

Patterns of social capital: stability and change in historical perspective

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Abstrak

Societies work best where citizens trust their fellow citizens, work cooperatively for common goals, and thus share a civic culture. The accumulation of reciprocal trust, as demonstrated by voluntary efforts for the creation of common goods, builds social capital and contributes to effective government. This volume advances the study of social capital across chronological and geographical space. It examines voluntary associations, comparatively and cross-culturally, as important indicators of citizen readiness for civic engagement. An important conclusion, along the way, is that social capital may not be continuous, or endure. Several of the authors wonder if the accumulation and diminution of social capital will prove cyclical. Or has there been a societal deterioration as we enter a more anonymous age? This book is ultimately about the pattern of social and civic interactions in past times, and how these patterns may no longer exist.