communities is where culture emerges. Janet Hammer provided an example of the dynamic nature of *Social Institutions* in this illustration of the changing meaning of organic:

On a macro scale, as dismal as it seems sometimes, we're actually doing great compared to where we were ten years ago. To the point where now we've new things to worry about like, wow, isn't it great that organic is getting more attention. But we've lost the integrity of the industry because it's become corporatized. And so something might be organic, but it's still using irrigation water that it shouldn't have used, and exploited migrant labor, and it's processed, it's packaged, and it's shipped. So it's not really sustainable, but it's organic. Things we never thought we'd have to worry about. On the same hand there are still people in the community and in the institutions that think this stuff is fringe, marginal, radical, weird and want nothing to do with it. It's cultish and dangerous. So we're making progress...

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<sup>3</sup> Commonly Institutions are described as banks, schools, libraries, and other highly organized entities that serve some societal purpose. However, in this context, *Institutions* are the underlying conceptual foundations of society. In this sense they are not physical entities. Physical entities exist within *the Community*.

The meaning of the term *organic*, as Hammer noted, has changed over time due active social changes in the American society. The active participation by individuals and communities in the dynamic nature of social institutions, such as the social construction of *organic*, affects society's social capital as defined by the phenomenon of *Social Institutions*. Furthermore, David Korten noted that *Social Institutions* also influence communities and individuals:

We've been restructuring our institutions globally in ways that shift power away from communities and individuals and to the global financial system, which is running on autopilot. Both states and corporations are essentially captive to the dynamics of the financial markets and the international institutions that serve those markets.

David Korten's statement implies that the structuring of institutions is deliberate, and therefore that it is possible to structure society's institutions in ways that restore "power" to communities and individuals. The "power" that Korten highlights is crucial to the capacity of *the Individual* and *the Community* to build the social capital that has the potential to exist around the axes of each phenomenon. *Social Institutions* provide the final set of building blocks in which social capital exists. Those building blocks that comprise *Social Institutions* can be divided into four subcategories: *Networking*, *Common Understanding*, *Action*, and *Scale*.

### *Networking*

*Networking* institutionalizes relationships and partnerships across the social landscape. Every participant in this study discussed networking, and their networks of exchange and support. It is clear from the data that the social capital that is derived from the investment in

networks of support and exchange constitutes an institutional wealth that oils the gears of society. Mark Lakeman offers an example of that wealth in discussing how his organization's work to create a neighborhood plaza on a street intersection has catalyzed a network:

When people ask me how big City Repair is, it's a difficult question to answer because, for instance, in the Sellwood neighborhood there's all these people involved now in this intersection project, and to a certain extent you could say, 'This is a City Repair project,' but are these people in City Repair? What we've done is we've helped them take back their point that catalyzes social interaction. I know that they're all in City Repair because they're doing city repair, but they think of themselves as their own identity.

Sherett Square (pronounced share-it) on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Sherett in Southeast Portland has become a neighborhood gathering place. The festive intersection is painted to resemble a plaza, a signpost advertises community events and garage sales on one corner, the tea on the opposing corner is always warm, and the gardens are well tended on another corner. A reading room and children's playhouse made from local materials invites neighborhood residents to the welcoming intersection. An informal local neighborhood network maintains the intersection. Lakeman quotes a survey City Repair did in the neighborhood about the residents' feelings toward the project, "One woman said, 'It makes me feel like the whole neighborhood is my home.'" The comfort that this woman's survey response conveys is a property that a number of participants discussed.

There are two main types of networks important to social capital: business networks, or networks of exchange, and social support networks. After describing how, "most of our

customers like us to tell their stories,” sustainability minded banker John Haines gives an example of the value of exchange networks to the institutional wealth of social capital:

New Leaf Paper, they're a company that is the highest quality recycled content paper in the country, ...approaching a \$20 million company this year. They're kind of transforming the market through relationships that extend through their end customers. Locally, here Nike, Hanna Anderson, Norm Thompson, Warner Brothers. They're in San Francisco. Extending from the mills, which are across the country, to printers, they certify and communicate what the environmental savings and benefits are for choosing their paper, from VOC's, landfill waste, water, virgin timber...

That New Leaf Paper is able to “certify and communicate” non-price information about its product through it's business network is a means of institutionalizing the business practices that John Haines is trying to help foster through his commercial lending program at ShoreBank Pacific.

Support networks on the other hand are those networks that provide a social safety net for *the Individual* and *the Community*. Support networks also empower individuals and groups involved in that network. Mary Embolten touches on the idea while talking about ways to strengthen the confidence and abilities of her organization and others that she works with on local agricultural issues in western Washington, “The more of those connections we can make, the stronger we are as a group and a coalition. It empowers smaller groups to grow.” The strength and empowerment she spoke of is a means to reinforce the safety net.

John Haines talked about a micro-enterprise loan program he ran in Trenton, New Jersey. The support network, he said, “was an opportunity for them to link up, be energetic, not operate

alone, and even pursue ideas that they didn't otherwise." Haines' description demonstrates the power of support networks to strengthen social institutions like *entrepreneurship*.

*Networking*, explained the participants is transforming, coordinating, idea rich, empowering, and a means to build trust. Networks are an important means through which information, goods, and services are distributed across society. *Networking* provides depth to the why, how, and with what consequences the phenomenon of *Social Institutions* occurs.

### *Common Understanding*

*Common Understanding* strengthens institutions. This subcategory deals primarily with the ways that individuals and communities come to understand each other in the context of *Social Institutions*. Talking about sustainable food systems, Janet Hammer touched on the subcategory, "The idea is we need to bring diverse stakeholders together to develop shared understandings." There are two properties in Hammer's statement on *Common Understanding*, awareness and cultural consciousness. The first property is concerned with the way individuals and communities understand the institutional context within which they exist. The latter relates to the ways in which individuals and communities respond to and incorporate awareness into their being.

Awareness sets the stage for *Common Understanding*. The process of becoming aware of one's institutional context may take the form of self-discovery, or more often according to participants, through the work of other individuals or groups. Mary Embolten discussed the benefits that harvest celebrations and farm tours have on the institutional awareness of people who come. Embolten maintains that there is:

...increased awareness on the part of the local citizens. They learn, and then they'll take the next step. That's the best thing that can happen. You foster interest in someone and they take action. It slowly works to change people's awareness and behavior towards their environment and their community.

Important to Mary Embolten's assertion is that people learn, and that learning helps them to understand, so that they can "take the next step." The second component to Embolten's statement, "take the next step," is the response and incorporation of awareness, which is the second property of *Common Understanding*.

The data suggest that cultural consciousness is a property of *Common Understanding* and is related to the response that institutional awareness creates. Cultural consciousness is exemplified by David Korten's discussion about the results of the Rio Earth Summit:

When everybody went home, in the one sense nothing happened, and in another sense everything happened. Everyone went home, whether they knew it or not, with a changed worldview, with a deeper sense of solidarity with all sorts of other people around the world, with new names in their database, probably a deeper sense of trust and recognition of the set of deeply shared values that unite humanity. So that changes the way you do everything, even in ways that you don't understand. In many ways that provided the base for the kinds of things that emerged.

Korten's statement at first touches on the awareness that befell the attendants of the Earth Summit, and closes with how they incorporated and responded to that awareness. Implicit in Korten's statement is that the response and incorporation can be either conscious or unconscious. On a similar note, Mark Lakeman continued his discussion of Portland's success in building

Pioneer Square as well as the success of overcoming a proposal for a freeway on the West bank of the Willamette River:

Portland has learned that their involvement can matter. People learned that they could win, that they could change the world, even if it's just a little piece of waterfront and stopping a parking lot and putting that [public] space there.

The declaration, “Portland has learned,” implies some sort of institutional consciousness. Furthermore, according to David Korten, cultural consciousness, “is what all this framing is about, the Conservation Economy, the Living Economy, whatever you call it. It’s about raising consciousness in people who care.” In the context of the phenomenon of *Social Institutions*, learning and raising consciousness about one’s context comprises *Common Understanding*.

Participants also said that *Common Understanding* deals with society’s values and how they are assessed, the amount of empathy the society has for others’ situations, and what sort of macroperspective, or big picture view is common in that society. Furthermore, *Common Understanding* varies in two primary ways. First, does society actively pursue a common understanding or is that notion assumed. And second, *Common Understanding* can be deep or shallow. *Common Understanding*, therefore, provides value and greater depth of explanation and insight to *Social Institutions*.

### *Action*

*Action* reinforces and builds upon both *Networking* and *Common Understanding*. *Action* defines the ways in which *Social Institutions* adapt to the changing forces of the world, both forces from within and from outside of society. A statement made by David Korten provides an



appropriate definition of *Action* as, “the shift from resistance to proaction, defining the positive alternatives.” The subcategory consists of three properties: collaboration, catalysts, and transition.

Collaboration is often the first step toward taking an action that is derived from or aimed at *Social Institutions*. Discussing the other groups and individuals that Mary Embolten works with, she asserted, “I don’t think overall any of us would be very successful if we didn’t rely on the others.” The social institution of depending on others was echoed by many other participants and was especially appropriate as Embolten spoke from the edge of the bustling Pike Place Market. Janet Hammer also pointed out that the work she does on building a sustainable regional food system involves collaboration:

Think of it as a feedback loop. So we’ve got some of the things in place that position us well. But we have all these indicators that things aren’t so well. So *we work together* [emphasis added] to identify where the gaps are, and where the leverage points are, and that helps take us to the next level.

Implied by Hammer is that “working together” is an important component of getting to “the next level.” Collaboration strengthens institutional networks and understanding and thereby is an investment in social capital. Many participants pointed out that they were actively searching for means and methods of improving collaboration.

Collaboration often parallels a catalyst. Participants consistently commented on the necessity of a catalyst to create *Action*. Catalysts come in many forms. John Haines, at ShoreBank Pacific, noted that even bottom-line entities such as a bank can provide the needed catalyst for social actions:

We finance space, in a sense. Building programs beyond that is a good big opportunity for banks.

But it is one that banks aren't typically forced to do, and banks don't realize that they are potentially a far bigger catalyst in the community that they are conditioned to be.

The importance of Haines' statement is underscored by the fact that all entities, corporate, for-profit, non-profit, individuals, and associations make daily decision that have social effects.

From the standpoint of this research, *Social Institutions* are enhanced when those decisions reflect sustainable values. Catalysts occur in many forms. For instance, Janet Hammer pointed out that, "You need to have some of the key opinion leaders or key organizations at the table to give it credibility." Hammer's implication is that credibility enhances the chances for *Action* because those key players will provide some needed catalytic role. *Action* often rests upon the shoulders of the catalyst, without it *Social Institutions* are rigid.

The data suggest that transitions complete the subcategory labeled *Action*. Transitions are active changes in *Social Institutions*, and are the result of a catalyst. Janet Hammer provided one example of how transitions can work:

Well, I think it's two things. Part of it is the structure. I'll tell you one of the things that's helping, the Kellogg Foundation made a major commitment to regional food systems in the nineties. It was their \$1.3 million grant that funded the project I was on in Pennsylvania. And now they're carefully trying to nurture a certain kind of shift. They network the people across the country who are receiving those grants. So they're continuously convening all these people who are doing this great, great work from around the country and sharing information.

In this example, Hammer demonstrates a top down model of transitions occurring. The Kellogg foundation serves as the catalyst, and by convening different people to share information it supports a carefully planned shift. On the other hand, many transition occur from the bottom up, as the result of a number of people independently collaborating, which provides a catalyst in the form of a critical mass that can initiate a transition. Sometimes a bottom up transition comes in the face of an opportunity or threat as David Korten illustrated:

Argentina is an example of where the money economy has collapsed. People are mobilizing in their communities and developing their food systems, essentially rebuilding their economies from the bottom up, based on people producing real goods and services and exchanging with each other, which is a living economy, what an economy is supposed to be about.

The threat posed by a collapsing economy in Argentina is also an opportunity for a transition. The transition that Korten spoke about from a threat to a “living economy” is the result of a changing *Social Institution*. *Action* in this case is the positive and active participation in a change from the threat of a collapsing economy to a new manner of day to day living.

*Action*, the data also suggests, varies from easy to difficult, from supported to unsupported, and from empowering to exclusive. *Action* within *Social Institutions* consistently appeared in the data as an important means of exercising social capital. Without *Action*, *Social Institutions* become rigid and lose their value to society. *Action* explains how the phenomenon of *Social Institutions* is changed, why, when, and with what consequences.

### *Scale*

All participants acknowledge that *Social Institutions* occur from the local to the global scales. Most often, *scale*, is mentioned in conjunction with all or some of the other three subcategories of *Social Institutions*. Whether *scale* actually constitutes a subcategory of *Social Institutions* or is actually a property of the phenomenon is not well defined by the data. Even so, *Scale* merits discussion on its own.

It is apparent from the analytic breakdown of social capital presented here, that social capital can only be maximized if *the Individual* and *the Community* understand the implications of the social institutions on all scales that those institutions exist. A clear understanding of social context is necessary if an optimal investment in social capital is to be an outcome.

The multiple scales that social institutions occur on provide spatial dynamism to the explanation of the phenomenon of *Social Institutions*. Participants note that knowing where to intervene in a system and choosing the appropriate scale on which to address a particular problem are important components of *Scale*.

*Social Institutions* are the final building blocks of social capital that this study defines. *Social Institutions* provide context to *the Individual* and *the Community* in the form of norms and standards. The interaction between *Social Institutions* and *the Individual* creates the social safety net, and the interaction between *Social Institutions* and *the Community* is where culture emerges. The phenomenon is explained by the axial subcategories of *Networking*, *Common Understanding*, *Action*, and the pseudo-subcategory *Scale*. This third category provides substantial explanatory power to the nature and forms of social capital.

## **CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS – ASSESSING & MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

This chapter focuses on how interview participants categorized the assessment and measurement of social capital. The data is presented primarily through the use of verbatim quotations. The raw data is supplemented with a table of categories that interview participants used when discussing the assessment and measurement of social capital.

### ***6.1. The Difficulty in Measuring Social Capital***

Most participants agreed that although there may be some concrete measures of social capital, in general measuring it is a difficult task. In the coffee shop below ShoreBank Pacific, John Haines summed up that feeling, “You can measure environmental performance through various environmental management systems, and various standards within industries, but social capital is rough to measure.” The difficulty that Haines asserted, is supported by Rebecca Slak, who described Trillium Artisans’ attempt to develop programs directly aimed at building social capital:

What we found out was that it is very hard to get that funded because funders always want to see results... But how do you show someone that this woman is now speaking, sharing her mind, decision making, participating here, she’s joined different groups, and all those things. How do you show that?

Although participants commonly relayed frustration with trying to measure the concept, most had some sort of method to measure or assess the state of social capital in their lives and communities.

## 6.2. *Qualitative Assessments*

The difficulty in measuring social capital that most participants felt was often supplemented by a gut feeling that participants said could qualitatively interpret the existence of the concept. David Yudkin illustrated this type of assessment while sitting at a table just outside of his pizza shop:

It's heavily anecdotal. It's more on a gut level. ...I'm much more instinctual, tactile. I can feel it on a gut level. Go over to my store, there's just a vibe in the place, which makes it hard for number crunchers... People are just in a good mood, they all strive to put out a good product, they're enthusiastic.

Yudkin's assessment of "a vibe" highlights the qualitative nature of social capital. Rebecca Slak described the importance of qualitatively assessing social capital even when "tangible markers" such as, "she came to eight meetings," are available:

So when we talk about those things we say, 'well you know this woman went to a Catholic Church and talked to people about her experience. And because of that we had three people come in and shop and buy products here. In the end that seems it's a quantifiable measure, *but it's the fact that she was able to open up and speak* [emphasis added]. That is the tremendous success. The only way it's going to matter qualitatively is if those who are reading about it value what happens

qualitatively. The only way to have people value it is by having them hear it over and over and over again. There's no other way around it.

Slak's distinction between the quantifiable measure and the deeper value of social capital is one that participants said is often overlooked, especially when funding is involved. Mark Lakeman described another form of qualitatively assessing social capital:

I've been measuring it at City Repair by personal experience, by interactions with people. Whereas a few years ago I was doing this kind of task, the next year I'm doing another kind of task because somebody else was doing that first task. This form of the organization evolving, our relationships expanding, and noticing that like a tree with its rings.... Activities like the Tea-Horse are still going on, and just as I have gone on to do other things, people have followed me to do those things.

Whereas Rebecca Slak's statement addresses the social capital that exists between *the Individual* and *the Community*, Lakeman's form of assessment concentrates on the social capital that emerges in the form of culture and exists between *the Community* and *Social Institutions*. Qualitative assessment can often be enhanced when it is supported by quantitative measurements.

### **6.3. Quantitative Measurements**

Quantitative measurements of social capital also emerged from the data, albeit in smaller amounts and less rich forms than the data on qualitative assessment. Participants discussed some proxies that parallel trends in social capital, such as the number of volunteer hours or meetings attended, the number of neighbors known, and turnover rates in employment and schools. For

instance, Mary Embolten proclaimed that the Cascade Harvest Coalition's farm link program, which connects young farmers with landowners, "got ten folks on land." That numerical measure helps Embolten assess the value of her programs to agriculture in western Washington. Molly Cooley explained some measures that the Neighborhood Pride Team used and one of the limitations of those measures:

How many people have you worked together with, or how many activities did you participate in?  
How many NPT meetings? How many neighborhood events did you go to, or how many neighborhood events did you volunteer for. It doesn't really show the level of trust, but knowing somebody by their name is something, and to have some interaction with them...

The measures that Cooley listed all assume that some sort of social resource is being utilized, and therefore that these measures reflect the amount of social capital that is being utilized. However, as Molly Cooley pointed out, social capital doesn't just occur in incremental amounts, it occurs in factors like trust, which have no direct easily quantifiable measure.

Participants consistently noted that quantifiable measures of social capital are a useful tool, but that they by no means can fully address the true nature of social capital. For that, qualitative assessment is necessary. Table 6.1. presents the qualitative assessment indicators and the quantitative measures that participants offered as useful tools.



**Table 6.1. Qualitative Indicators and Quantitative Measures of Social Capital**

| <b>QUALITATIVE INDICATORS</b>    | <b>QUANTITATIVE MEASURES</b>    |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ➤ <b>SELF ESTEEM</b>             | ➤ <b>MEETINGS ATTENDED</b>      |
| ➤ <b>DECISION MAKING ABILITY</b> | ➤ <b>PEOPLE REACHED</b>         |
| ➤ <b>PARTICIPATION</b>           | ➤ <b>VOLUNTEER HOURS</b>        |
| ➤ <b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</b>    | ➤ <b>EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT</b>  |
| ➤ <b>VIBE</b>                    | ➤ <b>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN</b> |
| ➤ <b>SELF-IMAGE</b>              | ➤ <b>NEIGHBORS KNOWN</b>        |
| ➤ <b>CONFIDENCE</b>              | ➤ <b>PEOPLE OF YOUR STREET</b>  |
| ➤ <b>INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY</b>     | ➤ <b>KNOWN BY NAME</b>          |
| ➤ <b>TRUST</b>                   | ➤ <b>CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMS</b> |
| ➤ <b>NETWORK</b>                 | ➤ <b>TURNOVER/RETENTION</b>     |
| ➤ <b>DENSITY/RICHNESS</b>        | ➤ <b>CONTACTS MADE</b>          |
|                                  | ➤ <b>ATTENDEES AT AN EVENT</b>  |

## **CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – MODELING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Most literature on social capital (see References and Appendix E) is either a case-study or a quantitative analysis. Some, like the bulk of the literature cited in Chapter 2, is theoretical, but few studies that begin with the objective of using purposefully collected qualitative data to develop a grounded theory or model of the concept appear in the literature. This study has achieved exactly that goal, and is, therefore, a significant contribution to the understanding of social capital.

The problem that preceded this study was the elusive and highly abstract nature of the concept in its application to sustainability. In this chapter the relationships and interactions between the categories and subcategories that are presented in Chapter 5 are organized into a grounded model with two separate forms. The first is a non-linear depiction of the social capital that transforms the richly described findings into a visual icon. This model illustrates what the data reveals about social capital. The second is a diagram that represents the concepts in a non-relational format. Furthermore, this diagram uses the format that Ecotrust has already created to model other aspects of the Conservation Economy (Appendix D). Both figures accurately depict the findings of the study, with the first identifying relationships and the second presenting components of the concept.

7.1 The Relational Model

Figure 7.1. depicts the relationships between the different components of social capital, *The Individual, The Community, and Social Institutions* each exist with its consituting

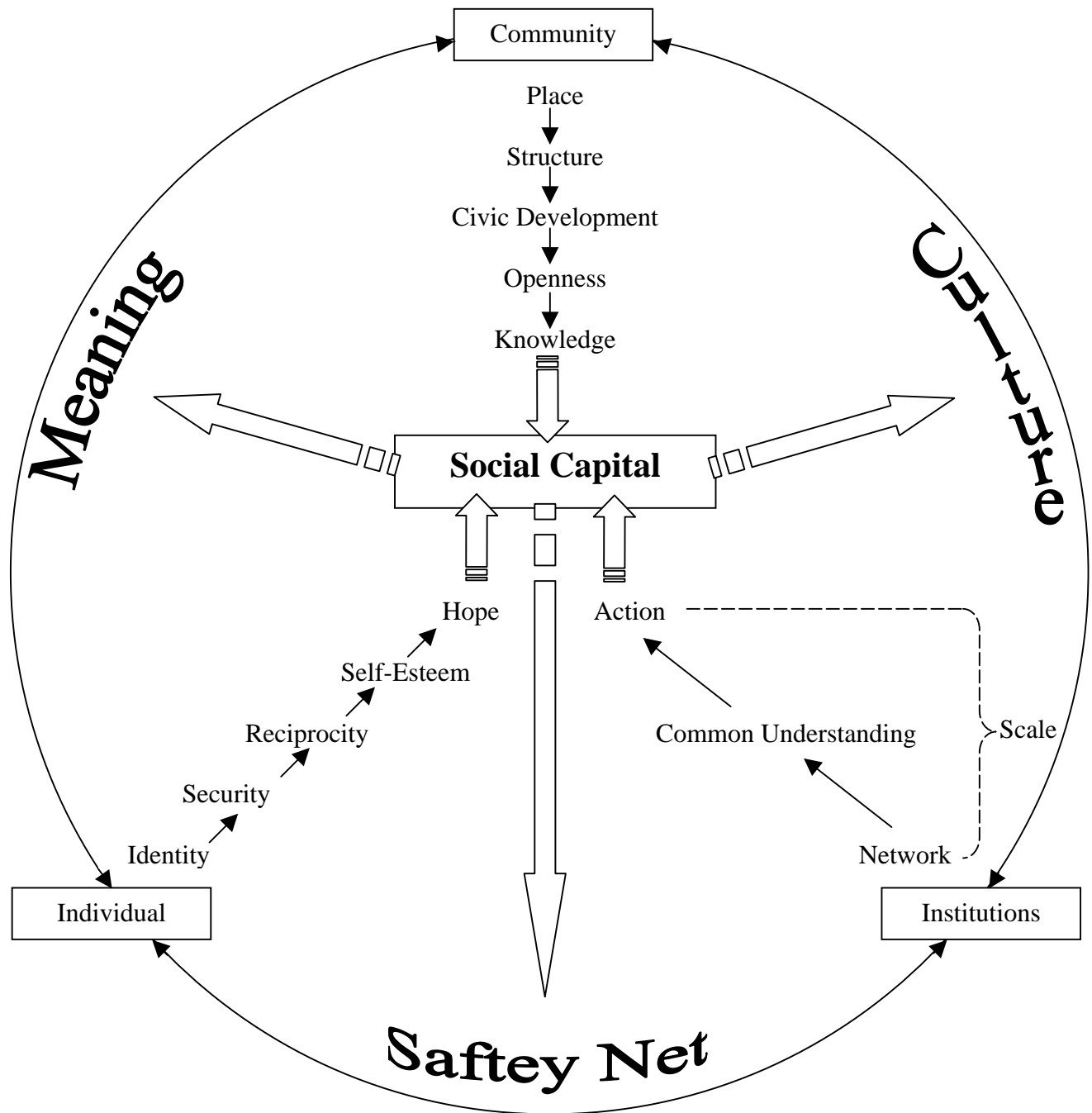


Figure 7.1. – A Relational Model of Social Capital

subcategories. The concept is cyclical. As investments are made in each of these realms social capital is created. It inheres in the meaning, culture, and social safety net of human systems. As those reservoirs of social capital are strengthened in the phenomena of *the Individual*, *the Community*, and *Social Institutions*, investments in it becomes easier. Social capital is the value inherent to the relationships between individuals, communities, and social institutions.

This model has implications for both individuals and organizations. Individuals and organizations that care about the state of social capital in their lives and activities can assess their daily decisions according to how those decisions affect the potential for value to flow through the components of the model. Rebecca Slak illustrates:

First of all being very mindful in our day to day, and asking those hard questions I talked about earlier. When you say I know I shouldn't be doing this or buying that – making those tough decisions and thinking through what they mean. If I buy this, who benefits from it? And where does that go? Or if I buy that, who benefits from it? Or if I decide to get involved in this group or this church or what have you, what does that mean and who's going to benefit and who won't?

I guess first looking at our individual lives on a day to day basis. Then making decisions about where we are going to work, what do we want to do with our life, what those five days a week, eight hours a day are? And really recognizing that that's a huge piece of our life that we're devoting to something. So what is that something?

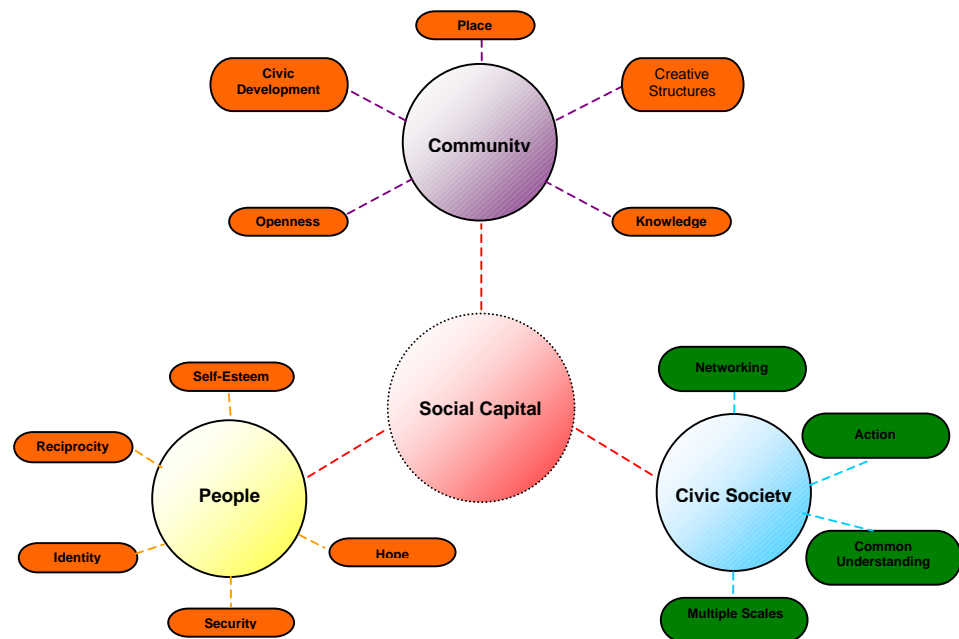
Slak's description can be easily interpreted as an assessment of what hinders and supports the flow of value into social capital. Organizations can do this too by assessing how their products, programs, and policies support or hinder social capital as defined by the relational model.

A second implication of this model is that social capital should be assessed by its trend over time rather than by making a static measurement. Social capital's nature is one of a

dynamic non-linear system. Static measurement requires the measurer to make definitive decisions about where in that system to measure social capital and when, ignoring the flow of value. By observing the trend over time of the flow of value through the system, the assessor can ascertain how the state of social capital is changing and at what rate it is changing. Both of these indicators will provide those who assess the state of social capital with a much more robust understanding of the human system that they wish to understand than a static measurement can provide.

**7.2. The Conceptual Diagram**

Figure 7.2. presents the components of social capital, ie. the categories and subcategories, in a visual format that is similar to the existing format for Ecotrust’s Conservation Economy model. This model is meant to be used in conjunction with text based relational statements. The familiar nature of Figure 7.2. should make integration into the Conservation Economy model an simple task for Ecotrust. The findings of this study can provide the textual support for the diagram.



**Figure 7.2. – A Conceptual Diagram of Social Capital**

### **7.3. Conclusion**

This study presents a qualitatively grounded model for understanding social capital. Many of the findings parallel the existing body of knowledge about social capital, however there are also new insights as well. With respect to Ecotrust, the most significant discovery is that there is a social institutional component of social capital that is equally as important as the community and individual components. This discovery parallels Robert Putnam's (1993a, 1993b, 2000) findings about social capital as well as the observations of Thomas Woolcock (1998) and Emory Castle (2002). On the otherhand, the findings contend with the assertion that for the concept to be useful, scholars of social capital must discern between the sources and outcomes of social capital (Castle, 2002; Portes, 1998). The non-linear nature of the concept make the differentiation of independent from dependent variables a task similar to the dilemma offered in the parable, *which came first, the chicken or the egg*. For the concept of social capital to be useful it must be understandable and it must explain what people experience in their daily lives.

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## Appendix A – Letter of Consent

29 January 2002

Max Nielsen-Pincus  
P.O. Box 772  
Mill City, OR 97360

Dear Mr. Nielsen-Pincus:

Ecotrust is pleased to accept your generous offer of conducting 50 hours of research as part of the requirements of your course Case Studies I: Qualitative Social Science Research Methods at Antioch University Seattle.

The scope of work shall be as follows:

1. Familiarize yourself with the sustainability framework developed by Ecotrust and fully documented at [www.conservationeconomy.net](http://www.conservationeconomy.net).
2. Conduct a literature review to identify theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and measurement systems for social capital (also known as community capital, human capital, etc.) Unlike economic capital (and even natural capital), social capital is an elusive concept. In order to further Ecotrust's work to develop a conservation economy, it is critical for us to have a clear, peer-reviewed understanding of social capital.
3. Conduct interviews with leading academic, governmental, activist, and other practitioners in community development who are attempting to analyze and cultivate social capital.
4. Document this research and show how it may used to refine the social capital portion of the conservation economy pattern language.

It is anticipated that the final research report may be archived on the [www.conservationeconomy.net](http://www.conservationeconomy.net) website, with full credit given to you. In addition, pieces of the research may be directly incorporated into portions of the evolving pattern language, with credit granted as project contributor. Ecotrust will of course seek permission from you for any use of your research in any of its own publications in any media.

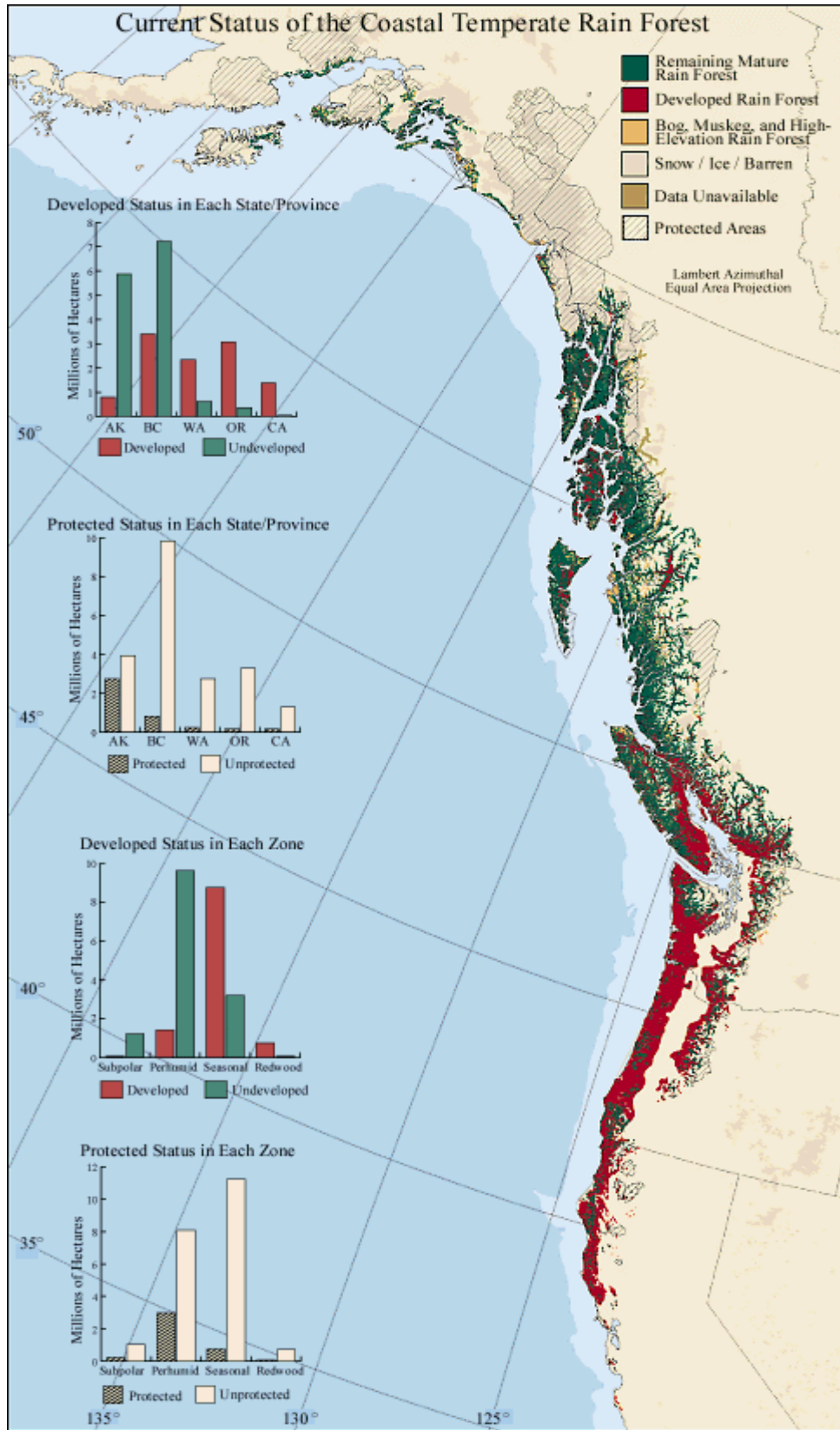
I look forward to working with you on this project, which will be an important and timely contribution to Ecotrust's efforts to build a just and restorative economy in this bioregion.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Cowan  
Research Director



Appendix B – The North American Rainforest Coast Bioregion



Source: Ecotrust, Pacific GIS, Conservation International 1995, Map 8

## APPENDIX C

### **BIOREGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE CONSERVATION ECONOMY**

Bioregions are an ecological concept most simply defined by Van Der Ryn and Cowan (1996) as geographical areas of “similar climate and vegetation” (p. 78). In “Principles of Bioregionalism” Sale (1996) reveals a more complex set of qualities that define a bioregion such as Cascadia.

The natural region is the bioregion, defined by the qualities Gaia has established there, the “givens” of nature. It is any part of the earth’s surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural characteristics rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by particular attributes of flora, fauna, water, climate, soils, and land forms, and by the human settlements and cultures those attributes have given rise to. The borders between such areas are usually not rigid – nature works of course with flexibility and fluidity – but the general contours of the regions themselves are not hard to identify by using a little ecological knowledge (p. 475).

A bioregion, therefore, is defined by qualities not necessarily recognized in conventional geopolitical division, which may prioritize economic or political preferences over the boundaries delineated by nature (Wilson, 1992, p.317).

To understand the context of a bioregion, one must understand the meaning of place. According to geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), place is defined by the intersection of space and culture (pp. 4-6). There are many ways to delineate the different spaces and cultures of the

Pacific Northwest;<sup>4</sup> however one obvious delineation, both spatially and culturally, is the coastal rainforest bioregion. Called “the Rainforests of Home” by Ecotrust, and known as North America’s Pacific Northwest Rainforest Coast by others, this bioregion has ecological, cultural, historical, physical, and economic continuities that tie it together as a place. The integration of these themes weaves a fabric so vibrant that it only can be understood as a depiction of Tuan’s “place.”

Ecotrust and its partners operate within the Pacific Northwest Rainforest Coast bioregion, which was defined by ecologists Paul Alaback and James Weigand in 1990, and is best characterized by coastal temperate rainforest. The two scientists identified four major criteria to differentiate this type of bioregion from other temperate forests. The criteria are well paraphrased in *The Rainforests of Home: An Atlas of People and Place* (Ecotrust, Pacific GIS, & Conservation International [hereafter cited as E, PGIS, & CI], 1995) as “proximity to oceans, the presence of coastal mountains, cooler summer temperatures, and higher rainfall levels with significant precipitation occurring in all seasons” (p.1). The Pacific Northwest Rainforest Coast bioregion encompasses the forested region from Kodiak Island in Alaska, south through British Columbia’s Coast Mountains, into Washington and Oregon covering the Cascades, the Olympics, the Coast Range, the Klamaths and Siskiyou, and California’s coastal redwood fog

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<sup>4</sup> Hirt and Goble (1999) have presented a physiographic map of the Pacific Northwest, which includes all of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of all surrounding states and provinces (xi-xiii). McCloskey (1993) has developed a watershed map of the region he calls Cascadia, which includes the Pacific Northwest Coastal watersheds from the Eel River Watershed in Northern California to the Prince William Sound in Southern Alaska, and including the entire Columbia Basin (61). Schwantes has described the region geopolitically by creating a table of maps that depicts the history of the formation of the states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington (254). Wisdom et al. identify both a region called the Interior Columbia Basin and smaller subregions called ecological reporting units (ERUs) (USDA Forest Service, 2000, pp. 2-3). Wisdom et al. defined the Interior Columbia Basin, because of their federal management mandates, to only cover portions of the interior Columbia watershed within the United States. Mathews, as well as Pojar and MacKinnon also present subregional categories similar to ERUs. Mathews (1999) has described four major subregions within the Oregon and Washington coast and Cascades. Pojar and MacKinnon (1994) have described 14 different subregions within the Pacific Northwest Coast of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia and Alaska (Inside Back Cover). They have also developed a map of First Nations’ linguistic boundaries over the same geographical area.

forests (E, PGIS, & CI, 1995). There are at least 16 different major ecological communities types within its boundaries: Warm temperate rainforest, seasonal rainforest, perhumid rainforest, subpolar rainforest, subalpine forest, riparian forest, rainshadow forest, freshwater wetlands, grasslands, high-elevation heaths, meadows, and rocklands; rocky shores, shingle beaches, sand beaches, tidal marshes, and disturbed habitat (Pojar and MacKinnon, 1994, pp.17-20; Alaback and Pojar, 1997, pp.72-80). Each of these zones is distinct to elevation and latitude. For instance four of the major forest types occur latitudinally. Subpolar rainforest, which consists mainly of Sitka spruce and western and mountain hemlock, occurs mainly along the coastline north of 60 degrees latitude (the Alsek River) and on Kodiak Island. Perhumid rainforest, comprised of Sitka spruce, red cedar, and western hemlock, occurs between 50 (approximately north of Vancouver Island) and 60 degrees latitude. Seasonal rainforest, which adds the dominant Douglas fir to the perhumid mix, occurs between 40 (approximately north of the Mattole River watershed in northern California) and 50 degrees latitude. Coastal redwood forests occur mainly south of the Oregon border along the coastline (E, PGIS, & CI, 1995, p.10). The bioregion is also spatially dynamic according to elevation. Coastal habitat differs greatly from marine to alpine habitat, while wetland areas differ also along elevational gradients.

Culturally, there is great dynamism within the bioregion as well. To the north, First Nations people occupy much of the coastline (Pinkerton, 1997; Turner, 1997). While much of the First Nations people's languages and cultures have disappeared south of the Canadian border, in Canada and Alaska over 20 major linguistic groups are still spoken (Ecotrust et al, 1995).<sup>5</sup> Traditional and subsistence uses of the landscape still occur in many of these northern areas

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<sup>5</sup> Including the Makah language on the northern tip of the Olympic peninsula, eight language groups are spoken by over 100 people each, while the rest are spoken by between 10 and 100 people. In total, an estimated 26 of 68 language groups have become extinct in the bioregion. 22 languages are spoken by less than 10 people or the status is unknown as of 1995.

(Turner, 1997). In the United States where the bioregion's first peoples have lost much of their land and culture, tribal casinos are helping to revive many tribes economically, which is often being turned into cultural revitalization as well (Marvin Saunders,<sup>6</sup> personal communication, 10 September 2002).

In the rainforest coast bioregion diversity is the rule. The Native American cultures that flourished in this bioregion are representative of that diversity. The historically recent evolution of 68 major linguistic groups is great supporting evidence for this rule. The transition from native cultural institutions to American cultural institutions happened rapidly. 19<sup>th</sup> Century adventurer Theodore Winthrop (1961 [1863]), wrote that before his very eyes, "in the Cascades, Klickitat institutions were toppling, [American] notions were coming in" (p. 64). This quick cultural transition did not allow for much of the former cultures' worldview or knowledge to become integrated into the latter.

The result has been a 150-year trend towards a more homogenous society. For the past 50 years the trend has resulted in governmental policy like the Forest Service's "Full-use and development of timber resources," which led federal forest managers to utilize timber as nearly the sole value of the bioregions forests in the American portion (Hirt, 1999, pp.446-447). Similar policies in Canada have led to thorough liquidation of timber resources in southern British Columbia along the Strait of Georgia (Ecotrust et al., 1995). Salmon represent another march toward homogeneity in our bioregion. Although some core anadromous fish bearing streams still exist in the southern portion of the rainforest coast, many historical fisheries have now been extirpated. The 20<sup>th</sup> century surge of hatcheries, which have flourished all along the bioregion's coastline, has downgraded the genetic diversity of the salmon stock (Wolf &

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<sup>6</sup> Marvin Saunders is the tribal smoke management officer for the Coeur d'Alene tribe in Northern Idaho. This topic came up in a conversation unrelated to the bioregionalism.

Zuckerman, 1999, pp. 27; Nehlsen & Lichatowich, 1997, pp. 220-223). In addition hatcheries have provided cultural validation for the destruction of the structural diversity of streams important to salmon reproduction.

However, the fecundity of the bioregion will not easily let diversity wane. Revitalizing forces are appearing all across the bioregion – from the Mattole Watershed’s salmon restoration efforts to Haida Gwaii’s community forestry proposition.<sup>7</sup> Prosperous culture can take a lesson from ecology: key to the success of nearly all of the ecological communities of the bioregion is the diversity of structure. Old growth forests have multi-layered canopies that provide vertical structure for increased forest habitat (Norse, 1990, p. 71). Healthy salmon bearing streams have woody debris crisscrossing the water creating pools and drops, adding oxygen, and providing places for gravels to settle (Mathews, 1999, pp. 438-439; Naiman & Anderson, 1997, p. 134; Nehlsen & Lichatowich, 1997, p. 220). Cultures need structural diversity as well. Since American culture arrived in the bioregion it has been based on timber and salmon. Beginning in the 1970s the bioregion added hi-technology. The culture of our future must continue to diversify, so that our interaction with this place can be as diverse as the space. Two indicators that this trend is happening are the move towards value-based production (Durning, 1999), and the growth of Latino society within the bioregion (Schwantes, 1996, pp. 450-451).

Trends toward economic, industrial, and social diversification will play an important role as population in the region continues to grow. The rainforest coast’s population is most dense between northern Oregon and Southern British Columbia. The bioregion has three main

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<sup>7</sup> Haida Gwaii, otherwise known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, is attempting to take it’s forests back into its own hands with both the Islands Community Sustainability Initiative (ISCI) and a municipally operated forestry operation. ISCI recognizes that maximizing value of the forest products that leave the islands is more important than maximizing the volume of the products. This recognition is paving the way for a diverse new forest products economy that is expected to increase the well-being of the islands’ people by providing more direct and indirect jobs as the islands’ economy grows. With ISCI, gone will be the days of raw logs leaving on off-island owned boats (Durning, 1999, pp. 24-38).

metropolitan centers (Vancouver, B.C.; Seattle/Tacoma, WA; and Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA), each consisting of over 1 million people. Also there exists two major population corridors, the Willamette Valley and Puget Trough. Outside of these corridors population is less regular and occurs often in isolated pockets. The most likely exception to this is along the southern Washington and central to northern Oregon coastlines where small but somewhat consistent populations occur.

In the less populated areas of the bioregion occur the coastal temperate rainforests, one of the most productive ecosystems on the planet. The terrestrial portion of the bioregion, although less biodiverse than tropical rainforests, accumulates over three times as much biomass per acre (Schoonmaker et al., 1997). The forests of this bioregion are truly incredible. Left to their natural life cycle, cedar trees in fertile bottomlands can reach nearly a 20-foot diameter (Pojar & MacKinnon, 1994, p.16). One champion Douglas fir was reported to reach have reached 415 feet upon its toppling by Canadian loggers, taller than any other recorded living being on Earth (Matthews, 1999, p.17). Salmon, it is said, returned to streams and rivers with such great size that they were called, “Spring hogs,” and in such great abundance that it is said that one could, “walk across a river on their backs.”<sup>8</sup>

The productivity of this bioregion is undeniable. According to Beebe (2001), there are about 15 million people living in the bioregion. These residents generate nearly \$500 billion in annual economic activity (p. xiii). However, in the past 20 years the increases in economic activity have mainly benefited the richest fifth of the bioregion. The income of this class of people has increased nearly 40% compared to nominal gains for the middle fifth and losses for

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<sup>8</sup> My introduction to these bit of historical anecdote come from listening to two story tellers tell the story of the Tillamook Burn, a giant series of fires in Northwestern Oregon in the 1930s and 1940s. Important to the historical story is understanding what this partially uncharted forest was like before the fires. Salmon play an important role in understanding that primeval forest.

the poorest fifth (Northwest Environment Watch [NEW], 2002, p. 15). This indicates that although the bioregion is naturally productive, there is an increasing disparity between the haves and have-nots.

The productivity from a human perspective has also shifted in the past 20 years. The new economy has taken hold in many areas of the bioregion. In the Portland and Seattle metro areas there are many and large hi-technology firms that have created an information-based economy that has taken over the former natural resource-based economy. Not only has Hi-Tech gained relatively to natural resource production, but resource based production has fallen substantially. For example, in Oregon timber harvests fell by over half between 1987 and 1997 (USDA Forest Service, 1999).<sup>9</sup> This trend begs the issue of rural stability. As the urban areas in our bioregion grow with prosperity, the citizenry of the bioregion must ensure a dignified future for the rural areas as well. Dying rural culture and stagnant economies seem endemic to many rural resource towns. Rural culture, however, with its deep connection to the land, to the physical space, must be recognized as an important part of any healthy and productive bioregion.

Although much of the region is rural, the rainforest coast is anything but disconnected from world trade. Corporate officials at Weyerhaeuser, for example, expect global demand for the bioregion's private timber business to outpace supply for at least another 15 years due to modernization in China and other countries (Lemons, 2001, pp. 173-174).<sup>10</sup> With worldwide development pressures sure to continue to impact the rainforest coast bioregion, making decisions about how best to use the resources will continue to be an increasingly important topic. Global trade organizations such as the WTO, NAFTA, GATT, and others impact the residents of

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<sup>9</sup> Timber harvest in Oregon fell from 8,215 million board feet (MBF) (Scribner scale) in 1987 to 4,081 MBF in 1997. In Washington harvests fell from 7,037 MBF in 1987 to 4,221 MBF in 1997. During this time forest product industry employment dropped by about 11% in Washington and about 20% in Oregon.



the bioregion on a daily basis by deciding what products will be on supermarket shelves and how the bioregion's resources will be used. Excepting the WTO's preamble, as of 1996 the word *environment* appeared nowhere in the trade organization's constitution, or in the GATT mandate (Goldsmith, 1996, p. 90). The bioregional citizenry should carefully scrutinize the bioregion's economic structure.

Economic trade, prosperity, and the striking natural beauty of the windswept coast and snow covered mountains have brought many new people to the Pacific Northwest's rainforest coast. The Pacific Northwest, which combines the rainforest coast and the interior Columbia basin, has experienced nearly 300% growth since 1950 (NEW, 2002, pp. 16-18).<sup>11</sup> Along with this influx of people, which is mainly occurring in the central portion of the bioregion, have come new cultures, new ideas, new roads, more development, and more sprawl. Native ecosystems are quickly being developed and invasive species like Himalayan blackberry, English Ivy, Scotch Broom, Japanese knotweed, zebra mussels, European starlings, and gypsy moths have all established themselves in the bioregion (Mathews, 1999; Pojar & MacKinnon, 1994). The porous nature of the rainforest coast brings with it the benefits and the consequences of the larger world.

The complexity of the interactions between the rainforest coast's economy, ecology, and culture will never be completely understandable. For within each is embedded an intricate web of participants, from single celled organisms to multi-leveled organizations, whose decisions and actions each affect the others. Although this is likely true for any place, it is especially apparent on the rainforest coast. Ancient forest soils thrive with life. According to Norse (1990), below

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<sup>10</sup> American's consume on average 700 pounds of paper per year according to Lemonds (2001), compared to the Chinese average of 50 pounds per year.

the surface of just a square meter of soil can live, “2000 earthworms, 40,000 insects, 120,000 mites, 120,000,000 nematodes, and extraordinarily large numbers of protozoa and bacteria, all taking in food, releasing wastes, and reproducing” (p. 134).

A system this complex can be thought of as nothing short of a miracle. Unfortunately, the flourishing of American institutions in the bioregion has trended towards simplifying the rainforest coast. 344 of the rain coast’s 827 watersheds are less than 2% undeveloped, meaning the complexity of the rainforests is still intact (Ecotrust et al., 1995, pp. 14-15). However, none of these watersheds exists outside of British Columbia or Alaska. The homogenization of the rainforests from complex and diverse stands, supporting equally complex and diverse cultures and economies, to monotonous Douglas fir tree plantations has paralleled the homogenization of culture and economy, especially along the southern half of the rainforest coast.

Fortunately the bioregion is resilient; from northern California to southern Alaska sustainable-minded businesses, non-profit organizations, and public initiatives are flourishing (Durning, 1999). Organizations like Ecotrust and ShoreBank Pacific are helping to foster this increasingly complex and deliberate movement with financial leverage and experience. By 2006 the two organizations strive to have an economic leverage reach in the bioregions economy of .0002,<sup>12</sup> thereby reaching conservation-based capital to thousands of new entrepreneurial ideas (Ecotrust, 2001, p. 3). The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies’ (BALLE), which brings together sustainable-minded business owners, concerned consumers, and conservation advocates, is another example of the increasing trend toward complex networks. Efforts like

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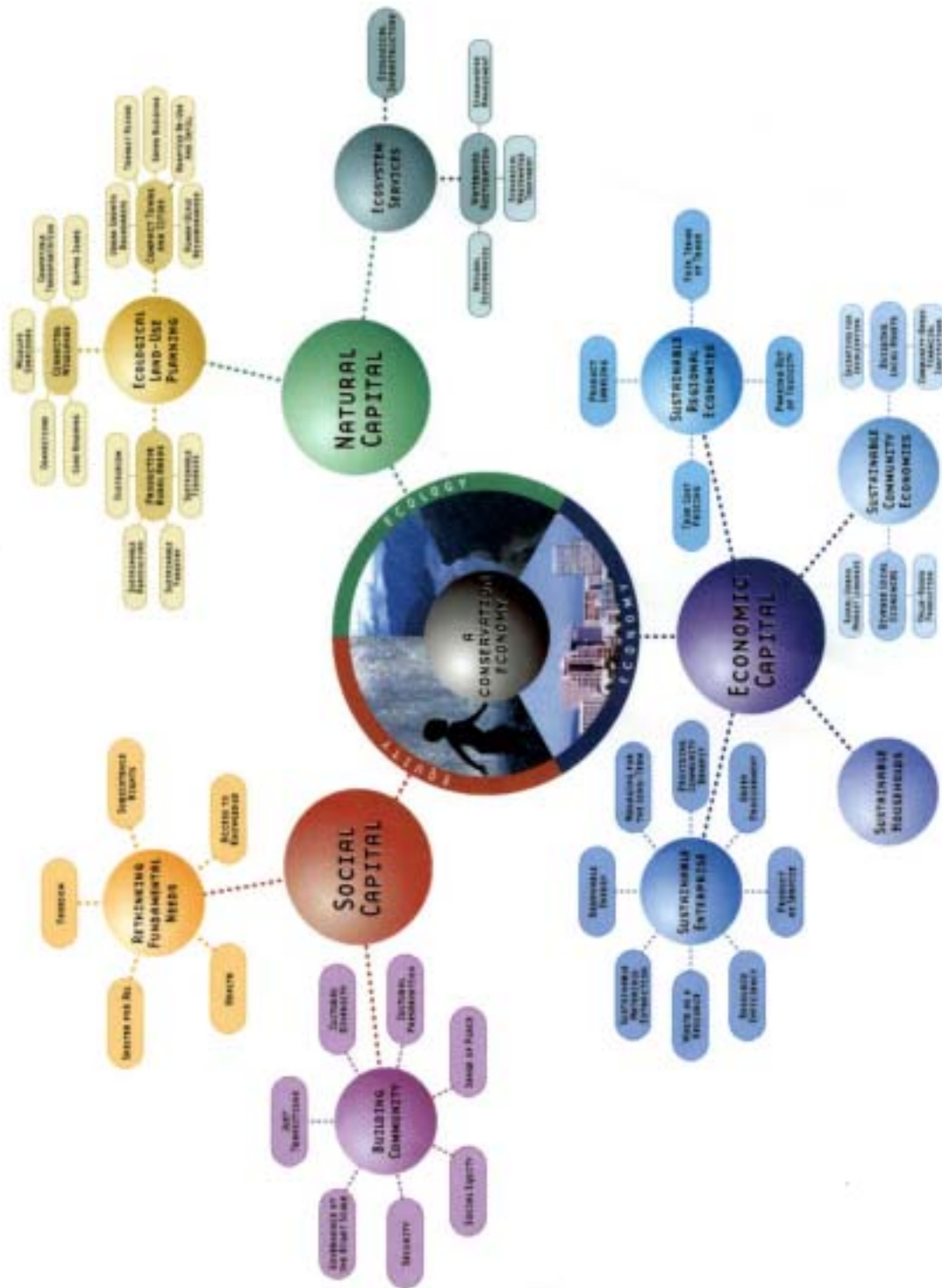
<sup>11</sup> Population in the Pacific Northwest has gone from about 6 million to over 16 million in the past 50 years. Most of that growth has happened in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia whose combined populations are about 13 million in number (NEW, 2002, pp. 16-18).

<sup>12</sup> The two organizations seek to be injecting nearly \$100 million of new capital into conservation-based development for the bioregion’s economy by 2006. \$100 million is .0002% percent of the rainforest coast’s current economic size of \$500 billion. As of 2001 their combined reach was \$40 million

these are forming in attempts to rediversify, relocalize, recontextualize, and regain control over an economy, culture, and environment that has seen the semi-permeable bioregional boundaries be pried open by multinational interests and development pressures.

The Northwest Environment Watch [NEW] (2001) has identified the bioregion as, “...one place shared by different political jurisdictions, now with a dawning sense of itself: a place bound by salmon and rivers, snowcapped mountains and towering forests” (p.1). The Pacific Northwest Rainforest Coast’s diversity of geography, ecology, economy, and culture all make this bioregion ripe for a conservation economy. This ripeness makes the construction and implementation of a conservation economy essential to the healthy and prosperous future.

### Appendix D – The Conservation Economy



Source: Ecotrust, no date b

## Appendix E – Further Reading on Social Capital

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**Appendix F – Concepts, Dimensions, Subcategories, Properties,  
and Dimensions of Social Capital**