

A SOCIAL RESOURCE MODEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:  
MASS MEDIA USE, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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A SOCIAL RESOURCE MODEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:  
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This dissertation explores the theoretical foundation and empirical significance of the social resource model of political participation, an approach that views political participation as an outcome of individuals' use of social resources created by social connectedness.

Building on the decomposition of the concept of 'social capital,' I explicate the mechanisms through which non-political resources – formal membership, social trust, talk and tolerance – function to facilitate political behaviors. In addition, I examine how such social resources enhance or substitute for other resources that are already established as individual-level determinants of political participation, such as formal education or mass media use.

I employ three datasets that include measures of social and individual resources with respect to political participation: The Social Capital Benchmark Survey (2000), the National Election Study (2002), and the American Citizen Participation Study (1990).

Results show that political (dis)engagement can be meaningfully explained by understanding why some people are better or more poorly able to utilize certain forms of social resources, regardless of or beyond their individual capabilities or options. It is important to note, however, that

different forms or dimensions of social relations contribute differently not only to the generation of social resources but also to political mobilization. In addition, this dissertation shows that social resources reinforce the effects of individual capital on political participation. Most of all, the structural and communicative forms of social resources add to the political reservoir of those who are highly educated. The significant interaction effects of television use and social resources support television's 'time displacement' and 'worldview' explanation of participation inequality. In future research, the nexus where social resources meet individual resources should be the focal point for the study and development of the social resource model of political participation.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eunjung Lee was born in Seoul, South Korea, on September 22, 1971. She received her B.A and M.A degree with a major in Mass Communication and Journalism from the Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, Korea, in 1994 and 1996, respectively. Following graduation, she conducted research at Research & Research Inc. and the Korean Broadcasting Institute in Seoul.

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To my parents and my husband: with love and admiration.

사랑하는 부모님과 남편에게 이 논문을 바칩니다.

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**A SOCIAL RESOURCE MODEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:**  
**NEED, POTENTIAL, AND CHALLENGES**

**Individual vs. Social Explanations of Political Participation**

Political participation as a basis of democratic citizenship has been traditionally understood as the result of rational choices made by individuals who are motivated, informed, and capable to participate. Empirical studies have subsequently focused on the extent to which individual-level variables account for both the willingness to take part in various political activities and the efficacy required to do so; it has been generally observed that people who are politically interested, efficacious or optimistic are more willing to participate (Abramson & Aldrich, 1982, p.146; Finkel, 1985; J. M McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Uslaner, 1998); those who are politically well-informed and knowledgeable, through mass mediated or interpersonal informational channels, tend to participate more (J. M McLeod et al., 1999; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993); and individuals with socioeconomic advantages are more competent to participate (Milbrath & Goel, 1977; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Verba & Nie, 1972). Among these studies it has been observed that the motivational, informational, and socioeconomic variables that affect individual choice with regard to participation were either mediating or moderating each other's influence (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; J. M McLeod et al., 1999; Scheufele, 1999a, 2002).

Looking at political participation – or the lack of it – as a function of these individual-level influences has, however, left as much room for challenges and contradictions as for acceptance of their explanatory powers.

On the one hand, despite growth in the levels of formal education and political information, the political arena has been struggling to attract participants, in particular those who are well motivated and rich in resources (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Nie et al., 1996; Patterson, 2002). From the rational choice perspective, on the other hand, political participation was regarded as an irrational outcome. That is, since the cost of participation is usually high and the benefit of participation is often collective, rational and self-interested individuals would opt for a free ride on others' involvement instead of investing their own resources (Downs, 1957; Olson, 1965; Riker & Ordeshook, 1968).

Researchers in both political science and political communications began therefore to seek alternative mechanisms by which the much complicated democratic participatory process can be better described. Among other things, relational and social contexts in which individual choices are made and behaviors take place drew particular attention. For example, Uhlaner (1986; 1989) proposed that motivations for individuals to take part in political activities could be modified by sociability or group consciousness that add incentives to narrow self-interest. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) modified the focus on individual resources and re-formulated it into a 'civic voluntarism model' in which networks of recruitment - being asked to participate - play an equally important mobilizing role. The social settings of communication and discussion networks also emerged as significant determinants of the flow of political information, which in turn had an important impact on participation (Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2002; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987; Scheufele, Nisbet, & Brossard, 2003; Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, & Nisbet, 2004). This shift of attention to social factors

indeed made up for the remaining deficiencies of individual capabilities or motivation alone with respect to different levels of political participation; political participation does occur as a rational outcome and the lack of it may well be overcome when mobilized by socially-interested factors.

Nevertheless, full understanding of democratic citizenship still remains restricted, because individual identity is likely to be lost in the movement toward focusing on the social-level variables, just as emphasizing too much individual-level variables has in the past underestimated the influence of social contexts. Therefore, as long as each of these seemingly distanced factors is held accountable for only a partial aspect of political (dis)engagement, the complete picture will never be revealed. Given consensus on the point that political participation should be approached as a mix of individual choices and social influences, we need a theoretical strategy that accounts for the social attainability of political mobilization without losing sight of individual influences.

### **Political Participation and Social Resources**

A recent development in sociology specifically acknowledges the coexistence of individual and social influences in explaining human actions. According to Granovetter (1985), this approach takes the middle ground between two distinct ways of understanding human actions and their consequences.

Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relation (p.487).



James Coleman (1988; 1990) noted that this 'embeddedness' of individual choices in social relations can be realized while individuals utilize specific resources. Defining these resources as 'social capital,' he posited that they function to "facilitate certain actions of actors within the social structure that in its absence would not be possible or could be achieved only at a higher cost" (p.598; p.304).<sup>1</sup> Considering the civic and political contexts, Putnam (1993) further refined the concept to mean "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (p.167). And most significantly, these social-relation-based resources were expected to be particularly effective in solving problems that lack collective cooperation, often called 'dilemmas of collective actions,' 'the prisoner's dilemma,' 'the free-rider problem,' or 'the tragedy of the commons' (Coleman, 1988, 1990; G. Hardin, 1968; Putnam, 1993). Accordingly, the results of higher levels of social capital were usually associated with benefits or gains in productivity, efficiency, or cooperativeness (Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1997).

Researchers who were particularly interested in revealing how an individual's participatory behavior in the political arena could be facilitated by these social resources have examined the roles of what they have termed

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman's definition of social capital is uniquely functional. He further elaborated on this definition thusly: "Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure" (p.598); "The function identified by the concept "social capital" is the value of the aspects of social structure to actors, as resources that can be used by the actors to realize their interests" (p.5101).

distinctively as “social capital serving civic ends” (Putnam, 1995b), “politically relevant social capital” (La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998), or “political capital” (Fuchs, Minnite, & Shapiro, 2000). What these concepts had in common was that political participation may well be approached from a social capital or collective action perspective, distinctively from the rational individual’s perspective as traditionally adopted. According to Knack and Keefer (1997), individual participation in political matters is regarded as ‘civic duty’ based mainly on cooperative norms or social expectations with less regard to cost and benefit. Along the same lines, Smith (2002) argued that political disengagement is a problem of “too few opportunities and resources, or too little cooperation upon shared interests” rather than too much individual freedom to avoid participation.

Based on his account of the result that undermines collective action logic, Coleman (1990) offers a rationale that supports locating political participation as an outcome of social resources. According to him, both the free-rider behavior and the opposite of it, “an excess of zeal,” occur under the same structure of interests where the interests of all are realized by the same outcome. What determines the prevalence of zealous involvement over free-riding is whether or not additional incentives exist “to reward the others for working toward the outcome” (p.275). In other words, the work of social resources, i.e., encouraging others or providing positive sanctions, explains a unique aspect of political participation that otherwise would have been simply avoided. Smith (2000) argued further that individuals are capable of altering situations not only by just ‘reacting’ to these resources, but by ‘acting’ cooperatively and pooling resources to overcome the perverse incentives. In summary, taking social relations into consideration beyond individual-level

influences of capability, motivation or information can redefine issues of political participation in terms of the abundance or lack of available social resources.

### **Problems with the Use of Social Capital**

Initially attractive because of its conceptual simplicity and normative effectiveness, the concept of social capital was readily employed in a variety of social fields dealing with collective problems in family, education, economy, or government, as well as community (see review by Woolcock, 1998). And it was often suggested that, in order to solve collective problems, policy should be developed around strategies that can encourage active utilization of resources, for only their effective use can generate further values.

Despite the popular acceptance of the concept as a useful analytical tool, however, critics have pointed out that the concept has been largely “undertheorized and oversimplified” (Foley & Edwards, 1997, p.551) or “misused and abused” (Greeley, 1997, p.587), causing both conceptual and empirical controversies. At the conceptual level, the functional definition of the concept was attributed to the failure to properly differentiate its multidimensionality (Greeley, n.d.; R. Hardin, 1999). That is, by mixing ‘what it is’ with ‘what it does,’ it was argued that the source and the derived benefits are blended together or too closely connected, resulting in conceptual ‘tautology or truism’ (Edwards & Foley, 1997; Portes & Landolt, 1996 May/June). Levi (1996) also suggested that virtuous interrelationships should be reassessed because the term may well be simply a description of an auto-correlated relationship, like connecting, for example, civic communities with doing civic things. Therefore, unless the constitution of the concept is properly

disaggregated and sorted out, the concept will remain in a state of “amorphously” covering varied causal relations under a single term (R. Hardin, 1999) or, in other words, “mean everything and nothing” (Greeley, 1997, p.588).

Empirically, on the other hand, research interest has been extremely unbalanced because it has centered on debates over what the level of social capital has been and what has caused it to be at that level, rather than on efforts to reveal what social capital actually does or how it does it. This trend stems from Putnam’s positing an erosion of social capital over the years and recapitulating it as the phenomenon of “bowling alone” (Putnam, 1995a, 1996, December, 2000)<sup>2</sup>. Although Putnam’s conclusion was stated definitively, as he claimed that “by virtually every conclusive measure, social capital has eroded steadily and sometimes dramatically over the past two generations” (Putnam, 2000, p.287), so were the critiques. Ladd (1996) challenged him with contradictory evidence and concluded that “not even one set of systematic data support the thesis of bowling alone” (p.1). Though not completely negated, the thesis has been criticized for lack of plausibility and for being superficial and dubious (Greeley, n.d.; Paxton, 1999; Samuelson, 1996). In particular, Putnam’s failure to capture some of the current improving trends in civic life was also criticized (Skocpol, 1999, July/August; Wills, 2000, July),

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<sup>2</sup> “More Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so . . . . The rise of solo bowling threatens the livelihood of bowling-lane proprietors because those who bowl as members of leagues consume three times as much beer and pizza as solo bowlers, and the money in bowling is in the beer and pizza, not the balls and shoes. The broader social significance, however, lies in the social interaction and even occasionally civic conversations over beer and pizza that solo bowlers forgo” (Putnam, 1995a, p.70).

so the rhetoric of “decline or disappearance” should be replaced with that of “mutation” (Lemann, 1996, April), “return to normalcy” (Schudson, 1996, March/April), or “churning” (Ladd, 1999).

Subsequently, scholars were concerned with the lack of empirical attention on the ‘productive’ aspect of the social capital concept. In order for the concept of social capital to be developed into a coherent model or theory of social resources, it was argued that studies should look into the mechanisms through which social resources are utilized and in turn help to resolve the collective problems, beyond describing what they are (Levi, 1996; Lin, 2001a; Newton, 1997).

### **Toward a Social Resource Model of Political Participation**

Given the need for, the potential of, and challenges to the social explanation of political participation discussed so far, this dissertation attempts to validate the theoretical foundation and the empirical significance of the social resource model of political participation: an approach to political participation as an outcome of individuals’ use of social resources created by social connectedness. By examining how non-political resources can explain the individual-level outcomes, i.e., political behaviors, this model is expected to shed new light on the puzzling mechanism of political (dis)engagement. The highly controversial concept of social capital will also be made more acceptable as a coherent analytical tool after undergoing a thorough clarification in theoretical and empirical terms.

To carry out this goal, Chapter 2 will be devoted to a threefold exploration of the conceptual foundations relevant to the building of the social resource model of political participation. First, I will address how the most

generally discussed aspects of social relations – formal membership, social trust, talk, and tolerance – constitute different forms or dimensions of social capital. Next, I will examine the patterns of interrelationships among these different forms or dimensions. In particular, I will consider not only the widely assumed cyclical pattern but also the less recognized possibility of conflicting relationship that occur in the course of being grouped together.

Building on the decomposition of the concept, I will try to reveal the mechanisms through which these non-political resources are functioning to facilitate political behaviors. In addition to considering individual contributions to political mobilization, I will pay special attention to examining how mutual or uncooperative relationships are reflected in those mechanisms.

Lastly, yet most significantly, the role of social resources in political mobilization will be further elaborated with reference to the moderating role of social resources. As implied by its definition, the value of social resources depends, to a large degree, on the availability of other types of resources. Following this point, I will examine whether and how social resources could enhance or substitute for other resources that are already established as the individual-level determinants of political participation, such as formal education or mass media use.

In Chapter 3, I will develop several research questions dealing with the key issues examined in the discussions of Chapter 2. As introduced above, the rationale for appealing to social resources in response to issues concerning political participation can be sustained by the specific ways in which the three building blocks necessary for the model are arranged. That is, this process begins with concept explication followed by its application to the political

context. Only then does it lead to a modification of the model that accounts for the interplay with other resources. For this reason, I will propose sets of open questions instead of assuming concrete hypothetical relationships. Answering such questions will be critical in moving forward to the next level.

Chapter 4 describes the data sets and measurements of key variables for the analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 present results and conclusions, respectively.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **STEPS FOR BUILDING A SOCIAL RESOURCE MODEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

This chapter comprises three parts addressing the key issues involved in building a social resource model of political participation. First, the concept of social capital will be explicated to identify how social resources are constituted. Next, I will examine how these resources at the social levels are utilized to facilitate participatory behaviors at the political level. Finally, the link connecting social resources and political participation will be further elaborated to include the interplay between social resources and individual resources.

#### **Construction of Social Capital:**

##### **Dimensions and Interrelationships of Social Resources**

As noted earlier, the usage of social capital in general has suffered from “lack of clarity about the meaning of the key term and a failure to appropriate the complexities of the theoretical tradition” (Foley & Edwards, 1997, p.551). To unravel the mix-ups and rebuild them into an integrated social resource model, it is necessary to identify different “forms” of social relations that “can constitute useful capital resources for individuals” (Coleman, 1988, p.S102). Distinguished from a specific behavioral consequence, the general construction of social capital is divided into two sub-dimensions: the structure and the values created.



### **Structure of Social Relations: Formal Membership**

The first of the abovementioned sub-dimensions refers to locating where relational resources actually reside or inhere: the structure of relations between and among persons. Although it is less tangible compared with other forms of capital existing in actual persons or certain productions, this dimension of social capital is embodied through networks of connection or memberships in formal or informal associations (Coleman, 1988, 1990).

For social relations to be capitalized independently, Bourdieu (1983) emphasizes that individuals need to strategically invest their time and effort in establishing networks of relationships. Fukuyama (1995) also points out that social capital is manifested by “spontaneous sociability,” the capacity to form formal associations and to thrive in organizational settings. Therefore, the more associational connections people have, the richer and more diverse are the resources mobilized by individuals for their use. For this reason, the structure of relations was described as the “quantitative” dimension (Paxton, 1999) or, in a narrower sense, the “organizational or network capital” (R. Hardin, 2000).

It is significant to note that, in being capitalized, organizational settings make a difference in types of interactions, the quality of bonding, and the effectiveness of the cooperative outcome. As Putnam (2000) noted, it is important to differentiate the “machers” who tend to invest in formal connections and the “schmoozers” who are more likely to participate in informal networks (pp.93-94). And it was usually formal types of relations based on weak ties of acquaintanceship, rather than social connections that are based on vertical relationships or strong informal ties among friends or family,

that sustained cooperative values and increased the possibility of obtaining new resources (Lin, 2001b; Putnam, 2000).

### **Values of Social Relations: Social Trust, Talk, and Tolerance**

Despite being fundamentally structural in nature, structural existence alone cannot address how or why social resources work to bring about certain outcomes. It was suggested therefore that the production of social capital be considered as a function of “cultural components” (Edwards & Foley, 1997) or of the “subjective and qualitative” (Paxton, 1999) dimension of social relations, which can fill the functional gap left unexplained solely by networks of connection (DeFilippis, 2001). Newton (1997) argues that this dimension constitutes specific norms or values that transform somewhat “self-seeking and egocentric” members to care more about collective interests.

Among many norms and values that are capable of assuming this role at the individual level, three forms of relational values are identified here: social trust, talk, and tolerance. On the surface, they may look irrelevant to each other and the extent to which these forms are materialized or qualified as social capital values may vary. They can be tied together, however, as by-products of social relations.

**Social Trust.** The issue of trust emerges from the fundamental assumption that social capital is based primarily on relationships with others. This implies that such a reciprocal situation inherently involves uncertainty because the generation of benefits depends more on the actions of related persons, not on those of the actor himself. According to Coleman (1990), this type of “voluntary decision-making under risk” (p.99) can be dealt with exclusively in terms of “trust” (p.91). Therefore, trust in his account is

characterized as 'rational' and 'information-based'; the decision to maintain or break a trusting relationship depends on the actors' calculating possible losses or gains in order to maximize utility under the risk.

Building on the work of Coleman, Putnam (1993) distinguishes 'social trust' from 'personal or thick trust' and emphasizes two unique sources. The first is what he calls a "generalized reciprocity" that can be summed up as "I'll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you'll do something for me" (Putnam, 1993, pp.182-183). That is, the short-term altruism grounded on the expectation of a long-term benefit can facilitate cooperation and make trusting relationships easier to maintain while suppressing self-interest or opportunism. Social trust also arises from the second, structural source of networks of engagement. According to Putnam, associational ties not only allow members to verify and uphold the trustworthiness of their environment in the course of interacting with other members, but they also provide a reputational motivation to be trustworthy.

A key characteristic of such network-based social trust is that it is "transitive" and can be "spread" across society in general (Putnam, 1993, p.169). According to Dasgupta (1998), this extension of trust is possible because personal experiences with trusting people serve as evidence for quasi-statistical inferences about trust in society at large. Levi (1996, 1999) suggests a behavioral approach to the transition of trust. A decision to trust someone, according to her, is made by low personal investment in learning or monitoring the trustworthiness of others; "the greater the investments, the greater the distrust" (1999, p.6) . Therefore, one tends to make a heuristic decision or to project one's own trustworthiness to others without much deliberation. And it is the associational experience that provides people with

safe grounds to broaden the boundary of trust to others more generally with relative ease and at low cost.

A number of scholars support the view of trust as a property of social relations. For example, Granovetter (1985) argues that trust should be “embedded” in concrete and personal relations. Cook and Hardin (2001) also make it clear that networks of ongoing interactions provide the grounds for trust or trustworthiness and, consequently, for cooperation. In an “encapsulated-interest” view of trust, Hardin (1993b, 2002) describes trust as an expectation that others will fulfill a shared interest in maintaining the relationship. On this account, trust is ‘rational’ in that it is in the same cognitive category as knowledge, and ‘risky’ due to the uncertainty involved when it is used as a ground for action. And for these specific reasons Hardin (1993a; 1993b) claims that the boundary of trust should be limited to people, not extending to government or other institutions.

**Talk.** The informational potential that inheres within social relations is also a vital source of action in general (Coleman, 1988, 1990) and of cooperative behavior in particular (Putnam, 1995a, 2000). Nevertheless, the communicative aspect of relationships that convey information has been a largely ignored social capital asset (Eliasoph, 1998, 1999).

Talking with others based on social relations has unique informational value in two respects. First, it is relatively less costly to access and acquire information, compared with the cost of mass-mediated information, which usually requires some level of cognitive skill or psychological effort to access and process the information. Talking with others has long been identified as a low-cost information-gaining device (Granovetter, 1973; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) for its occurrence in a far less demanding and more natural

environment, often interwoven with other subjects and contexts. As opposed to the unequal acquisition of mass-mediated information favoring or disallowing access to certain segments of the population (Barnhurst & Mutz, 1997; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; J. P. Robinson & Davis, 1990; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970), informational value tends to expand to wider segments of the population as conversational relations diversify. According to Coser (1975), when individuals meet with different role sets within diverse relations, they learn how to deal with the complexity of the relations. In order to embrace such diversity, she argues, conversational patterns are adjusted, becoming more elaborate, intellectually flexible and universally accessible.

Second, interpersonal discussion conveys information in a more understandable format and content. Conversations are capable of pre-selecting, summarizing, and repeating key information, tailoring messages to the partners or to specific contexts in the course of interactions. According to Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987), network-based talking is the only source of socially transmitted information that is responsive to the social and political context. Talking with others also provides additional information for those who need to “clarify potential ambiguities in the media accounts” (Scheufele, 2002, p.52), reinforcing, complementing, or even replacing the effects of mass-mediated information on certain outcomes (McLeod et al., 1999).

Talking with others – even in the most trivial forms of gossip – in a way that provides informational value was believed to be capable of establishing and reinforcing collective norms by transmitting encouragement and rewards (Coleman, 1990, chap. 11) or by offering opportunities for “[testing] the veracity of different views” and in turn avoiding reliance on self-interest or impulse (Putnam, 2000).

**Tolerance.** In a weak sense, tolerance is defined as the belief in every citizen's equal right to express his or her ideas and views (Nie et al., 1996; Verba et al., 1995). More broadly, tolerance is a willingness to extend liberties and protection even to disliked or hated groups (Stouffer, 1955; Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982). Despite its seeming relevance to trust and open communication, the viability of tolerance as a social capital asset was more often in question and this has made tolerance the most controversial case in the debate over social capital.

To those who dispute the value of tolerance as social capital, it is more likely to be a source of what has been called a "dark side or downside" of social capital that is explicitly at odds with other social values. Analyses of the trend data have shown that, while the level of tolerance has been rising rather than cooperatively decreasing, people have become more and more disconnected from civic life or from one another over the years (Cigler & Joslyn, 2002; Nie et al., 1996; Putnam, 2000). In this light the increase in tolerance was interpreted as a manifestation of the rise of individualism to the detriment of organizational solidarity (Portes, 1998; Portes & Landolt, 1996 May/June; Schudson, 1998). The cross-sectional evidence was even more troublesome. Several scholars have pointed out that strong inside solidarity or in-group bonding could produce an adverse side effect of cliquish attitudes toward outer groups (Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 2000, pp.22-23). Thus, those who were more connected via organizational memberships were not necessarily more tolerant (Ikeda, 2002; Paxton, 1999; Stolle & Rochon, 1998).

According to Sullivan et al. (1982) and Mondak and Sanders (2003), however, any increase in the level of tolerance was shown to be marginal or modest at best when tolerance was re-conceptualized and re-measured more

validly. Then, its contrast with civil connection was not dramatic enough to signify a negative relationship with social capital in general. Putnam (2000) argued as well that positive, or at least non-negative, correlations between tolerance and civic engagement are more common in many empirical studies.

Furthermore, tolerance is well qualified as a legitimate or even essential element of social capital for its functional similarities to other relational values, such as social trust or talk. For example, the need to reduce prejudice and to tolerate diverse lifestyles or attitudes often extends beyond those who share immediate contact or even beyond disliked groups (Pettigrew, 1997; Stolle & Rochon, 1998), just as social trust was viewed as an extension of knowledge-based or particular trust (Dasgupta, 1998; Levi, 1996; Putnam, 1993). And some of the affective or personality variables, such as self-esteem (Zellman & Sears, 1971), psychological insecurity (Bobo & Licari, 1989) or trust (Gibson, 1987), were found to make this transition easier. Being tolerant is also related to an enhancement of information flow in that it makes discussion or debate open to unpopular or unorthodox views (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). According to Mutz (2002a), those who are exposed to the diverse and oppositional views of others they talk with are more likely to learn how to sustain social interactions by refraining from acting for self-interest and accepting or even respecting the divergent interests of others. Several scholars explained this cognitive mechanism of learning to tolerate by reference to the educational effect on threat perception or cognitive sophistication. That is, as people have more years of formal schooling, they perceive others as less threatening (Bobo & Licari, 1989; Nunn, Crockett, & Williams, 1978), and become more open-minded to new ideas and more willing to risk uncertainty (McClosky & Brill, 1983). In sum, social virtues that arise from interacting with

others are, at least, rarely associated with lack of tolerance, on either the cognitive or affective levels.

### **Interrelationships among Social Resources**

Once the structural and values dimensions of social capital were identified as above, whether and in what manner the various forms of social capital are related to each other emerges as an important question.

**Virtuous Circle.** In general, various forms of social capital in different dimensions are regarded as self-fulfilling and mutually reinforcing each other because they are tied together as resources derived from social relations. Putnam (1993) adopted what Hirschman (1984) termed as “moral resources” to explain this relationship. That is, resources like “morality, civic spirit, trust, observance of elementary ethical norms” are atypical in that they increase rather than decrease through use, and atrophy rather than stabilizing if not used (p. 93). Therefore, practice of one form of social capital is likely to stimulate the breeding of other forms or dimensions. This interdependence was thought to contribute to either the creation and maintenance of social capital, constituting a “virtuous circle,” or the destruction of social capital, forming a “vicious circle” (Putnam, 1993).

Support for this mechanism has been found in many studies that examined the proposition advanced by Putnam (1993) that designated networks of engagement as a primary source of social trust, or what Stolle (1998) specifically referred to as a “micro-theory of social capital.” And the results showed that associational or civic engagement was significantly associated with the increase in social trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Shah, 1998). Although others validated the reverse relationship,



i.e., trusting people are predisposed to participate (Fukuyama, 1995; Newton, 1997; Uslaner, 1998), explaining associational participation as a simple function of trust was relatively less convincing because trust alone was likely to overlook the additional motivation to join, i.e., “the actual needs that persons have for help, the existence of other sources of aid and the degree of affluence” (Coleman, 1990, p.307). Therefore, Jackman and Miller (1998) argued that trust should be “endogenized” to, i.e., treated as being influenced by, membership in order for the social capital argument to be theoretically productive.

Many scholars also supported the idea that political conversation can be socially acquired through networks of memberships (Simonson, 1996; Verba, 1965; Wyatt, Katz, & Kim, 2000). The role of formal membership was particularly effective among those “who may not otherwise be linked” (Davison, 1988, p.14) by “utilizing social arrangements and set-ups” (Menzel, 1971, p.406).

Since being tolerant of different ideas and ideologies is a learned attitude or judgment, people’s perceptions of certain groups has been found to be directly influenced by how the surrounding information negatively or positively portrays them (Gibson, 1987; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood, 1995; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). When direct framing information was not available or applicable, participation in voluntary associations and a subsequent increase in opportunities for joining heterogeneous discussion networks were found to play a vital role in developing tolerance (Mutz, 2002a; Scheufele et al., 2004) or preventing partisanship from leading to intolerance (Cigler & Joslyn, 2002). At the cognitive level, exposure to the diverse or oppositional views of others

enhanced people's awareness of the rationales for the differences (Stouffer, 1955; Sullivan et al., 1982). It also developed norms or attitudes that are conducive to maintaining tolerance, such as "cross-cutting solidarity" (Kornhauser, 1959), conversational etiquette, or the civility of "not saying" (Kingwell, 1995). On the other hand, Pettigrew (1997) pointed out that group affiliation tended to develop intimacy among members first, as a result of which political differences are recognized later with less gravity.

**Dark Side of Social Capital.** To some scholars, however, the "win-win sets of relationship" (DeFilippis, 2001p. 786) among different forms of social resources are neither clear-cut nor always possible (Foley & Edwards, 1997; Greeley, 1997; R. Hardin, 2003; Portes, 1998; Portes & Landolt, 1996 May/June). According to this perspective, social capital is inherently neutral or conflict-ridden and may well contribute to polarization rather than cooperation. Coleman (1988)'s version of social capital explicitly addresses the context-specific and non-interchangeable nature of these resources: "[A] given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others" (p.98). Hardin (2003) also disallows any normative valence of social capital because it is simply about "means of doing things" (p.21). Especially given the prevalence of unequal access to the various forms of resources, Foley and Edwards (1997) assert that social capital can range "from asocial to antisocial to broadly prosocial" (p.552). Therefore, it is equally or more likely that cyclical relationships will be broken rather than revolve.

In fact, studies have shown how it is characteristic of various forms or dimensions of social resources to work against the virtuous circle thesis. Most of all, formal memberships were found to bear no relation to social trust

(Claibourn & Martin, 2000; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Newton, 1999b; Uslaner, 2002). Alternatively, less formal associations, such as family, workplace or school relations, played a more significant role in generating trust (Foley & Edwards, 1996; Levi, 1996; Mutz & Mondak, 1998; Newton, 1997). Two factors with respect to both formal membership and social trust explain these results. First, it is difficult, if not impossible, to materialize relationships as a result of formal membership because involvement in voluntary associations tends to occur “too late in life to shape their fundamental disposition” (Uslaner, 2002, p.41), and to exist only as “short-lived effects in one’s lifetime” (Stolle, 1998, p.521) accounting for “only a minority of activities” (Newton, 1997, p.579). Second, associational membership fosters trust that is fundamentally different from social or general trust; it is restricted to or ‘particularized’ toward in-group members only (Cohen, 1999; Stolle, 1998; Uslaner, 2002). Proponents of social capital assume that trust developed within such networks naturally spills over to society in general (Dasgupta, 1998; La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1997; Levi, 1996, 1999; Scholz & Lubell, 1998). However, making the leap from particular experience to general faith is based on “little evidence and a shaky theoretical foundation” (Uslaner, 2002, p.44) and needs to be tracked over time if it is to be explained (Stolle & Rochon, 1998). Moreover, positive in-group trust or ‘thick’ trust was found to be transformed into strategic hostility toward out-groups, precluding the development of social trust (Granovetter, 1973; Uslaner, 2002).

Findings were also contradictory regarding sources of information. Participants in voluntary associations were not necessarily political talkers (Eliasoph, 1998; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Mutz & Mondak, 1998). According to Pollok (1982)’s study, talking about politics in the non-political

settings of voluntary associations was found to be secondary to or to deviate from the primary organizational activities; those who were highly involved in the non-political activities of the organization were less likely to talk about politics. Wyatt et al. (2000) also found that political conversation occurred more frequently in private or personal settings partly because of the greater sensitivity of certain issues in public settings.

Circular relationships involving tolerance seem more volatile. Although organizational interactions or discussion networks were believed to imbue diversity, leading to tolerant attitudes, they did not always provide dissimilar views or foster diversity (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Mutz & Martin, 2001; Verba, 1965). Therefore, when cross-cutting exposure did not result in cross-cutting solidarity due to a strong sub-culture or in-group bonding, as in religious groups (Beatty & Walter, 1984; Stouffer, 1955) or political organizations (Stolle & Rochon, 1998), tolerance was not facilitated.

### **Social Resources and Political Participation**

As pointed out earlier, defining social capital uniquely by reference to its function has misguidedly included particular benefits or gains in productivity, efficiency or cooperativeness as component indicators representing social capital. Many scholars argue, however, that this dimension of social capital should *not* be part of the definition, but should instead be a reference to 'what it does,' an outcome of capitalization (Lin, 2001a; Newton, 1997; Paxton, 1999; Portes, 1998).

Explicating the social capital concept in this manner – separating the outcome from the structure or the values of social relations – makes it possible to locate political participation as a specific outcome of social relations. It then

becomes important to examine how the general constitution of social resources actually functions to facilitate political participation.

Before examining these relationships, three terms that are often used interchangeably should be distinguished: social capital, civic engagement, and political participation. Putnam (1995b) described civic engagement as “people’s connections with the life of their communities,” and political participation as “relations with political institutions” (p.665). While generally referring to social capital in terms of “relations with one another,” he addressed special forms of social capital that “serve civic ends” to deal with civic or political engagement (p.665). Despite these efforts, it was still difficult to differentiate those terms, causing further confusion. For instance, he treated civic engagement both as a ‘civic association’ that “embodies and creates” social capital (1995b, p.665) and more generally as ‘civic participation,’ parallel to political participation, as a behavioral consequence at the civic or community level (2000, chap. 2). In other studies, civic engagement was treated as either a structural indicator or an individual-level sub-dimension of social capital (Moy, Scheufele, & Holbert, 1999; Scheufele & Shah, 2000). In some other cases, especially those dealing with local politics, civic participation or even social capital were mixed with political participation (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Scheufele & Shah, 2000). As Smith (2002) noted, however, one should be wary of equating civic participation undertaken for the sake of political issues with political participation in general, because social investments that encourage general political participation – political expertise – can be different from or even in contradiction with those that encourage civic engagement involving political issues – locality.

### **Social Resources Facilitating Political Participation**

At the relocation of political participation to fit into the concept of social capital, it is appropriate to ask: How can resources at the social level be utilized to facilitate participatory behaviors at the political level? Just as different forms of social relations were differently qualified with respect to the generation of social resources, their politicizing functions are also expected to vary or, as Kanck and Keefer (1997) suggest, even be “counteractive” (p.1248). In what follows, therefore, the extent to which each dimension or form of social relation relates to political mobilization will be examined.

**Membership and Political Participation.** The foundation of the linkage between civic association and political participation stems from the so-called ‘principle of associations’ acclaimed by de Tocqueville:

The greater the multiplicity of small affairs, the more do men, even without knowing it, acquire facility in prosecuting great undertakings in common. Civil associations, therefore, facilitate political association (1965, p.108).

Adopting a similar assumption, Coleman (1990) explains the transition from social to political as a natural occurrence inherent to the function of social capital. That is, voluntary organizations have the capability of carrying out non-intended functions against their original purposes, and such changes in relations constitute an important part of social capital.

Support for this assumption can be found in studies that have demonstrated a positive link between members in voluntary associations and higher levels of political participation (Alford & Scoble, 1968; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Milbrath, 1965; Olsen, 1972; Rogers, Bultena, & Barb, 1975;

Verba, 1965; Verba & Nie, 1972; Wilkins, 2000). Putnam (1993)'s pioneering work exemplified how civic engagement as a social capital asset led to various participatory processes for a working democracy. Precisely how and why such a connection to non-political organizations stimulates political involvement has not, however, been widely recognized as an empirical issue worthy of study (Erickson & Nosanchuck, 1990; Levi, 1996; Pollock, 1982). Three different mechanisms have been identified to explain how this structural dimension of social resources leads to behaviors in the political dimension.

The simplest explanation draws on the well-established influence of socioeconomic status in predicting both political participation (Alford & Scoble, 1968; Milbrath & Goel, 1977; Olsen, 1972; Verba & Nie, 1972) and joining more, staying longer and being relatively more active in voluntary organizations (La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; McPherson, 1981). Because the joiner characteristics are commonly predisposed by socioeconomic status, those who have more organizational memberships are more likely to take part in the political arena as well (Erbe, 1964; Nie et al., 1996; Pollock, 1982; Verba & Nie, 1972). Such a dispositional account is however limited in that the link is based largely on assumptions. Moreover, many studies have found that the effects of voluntary associations on political participation were rather independent of the influence of SES (Olsen, 1972; Sallach et al., 1972; Alford and Scoble, 1968; Verba and Nie, 1972; Rogers et al., 1975).

Others insist on looking into the unique parts generated and played by actual associational involvement to explain the connection. According to this view, it is hard to assume that simply being involved in non-political associations assures political activation. More importantly, studies have confirmed that, once associated, the SES-related differences are likely to

disappear in the face of other factors generated through organizational experiences, such as new perspectives toward diversity (Almond & Verba, 1963; Rogers et al., 1975), participatory traits enhanced through various associational works (Almond & Verba, 1963; Pollock, 1982), and civic orientations such as a sense of civic duty or faith in democratic institutions (Denney, 1979). Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) argued that the acquisition and practice of these 'civic skills' in non-political voluntary associations are less affected by educational attainment. In the same vein, Denney (1979) stressed the important role of the "adult resocialization" process in shaping civic orientations that takes place in non-political organizations. These processes of social mobilization outside of politics are very much essential and relevant to political mobilization, for they serve as a 'training ground' through which people can be smoothly and effectively transmitted into political activities.

Lastly, some scholars have emphasized the need for actual political stimuli to generate the function of political mobilization within associations. Political input was especially necessary for associations in which the political potentials are difficult to develop. Rogers et al., (1975) argued that diversity seldom arises when most members join through the sponsorship of similar friends. Informal interactions with friends or neighbors, according to Olsen (1972), showed no effect on voting turnout. Even the experience of holding associational office had no effect on political participation, when the specific culture or activities of associations do not encourage the willingness to take positions of high responsibility (Erickson & Nosanchuck, 1990).

To those members who are simply not interested in politics or not susceptible to indirect mobilization, direct political incentives are critical as



well. Pollock (1982) found that political orientation was the key mobilizing factor that could translate organizational participation in purely social activities into participation in political activities. Exposing members to political information is also an important mobilizing input. Fuchs, Minnite, and Shapiro (2000) emphasize the role of an explicitly political agenda that enables organizational members to “expressly confront contentious and interest-based social and political issues” as a key factor leading to political participation (p.13). Intra-group political discussion played an important role in making a political agenda salient (Verba & Nie, 1972) and providing “connections with politics” that otherwise would have been absent (Erickson & Nosanchuck, 1990, p.207). Given that organizations or networks are capable of acting as ‘vehicles’ for accomplishing certain purposes (R. Hardin, 1999, 2000), voluntary organizations can even serve as an independent agent of political mobilization by providing direct channels of political recruitment (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995), transforming its members into “parapolitical actors” (Olsen, 1972, p.318).

**Social Trust and Political Participation.** The value of social trust as social capital has been best known to play the so-called “credit slip” function that works *against* the logic of collective action; trust “lubricates cooperation” (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993) or “turns rational fools into effective cooperators” (Newton, 1997, p.576). How this trust-based cooperation can further grease the wheel of political participation, however, has been relatively unexplored (Inglehart, 1999; Levi, 1996).

A number of scholars have rationalized how the cognitive domain, where trust belongs, develops into a specific behavioral pattern. According to Luhmann (1979), trust operates as a mechanism that reduces relational

complexities, by which individuals can expand their action boundaries. Scholz and Lubell (1998) argue that trust works as a heuristic that encourages individuals to comply with participatory obligations, especially when the relevant information is not sufficient. From a series of experimental studies, Yamagishi and his associates have developed the idea that trust serves as a springboard, 'emancipating' individuals from a secure yet confined world to the wider opportunities that lie outside it (M. Yamagishi, Cook, & Watabe, 1998; T. Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). From an economic point of view, Fukuyama (1995) argued that reciprocity-based trust is conducive to participation by lowering the transaction costs required for participation.

On the other hand, for social trust to induce participation under the political context, it has been suggested that trust at social levels relies on political-level trust, "the belief that the government is operating according to one's normative expectations of how government should function" (A. H. Miller, 1974, p.990). Two different domains of trust were significantly associated according to the finding by Moy and Scheufele (2000), which implies that political trust can be seen as an extension of trust in generalized others. And the lack of political trust indicated by disbelief in legitimacy, disaffection or alienation was traditionally the very cause of participatory withdrawal from political activities (Almond & Verba, 1963; Finifter, 1970).

According to scholars who support the 'ethics-based' or 'moralistic' view of trust as opposed to reciprocity-based trust, however, social trust is entirely incapable of solving collective problems or promoting participatory outcomes (Offe, 1999; Uslaner, 1998, 2002). They argue that a faith in generalized others' trustworthiness develops early in life, which tends to depend on having an optimistic world view (Uslaner, 1998) or life satisfaction

(Shah, 1998). And Scheufele (1999a) found that, regardless of whether trust serves as a moral basis or as a motivational factor, it did not have any impact on political participation.

The intervention effect of political trust was controversial, too. According to Newton (1999b), political trust is “a thinner kind” than social trust is, “belonging to the public political sphere, where there are more unknowns, greater risks, and less predictability” (p.179). And because politicians or public authorities are often judged by second-hand information, such as performance or appearance (M. M. Miller & Reese, 1982; Pfau, Moy, Radler, & Bridgeman, 1988), trust in political figures does not necessarily correspond with trust in general others, let alone with leaps of faith from the social to the political levels (Craig, 1993; Newton, 1999b). Wilkins (2000) also found political trust to be contradictory, rather than consistent, with other values of social capital. Moreover, political trust or confidence in the political system either had no link to political participation or even discouraged it (Austin & Pinkelton, 1995; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Moy et al., 2005; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Wilkins, 2000). According to these findings, it seems that a healthy degree of distrust or mistrust can activate a constructive skepticism or “reasonable frustration” (Wilkins, 2000, p.578) and lead to political engagement (R. Hardin, 2002; Uslaner, 2002).

**Talk and Political Participation.** Whereas trust serves a less pragmatic function, as a lubricant working for efficient operation rather than in making something happen (Arrow, 1972), the informative role that network-based conversations play in enhancing the mobilization process is expected to be more straightforward and explicit.

According to Kim (2004) and Scheufele (2000), conversations for conversation's sake are capable of a latent yet unique democratic function (Kim, 2004; Scheufele, 2000). Given that public-spirited political conversations are usually avoided at the expense of social etiquette or group solidarity (Eliasoph, 1998, 1999; Mutz & Martin, 2001; Wyatt et al., 2000), the significance of politically *disengaged* social conversation becomes even greater.

As a social resource, social conversation relates to political mobilization in a unique way. Talking with others plays a pivotal role in establishing and spreading social norms and ways of cultivating reputations so that people find it easier and more reasonable to engage in cooperative behaviors. Communication was also as critical as trust was in solving collective action problems. For example, letting participants talk to each other functioned to confirm the motivation to trust and to increase the willingness to cooperate (Gambetta, 1988; Ostrom, 1994; Ostrom, Walker, & Gardner, 1992). Discussion in a game-theoretic setting also increased cooperation by developing 'group regardingness,' a self-interest-narrowing attitude (Van de Kragt, Dawes, Orbell, Braver, & Wilson, 1986). The experimental study by Green and Brock (1998) also supported this mechanism. They found that communication about the benefits of social activities increased the willingness of the low-trust individuals to participate in socially constructive activities. In sum, social conversation, despite its apparent deficiency in terms of political relevance, has the potential to facilitate political action by way of "trust building."

Interpersonal discussion of political issues, on the other hand, has been the leading factor in promoting various types of political participation, by triggering political interest or providing political information, either independently or by complementing mass media (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000;

Knoke, 1990; McLeod et al., 1999; McLeod, Scheufele, Moy et al., 1999; Scheufele, 2000). Political talk was also found to be an effective social resource utilized for political mobilization. Due Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) argue that politically relevant social capital can be realized as political participation by the frequency, the level of expertise, and the size of the political communication network. And this political reservoir created by political communication was the only significant factor that could mobilize participants in non-political associations (Erickson & Nosanchuck, 1990). In addition, studies have found that the diversity or heterogeneity of networks of political discussion impacts the extent to which individuals in non-political settings are mobilized for political engagement (Ikeda, 2002; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Jack M McLeod et al., 1999; Scheufele, 1999a; Scheufele et al., 2004).

**Tolerance and Political Participation.** As discussed earlier, whether tolerance is in a symbiotic relationship with other values of social capital or not remains to be determined. Likewise, the outlook on tolerance as an agent for political mobilization has been open to much doubt.

Most of all, opinions are divided as to which—political tolerance or intolerance—is more natural or likelier to occur. Some have argued that political disagreements with respect to generating political *intolerance* are either not very salient (Mutz, 2002a) or even taboo (Eliasoph, 1998) under social settings.

Because politics is such a small part of people's day-to-day lives, when they come into contact with people of opposing views, it is relatively easy for them to ignore this dimension of difference or to discover it late enough that a friendship of some kind has already been initiated or established. Political views need not be at the forefront of daily life or daily conversation to produce beneficial consequences (Mutz, 2002a, p.122).

Although political disagreements might not be the most unsettled issue under social interaction settings, others argue that they do prevail because it is more natural and easier to harbor stereotypes or prejudices about those differences (Devine, 1989; McClosky & Brill, 1983).

On the positive side, political tolerance is well received as an integral condition for a thriving democracy (see Sullivan et al., 1982). As far as democratic participation is concerned, it mostly matters for its relevance to freedom of political expression and action. Gibson (1992) argued that intolerance not only suppresses others' freedom to express their views and act on them but it also affects one's own freedom and efficacy. In a political context, where "heterogeneous worldviews and antagonistic partisans prevail," Ikeda (2002) also emphasized tolerance as the key in encouraging citizens to continue being democratic joiners.

The cognitive mechanism of tolerance in processing different and oppositional information explains how the more tolerant are also more likely to be political participants. That is, political elites or the highly educated, who are traditionally the most active participants in political activities, are also more likely to tolerate and support civil liberties by having a "sober second thought about restricting the rights of those one finds disagreeable" (Bobo & Licari, 1989, p.299) or stronger internalized democratic norms as standing decisions (Marcus et al., 1995).

By contrast, Mutz (2002a) casts doubt on the mobilizing role of tolerance, because it is about "formalized ways in which people agree to disagree" and about "restraint and not doing, rather than political action" (p.123). Moreover, a number of studies have called attention to the possible incapacity of key antecedents to tolerance to function as catalysts for political

mobilization. For example, political discussion and increased exposure to diverse viewpoints may not contribute to political participation as much as is generally claimed. According to Schudson (1997), conversation at large can never be politically of use. Because democracy occurs at inherently public and deeply uncomfortable settings, he argues, it requires a peculiar type of talk that tends to be rule-governed and oriented toward problem-solving. Political discussion in heterogeneous networks does not always warrant the mobilizing effect of diversity, either. Cross-cutting exposure to conflicting viewpoints was found even to discourage political participation by causing attitudinal ambivalence intrapersonally, and social discomforts interpersonally (Mutz, 2002a, 2002b). Similarly, people tend to take political disagreement personally (Eliasoph, 1998) or they feel fear or embarrassment when exposed to different opinions (Noelle-Neumann, 1984). As a result, although people do participate in political discussions and learn how to cope with diversity and to tolerate differences, their choices are likely to be confined to either avoiding politics or keeping silent, working against the soul of democracy.

And the relevance of education with respect to tolerance was also criticized as artifactual or superficial, at best, in that tolerance among highly educated segments is expressed mostly in defense of their privileged status (Sullivan et al., 1979). Therefore, when it comes to a specific policy of integration, instead of abstract principles or norm, those who are highly educated were not much supportive of it (M. R. Jackman, 1978). According to this, it is highly unlikely that tolerance learned through formal education will mobilize people to enter the political arena.

### **Moderating Effect of Social Resources on Political Participation**

In understanding the productive aspect of social resources, it is important to note what Coleman (1988) described as the “second stage” in unpacking the concept of social capital:

The concept of social capital allows taking such resources and showing the way they can be combined with other resources to produce different system-level behavior or, in other cases, different outcomes for individuals (p. S101).

To apply this aspect of the concept to the process through which social resources are utilized for political participation, two points are noteworthy.

First, note the emphasis on the process of making use of resources, i.e., being capitalized by individuals. In general, social capital has been treated as an aggregated societal level phenomenon (La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Norris, 2002b), with empirical focus on the connections between social resources and collective outcomes, such as economic development (Fukuyama, 1995), market performance (Knack & Keefer, 1997) or government performance (Putnam, 1993). However, another important utility of the social capital concept should be to account for the outcomes at the level of individual actors beyond the structural functions (Coleman, 1988). Thus, social capital should be approached as “an ability of [the] actor” to secure benefits by virtue of social structures (Portes, 1998) that vary by individuals (Foley & Edwards, 1997). Brehm and Rahn (1997) also emphasized the importance of locating the basis of social capital in “individual behavior, attitudes, and predispositions” in order to account for its production (pp.1000-1001).



The other point is that one important utility of social resources lies in their relative efficiency or in their capacity to replace other types of resources. The functional definition of social capital highlights its capability of making certain things possible that otherwise cannot be done or can be accomplished only at higher costs (Coleman, 1988, 1990). Hardin (2003) also notes that social capital can even “displace what might be considered another form of capital that is putatively less effective or efficient” (p.2). In sum, the working of social resources can also be found in their interactions with other resources in facilitating certain outcomes, in which individual actors are actively involved for the use of the resources.

A study by Teachman, Paasch, and Carver (1997) specifically shed light on how research on social resources can empirically identify and assess this aspect of social capital at the level of the individual. In the replication of Coleman’s original study on children’s schooling, they claimed that social capital could operate either to enhance or to dilute the effects of the other resources, because it represented a “filter through which [other capital] is transmitted to and used by [individuals]” (p.1345). In order to find out how social capital sets this context in working for conversion, they argued, testing the moderating effects of the social resources was essential. Wilson and Musick (1998) recognized the lack of this analytical procedure in social capital research and argued that testing social capital “demands an interaction term” (p.801).

Given the significance of focusing on the parts played by individuals in utilizing social resources and the explanatory potential of examining the moderating effects of social resources, the combined effect of social resources

with resources at the individual level is expected to add new meaning to the utility of social resources and to the outcome of political participation as well.

### **Social Resources and Education**

Formal education has been the most important investment in human capital that yields knowledge, skills or higher income (Becker, 1964). By providing individuals with the civic and political capacity, education has been consistently a strong predictor of individual political participation (Alford & Scoble, 1968; Downs, 1957; Olsen, 1972; Verba et al., 1995). Despite the enhanced level of education, however, the level of political participation has not increased accordingly (Brady et al., 1995; Patterson, 2002). And this has necessitated looking at the role of formal education in political mobilization so as to include other factors beyond those that operate at the individual level (Nie et al., 1996; Scheufele, 1999a).

**Amplification.** The relationship between education and social resources on the pathway to political participation is broken down into two distinct patterns. The first pattern is captured in what Wilson and Musick (1998) have labeled as an “amplification” argument. According to them, social resources “make an additional resource to those supplied by individual resources alone,” access to which further reinforces the impact of human capital (p.801). Studies have supported this view with findings that people with more education were also more likely to have higher social resources. They were found to have easier access to such resources by being in better position in social networks or by being exposed more often to people who are already resource-rich both socially and politically (Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, & Levine, 1995; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Lin, 2001b; Nie et al., 1996;

Verba & Nie, 1972; Wilkins, 2000). Education was also linked to the affordability of dealing with possible losses of investments in social capital. Those who were in better off overall in terms of social and financial security were less likely to be affected by or were less concerned about, for example, betrayed trust (Inglehart, 1999; Uslaner, 2002). After all, social capital serves to “enhance human capital on the cheap” (La due lake, 1998, p.581).

Therefore, when the effect of political mobilization was assessed with the joint effect of social resources and accessibility to such resources, Rogers et al. (1975) found that social resources in the form of formal associations “further solidified the interests of high-status groups” (p.317). Based on the finding that social capital has a stronger effect on volunteering among people with higher human capital, Wilson and Musick (1998) concluded that “without the individual resources to exploit it, social capital will lie idle; unless human capital is combined with social capital its investment potential is reduced” (p.812).

**Substitution.** By contrast, others see the relationship between social resources and individual resources as functionally substituting for each other’s contribution to political mobilization. Based on this view, affluence in one dimension is more likely to suppress the need for another resource and, conversely, the lack of a certain resource will boost the utility of other available resources. Therefore, the significance of social resources also exists in its distinctive role of complementing the lack of human capital, instead of in strengthening the richness of human capital. There are several reasons that make this view convincing. For example, the distribution of social resources to a large degree depends on individuals’ “socializing or relational disposition,” which is often independent of educational level (Bourdieu, 1983). Moreover,

Nie et al. (1996) and Verba et al. (1995) found that, once conditioned by social structure, the positional or educational differences tended to diminish, if not disappear. In addition, according to DeFilippis (2001), social capital represents a highly “power-laden connection,” in which individual resources can be at odds with social resources so that high levels of individual resources are better produced or protected by class-based isolation, not by connectedness. Social resources, he argues, are “for the poor and therefore on the losing end of a set of power relations” (p.790).

Accordingly, studies have shown the possibility of substitution by social resources that can further overcome the lack of human capital. For example, Verba and Nie (1972) found that involvement in associations mobilized people at the lowest status levels more than those who are high in human capital. Although Teachman et al. (1997) failed to find a significant interaction effect of parental education and social capital on schooling, this result indirectly suggested that social capital might significantly work for the lower level of education, which could not be specified due to limitations in the data set.

### **Social Resources and Mass Media Use**

According to the gratification theory of mass media effects, individuals use mass media with the specific intention of fulfilling different needs such as information, identification, integration or entertainment (see Katz & Blumler, 1973; McQuail, 1987). The act of using specific media, therefore, may well be considered an investment at the individual level for a gain in gratifying resources.

**Media-based, Cognitive vs. Social Resource Approach.** Prior to considering social resources within the link between media use and political participation, the relationship has been traditionally understood so that media's inherent characteristics as expressed in the format of presentation and in the content of the message directly influence participation. In particular, how well each medium serves as an informational source was considered a key factor in determining the extent to which individuals are politically engaged (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Lemert, 1984). Numerous studies have confirmed that reading newspapers plays an essentially informative and, subsequently, a mobilizing role, whereas television watching is fundamentally non-informative or even detrimental to informed engagement in politics (Findahl & Hoijer, 1981; McLeod, Daily, Guo et al., 1996; McLeod et al., 1999; J. P. Robinson & Davis, 1990). Viewing public affairs or news content on television, on the other hand, has shown mixed effects depending on the pervasiveness of the form of television vs. the news content (Findahl & Hoijer, 1981; Newton, 1999a; Norris, 1996; Patterson & McClure, 1976; Petty, 1988; J. P. Robinson & Davis, 1990; J. P. Robinson & Levi, 1986; Weber & Fleming, 1983).

In addition, information gain from media use has been found to significantly depend on human capital factors, i.e., education- or income-based status, which in turn influences the accessibility or the availability of the media as an information source. Based on this perspective, certain types of media tend to favor certain socioeconomic groups, causing unequal information gain from media use (see Gaziano, 1983, 1997; Viswanath & Finnegan, 1996). Newspapers, on the one hand, work better for those in the higher socioeconomic bracket through greater exposure to them and more relevance to their interests due to media characters or unique managerial

systems (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1986; Tichenor et al., 1970). Television, on the other hand, tends to serve as an effective informational source for the less educated due to its lower-class bias (Kleinnijenhuis, 1991; Kwak, 1999; McLeod, Bybee, & Durall, 1979; Newman, 1976). Others, on the contrary, found that this lower-class bias failed to increase knowledge among the less educated (Gandy & Waylly, 1985; Horstmann, 1991; Lee, 2000; McLeod & Perse, 1994).

The explanation in terms of interaction between media use and human capital factors is still restricted to media characteristics, in that it accounts for the socioeconomic determinants of the mass-mediated resources. More recent studies have proposed that the effect of mass media use on political participation should alternatively consider the impact of other politically relevant social resources, access to which are influenced by different types of media use. To understand under what conditions participation is promoted or constrained, Wilkins (2000) argued that it is necessary to reveal how media use influences the degree of "access to social resources" (p.569). Kang and Kwak (2003) also suggested that mass-mediated messages are differently processed depending on the "residential resources" that provide different contexts for people's connections with their communities and this in turn impacts their level of political involvement.

Incorporating social and relational aspects into this link is not entirely new. A number of studies of political communication have explored the moderating or mediating roles played by social or institutional trust (Moy & Scheufele, 2000; Moy et al., 2005; Schulz, 2001; Shah, 1998), political conversation (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; McLeod et al., 1999; McLeod, Scheufele, Moy et al., 1999; Scheufele, 2000, 2002) or civic engagement (Stolle

& Rochon, 1998) in conjunction with media use and various participatory behaviors. Without explicit credits to social resources, however, these studies seemed irrelevant to each other and, more importantly, how the distribution of or access to these additional resources is determined differently by various types of media use was of secondary interest.

**Newspapers and Social Resource.** Since Alexis de Tocqueville claimed the essential role of newspapers in building democratic associations (1965), newspapers have been associated with high levels of various social capital assets (Putnam, 1995b, 1996, December, 2000). On the one hand, newspaper reading is conducive to the generation of social resources. Schudson (1997) emphasizes that newspaper reading plays a key role in providing a conversational basis for politics. Newspaper reading also serves as a fundamental source of collective norms by transmitting social expectations and introducing references about being “good citizens” (Knack & Kropf, 1998, pp.594-595). On the other hand, newspaper reading enhances the transmission of social resources into political resources or, in reverse, social resources help general news messages transmitted into mobilizing information. For example, the effect of the cooperative norm on voting was greater among those who read newspapers more often (Knack & Kropf, 1998). And interpersonal discussions of politics helped people understand news better and in turn participate more actively (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele, 2000, 2002). In sum, the joint effect of reading newspapers more frequently and possessing higher levels of social resources is expected to increase the willingness to participate in politics.

**Television and Social Resource.** Television, in contrast, has been known to reduce overall social capacity (Putnam, 1995a, 1995b, 1996,

December, 2000). Time spent watching television was negatively associated with various aspects of social capital (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Moy et al., 1999; Norris, 1996; Scheufele & Shah, 2000). Although some claimed that the 'content' of television watching should be disaggregated (Moy et al., 1999; Newton, 1999a; Norris, 1996; Shah, 1998; Wilkins, 2000), television news was often the main target of blame for social and political alienation (M. J. Robinson, 1976).

As to how television, regardless of what people watch, erodes social resources and inevitably fails to mobilize its viewers, two explanations have been offered. First, time spent watching television is simply incompatible, or in competition, with investment in social resources. According to Putnam (1995a), television watching comes at the cost of social activities by "privatizing or individualizing" leisure time, disrupting opportunities for social capital formation or rendering experience with one's community "wider and shallower" (p.75). This is partly based on Meyrowitz (1985)'s earlier reasoning that television viewers choose private over public activities because television blurs the division between private and public. Green and Brock (1998) more recently offer an alternative explanation that television watching has a direct impact on reducing the need for interaction or belongingness because it provides viewers with "parasocial" or "ersatz" social capital. Based on an experimental study, they found some psychological and situational determinants that influenced the choice of ersatz social activities over real social activities; people who trust others less, especially when the cost of real social activities was salient, tended to withdraw from real social activities and settle on the ersatz world.



The worldview that television produces is another reason heavy viewers are more likely to be discouraged from investing for social resources and participating politically. Primarily based on the cultivation theory of television effects (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980), Putnam (1995a; 1995b) pointed out that television watching cultivates beliefs about a 'misanthropic and mean' world, which makes its heavy viewers less trusting. Television also fosters a personal and individual worldview by locating individuals at the center in creating and resolving conflicts (McBride, 1998) or by holding individuals accountable for societal problems (Iyengar, 1991). As a result, heavy viewers tend to remain individually alienated from social or political matters with a belief that they "are best left in the hands of authorities" (Morgan & Shanahan, 1991, p.101).

When these mechanisms were tested, however, neither the time restraint nor television's negative portrayals accounted for social capital (Hooghe, 2002; Moy et al., 1999; Uslaner, 1998). Instead, the relationship seemed dependent on other factors; dispositional variables, such as confidence or leadership, and affective variables, such as optimism, were found to be more directly relevant than television use was in the production and destruction of social capital (Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Uslaner, 1998). The finding from a study by Kang and Kwak (2003), however, suggests that these mechanisms are not only plausible but also capable of accounting for the distinctive relationships that were created across television use, social resources and political participation. Upon examining the effect of the contextual and psychological aspects of social resources, they found that the length and stability of community residency moderated the negative relationship between television use and participation. In addition, they

applied two mechanisms to explain the different interaction patterns. For example, the positive interaction term between television news use and residential stability was interpreted as showing that television's negative effect was greater with those who live in less stable neighborhoods, which supports the work of the 'mean world' effect. On the other hand, the negative interaction term between time spent watching television and the length of residence was interpreted as indicating the effect of 'time displacement'; increases in time spent watching television indeed reduced the participation level and this effect was greater among those who had lived longer in a community.

In sum, it is difficult to overcome the detrimental effect of television use on political participation as long as media-based images about the world are not counterbalanced in reality or social interests or social capacity is repeatedly replaced by individual satisfaction.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As outlined so far, the social resource model of political participation is fundamentally based on the concept of social capital and its politicizing function. The potential of social capital to account for political involvement at the individual level has not, however, been systematically examined, nor have the contradictions been properly challenged. To assess the viability of the social resource model for political participation, I developed research questions regarding three essential areas of interest, presented here in order.

The first set of research questions deals with the basic understanding of the concept of social capital and, in particular, its dimensionality and interrelational structures. It might have been noticed that to this point in the discussion social capital remains a 'hypothetical' concept which is not directly measured but rather consists of several measurable resource variables in different dimensions – associational membership, social trust, social/political talk, and tolerance. As noted earlier, however, these social resources may not be equally distributed across different individual resources, such as demographics or different mass media use patterns. For this reason, it might not be straightforwardly tied together into a coherent concept, as has been claimed. Thus, it will be important to examine the degree to which these components serve as meaningful indicators of social resources, as in the following questions.

R.Q. 1-1. Is social capital manifested as a coherent concept by different forms of social resources? To what extent are various forms of social

resources differently related to individual resources and, at the same time, related to each other as common indicators of social capital?

To approach this question, I will adopt a structural equation modeling technique using the LISREL, which permits the examination of any hypothetical concept by treating it as a 'latent variable.' Such a latent variable is assumed to be a common factor that influences different sets of indicators in a measurement model. At the same time, it allows estimating the extent to which the latent variable is related to other variables by specifying them in a structural model (Bollen, 1989). Therefore, not only the relevance of each indicator to the common concept of social capital but also the relation of social capital to demographics or media use variables will be examined simultaneously.

The next question is about the inner structure of relations among the resources identified. As discussed earlier, empirical analyses have centered around the structural dimension because voluntary association was the focus of the well-known 'virtuous circle' thesis of social capital (Putnam, 1993). Nevertheless, results indicating the extent to which social trust, talk, or tolerance is network-based have been either inconclusive or inadequate to establish a causal relationship. In addition, findings from Stolle and Rochon (1998) suggest a particularly important point in examining the role of formal membership. That is, the interrelationship between the structural dimension and the values dimension of social capital should take the diversity and the purpose of the group into account. Therefore, the relationship between the structural dimension and various forms of social relational values will be explored as follows.

R.Q. 1-2. Are social trust, talk, and tolerance membership-based? And to what degree do the effects of formal membership differ by types of association?

To examine this, each relational value will be predicted by formal associational membership using a hierarchical regression analysis. In addition, it will be examined whether this membership effect is manifested through multiple memberships, in contrast to the case of non-members, or whether types of membership influence the creation of each value.

Building upon the explication of the dimensionality and inner structure of the concept of social capital, the second set of research questions examines how these social capital assets functionally relate to political participation. With respect to the political relevance of the outcome, several modifications in the model are needed.

First, scholars have found that the psychological aspect of involvement was a key motivational factor in the decision to engage in political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Knack & Kropf, 1998; Verba & Nie, 1972) and that it should precede other socially interested behavior (Knack & Kropf, 1998). Moreover, when the level of political interest is controlled, the overall confidence of the significant relationships tends to increase because the accountability of political interest is likely to “attenuate the strength of other relationships in the models” in explaining political participation (Scheufele, 2002, p.62). Therefore, considerable effort will be made to reveal the mechanisms through which these social resources are utilized to account for

why people do or do not become politically involved, beyond demographics, political interests and mass media use.

R. Q. 2-1. How do associational membership, social trust, talking with others and tolerance facilitate political participation beyond demographics, political interest and mass media use?

Second, since relational values are inherently apolitical, i.e., social, how these non-political factors generate politically behavioral outcomes can be intervened by several factors that buffer the gap. Though it is somewhat disputable, earlier discussion has observed that political trust could mediate between social trust and political participation. In terms of the effect of talking with others, political talk was more likely to be related to an enhancement of political information, while socializing talking was more effective in trust building. Thus, including political knowledge will shed significant light on the ways that informational values of social relations contribute to political participation. In order to better understand how social factors are transformed into politically useful resources, therefore, political mobilization mechanisms will be further elaborated, taking political trust and political knowledge into consideration as follows.

R. Q. 2-2. How is political trust related to social resources in affecting political participation?

R. Q. 2-3. How is political knowledge related to social resources in affecting political participation?

To estimate these relationships, I will again use the structural equation modeling technique. By alternating between ‘freeing’ or ‘fixing’ links among the different forms of social resources or between social resources and intervening variables, the structural modeling technique will allow estimating whether and how these variables are related to each other on the pathways to political participation. Ultimately, this will result in a causal model with a best fit. Both the direct and indirect influences involving the intervening variables will also be tested in the course of modeling political participation that best fits the data.

The last set of research questions will go beyond these linear effects to focus on whether and how social resources moderate relationships between individual resources and political participation. As noted earlier, two individual-level resources – education and media use – have been of special interest, each of which was meaningfully combined with social resources in accounting for political participation. With respect to the interplay between social resources and education, two possible interaction patterns will be examined, as follows.

R. Q. 3-1. How do social resources interact with formal education in influencing political participation? Do they reinforce education’s positive impact on political participation, or do they rather complement the negative impact of the lack of human capital on political participation? Which among the different forms of social resources contributes to which interaction pattern most significantly?

Mass media's inherent characteristics have typified the positive role of newspaper reading and the negative effect of watching television on political participation. More importantly, different types of media use have been found to influence access to other politically relevant social resources. Thus examining how the effects of newspaper and television use are combined with social resources is expected to add new meaning to well-established relationships between media use and political participation. Interactions between mass media use and social resources will be tested as follows.

R. Q. 3-2. How do social resources interact with newspaper use on political participation? Is the generally positive mobilizing role of newspaper reading further reinforced or mitigated by the effect of social resources?

R. Q. 3-3. How do social resources interact with television use with respect to political participation? Is the generally negative mobilizing role of television watching further reinforced or mitigated by the effect of social resources?

To test these moderating effects, multiplicative terms between individual resources and social resources will be constructed and tested in regression analyses. To better grasp how some of the significant interactions account for their effects on political participation, the effects will be further plotted.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODS

#### Data Sets

To analyze the relationships previously outlined in the research questions, I will utilize three data sets. As discussed so far, key tasks involved in building the social resource model of political participation are evaluating the rationale for tying several variables, which otherwise would have been examined separately, together into a coherent concept and then applying the concept in accounting for political participation. The primary issue concerning the variables lies, then, with determining how well they are conceptually and functionally related to each other, while ascertaining how accurately they are measuring certain indicators of the concept is secondary. I therefore chose existing data sets that already include an extensive range of measures.

To be suitable for use in analyses testing the social resource model of political participation, a data set should meet several conditions. Most necessarily, it should include both the structural and value dimensions of social resources, because resources not only are used independently but the interrelationships among different forms of resources are of special interest. And, rather ideally, the structure of social resources should be specific enough to estimate the differential effect of organizational type on the value-generation function and on political participation, as noted in many studies.

The data from the Social Capital Benchmark Study (2000) satisfy all of these conditions best, as far as the purely social resources are concerned. To examine the effects of more politically relevant social capital, the National Election Study (2004) is more suitable because it includes all the variables plus

a political talk measure instead of one for social talk. The measure of the structure of social resources is, however, too simple so it does not allow for specifying organizational type. To complement this, I will also include the American Citizen Participation Study (1990), which has a more elaborated measure of associational membership and tolerance.

In all three data sets, the variables used for the analyses are grouped into six parts with causal orders. (1) Demographic variables are included as controls. (2) For psychological involvement in political participation, political interest is controlled after demographics. (3) And, media use variables – they not only directly influence the distribution of social resources and the willingness to opt for political participation, but also interact with social resources – are included as an informational resource at the individual level. (4) After demographics, political interest, and media use variables, social resource variables are included, the dimensions of which are specified as structure vs. values. (5) To elaborate the link between social resources and political behaviors, two intervening variables are included: political trust and political knowledge. (6) And, finally, political participation is the dependent variable as an outcome of social resources. These sets of variables were measured in each data set as follows.

### **Social Capital Benchmark Survey**

The first data came from the Social Capital Benchmark Survey conducted by the Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (*Social capital benchmark survey, 2000, 2001*). The study was specifically designed to provide systematic measurements and a rich database for studies of social capital at both the community and national

levels. A national sample of 3,003 respondents was collected from July to November 2000, conducting telephone surveys using random-digit-dialing (RDD) techniques by TNS Intersearch, a commissioned survey firm.

For demographic controls, four variables were included. The mean of respondents' age was 44.4 years old with standard deviation of 16.3. The gender ratio of respondents was 48 percent male vs. 52 percent female. The level of formal education was measured on a 7-point scale of school years completed, ranging from "less than high school" to "graduate or professional degree." On average, respondents reported they had "attended some college" ( $m = 3.42$ ). Household income was assessed on a non-linear 8-point scale ranging from "less than \$20,000" to "more than \$100,000" with varying increments. Both the mode and median of household income fell between \$30,000 and \$49,000.

As a motivational control, interest in politics and national affairs was measured on a four-point scale ranging from "not at all interested" to "very interested" ( $m = 2.83$ ,  $s.d. = 1.00$ ).

For informational control at the individual level, two media use variables were included. Newspaper use was measured by number of days in the past week reading a daily newspaper ( $m = 3.34$ ,  $s.d. = 2.99$ ), and television use was measured by number of hours per day spent watching television on an average weekday ( $m = 3.04$ ,  $s.d. = 2.69$ ).

Measures of social resources were divided into two dimensions. The structural dimension of social resources was measured by the number of

formal memberships that respondents had in the last 12 months among the 18 groups presented ( $m = 2.99$ ,  $s.d. = 2.70$ ,  $\alpha = .71$ ).<sup>3</sup>

The value dimension of social resources included three variables. Social trust was measured by asking “whether most people can be trusted or you can’t be too careful in dealing with people, or it depends” ( $m = 2.01$ ,  $s.d. = .96$ ). Social talk was constructed by a seven-point scale measuring the frequency of talking with immediate neighbors from “never” to “just about every day” ( $m = 5.06$ ,  $s.d. = 1.83$ ). And tolerance was measured on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” with the statement, “a book that most people disapprove should be kept out of my local library” ( $m = 3.78$ ,  $s.d. = 1.50$ ).

In addition, two intervening variables were included. Political trust was measured as an additive index of two trust items in “national and local governments do what is right” ( $\alpha = .67$ ). And political knowledge was measured by asking respondents whether they can name two of the U.S. Senators of their respective states, on a five-point scale ranging from “failed to name either” to “both correct” ( $m = 2.23$ ,  $s.d. = 1.59$ ).

As a dependent variable, political participation was an additive index of three items measuring political activities in the past 12 months, including

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<sup>3</sup> The 18 groups presented were (1) adults sports club, league, or outdoor activity club, (2) youth organization, (3) parent association or other school support, (4) veterans group, (5) neighborhood association, (6) clubs or organizations for senior citizens or older people, (7) charity or social welfare organization, (8) labor union, (9) professional, trade, farm or business association, (10) service clubs or fraternal organizations, (11) ethnic, nationality, or civil rights organizations, (12) public interest groups, (13) political action groups, political clubs, party committees, (14) literary, art, discussion, music, dancing etc, (15) hobby, investment, garden clubs, (16) support groups or self-help program, (17) over the Internet, and (18) any other.

“signing a petition, attending a political meeting or rally, or participating in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches” ( $\alpha = .48$ ).

### **National Election Study**

The second data set came from the 2004 National Election Study that examined extensive aspects of political beliefs and actions (Burns & Kinder, 2004). Data collection was conducted by face-to-face interviews at two time points, a pre-election interview (September 7 ~ November 1, 2004) and a post-election re-interview (November 3 ~ December 20, 2004). Out of a sample of 1,833 eligible respondents, the pre-election interview yielded 1,212 cases (66.1 percent of response rate), and 1,066 among the 1,212 went on for the post-election interview (88.1 percent of the re-interview rate).

Four variables were included as demographic controls: respondent’s age ( $m = 47.3$ ,  $s.d. = 17.1$ ), gender (53 percent female), education<sup>4</sup> ( $m = 4.3$ , “attended some college”), and household income<sup>5</sup> (mean = 14.9, “\$30,000-34,999,” median = 16, “45,000-49,999”).

Political interest was measured on a three-point scale asking whether respondents were “very much, somewhat or not much interested” in political campaigns in an election year ( $m = 2.26$ ,  $s.d. = .71$ ).

For the media use measure, two news use variables were included. Newspaper use was measured by number of days reading a daily newspaper ( $m = 3.08$ ,  $s.d. = 2.38$ ). Television news use was an additive index of number of

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<sup>4</sup> Education was measured on a seven-point scale ranging from “less than 9 grades” to “advanced degree.”

<sup>5</sup> Household income was measured using 23 categories from “less than \$2,999” to “\$120,000 and over.”

days watching national network news and local TV news shows at two different times ( $\alpha = .69$ ).

The structural dimension of social resources was measured by number of organizations that respondents were a member of ( $m = .89$ ,  $s.d. = 1.45$ ).<sup>6</sup>

Social trust was measured by a dichotomous trust item asking, "Would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" ( $m = 1.44$ ,  $s.d. = .50$ ). Political talk was measured by number of days in a week respondents discussed politics with family or friends ( $m = 2.66$ ,  $s.d. = 2.55$ ). The tolerance measure was a combination of three items asking opinions about discriminating against homosexuals ( $\alpha = .64$ ).<sup>7</sup>

A measure of political trust used four items of trust in government or politicians ( $\alpha = .60$ ).<sup>8</sup> Political knowledge was an additive index of four

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<sup>6</sup> Instead of presenting specific organizations with respect to each of which respondents give an answer, exemplary organizations were introduced. The exact wording was: "There is a list of some organizations people can belong to: There are labor unions, associations of people who do the same kinds of work, fraternal groups such as Lions or Kiwanis, hobby clubs or sports teams, groups working on political issues, community groups, and school groups. Not counting membership in a local church or synagogue, are you a member of any of these kinds of organizations?"

<sup>7</sup> (1) Do you favor or oppose laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination? (2) Do you think homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces or don't you think so? (3) Do you think gay or lesbian couples, in other words, homosexual couples, should be legally permitted to adopt children?

<sup>8</sup> (1) How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? (2) Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people? (3) To what extent does the government waste tax revenue? (4) Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?

dichotomous items measuring whether respondents correctly recognize the job or office holding of four political figures ( $\alpha = .66$ ).<sup>9</sup>

As a dependent variable, political participation was constructed by ten participation items asking about respondents' participation in various political activities ( $\alpha = .70$ ).<sup>10</sup>

### **American Citizen Participation Study**

The third data set came from the American Citizen Participation Study conducted in 1990 by the National Opinion Research Center (Verba, Schlozman, Brady, & Nie, 1995). The in-person interviews were carried out to

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<sup>9</sup> The exact wording was: "Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like. What job or political office does (1) Dennis Hastert, (2) Dick Cheney, (3) Tony Blair, (4) William Rehnquist now hold?"

<sup>10</sup> Seven of them measured campaign activities: "We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. (1) During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates? (2) Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate? (3) Did you wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or place a sign in your window or in front of your house? (4) Did you do any (other) work for one of the parties or candidates? (5) During an election year people are often asked to make a contribution to support campaigns. Did you give money to an individual candidate running for public office? (6) Did you give money to a political party during this election year? (7) Did you give any money to any other group that supported or opposed candidates?" And three items measured expressive participation: "Over the past five years or so, have you done any of the following things to express your views about something the government should or should not be doing? (1) Contacted a politician or government official either in person, or in writing, or some other way? (2) Taken part in a protest, march or demonstration? (3) Worked together with people who shared the same concern?"

examine political and nonpolitical civic participation of a subset of 2,517 respondents.

Four demographics are identified: age ( $m = 51.44$ ,  $s.d. = 15.82$ ), gender (53.1 percent female), education ( $m = 13.3$ , "12<sup>th</sup> grade of school years completed"), and household income ( $m = 7.18$ , median = 7, "\$30,000-34,999").<sup>11</sup>

Political interest was measured by asking about respondents' level of interest in politics and public affairs at both the local and national level ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

Newspaper use was a combination of three measures of frequency of newspaper reading and attention to national and local politics or public affairs ( $\alpha = .76$ ). And television news use as measured by two seven-point scale measures of frequency of watching national news and public affairs programs on television ( $\alpha = .64$ ).

Associational membership was measured by the number of formal memberships ( $m = 2.14$ ,  $s.d. = 2.25$ ).<sup>12</sup> A measure of political talk used two items measuring the frequency of talking with others about politics or affairs at the local and the national levels ( $\alpha = .75$ ). And tolerance was measured by

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<sup>11</sup> Household income was measured on a sixteen-point scale ranging from "under \$2,000" to "\$200,000 and over."

<sup>12</sup> Respondents were presented with 20 organization types that they could identify in reporting their memberships: "(1) service clubs or fraternal (2) veterans (3) religious (4) nationality, ethnic, or racial (5) the elderly or seniors (6) women's rights (7) labor union (8) business or professional (9) political issues (10) non-partisan or civic (11) general liberal or conservative (12) elections (13) youth (14) literary or art (15) hobby or sports (16) neighborhood (17) health service (18) education (19) cultural and (20) other."



combining four dichotomous items tapping tolerance toward homosexuals, racists, militarists or atheists ( $\alpha = .72$ ).<sup>13</sup>

The measure of political participation as a dependent variable was an additive index of five items measuring political contact with governmental officials and participation in protest, march or demonstration regarding political issues ( $\alpha = .68$ ).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The exact wording was: "There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. (1) If someone in your community suggested that a book he or she wrote in favor of homosexuality should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book or not? (2) If someone in your community suggested that a book he or she wrote arguing that blacks are genetically inferior should be taken out of your public' library, would you favor removing this book or not? (3) Or consider someone who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should he or she be allowed to or not? (4) And what about someone who is against all churches and religion? If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should he or she be allowed to or not?"

<sup>14</sup> The exact wording was: "In the past twelve months, have you initiated any contacts with (1) a federal elected official or someone on the staff of such an official, (2) a non elected official in a federal government agency, (3) an elected official on the state or local level, and (4) a non-elected official in a state or local government agency or board – either in person or by phone or letter – about problems or issues with which you were concerned? In the past two years, have you taken part in a protest, march or demonstration on some national or local issues?"

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS

#### **Generation of Social Resources: Membership, Social Trust, Talk, and Tolerance**

##### **Latent Variable Model of Social Capital**

To examine the generation of social capital as a whole, a latent variable model was specified to include two sub-models. In the measurement model, the latent variable of social capital was constructed with four measured variables, i.e., formal membership, social trust, talk, and tolerance. It was assumed that part of the variance in each of the four measures was accounted for by the common factor of the social capital concept, and the rest consisted of the unique variance in the variable as well as the measurement error. To assign units of measurement to the unmeasured latent variable, the parameter of formal membership was fixed at 1 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). At the same time, the structural model was specified to causally link demographic and media use variables to the latent variable of social capital manifested by the four measures.

Among other results, as in Figure 1, formal membership showed the largest loading to the concept of social capital with  $\lambda = .47$ , followed by social trust ( $\lambda = .34$ ), tolerance ( $\lambda = .29$ ) and social talk ( $\lambda = .22$ ). On the whole, however, these four variables were not strongly enough tied together to represent the concept of social capital. Fifteen percent of the variance in membership, 8.1% of the variance in social trust, 9.8% of the variance in

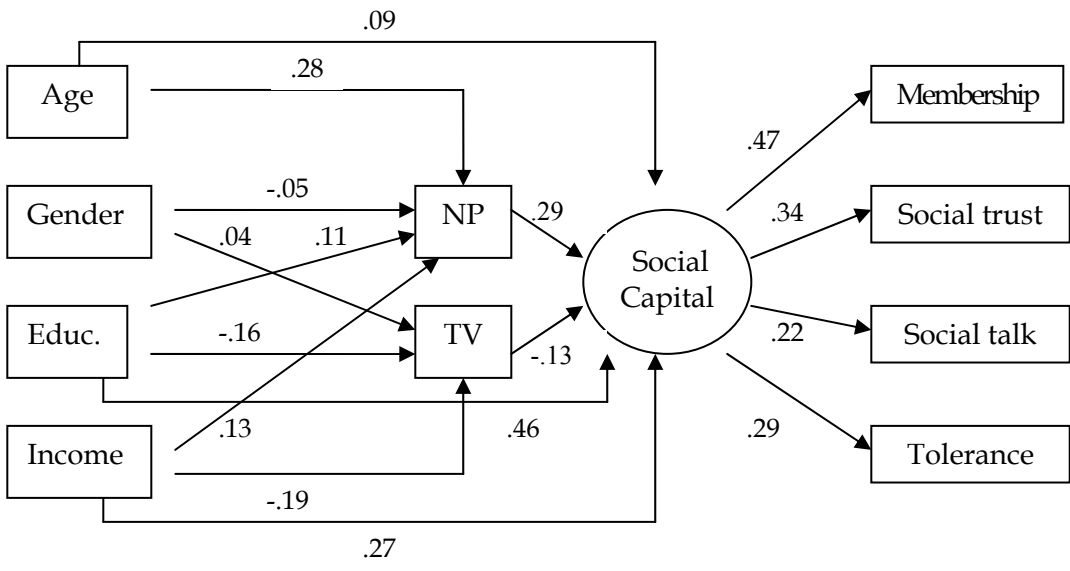


Figure 1. Latent Variable Model of Social Capital (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

tolerance, and only 4.8% of the variance in social talk were accounted for by the common factor of social capital.

Among the four demographic variables included as exogenous variables that influence other variables, the older ( $\gamma = .09$ ), the highly educated ( $\gamma = .46$ ), and those with higher income ( $\gamma = .27$ ) were more likely to hold a higher level of social capital assets. Gender, however, did not have a direct effect on social capital. And the impact of mass media use variables as antecedent endogenous variables was positive for newspaper reading ( $\gamma = .29$ ) but negative for television watching ( $\gamma = -.13$ ). With demographics and mass media use variables controlled, 65% of the variance in the concept of social capital was explained.

However, the model with social capital as the latent variable did not fit the data very well, producing a large Chi-square value ( $X^2 = 233.51$ ,  $df = 21$ ,  $N = 2,298$ ) and a small P-value of close to 0. Although the large sample size might have contributed to the large Chi-square due to the potential Type-I error in rejecting the null hypothesis of perfect model fit (Brown, MacCallum, & Kim, 2002), other fit indices also showed poor model fit (Goodness-of-Fit Index = 0.98, Root Mean Square Residual = 0.78).

To identify the source of the model misfit, a standardized residual covariance matrix was examined.<sup>15</sup> As Table 1 shows, significantly large

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<sup>15</sup> A residual covariance is a difference between sample covariance and implied covariance by the model. A standardized residual is a residual divided by its estimated standard error so that it is independent of the units of measurement of the variables (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1984, p.146). Thus, a standard residual that is greater than 2.58, which is two standard deviations apart from the perfect fit, is considered significantly large. According to Bollen (1989), any non-zero residual covariance suggests covariance between variables is either under or over-explained (p.257).

Table 1. Standardized Residual Covariance of Latent Variable Model of Social Capital (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|              | Membership | Social Trust | Social Talk | Tolerance |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Age          | 1.05       | 3.85         | 6.46        | -10.92    |
| Gender       | -0.42      | 0.44         | -0.85       | 0.73      |
| Education    | 2.76       | -2.30        | -6.82       | 4.35      |
| Income       | -0.25      | -0.74        | -2.61       | 3.23      |
| Newspaper    | -0.55      | 0.85         | 3.18        | -2.72     |
| Television   | 3.84       | -1.84        | -1.31       | -2.11     |
| Membership   |            | -2.01        | 4.02        | -2.61     |
| Social Trust |            |              | 3.31        | 0.59      |
| Social Talk  |            |              |             | -1.64     |
| Tolerance    |            |              |             |           |

residual covariances (greater than 2.58) were found between demographic variables and social capital measures, between media variables and social capital measures, and among the social capital measures themselves. In particular, the links that age and education had with social capital measures remained unidentified; the largest residuals were found between age and tolerance (-10.92), and the relationships that social talk had with age (6.46) and with education (-6.82) were also left largely underestimated. Residual covariances were also noticeable between newspaper and social talk, newspaper and tolerance, and television and membership. Furthermore, interrelationships among the measures of social capital, especially between social talk and membership, social talk and social trust, and membership and tolerance, seemed to contribute to the poor model fit as well, requiring further examination.

### **Individual Indicator Model of Social Capital**

Given the identification of misfit described above, it is clear that the latent variable model of social capital was under-specifying not only some of the direct impacts on each of the measures of social capital but also the potential interrelationships within the different dimensions of the social capital concept. Therefore, an alternative model was tested which freed the unexplained links instead of limiting each indicator's relationship to dependency on the common factor of social capital. To estimate how indicators were related to each other, error terms among the four indicators were first set to correlate to each other and only significant relations were included in the final model.

Compared with the poor fit made by the latent variable model of social capital, this model showed good model fit with a Chi-square value of 6.26 ( $df = 4$ ,  $N = 2.481$ ) and a p-value of 0.18. Other fit indices also confirmed the fit by high GFI value (0.99) and low RMR value (0.03). And there were no statistically significant residual covariances detected.

Table 2 shows the results from both models separately in order to demonstrate the generation of social capital both at the concept level as a whole and at the individual indicator level in detail. Overall, the effects of the four exogenous variables on social capital were also replicated on each of the indicators. Education had strong positive impacts on membership ( $\gamma = .25$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .13$ ), and tolerance ( $\gamma = .17$ ). Income also had positive direct effects on membership ( $\gamma = .13$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .04$ ), and tolerance ( $\gamma = .10$ ). The older respondents were more likely to be joiners in organizations ( $\gamma = .06$ ), social trusters ( $\gamma = .09$ ) and social talkers ( $\gamma = .13$ ). Gender did not influence the generation of social capital at any level. Against this general pattern, however, social talk and tolerance stood out; tolerance toward differences decreased significantly as people got older ( $\gamma = -.17$ ), and talking with others socially was not influenced by education as other values were. These distinctive patterns were, in fact, what were expected from the relationships marked by the largest residual covariances in the previous model.

As in the latent variable model, more newspaper reading was predicted by respondents' age ( $\gamma = .28$ ), being male ( $\gamma = -.06$ ), and by high levels of education ( $\gamma = .11$ ) and income ( $\gamma = .13$ ). On the contrary, female ( $\gamma = .04$ ), less educated respondents ( $\gamma = -.16$ ), and people with low income ( $\gamma = .19$ ) were more likely to watch television. The demographically opposite pattern found in media use was also manifested in their effects as antecedent endogenous

Table 2. Individual Indicator Model of Social Capital  
(Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|                       | Age   | Sex   | Educ. | Incom. | (a)  | (b)   | <i>Social Capital</i> | (c)          | (d)          |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|-------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Newspaper (a)         | .28*  | -.06* | .11*  | .13*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | .28*  | -.06* | .11*  | .13*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
| Television (b)        | -     | .04*  | -.16* | -.19*  |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | -     | .04*  | -.16* | -.19*  |      |       |                       |              |              |
| <i>Social Capital</i> | .09*  | -     | .46*  | .27*   | .29* | -.13* |                       |              |              |
|                       | .09*  | -     | .46*  | .27*   | .29* | -.13* |                       |              |              |
| Membership (c)        | .06*  | -     | .25*  | .13*   | .13* | -     | .47*                  |              |              |
|                       | .04*  | -.01* | .02*  | .02*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | .09*  | -     | .27*  | .15*   | .13* | -     | .47*                  |              |              |
| Social trust (d)      | .09*  | -     | .13*  | .09*   | .10* | -.08* | .34*                  |              |              |
|                       | .03*  | -.01* | .02*  | .03*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | .12*  | -     | .15*  | .12*   | .10* | -.08* | .34*                  |              |              |
| Social talk           | .13*  | -     | -     | .04*   | .10* | -.08* | .22*                  |              |              |
|                       | .03*  | -.01* | .02*  | .03*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | .15*  | -     | -     | .07*   | .10* | -.08* | .22*                  | .10 $\psi$ * | .07 $\psi$ * |
| Tolerance             | -.17* | -     | .17*  | .10*   | .09* | -.05* | .29*                  |              |              |
|                       | .02*  | -.01* | .02*  | .02*   |      |       |                       |              |              |
|                       | -.14* | -     | .19*  | .12*   | .09* | -.05* | .29*                  |              | .05 $\psi$ * |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are coefficients indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.

4) Grey areas represent the effects on and from the latent variable of social capital.



variables on most of the social capital assets. Heavy newspaper readers held higher levels of social resources: they were more likely to join associations ( $\beta = .13$ ), trust others more ( $\beta = .10$ ), be involved in social talking ( $\beta = .10$ ), and be more tolerant of differences ( $\beta = .09$ ). On the other hand, television watching had no direct effect on membership but negative impacts on social trust ( $\beta = -.08$ ), social talk ( $\beta = -.08$ ), and tolerance ( $\beta = -.05$ ).

After all the effects of demographics and media use were taken into account, organizational engagement was still related to talking with others ( $\psi = .10$ ) and trusting general others was significantly related with social talk ( $\psi = .07$ ) and tolerance ( $\psi = .05$ ).

### **Individual Indicator Model of Social Capital with Political Talk**

In earlier discussions, the content people talk about was assumed to possess different informational values. With respect to interest in political participation, therefore, it is important to examine whether and how talking about politics in particular serves as social capital that is politically relevant.

The same analytical procedures testing the latent model and the indicator model of social capital were repeated on the additional data sets that included political talk as a variable instead of social talk.

Table 3 displays the results from the National Election Study data. Based on the latent variable modeling, political talk was loaded to the concept of social capital with  $\lambda = .34$  and 12% of the variance in political talk accounted for as an indicator of social capital. When each indicator was examined individually, people who talk about politics turned out to be the highly educated ( $\gamma = .12$ ), with higher income ( $\gamma = .11$ ), heavy newspaper readers ( $\beta = .09$ ) and television hard news viewers ( $\beta = .11$ ). Age and gender were not

Table 3. Individual Indicator Model of Social Capital  
(National Election Study)

|                     | Age   | Sex   | Educ. | Inco. | (a)          | (b)   | Social<br>Capit | (c)          | (d)          |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Newspaper (a)       | .35*  | -.08* | .12*  | .11*  |              |       |                 |              |              |
|                     | .35*  | -.08* | .12*  | .11*  |              |       |                 |              |              |
| Television news (b) | .31*  | -     | -     | -     |              |       |                 |              |              |
|                     | .31*  | -     | -     | -     | .11 $\psi$ * |       |                 |              |              |
| Social Capital      | -     | .10*  | .47*  | .25*  | .17*         | -     |                 |              |              |
|                     | -     | .10*  | .47*  | .25*  | .17*         | -     |                 |              |              |
| Membership (c)      | -     | -     | .23*  | .12*  | .08*         | -     | .48*            |              |              |
|                     | -     | -.01* | -     | -     |              |       |                 |              |              |
|                     | -     | -     | .24*  | .13*  | .08          | -     | .48*            |              |              |
| Social trust (d)    | .18*  | -     | .19*  | .09*  | -            | -.10* | .39*            |              |              |
|                     | .16*  | -     | .19*  | .09*  | -            | -.10* | .39*            | .09 $\psi$ * |              |
| Political talk (e)  | -     | -     | .12*  | .11*  | .09*         | .11*  | .34*            |              |              |
|                     | .06*  | -     | -     | -     |              |       |                 |              |              |
| Tolerance           | -     | -     | .12*  | .12*  | .09*         | .11*  | .34*            | .12 $\psi$ * | .11 $\psi$ * |
|                     | -     | -     | -     | -     |              |       |                 |              |              |
| Tolerance           | -.15* | .13*  | .18*  | -     | .07*         | -     | .31*            |              |              |
|                     | -.12* | .13*  | .18*  | .08*  | .07*         | -     | .31*            |              | .06 $\psi$ * |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are coefficients indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.

4) Grey areas represent the effects on and from the latent variable of social capital.

significantly related to political talk. Interrelational patterns were also found between media use and among the social resources. Newspaper reading and television news watching were significantly related to each other after demographic controls ( $\psi = .11$ ). And formal membership was still related to social trust ( $\psi = .09$ ) and talking about politics with others ( $\psi = .12$ ), and trusting general others was significantly related to political talk ( $\psi = .11$ ) and tolerance ( $\psi = .06$ ).

### **Membership as a Structural Source of Relational Values**

Given the better fit by the individual indicator model of social capital as confirming the multidimensionality of the concept, I further examined the causal assumption from the structural dimension to the value dimension.

Table 5 shows the result of hierarchical regression analyses predicting three relational values from formal membership. After controlling for demographics and media use variables, the increase in formal membership in voluntary associations predicted talking with others more ( $\beta = .12$ ) and trusting general others more ( $\beta = .04$ ). Tolerance, however, was not accounted for by formal membership.

In order to examine how associational membership works in greater detail, I ran two additional hierarchical regression analyses predicting each of the relational values, the final blocks of which included multiple memberships or different types of associations (see Table 6). The number of respondents' membership was dummy-coded into 5 categories from none to 5 or more (see Table 4). Talking with others socially gradually increased as people join two or more associations. The significant trust-generating role of formal membership, however, was not manifested by the effect of multiple memberships. Although

Table 4. Distribution of Associational Membership

|                         | Social Capital<br>Benchmark Study<br>(%)  | National Election<br>Study<br>(%)                          | American Citizen<br>Participation Study<br>(%)  |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
|                         | Whether<br>respondents are<br>members of 18<br>categories of<br>voluntary<br>associations | Number of<br>organizations<br>respondent is a<br>member of | Whether<br>respondents are<br>members of 20<br>categories of<br>voluntary<br>associations |
| Number of<br>Membership |   |  |   |
| 0                       | 20.2  | 58.2   | 28.5  |
| 1                       | 15.6  | 18.5   | 21.5  |
| 2                       | 13.5  | 11.8   | 16.1  |
| 3                       | 12.7  | 6.2  | 11.8  |
| 4                       | 10.5  | 2.3  | 7.3   |
| 5 or more               | 27.5  | 3.0  | 14.8  |

Table 5. Predicting Relational Values from Formal Membership  
(Social capital benchmark)

|                              | Social trust             |               | Social talk              |               | Tolerance                |               |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                              | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta |
| <u>Demographics</u>          |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Age                          | .12**                    | .09**         | .16**                    | .13**         | -.15**                   | -.17**        |
| Gender                       | -.02                     | -.01          | -.03                     | -.02          | .02                      | .03           |
| Education                    | .16**                    | .13**         | .04                      | -.02          | .19**                    | .17**         |
| Income                       | .11**                    | .08**         | .07**                    | .03           | .13**                    | .11**         |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 6.6**                    |               | 3.5**                    |               | 9.2**                    |               |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>        |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Newspaper                    | .09**                    | .09**         | .10**                    | .09**         | .09**                    | .09**         |
| Television                   | -.08**                   | -.08**        | -.07**                   | -.07**        | -.04*                    | -.04*         |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 1.3**                    |               | 1.4**                    |               | 0.9**                    |               |
| <u>Structure of Relation</u> |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Formal Membership            | .04*                     | .04*          | .12**                    | .12**         | .01                      | .01           |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | .02*                     |               | 1.3**                    |               | 0                        |               |
| <i>Total R-square</i>        | 8.1**                    |               | 6.2**                    |               | 10.0**                   |               |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$

Table 6. Effect of Multiple Membership and Membership Type on Relational Values (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|                            | Social trust      |            | Social talk       |            | Tolerance         |            |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
|                            | Before-entry beta | Final beta | Before-entry beta | Final beta | Before-entry beta | Final beta |
| <u>Multiple Membership</u> |                   |            |                   |            |                   |            |
| One                        | -.04              | -.03       | -.06**            | .02        | -.01              | .02        |
| Two                        | .01               | .02        | -.01              | .06**      | .00               | .02        |
| Three                      | -.01              | .00        | .03               | .10**      | .01               | .03        |
| Four                       | -.02              | -.02       | .05**             | .11**      | .05*              | .06**      |
| Five or more               | .05**             | .05        | .07**             | .15**      | -.01              | .03        |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>  | (0.4)             |            | 1.8**             |            | 0.3               |            |
| <i>Total R-square</i>      | 8.3**             |            | 6.7**             |            | 10.3**            |            |
| <u>Type of Membership</u>  |                   |            |                   |            |                   |            |
| Religion                   | .03               | .02        | .06**             | .03        | -.04*             | -.09**     |
| Sports                     | .00               | -.01       | .06**             | .03        | .02               | .02        |
| Youth                      | .04*              | .04*       | .09**             | .05*       | -.01              | -.02       |
| School                     | .00               | -.02       | .05**             | .02        | -.02              | -.07**     |
| Veterans                   | .00               | -.01       | .04               | .01        | .00               | .00        |
| Neighborhood               | -.01              | -.02       | .13**             | .12**      | .04               | .04        |
| Seniors                    | .01               | .01        | .05**             | .03        | -.03              | -.01       |
| Charity/Social Welfare     | .04*              | .03        | .06**             | .02        | .06**             | .02        |
| Union                      | -.02              | -.03       | .02               | .02        | .01               | .02        |
| Business/Professional      | .08**             | .07**      | .03               | .00        | .05*              | .04        |
| Service/Fraternity         | .05**             | .04        | .05**             | .02        | .02               | .03        |
| Ethnic/Civil Rights        | .00               | -.02       | .00               | -.04*      | .05**             | .01        |
| Political                  | .04*              | .04        | .03               | .01        | .05**             | .02        |
| Literary/Art               | .01               | -.02       | .04               | .00        | .04*              | -.01       |
| Hobby                      | .02               | .01        | .06**             | .03        | .03               | .01        |
| Self-help                  | -.03              | -.05*      | .01               | -.03       | .00               | -.01       |
| Internet                   | -.01              | -.01       | .02               | .02        | -.01              | .00        |
| Other                      | .01               | -.01       | .02               | -.01       | .06**             | .05*       |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>  | 1.4**             |            | 2.9**             |            | 2.0**             |            |
| <i>Total R-square</i>      | 9.5**             |            | 7.8**             |            | 12.0**            |            |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$

people who have five or more memberships were more tolerant than non-members ( $\beta = .06$ ), the overall effect of multiple memberships was not significant.

On the other hand, the effect of membership that depends on types of association turned out to be significant across all relational values. Social trust was more likely to be boosted when people join associations for youth ( $\beta = .04$ ), charity or social welfare ( $\beta = .04$ ), business/professional ( $\beta = .08$ ), or service/fraternity ( $\beta = .05$ ). Many more associations influenced their members to talk with others more; membership in associations of religion ( $\beta = .06$ ), sports ( $\beta = .06$ ), youth ( $\beta = .09$ ), school ( $\beta = .05$ ), neighborhood ( $\beta = .13$ ), seniors ( $\beta = .05$ ), charity ( $\beta = .06$ ), service ( $\beta = .05$ ), or hobby ( $\beta = .06$ ) significantly contributed to the increase in social talking. For tolerance, the effect of associational type was significant but the direction of the relations was mixed. Whereas associations for charity ( $\beta = .06$ ), ethnic/civic rights ( $\beta = .05$ ), political issues ( $\beta = .05$ ), and literacy/art ( $\beta = .04$ ) played a significantly positive role in promoting tolerance level independently, involvement in religious associations ( $\beta = -.09$ ) and school-related associations ( $\beta = -.07$ ) was more likely to make people less tolerant.

Using data from the American Citizen Participation Study, the effect of formal membership was also tested against political talk and tolerance (see Table 7). The demographic block explained 17.6% of the variance in political talk with influences by age ( $\beta = .09$ ), being male ( $\beta = -.12$ ), education ( $\beta = .27$ ), and income ( $\beta = .17$ ). Newspaper reading ( $\beta = .37$ ) showed the strongest influence on political talk and television hard news viewing ( $\beta = .15$ ) also increased interpersonal communication about politics. Moreover, those who join more voluntary associations tended to talk about politics more ( $\beta = .18$ ).

Table 7. Predicting Relational Values from Formal Membership  
(American Citizen Participation Study)

|                              | Political talk        |            | Tolerance             |            |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|                              | Before-<br>entry beta | Final beta | Before-<br>entry beta | Final beta |
| <u>Demographics</u>          |                       |            |                       |            |
| Age                          | .09**                 | -.04*      | -.14**                | -.18**     |
| Gender                       | -.12**                | -.08**     | .05**                 | .06**      |
| Education                    | .27**                 | .12**      | .28**                 | .24**      |
| Income                       | .17**                 | .07**      | .10**                 | .07**      |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 17.6**                |            | 13.8**                |            |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>        |                       |            |                       |            |
| Newspaper                    | .37**                 | .33**      | .08**                 | .06**      |
| Television hard news         | .15**                 | .08**      | .04                   | .02        |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 12.0**                |            | 0.6**                 |            |
| <u>Structure of Relation</u> |                       |            |                       |            |
| Formal Membership            | .18**                 | .18**      | .07**                 | .07**      |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 2.1**                 |            | 0.3**                 |            |
| <i>Total R-square</i>        | 31.7**                |            | 14.7**                |            |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$



This tendency was in fact the result of multiple memberships in that the level of political talk gradually rose as the membership number increased (see Table 8). Also, in 15 out of 20 cases, being a member of an association was playing as a significant predictor for talking about politics.

Similar to other values, higher levels of education ( $\beta = .28$ ) and income ( $\beta = .10$ ) also increased the level of tolerance (see Table 7). Intolerance, on the other hand, was increased with age ( $\beta = -.14$ ). Gender mattered, as females ( $\beta = .05$ ) were more likely to be tolerant than males. And only newspaper reading ( $\beta = .08$ ), not television news use, promoted a tolerant attitude. Associational participation additionally explained the level of tolerance ( $\beta = .07$ ), accounting for a 0.3% increase in the variance in tolerance. In detail, the level of tolerance became significantly greater among those who were members of at least four associations or more (see Table 8). Interestingly, the overall positive impact of associational membership on tolerance turned out to be, in fact, a result of a combination of both tolerance and intolerance generated by different memberships. While political ( $\beta = .08$ ), literary/art ( $\beta = .06$ ), education ( $\beta = .05$ ), and culture ( $\beta = .09$ ) groups help members develop tolerant attitudes, memberships in veteran ( $\beta = -.05$ ) and ethnic ( $\beta = -.08$ ) groups had a detrimental effect on tolerance. When these effects were combined, the positive effects offset much of the negative impacts.

The measure of formal associational membership in the National Election Data is different from that used in the other studies in that it asked respondents to self-report the number of organizations that they are members of, without presenting exemplary categories of associations, and this resulted in a distribution of membership that was highly skewed to non-members (see Table 4). With this caution in mind, I also ran regression analyses to examine

Table 8. Effect of Multiple Membership and Membership Type on Relational Values (American Citizen Participation Study)

|                            | Political talk    |            | Tolerance         |            |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
|                            | Before-entry beta | Final beta | Before-entry beta | Final beta |
| <u>Multiple Membership</u> |                   |            |                   |            |
| One                        | -.03              | .07**      | (-.03)            | (.01)      |
| Two                        | -.01              | .10**      | (.02)             | (.05)      |
| Three                      | .03               | .12**      | (-.04)            | (.00)      |
| Four                       | .04*              | .13**      | .05*              | .07**      |
| Five or more               | .12**             | .22**      | .06*              | .09**      |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>  | 2.7**             |            | 0.8**             |            |
| <i>Total R2</i>            | 32.3**            |            | 15.1**            |            |
| <u>Type of Membership</u>  |                   |            |                   |            |
| Service/Fraternal          | .04*              | .01        | -.02              | -.01       |
| Veteran                    | .04               | .04        | -.05*             | -.06**     |
| Religious                  | .04*              | .03        | -.03              | -.04       |
| Ethnic                     | .07**             | .06**      | -.08**            | -.08**     |
| Senior Citizens            | -.04              | -.06**     | .03               | .04        |
| Women                      | .05**             | .02        | .00               | -.01       |
| Union                      | .02               | .00        | .01               | .02        |
| Business/Professional      | .06**             | .03        | .03               | .03        |
| Political                  | .06**             | .04        | .08**             | .06**      |
| Civic                      | .07**             | .05*       | .02               | .01        |
| Liberal/Conservative       | .07**             | .05**      | .01               | .00        |
| Elections                  | .09**             | .06**      | .01               | .00        |
| Youth                      | .05*              | .02        | -.01              | -.02       |
| Literary/Art               | .04*              | .02        | .06**             | .04        |
| Hobby/Sports               | .08**             | .06**      | .01               | .00        |
| Neighborhood               | .07**             | .05*       | .02               | -.01       |
| Health Service             | .06**             | .01        | .04               | .03        |
| Education                  | .03               | .00        | .05*              | .03        |
| Cultural                   | .03               | -.02       | .09**             | .08**      |
| Other                      | .03               | .02        | .05*              | .03        |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>  | 3.5**             |            | 3.0**             |            |
| <i>Total R2</i>            | 32.4**            |            | 16.7              |            |

Note: \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01

the effect of formal membership on social trust, political talk, and tolerance. As in Table 9, associational involvements turned out to significantly promote social trust ( $\beta = .10$ ), and political talk ( $\beta = .13$ ), but not tolerance.

### **Social Resources Facilitating Political Participation**

#### **Political Mobilizing Effects of Social Resources**

The first political participation model presented in Figure 2 showed a good overall model fit, with a Chi-square of 1.71 ( $df = 1, N = 2,481$ ) and a p-value of 0.19. Other fit indices also showed a good fit, with GIF = 1.0 and RMR = 0.02. The squared multiple correlations by the structural model were 15.2% for political interest, 15.1% for newspaper reading, 9.0% for television watching, 17.0% for membership, 6.3% for social talk, 9.1% for social trust, and 10.6% for tolerance. Also, 7.7% of the variance in political trust, 23.5% of the variance in political knowledge, and 26.9% of the variance in political participation were accounted for by the model.

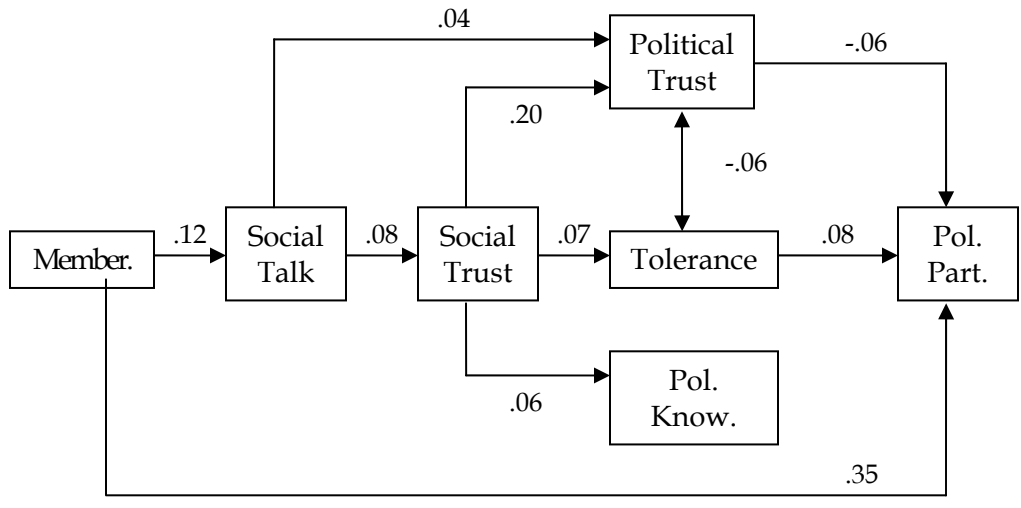
Table 10 shows the impacts of four demographic variables on political participation. Age had a negative direct effect ( $\gamma = -.07$ ) on political participation but the indirect effect was positive ( $\gamma = .07$ ), resulting in an insignificant total effect. Although age had positive links with many variables in the model, including political interest ( $\gamma = .25$ ), newspaper ( $\gamma = .23$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .07$ ), social talk ( $\gamma = .12$ ), and political knowledge ( $\gamma = .13$ ), the negative link between age and tolerance ( $\gamma = -.18$ ) counterbalanced much of the positive indirect effects.

Gender did not have a direct impact on political participation. Indirectly, however, males ( $\gamma = -.03$ ) turned out to be more involved

Table 9. Predicting Relational Values from Formal Membership  
(National Election Study)

|                              | Social trust             |               | Political talk           |               | Tolerance                |               |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                              | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta | Before-<br>entry<br>beta | Final<br>beta |
| <u>Demographics</u>          |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Age                          | .17**                    | .18**         | .02                      | -.04          | -.12**                   | -.14**        |
| Gender                       | -.01                     | .00           | .00                      | .00           | .12**                    | .13**         |
| Education                    | .18**                    | .16**         | .15**                    | .11**         | .19**                    | .16**         |
| Income                       | .12**                    | .10**         | .10**                    | .07*          | .07                      | .05           |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 9.2**                    |               | 4.5**                    |               | 7.5**                    |               |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>        |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Newspaper                    | .02                      | .02           | .11**                    | .08*          | .07*                     | .06           |
| Television news              | -.08*                    | -.08*         | .11**                    | .11**         | .03                      | .02           |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 0.6*                     |               | 1.9**                    |               | 0.4                      |               |
| <u>Structure of Relation</u> |                          |               |                          |               |                          |               |
| Formal Membership            | .10**                    | .10**         | .13**                    | .13**         | .06                      | .06           |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>    | 0.9**                    |               | 1.5**                    |               | 0.3                      |               |
| <i>Total R-square</i>        | 10.7**                   |               | 7.9**                    |               | 8.3**                    |               |

Note: \*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01



Note. The exogenous variables were controlled but not included.

Figure 2. Structural Model of Political Participation (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

Table 10. Effects of Exogenous Variables  
(Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|                                | Age   | Gender | Education | Income |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Political Interest             | .25*  | -.08*  | .24*      | .09*   |
|                                | .25*  | -.08*  | .24*      | .09*   |
| Newspaper                      | .23*  | -.05*  | .07*      | .12*   |
|                                | .05*  | -.01*  | .04*      | .02*   |
|                                | .28*  | -.06*  | .11*      | .13*   |
| Television                     | -     | .04*   | -.15*     | -.19*  |
|                                | -     | -      | -.01*     | -      |
|                                | -     | .04*   | -.16*     | -.19*  |
| Membership                     | -     | -      | .21*      | .12*   |
|                                | .07*  | -.02*  | .06*      | .03*   |
|                                | .09*  | -      | .27*      | .15*   |
| Social talk                    | .12*  | -      | -         | -      |
|                                | .04*  | -.02*  | .06*      | .05*   |
|                                | .16*  | -      | -         | .07*   |
| Social trust                   | .07*  | -      | .11*      | .08*   |
|                                | .05*  | -.02*  | .04*      | .04*   |
|                                | .12*  | -      | .15*      | .12*   |
| Tolerance                      | -.18* | -      | .16*      | .09*   |
|                                | .04*  | -.01*  | .03*      | .03*   |
|                                | -.14* | -      | .19*      | .12*   |
| Political trust                | -     | -      | -         | -      |
|                                | .07*  | -.01*  | .06*      | .05*   |
|                                | .09*  | -      | .09*      | -      |
| Political knowledge            | .13*  | -.09*  | .16*      | .07*   |
|                                | .09*  | -.03*  | .09*      | .05*   |
|                                | .22*  | -.12*  | .25*      | .12*   |
| <i>Political Participation</i> | -.07* | -      | -         | .06*   |
|                                | .07*  | -.03*  | .17*      | .09*   |
|                                | -     | -      | .20*      | .15*   |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are coefficients indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.

politically. This was also supported by other links indicating that males were more likely to be interested in politics ( $\gamma = -.08$ ), politically more knowledgeable ( $\gamma = -.09$ ) and read more newspapers ( $\gamma = -.05$ ).

Education was related to political participation mostly through indirect paths ( $\gamma = .17$ ), especially through positive links with political interest ( $\gamma = .24$ ), newspaper reading ( $\gamma = .07$ ), political knowledge ( $\gamma = .16$ ), and with social capital variables including membership ( $\gamma = .21$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .11$ ), and tolerance ( $\gamma = .16$ ). Income had a stronger indirect effect ( $\gamma = .09$ ) than direct effect ( $\gamma = .06$ ). Relationships contributing to the significant indirect link were similar to those with education. People with high income were associated with high levels of political interest ( $\gamma = .09$ ), newspaper reading ( $\gamma = .12$ ), membership ( $\gamma = .12$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .08$ ), tolerance ( $\gamma = .09$ ), and political knowledge ( $\gamma = .07$ ). Both education and income were negatively related to television viewing ( $\gamma = -.15$  and  $\gamma = -.19$ ), and social talk was the only variable among social capital indicators that was not accounted for by either education or income.

The effects of antecedent endogenous variables are presented in Table 11. Political interest showed both direct ( $\beta = .21$ ) and indirect impacts ( $\beta = .08$ ) on political participation. These indirect links were accounted for by the positive relationships political interest had with almost every variable in the model, except television and tolerance.

The positive links that newspaper use had, not only with all of the social resource variables but with political trust and political knowledge added, accounted for the significant indirect impact of newspaper reading ( $\beta = .04$ ) on political participation. Nevertheless, newspaper reading had no direct impact on political participation. Television use, on the other hand, was not

Table 11. Effects of Endogenous Variables  
(Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|                                | (a)  | (b)  | (c)   | (d)  | (e)  | (f)   | (g)                 | (h)   | (i) |
|--------------------------------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|---------------------|-------|-----|
| Political Interest (a)         |      |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
| Newspaper (b)                  | .18* |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .18* |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
| Television (c)                 | -    |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | -    |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
| Membership (d)                 | .19* | .09* | -     |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .02* |      |       |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .20* | .09* | -     |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
| Social talk (e)                | .05* | .08* | -.08* | .12* |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .04* | .01* | -     |      |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .09* | .09* | -.08* | .12* |      |       |                     |       |     |
| Social trust (f)               | .06* | .08* | -.08* | -    | .08* |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .03* | .01* | -.01* | .01* |      |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .09* | .09* | -.08* | -    | .08* |       |                     |       |     |
| Tolerance (g)                  | -    | .08* | -.04* | -    | -    | .07*  |                     |       |     |
|                                | .02* | -    | -.01* | -    | -    | -.01* |                     |       |     |
|                                | .05* | .08* | -.05* | -    | -    | .06*  |                     |       |     |
| Political trust (h)            | .11* | .05* | -     | -    | .04* | .20*  | -.06 <sup>ψ</sup> * |       |     |
|                                | .03* | .02* | -.02* | .01* | .02* |       |                     |       |     |
|                                | .14* | .07* | -     | -    | .06* | .20*  |                     |       |     |
| Political knowledge (i)        | .23* | .11* | -     | -    | -    | .06*  | -                   | -     |     |
|                                | .03* | -    | -.01* | -    | .01* | -     | -                   | -     |     |
|                                | .26* | .12* | -.04* | -    | -    | .06*  | -                   | -     |     |
| <i>Political Participation</i> | .21* | -    | -     | .35* | -    | -     | .08*                | -.06* | -   |
|                                | .08* | .04* | -     | -    | -    | -     | -                   | -     | -   |
|                                | .29* | -    | -     | .35* | -    | -     | .08*                | -.06* | -   |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.



related to political participation either directly or indirectly, despite the negative relations with social talk ( $\beta = -.08$ ), social trust ( $\beta = -.08$ ), and tolerance ( $\beta = -.04$ ).

The parts played by the social capital variables with respect to political participation showed much more complicated relational patterns. On the surface, only formal membership ( $\beta = .35$ ) and tolerance ( $\beta = .08$ ) were found to have direct impacts on political participation. Indirectly, however, far more entangled relationships among social trust, social talk, and tolerance were present, where political trust and political knowledge were playing unique roles, providing some explanations for the mechanism.

Most of all, formal membership had a direct impact on social talk ( $\beta = .12$ ) but no impact on any other variables in the model, which ultimately caused its indirect impact to be insignificant. Social talk consequently had positive links with social trust ( $\beta = .08$ ) and political trust ( $\beta = .04$ ), but it did not affect level of tolerance or political knowledge. Nevertheless, neither talking at social settings nor social trust related to political participation at any level.

Tolerance was neither membership-based nor affected by social talk. Only those who trust others tended to be more tolerant ( $\beta = .07$ ).

Political trust turned out to hold a very important key to explaining the function of social trust in the process of political participation. That is, the seemingly insignificant effect of social trust on political participation might have something to do with its strong relevance to political trust ( $\beta = .20$ ) and, subsequently, the negative impact of political trust ( $\beta = -.06$ ) on political participation. Moreover, political trust was negatively associated with

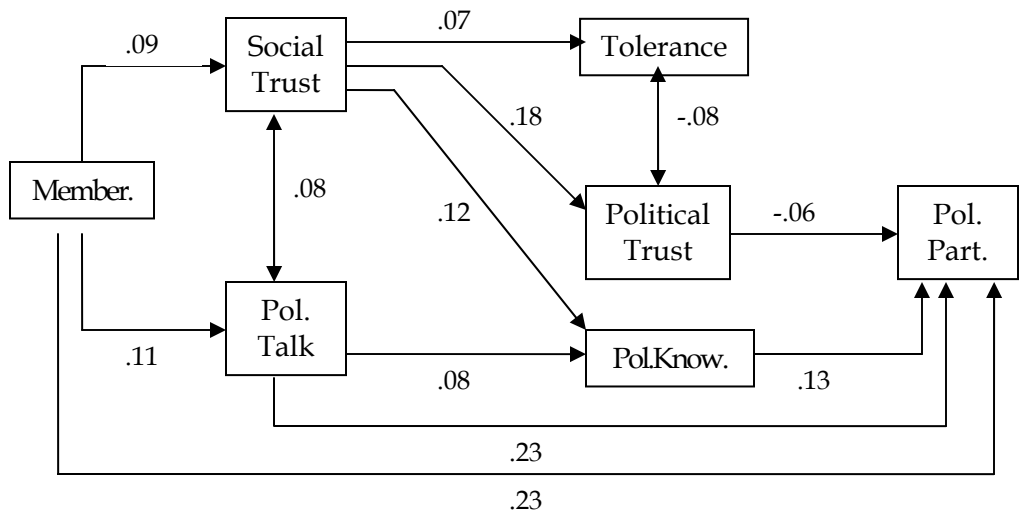
tolerance ( $\psi = -.06$ ). Finally, political knowledge did not have a direct impact on political participation.

### **Political Mobilizing Effects of Politically Relevant Social Resources**

Next, the political participation model was run with the National Election Study data, which allowed examining the impacts of more politically relevant social resources, particularly in the context of an election. At an individual media-use level, exposure to television hard news use was examined, for it was more likely to provide politically relevant information, compared with general overall exposure. At a social resource level, talking about politics with others has been known as a direct political stimulus toward participatory outcomes, which social conversation cannot provide.

The relationships specified as in Figure 3 produced a saturated model. This model accounted for a total of 34.2 % of the variance in political participation. The squared multiple correlations for the other endogenous variables were 11.2% for campaign interest, 16.8% for newspaper reading, 16.6% for television news watching, 11.2% for membership, 17.0% for political talk, 10.9% for social trust, 10.1% for tolerance, and 3.6% and 40.8% for political trust and political knowledge, respectively.

Similar to the results obtained with the previous model, demographics manifested their impacts indirectly rather than directly (see Table 12). The impact of age ( $\gamma = .09$ ) on political participation was valid only through indirect links. Among the relationships accounting for the indirect effects, the positive impacts on many variables, such as campaign interest ( $\gamma = .21$ ), newspaper ( $\gamma = .33$ ), television hard news ( $\gamma = .25$ ), social trust ( $\gamma = .18$ ), and political knowledge ( $\gamma = .14$ ), seemed to be slightly offset by the negative



Note. The exogenous variables were controlled but not included.

Figure 3. Structural Model of Political Participation (National Election Study)

Table 12. Effects of Exogenous Variables  
(National Election Study)

|                         | Age   | Gender | Education | Income |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Campaign interest       | .21*  | -.09*  | .20*      | .08*   |
|                         | .21*  | -.09*  | .20*      | .08*   |
| Newspaper               | .33*  | -.08*  | .10*      | .10*   |
|                         | -     | -      | -         | -      |
|                         | .35*  | -.08*  | .12*      | .11*   |
| Television hard news    | .25*  | .09*   | -.08*     | -      |
|                         | .06*  | -.02*  | .05*      | .02*   |
|                         | .31*  | -      | -         | -      |
| Membership              | -     | -      | .21*      | .11*   |
|                         | -     | -.02*  | .03*      | .02*   |
|                         | -     | -      | .24*      | .13*   |
| Social trust            | .18*  | -      | .15*      | -      |
|                         | -     | -      | .04*      | .02*   |
|                         | .16*  | -      | .19*      | .09*   |
| Political talk          | -.07* | -      | -         | -      |
|                         | .10*  | -.03*  | .10*      | .05*   |
|                         | -     | -      | .12*      | .12*   |
| Tolerance               | -.16* | .12*   | .15*      | -      |
|                         | .04*  | -      | .03*      | .02*   |
|                         | -.12* | .13*   | .18*      | .08*   |
| Political trust         | -     | -      | -         | -      |
|                         | -     | -      | -         | -      |
|                         | -     | -      | -         | -      |
| Political knowledge     | .14*  | -.14*  | .24*      | .13*   |
|                         | .11*  | -.03*  | .11*      | .06*   |
|                         | .25*  | -.17*  | .35*      | .19*   |
| Political Participation | -     | -      | .08*      | -      |
|                         | .09*  | -      | .18*      | .10*   |
|                         | .08*  | -      | .26*      | .09*   |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are coefficients indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.

impact of age on tolerance ( $\gamma = -.16$ ). Although the direct link between age and political talk was also negative ( $\gamma = -.07$ ), it did not contribute to the offset because the positive indirect links ( $\gamma = .10$ ) made the negativity disappear. Gender did not relate to political participation at all.

The indirect impact ( $\gamma = .18$ ) was greater than the direct impact ( $\gamma = .08$ ) for education, too, explaining its positive links with almost all the variables in the model, either directly or totally, except for political trust. The positive relationships that income had with other variables, aside from television hard news and political trust, also made its indirect impact on political participation significant ( $\gamma = .10$ ).

The influences of endogenous variables are presented in Table 13. Whereas interest in the ongoing campaign directly ( $\beta = .23$ ) influenced political mobilization, its strong impacts on television hard news use ( $\beta = .27$ ), talking about politics ( $\beta = .23$ ), and political knowledge ( $\beta = .20$ ) were especially noteworthy in accounting for the indirectly significant influence of campaign interest on political participation ( $\beta = .13$ ). The more respondents were interested in campaigns, however, the less likely they were to trust political systems to do the right things ( $\beta = -.07$ ).

Although newspaper use and television hard news use were reinforcing each other's reliance ( $\psi = .09$ ), neither use was related to political participation. Reading newspapers, however, increased political participation indirectly ( $\beta = .06$ ) through its positive effects on membership ( $\beta = .08$ ), political talk ( $\beta = .07$ ), and political knowledge ( $\beta = .15$ ).

Associational membership facilitated political participation both directly ( $\beta = .23$ ), and indirectly ( $\beta = .03$ ) by generating social trust ( $\beta = .09$ ) and political talk ( $\beta = .11$ ). Sequentially, social trust and political talk turned

Table 13. Effects of Endogenous Variables  
(National Election Study)

|                                | (a)   | (b)          | (c)   | (d)  | (e)          | (f)  | (g)           | (h)   | (i)  |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------|-------|------|--------------|------|---------------|-------|------|
| Campaign Interest (a)          |       |              |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
| Newspaper (b)                  | -     |              |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -     |              |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
| Television (c)                 | .27*  |              |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | .27*  | .09 $\psi$ * |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
| Membership (d)                 | .08*  | .08*         | -.07* |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -     |              |       |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -     | .08*         | -.07* |      |              |      |               |       |      |
| Social trust (e)               | .08*  | -            | -.11* | .09* |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -.02* | -            | -     |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | .05*  | -            | -.12* | .09* |              |      |               |       |      |
| Political talk (f)             | .34*  | .07*         | -     | .11* |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -     | -            | -     |      |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | .36*  | .08*         | -     | .11* | .08 $\psi$ * |      |               |       |      |
| Tolerance (g)                  | -     | -            | -     | -    | .07*         | -    |               |       |      |
|                                | .04*  | -            | -     | .01* |              |      |               |       |      |
|                                | -     | .07*         | -     | -    | .07*         | -    |               |       |      |
| Political trust                | -.07* | -            | -     | -    | .18*         | -    | -.08 $\psi$ * |       |      |
|                                | -     | -            | -.02* | -    | -            | -    |               |       |      |
|                                | -.08* | -            | -     | -    | .17*         | -    | -.09*         |       |      |
| Political knowledge (i)        | .20*  | .15*         | -     | -    | .12*         | .08* | -             | -     |      |
|                                | .04*  | -            | -.02* | .02* | -            | -    | -             | -     |      |
|                                | .24*  | .16*         | -     | .06* | .12*         | .09* | -             | -     |      |
| <i>Political Participation</i> | .23*  | -            | -     | .23* | -            | .23* | -             | -.06* | .13* |
|                                | .13*  | .06*         | -     | .03* | -            | .02* | .01*          | -     | -    |
|                                | .36*  | -            | -     | .26* | -            | .25* | -             | -.07* | .13* |

Notes: 1) Cell entries are coefficients indicating direct (first row), indirect (second row) and total (third row) effects.

2) \* $p \leq .05$

3) Coefficients marked with  $\psi$  represent bi-directional psi-coefficients.

out to vary together ( $\psi = .08$ ) as they serve different roles in the process of political mobilization.<sup>16</sup> Talking with others about politics, on the one hand, fostered political involvement both directly ( $\beta = .23$ ), and indirectly ( $\beta = .02$ ) through enhanced political knowledge ( $\beta = .08$ ). The role of social trust, on the other hand, was trickier in that it did not have any impact on political participation, despite its positive links with tolerance ( $\beta = .07$ ), political trust ( $\beta = .18$ ), and political knowledge ( $\beta = .12$ ). Among these three significant links, the more people trust the government or political system, the less they participate ( $\beta = -.06$ ). On the contrary, political informedness ( $\beta = .13$ ) advanced the increase in political participation. Although tolerance did not make it to political participation, being tolerant made people less trusting politically and vice versa ( $\psi = -.08$ ).

### **Moderating Effect of Social Resources in Facilitating Political Participation**

The following analyses tested the final set of research questions dealing with how the interplay between capitals at the individual level, i.e., education and mass media use, and social capital assets accounts for political participation.

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<sup>16</sup> When the relationships between social trust and political talk were causally modeled, the link from social trust to political talk had  $\beta = .09$ , and the link from political talk to social trust was  $\beta = .10$  (results not shown).

### **Interaction Effects with Education**

In order to examine whether and how social resources moderate the relationship between education and political participation, a standardized multiplicative term between education and each of the four social resource variables was entered in four separate hierarchical regression analyses after controlling for demographics, media use, and the social resource variable of interest.

From the Social Capital Benchmark Study, education was found to significantly interact with two forms of social resources (see Table 14). Among the demographics, education's main effect on political participation was significant, as expected ( $\beta = .20$ ). After controlling for demographics, political attitude, and media use, associational membership showed a strong main effect ( $\beta = .36$ ) and a significant interaction effect with education ( $\beta = .05$ ). The finding for the significant interaction term between education and formal membership was plotted in Figure 4. As indicated by a steeper slope for the high-education group, the positive effect of formal membership on political participation was significantly greater for those who are highly educated than for the less educated. Consequently, the participation inequality initially created by human capital became larger with the increase in involvement in associational activities, a form of the social resources.

For social talk, the interaction effect with education was also significant at  $\beta = .05$  despite a relatively marginal main effect ( $\beta = .04$ ). When plotted, the education-based participation gap appeared even more exacerbated by the seemingly contrasting influences of social talk on two educational subgroups (see Figure 5). That is, as people talk with others more frequently, the more educated tended to become more involved as political participants while the



Table 14. Interaction Effect between Social Resource and Education  
(Social Capital Benchmark Study)

|                           | Education<br>x<br>Membership | Education<br>x<br>Social talk |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Demographics</u>       |                              |                               |
| Age                       |                              | (.01)                         |
| Gender                    |                              | (.00)                         |
| Education                 |                              | .20**                         |
| Income                    |                              | .15**                         |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>       |                              | 8.7**                         |
| <u>Political Attitude</u> |                              |                               |
| Political interest        |                              | .28**                         |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>       |                              | 6.8**                         |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>     |                              |                               |
| Newspaper                 |                              | (.03)                         |
| Television                |                              | (-.04)                        |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> |                              | 0.2*                          |
| <u>Social Resource</u>    |                              |                               |
| Membership                | .36**                        |                               |
| Social talk               |                              | .04*                          |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> | 10.4**                       | 0.2*                          |
| <u>Interaction</u>        |                              |                               |
| Educ. * Social resource   | .05**                        | .05*                          |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> | 0.2**                        | 0.2*                          |
| <i>Total R2</i>           | 26.8**                       | 16.2**                        |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$

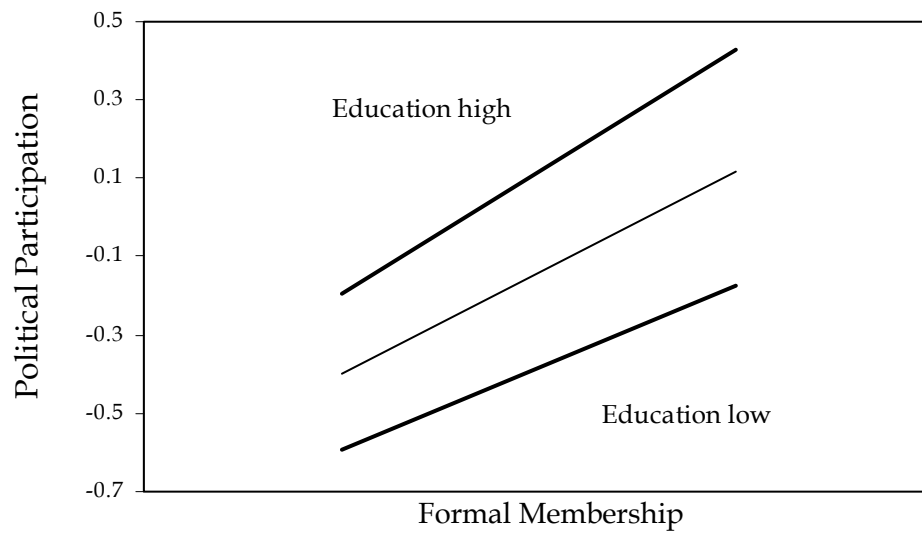


Figure 4. Interaction Effect between Formal Membership and Education (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

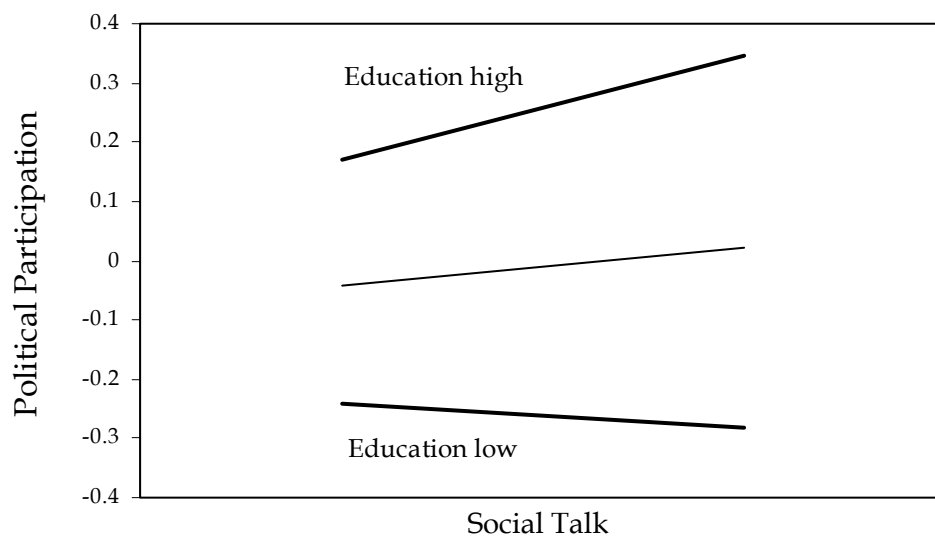


Figure 5. Interaction Effect between Social Talk and Education  
(Social Capital Benchmark Study)

less educated were either not affected much or showed a tendency to further withdraw from participatory behaviors.

In a similar way, formal membership and talking about politics with others turned out to significantly interact with education in accounting for political mobilization in the more politically relevant context based on data from the National Election Study (see Table 15). Again, education showed a significant main effect at  $\beta = .25$ . After controlling for demographics, campaign interest, and news media use, both formal membership and political talk showed strong main effects ( $\beta = .25$  and  $\beta = .28$ , respectively).

Despite independent positive main effects, education and formal membership turned out to interact negatively ( $\beta = -.07$ ). The plot in Figure 6 shows how this negative interaction influences the relationship between education and political participation. Noticeably, the slope indicating the main effect of formal membership on political participation was steeper for the low-education group than for the high-education group. This suggested that the positive correlation between education and political participation became weaker as people got more involved in associational activities. This may be the case where the rather steady slope for the high-education group was the result of the ceiling imposed by formal membership. Because there is a limit to the number of memberships one can have, it is possible that, beyond a certain point, additional memberships make no difference in its mobilizing impact.

On the other hand, the result of the significant interaction effect that political talk had with education ( $\beta = .11$ ) is shown in Figure 7. As indicated by the steeper slope for the high-education group, the highly educated were more likely to participate politically than the less educated, and this educational difference in political participation was far greater when people

Table 15. Interaction Effect between Social Resource and Education  
(National Election Study)

|                           | Education<br>x<br>Membership | Education<br>x<br>Political talk |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Demographics</u>       |                              |                                  |
| Age                       |                              | .07*                             |
| Gender                    |                              | (-.01)                           |
| Education                 |                              | .25**                            |
| Income                    |                              | .10**                            |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>       |                              | 10.0**                           |
| <u>Political Attitude</u> |                              |                                  |
| Campaign interest         |                              | .35**                            |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>       |                              | 10.8**                           |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>     |                              |                                  |
| Newspaper                 |                              | (.05)                            |
| Television hard news      |                              | (-.04)                           |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> |                              | 0.3                              |
| <u>Social Resource</u>    |                              |                                  |
| Membership                | .25**                        |                                  |
| Political talk            |                              | .28*                             |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> | 5.7**                        | 6.4*                             |
| <u>Interaction</u>        |                              |                                  |
| Educ. * Social resource   | -.07*                        | .11**                            |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i> | 0.4**                        | 1.3**                            |
| <i>Total R2</i>           | 27.2**                       | 28.8**                           |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$

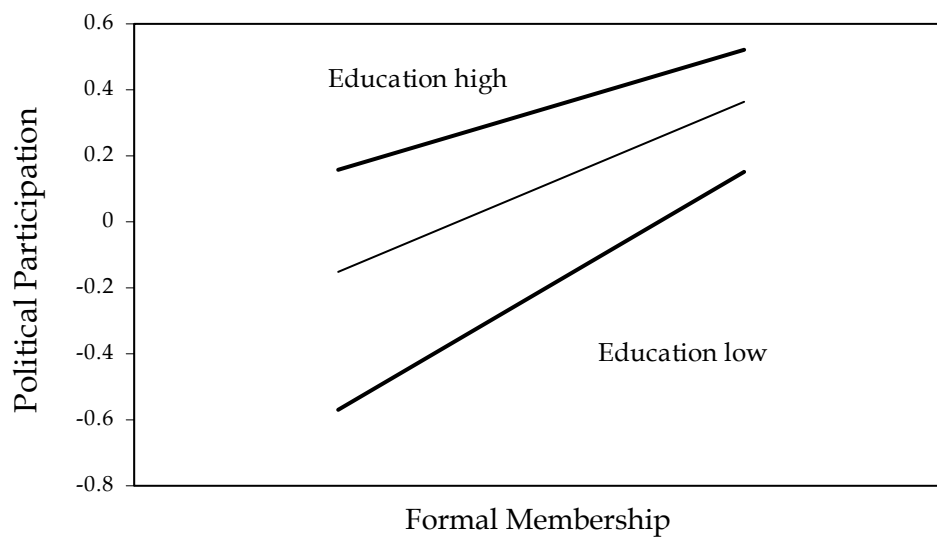


Figure 6. Interaction Effect between Formal Membership and Education (National Election Study)

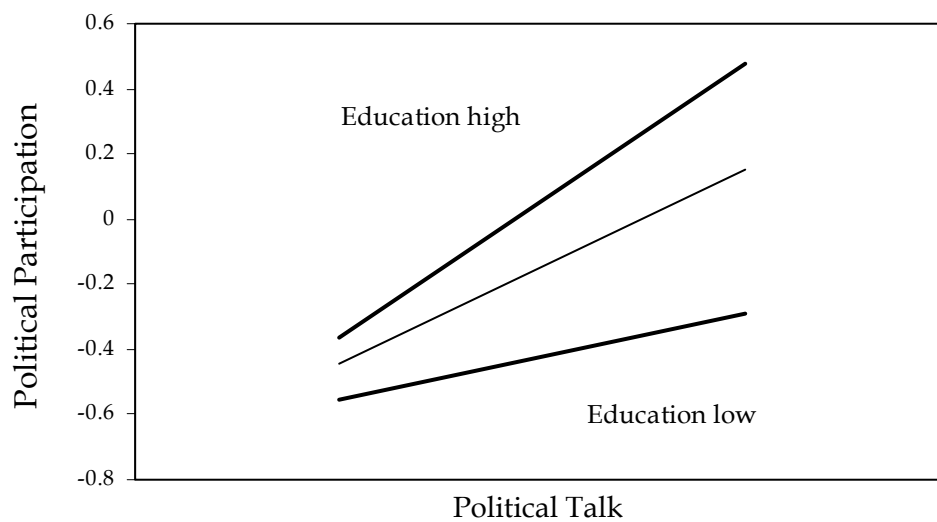


Figure 7. Interaction Effect between Political Talk and Education (National Election Study)

talk about politics more frequently than not. To the less educated groups, the mobilizing effect was relatively minimal. As a result, by benefiting the highly educated more than the less educated, the informational function of talking about politics further reinforced, rather than weakened, the educational difference in political mobilization.

### **Interaction Effects with Media Use**

Significant interplays between media use and the social resource variables were found in two relations: between the time spent watching television and social talk, and between watching television news use and formal membership (see Table 16).

Although neither measure of television use had any independent impact on political participation, the ways in which they interact with social resources could expose reasons for the ineffectiveness of television use.

First, the negative interaction effect between television watching and social talk ( $\beta = -.05$ ) in conjunction with the significant main effect of social talk ( $\beta = .04$ ) was plotted in Figure 8.1. At first look, the plot suggested that social talking encouraged political participation and this overall positive effect was far greater among those who watched television less frequently than among those who watched television more frequently. This result was of no surprise given that talking with others in social settings further amplified the negative effect of television on political participation by mobilizing the light viewers far more than the heavy viewers. In detail, however, television watching was found to play two distinctive roles depending on the level of social talking, which ultimately resulted in rendering television's overall mobilizing role insignificant. An alternative plot of the relationships across the



Table 16. Interaction Effect between Social Resource and Media Use

|                                 | Social Capital<br>Benchmark Study | National Election<br>Study   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                 | Media use<br>x<br>Social talk     | Media use<br>x<br>Membership |
| <u>Demographics</u>             |                                   |                              |
| Age                             | (.01)                             | .07*                         |
| Gender                          | (.00)                             | (-.01)                       |
| Education                       | .20**                             | .25**                        |
| Income                          | .15**                             | .10**                        |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>             | 8.7**                             | 10.0**                       |
| <u>Political Attitude</u>       |                                   |                              |
| Political interest              | .28**                             | .35**                        |
| Campaign interest               |                                   | 10.9**                       |
| <i>R-square (%)</i>             | 6.8**                             |                              |
| <u>Mass Media Use</u>           |                                   |                              |
| Newspaper                       | (.03)                             | (.05)                        |
| Television                      | (-.04)                            |                              |
| Television hard news            |                                   | (-.04)                       |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>       | 0.2*                              | .03                          |
| <u>Social Resource</u>          |                                   |                              |
| Membership                      |                                   | .25**                        |
| Social talk                     | .04*                              |                              |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>       | 0.2*                              | 5.7**                        |
| <u>Interaction</u>              |                                   |                              |
| Newspaper * Social<br>resource  | (.01)                             | (.01)                        |
| Television * Social<br>resource | -.05**                            | .08**                        |
| <i>Incr. R-square (%)</i>       | 0.3*                              | 0.6*                         |
| <i>Total R2</i>                 | 16.2**                            | 27.5**                       |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$

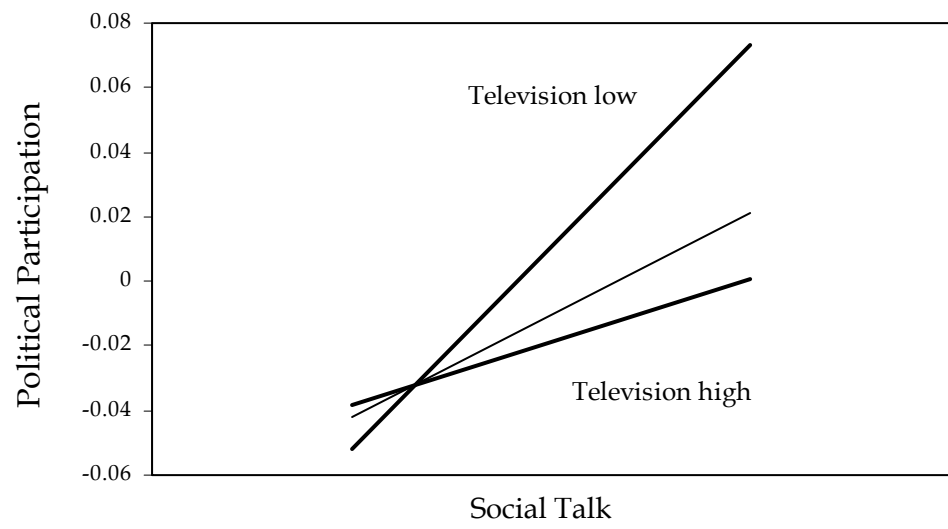


Figure 8.1 Interaction Effect between Social Talk and Television Use (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

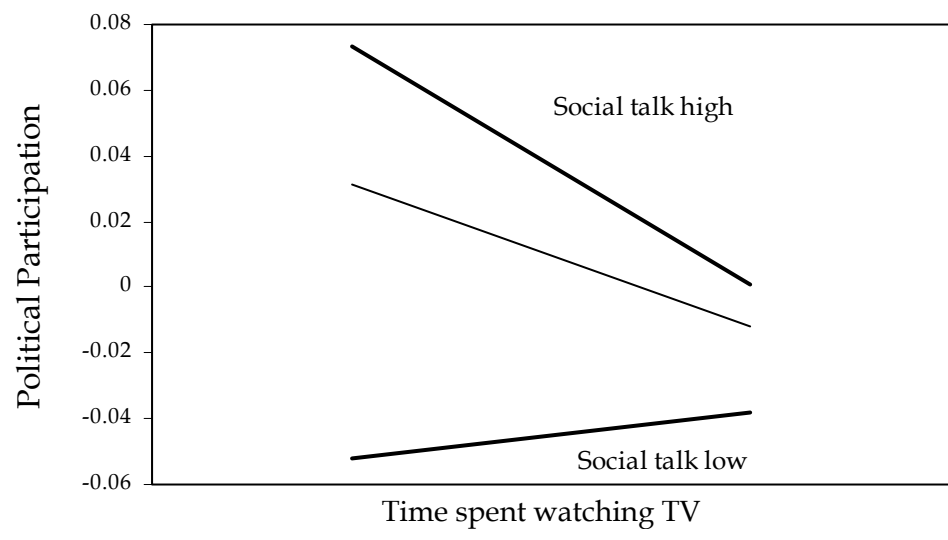


Figure 8.2. Interaction Effect between Social Talk and Television Use (Social Capital Benchmark Study)

three variables (see Figure 8.2) showed that the increase in the time spent watching television corresponded with a dramatic drop in political participation among those who talked with others more frequently. For the less frequent social talkers, by contrast, television watching did encourage political participation.

Next, following the significant main effect of formal membership ( $\beta = .25$ ), interaction between television news with formal membership was also significant at  $\beta = .08$ . As indicated in Figure 9.1, the direction of the relationship between television news and political participation was reversed from negative to positive as the level of formal membership increased. When not accompanied by the social resource, television news did not play the mobilizing role, even discouraging engagement among heavy television news viewers. However, the relationship was reversed with increases in associational membership so that those who watched television news more frequently also participated more than those who watched television news less frequently. An additional plot shows more clearly this oppositional pattern of relationships involving two membership subgroups. As in Figure 9.2, the negative function of television use on political participation was found only among those with no or fewer group memberships. For those with more group memberships, television news watching increased participation in political activities.

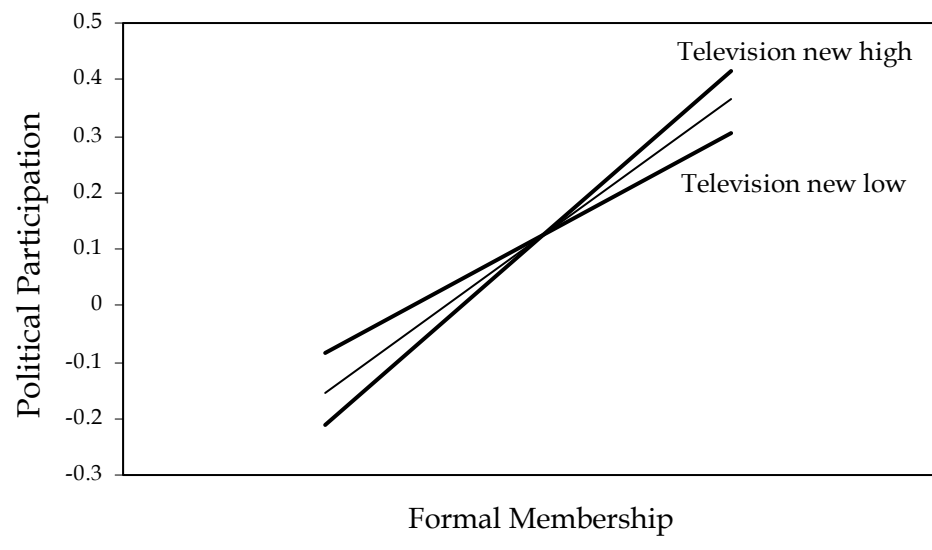


Figure 9.1. Interaction Effect between Formal Membership and Television News Use (National Election Study)

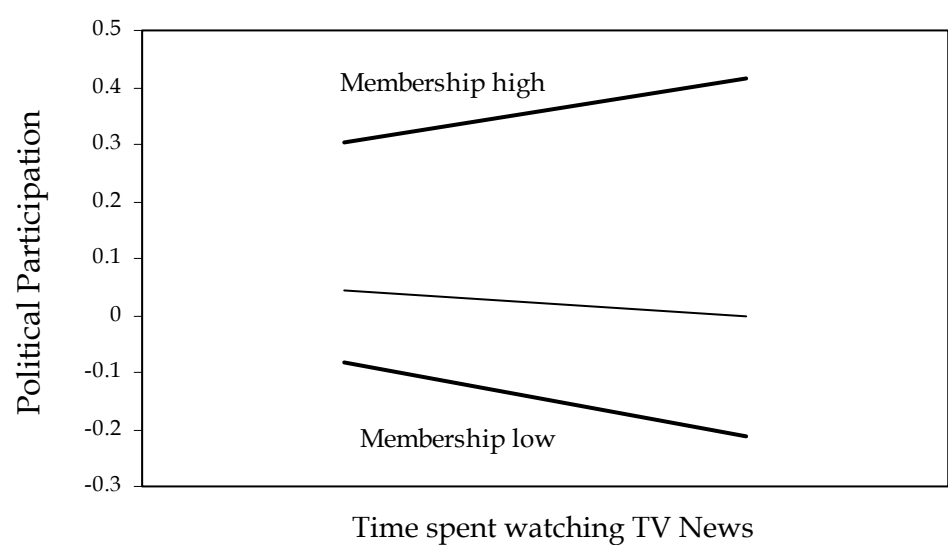


Figure 9.2. Interaction Effect between Formal Membership and Television News Use (National Election Study)

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Review of the Results**

In assessing the social explanation of political behaviors, this study avoided simply gathering dispersed social variables and examining their distinctive contributions to the participatory outcomes. Instead, I saw a need for devising a conceptual tool to embrace these social variables together into a coherent 'social resource model' and I tried to address some of the unsolved issues regarding political participation using the frameworks provided by the model. In carrying out the objectives, three sets of research questions were developed and analyzed, and meaningful results were obtained.

#### **Generation of Social Resources**

While dealing with the first set of research questions, this study demonstrated that criticisms of the conceptual ambiguity of the concept of social capital were reasonably held. As was confirmed by the poor fits of the latent variable models, social capital was not a concept representing a blanket feature by itself. Instead, it was more likely to be a composite of various resources from social relations, each of which was distinctively distributed by individual resources yet connected to each other with a functional commonality.

As a whole, those who are rich in individual resources, i.e., the older, the highly educated, the more affluent, and those who read newspapers more frequently, possessed higher levels of social capital. Individually, however, different forms of social resources were distinctively related to the various

individual resources; among other variables, tolerance tended to deteriorate as people got older, and social talk was unrelated or less related to socioeconomic status. Television watching indeed impeded building social capital, regardless of what people watched. According to one observed exception, content mattered as some have claimed (Hooghe, 2002; Moy et al., 1999; Norris, 1996; Shah, 1998): watching television news triggered political discussion with others.

Different forms of social resources were, however, still related to each other in sharing the common denominator, social capital. Such interrelationships were supported partly by the so-called 'virtuous' effect of the structural dimension of the resource on generation of other values of the resources, especially social talk and political talk. The effect on social trust was significant yet rather weak. However, not all values were defined as relational virtues. Tolerance was not universally network-based. To be more precise, it turned out to depend on network type. According to the findings of this study, joining groups that were devoted to issues of religion, ethnicity, schools or veterans affairs was identified as a source of intolerance. Nevertheless, the overall effect of associational membership on tolerance could be positive if the beneficial effect of multiple memberships was large enough to counteract the possible downside of social relations caused by certain types of group membership, as found from the American Citizen Participation Study.

### **Mobilizing Functions of Social resources**

This study showed that the multi-dimensionality and interrelationships identified in the generation of social resources were also reflected in their impacts on political participation. And this further helped to identify the key

mechanisms through which certain social resources are effectively utilized to increase citizen engagement in political activities.

Most of all, this study showed that different dimensions and forms of social resource made differential contributions to political participation. While formal associational membership showed a consistently strong effect on political participation, the roles played by relational values were far more complicated.

Despite its magnitude at the heart of social capital, social trust was not an effective resource that could be utilized in promoting political participation; trusting general others was not related to political participation at any level. More significantly, this study uncovered why the 'participation-inducing' mechanism of trust could not work under political contexts. The relationship between social trust and political trust and its impact on political participation was of particular importance to explain this. In other words, this study confirmed the wider-level leap of trust from general others to political systems or politicians. Rather contradictorily, though, the result of this study also supported the previous findings in which citizen participation was more likely to be provoked by political distrust or cynicism, not by political trust. Therefore, whereas social trust contributes collaboration at the social level by restraining the malice of self-interest, it could not do so politically because it overly subdued even a healthy dose of political distrust or cynicism.

As far as political mobilization by informational variables is concerned, this study indicated that social talk and political talk did function differently. Although interpersonal discussion about any subject was rooted in social relations, a simple flow of information did not guarantee political mobilization. Talking about political issues stimulated participation in political activities not

only directly but also by enhancing political knowledge. Social talk, in contrast, was related to neither political knowledge nor political participation.

Although talking with others socially increased the willingness to trust others, the 'trust-building mechanism' of social talk did not develop into the 'emancipating mechanism' under the political context.

Finally, tolerance was neither network-based nor affected by certain information transmitted from social or political discussions. Only those who trust others were more likely to be tolerant, supporting the affective over the cognitive mechanism of tolerance development. That is, once trusting relationships are established, dissimilarities become less conspicuous or are perceived less seriously so that people become open-minded toward differences more easily. Furthermore, being tolerant of different or oppositional political views enabled political engagement in two different ways. Political participation was facilitated directly by those who were more tolerant because of their perceived freedom to express their views and act on them (Social Capital Benchmark Study). Indirectly, on the other hand, it was also possible that if a strong faith in civil liberties develops into a constructive criticism to check how poorly political systems live up to these faiths, it may promote political participation among those who are highly tolerant (National Election Study).

### **Interaction Effects of Social Resources at the Individual Level**

This study showed that the utilization of social resources could meaningfully explain political participation above and beyond the influences of individual resources. In addition, some forms of social resources are significantly interacting with resources at the individual level, reinforcing or



substituting the relationships between the individual resources and political participation.

Most of all, the structural and the communicative forms of social resources turned out to add to the political reservoir of those who are highly educated, strengthening educational inequality. This is not to say that the less educated were not stimulated at all by having formal memberships or talking with others about politics. But it was those who had completed more years of formal education who benefited more from the potential mobilization effect of social relations and thus participated more.

The effects of social conversation and associational membership, especially on those who were in the lower bracket of education, showed two opposite exceptions. Simple talking devoid of political substance even aggravated the likelihood of participation among those who were not competent to participate in the first place. And when this ceiling was imposed on those with higher levels of education as in the National Election Study, joining formal membership played a role in complementing the lack of human resource; the effect of multiple memberships on political participation was greater for those who were in lower educational brackets.

Unlike the general assumption of the positive role of newspaper use on political participation, the findings of this study suggested that newspaper reading did not have any impact on political participation. This is in fact consistent with other studies in which newspapers' role was insignificant or even detrimental. Several factors were identified as possible causes. For example, newspapers do not cover as much information that is directly related to mobilizing people into various political activities as in the past, due partly to competition with other contents or with other media (Barnhurst & Mutz,

1997; Lemert, 1984). Increases in bad news or attack journalism focusing on scandals and the negative aspect of politics were identified as producing a “media malaise” that causes political alienation (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger, & Bennett, 1999; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Fallows, 1997; Patterson, 2002). Moy et al. (2005) also argued that the effects of newspaper reliance on political participation are not so much direct as mediated by other cognitive and affective factors. On top of this, no significant interaction was found between social resources and newspaper use in their effects on political participation.

By contrast, at least two forms of social resource were found to moderate the generally negative or insignificant effect of television use on political participation. And this revealed an interesting venue in which different types of television use and different social resources in terms of mobilizing effect can account for political participation.

First, the negative role of television use on political participation was further amplified by social resources. Although the mobilizing effect of social talk was weak, it was the light viewers who reaped the benefit from talking with others and, as a result, became politically involved. Interestingly, it was those who talked with others more frequently who were more influenced by the negative effect of television watching. The reason that the negative effect of television was more prevalent among the frequent social talkers seems to be related to the ‘time displacement’ function of television discussed earlier. In particular, this study demonstrated that the degree of displacement varied by the amount of social time. In other words, the more social time one invests in talking with others, the greater the chance that it will be replaced by time spent watching television. For those who had little social time in the first place, television’s influence was irrelevant or minimal.

From the media characteristics' point of view, the results are inconclusive in determining whether watching public affairs or news can contribute to political participation or not. By considering their interactions with social resources, this study could reveal that television news was showing two differential roles depending on the degree of the social relational benefit. That is, television news use increased the likelihood of political participation among active joiners in formal associations, but its effect was negative among those with no or fewer memberships. With respect to the stronger negative function of television news among those with a lower level of social resources, the 'worldview' explanation seemed to fit more reasonably. Sustaining the statement by Postman (1986) that "[television's] form works against the content," it seems likely that the misanthropic and individualistic worldview portrayed by television in general was no exception to the news programs. According to the finding of this study, however, this negative effect could be reduced considerably if, but only if, television news viewing was accompanied by more realistic and collaborative feedbacks based on social relations through joining formal associations. Social resources played an important role in counterbalancing the effect of television news' perceived reality on political alienation and in helping television news function in the informative role and further facilitate political participation. The double-dose effect of the potential of television news plus formal group membership, therefore, further polarized the participation gap.

## **Limitations and Remaining Issues**

### **In Data Sets**

By utilizing secondary data sources that included an extensive range of measures needed for this study, I could assess the full picture of the social resource model with respect to political participation. Despite benefits in terms of saving cost and time for data collection, especially for the national-level samples, it was unavoidable to have limitations in comparing and generalizing the results across different data sets. In order to address the shortcomings, I carefully described each type of measurement and the data collection procedures in detail in the methods section.

As far as the different political contexts are concerned between the election studies and the non-election social study, I excluded the voting item for the measure of political participation from the election studies and only dealt with rather expressive or collective forms of participation that are based on resources distinct from those required for voting. This allowed the current study to be more pertinent to the discussion of social capital because it was the collaborative type of participation, not the individualistic form of voting, that was more vulnerable to the collective action problem of free-riding.

### **In Model Building**

Besides shortcomings in data sets, it is also necessary to address some of the issues involved in building the social resource model and its political mobilizing mechanism.

Most of all, the focus on the formal, voluntary organization as the structural foundation of social resource has been criticized as the outdated

Tocquevillian romanticism of associational life (Levi, 1996). Scholars instead have suggested that studies should look at the roles played by informal networks (Ikeda, 2002; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998) or the influences by social culture or political system at the broader level (Schudson, 1998; Skocpol, 1996, March/April) to better deal with the generation or erosion of social capital.

It might be true that the informal aspects of social relations account for many daily activities and the relevant individual-level decisions, informational flows, or attitudes relatively easily. Instead of simply switching to or adding casual relations in the model, however, I tried to adhere to resources that need to be eagerly obtained and secured by individuals, and to focus on how they are transformed into collaborative assets, which tends to vary by the type of organizations. For future research, it will be surely interesting to explore how the formal and informal networks counterbalance or reinforce each other's networking. For example, it is possible that those who are active in the friends- or family-based networking might also be organizational participants. In contrast, bonds that tend to be too intense within such networks might jeopardize the motivation or capability for organizational involvement. Although looking at the problem of social decapitalization as a consequence of disconnected culture, governmental policy, or even the nature of politics rather than disconnected individuals might provide meaningful insights, too, it was beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Another issue to address is related to the focus on the utility of social resources vs. on the influence by political participation. Basically, the social resource model of this study was an attempt to explain political participation

from social activism and the relevant social values. However, several studies have pointed out that research on the political utility of social resource are less useful because the results tend to be indirect or too complicated to verify, therefore, it should be treated as endogenized to politics (see R. W. Jackman & Miller, 1998). In fact, the characteristics and abilities of the politically active were found to explain democratic values and other participatory attitudes such as political tolerance, interest or trust (M. R. Jackman, 1978; McClosky, 1964).

Nevertheless, focusing on the behavioral consequence of social resources, rather than the social and relational outcome of political resources, has more practical implications in terms of the application of the social resource model and its utility in enhancing political mobilization. This is because resources, in either additionally available forms or in substituting the previously ineffective forms, are most needed among those who are politically inactive and less resourceful. And finding ways to access to or develop proper forms of resources for them should be an important object for a successful political campaign.

With respect to developing strategies for media campaigns, this study is also constrained by not accounting for the significance of the Internet in its relation to the construction of social capital and in its politically mobilizing role. Although the problem was mainly attributed to the unavailability of the measure within the data sets used, it is still worthwhile to mention the potential of this new medium not only as an individual level resource that can interact with social resources but also as a network of relations that can constitute social resource at a virtual level through on-line communities. Putnam (2000) raises an interesting question regarding the Internet-based

social capital; whereas the “Net” can provide social capital without “barriers of time and distance,” the virtual social capital can be “a contradiction in terms” (pp. 170-171). In fact, just like television was associated with the erosion of social capital, the Internet was found to have all the features that can transform the leisure and social time into the private or individualistic time and more to reduce off-line interactions including one’s community involvement (Kraut et al., 1998; Turkle, 1996, Winter). On the other hand, because of its unfathomable capacity for information and connectivity, the Internet has been known as the most efficient tool capable of reinforcing or replacing the classic forms of social connection and furthermore political engagement (Bimber, 1998; Rheingold, 1994). Though not completely agreed, taking the relationship between the on-line and off-line interactions into consideration will enrich the social resource model by accounting for competing environments in the media system and in the networks of relations as well.

### **Implications and Suggestions**

Despite the shortcomings and remaining issues, this dissertation has important implications for the three respective research areas that were incorporated in the social resource model of political participation: social capital, media effects, and political participation.

Most of all, it contributed to the development of the concept of social capital and, in turn, to the expansion of the applicability of the concept. Although not all aspects of the concept were considered – only four forms of social resources were examined – this dissertation provided a useful analytical framework for empirically treating this hypothetical concept that is composed

of assorted features of social relations that otherwise could not have been tied together. And by empirically sorting out the complications involved in the conceptual and subsequent analytical practices of social capital, the much assumed relationships both in support of and in contrast to the concept were tested. As a result, this study confirmed that the concept did possess conflicting elements in itself, the manifestation of which should be looked at on two different levels. That is, the so-called 'dark side' of social capital was identified not only by the conflicting relevance to other forms of social resources but also by the contradictory function to a specific outcome. And these two distinct levels did not always correspond to each other, as in the case of social trust and tolerance. This further implies that, while the productive function is treated as context-specific, the model for the generation of social resources was constructed universally so that it can be applied to a broader range of behavioral consequences beyond the political context.

Second, by exposing the significant interplays between social resources and mass media use at the individual level, this dissertation played the role of corroborating some of the important issues in political communication research. For example, this study supported the line of research that focuses on the interaction between media use and interpersonal discussion in better accounting for how people get politically informed and engaged. After all, talking with others, not only as an interpersonal communicative pattern but also as a resource based on social relations, seems to hold a key to further elucidating the many ways that mass media use has impacted civic and political participation.

As far as the effect of television news is concerned, this study added new meaning to the differential roles it plays instead of being either



consistently positive or consistently negative. From the individual resource's perspective, television news has been found by some to be "news for the initiated" (Findahl & Hoijer, 1981, p.401) and "activating the active" (Norris, 2000a, p.18), of which those who are highly educated are the main beneficiaries. From the social resources perspective, this study revealed that those who were rich in social resources were also the initiated or the active in terms of utilizing information from television news, which in turn was transformed into democratic participation. In this study, the generally negative stance of television watching was further reinforced by the dual effects of the de-capitalizing and the de-mobilizing impacts of television watching. And interestingly, this combined effect was explained by television's time-displacement function, which was stronger for those who invested more time to acquire social resources

Finally, this dissertation validated the social resource model by showing that political (dis)engagement could be meaningfully explained by understanding why some people are better or more poorly mobilized into becoming political participants by utilizing certain forms of social resources, regardless of or beyond their individual capabilities or options. Furthermore, the elaborated version of the social resource model that incorporated the influence of the individual capabilities and options on the part played by social resources also showed that social resources are in fact reinforcing the works of individual capital on political participation.

Interestingly, the one very promising interactive pattern concerning the relationship between individual capital and social capital was not supported. According to those who defended the substituting role of social capital (Bourdieu, 1983; DeFilippis, 2001; Nie et al., 1996; Teachman et al., 1997; Verba

et al., 1995), social resources were expected to play a unique role in complementing and further overcoming the lack of other resources so that inequalities in the levels of political participation could be narrowed. Out of six significant interactions found, four relationships were evidence for the opposite; formal memberships, social talk, and political talk hardly worked as complementing for the less educated or for heavy television viewers. These findings are not very optimistic in terms of the development of democratic citizenship. When only those who are already capable of voicing their interests keep making their voices heard by actively participating in various political activities, the opportunities for political minorities to express their views are more likely to disappear than remain intact.

It is reasonable, then, to presume that a particular social resource that is necessary and most suitable to mobilizing those who lack specific individual resources may be different from the generally acknowledged forms of social resources. For example, participation in voluntary associations may not work as an appropriate channel for the less educated to obtain resources not possessed by them. According to Green and Brock (2005), informal interactions played roles that were as significant as those played by the formal kinds in solving collective action problems; they were particularly effective in building feelings of connectedness or social support and in providing opportunities for expressing personal views. Given that intimate and familiar relations "have greater motivation to be of assistance and are typically more easily available" (Granovetter, 1983, p.209), being "schmoozers," or having "bonding" kinds of relations or "strong ties" may well be a special route to obtaining social resources among lower status people. Scholars who approach social capital from network theories also maintain that social capital that we

know of in general may be more oriented toward higher status in society. Social capital, according to Lin (2001b), can also be significantly used “to defend against possible resource losses” (p.19), a function that is pertinent mainly to those who already have many resources. If this makes for a reasonable case, studies on the effects of social resources should consider the power-laden aspects of the use of resources. And it has further implications for future research on the social explanation of political participation. That is, the nexus where social resources meet individual resources should be the focal point for the social resource model of political participation.

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