

WEAVING COMMUNITY:
NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN DYSFUNCTIONAL
CONTEXTS

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By

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ABSTRACT

It is widely understood that there is a relationship between strong social capital, institutions, and growth (Putnam, 1993; North, 1990). However, the mechanisms for the building of social capital are still incompletely understood. A review of the literature on social networks suggests that development programs with communications components that 1) focus on creating horizontal, open networks and that 2) reinforce a sense of community through that network demonstrate stronger, measurable indicators of social capital than programs that do not include such components or that operate in environments in which such networks are not present. This proposition is developed through an exploratory case study of squatter-settlement-cum-city of Villa El Salvador in Peru. It is then validated through a structured analysis of municipalities in Colombia, selected for high indices of measured social capital and studied for the presence or absence of such networks.

Dedicated to my father, Luis Hernán Rincón, PhD.

I would have never predicted that his continuing and lifelong commitment to communications and community development would also become my own.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Social capital has become an important concept for development specialists. Broadly defined, social capital represents both the value inherent within networks of social relationships that facilitate productive activity through their embedded trust and reciprocity as well as the norms and social relationships that, within a society, facilitate coordination of action and goals. The effectiveness of these norms in coordinating and reducing uncertainty and transaction costs in economic exchange are closely linked to economic performance. In short, social capital is one of the main social mechanisms driving prosperity.

Certain variables such as the shared symbolic heritage of a community, the interplay between formalized rules and internalized cultural norms, and the historical legacies of a community are known to play a role in the growth and maintenance of the stock of social capital. Shared sets of symbols and codes form the foundation for the interactions between members of a community and their collective conceptualizations of their roles within it. Norms of social interaction and obligation emerge from these ongoing interactions; these accepted informal practices are often the source for more formalized and codified rules. Both the frequency of these interactions, and the mechanisms for enforcing these norms, are central to the emergence of trust and reciprocity. Over time, existing norms and institutions become embedded and self-reinforcing as members of a community adapt to them. Embedded norms become part of a community's historical legacy, laying the

groundwork for social, political, and economic relationships. If embedded norms are effective, these relationships have a greater chance of being effective. Conversely, ineffective norms encourage ineffective relationships. Hence, the glow from past successes leads to more successes, while the shadows from past failures continue to obscure the path to economic performance.

This relationship between strong social capital, historical legacies, functional institutions and economic growth has been widely studied from a theoretical perspective. However, the process of building social capital from scratch, in the context of past failure, is not well understood. The lack of a broad understanding of this process poses a difficulty for those seeking to resolve social problems through planned development. If the past is such an important variable in shaping the future, there may be little hope for comprehensive efforts to transform embedded social networks that have evolved around dysfunctional or nonfunctional structures of civil governance. In areas where sub-optimal social outcomes have been the norm, and where increasing returns on sub-optimal institutional processes have set in, the development specialist will find it very difficult to encourage the development of trust and reciprocity required for the collective action and cooperative behavior that are characteristic of strong social capital.

One way to begin might be to focus on the architecture underlying social networks, for social capital is rooted in the relationships between actors in a society. Social networks are the major media for transmitting both a sense of community and

information in an economy. Likewise, social networks are essential for the diffusion of new technological and political innovations. Understanding the workings and characteristics of social networks and how their design may serve to reinforce or undermine cooperation is therefore an important component of development policies.

The design of a network comprises its components, its architecture, and its capabilities (Garcia, 2001). Variations in these aspects among different networks, are important determinants of the social and cultural impact of a network. They affect existing processes of communication, which in turn are core components of social processes. Thus, components, architecture and capabilities are important variables for understanding and delineating the power relationships embedded within a network, and thus its potential for encouraging trust and reciprocity. Given these relationships, the question arises as to what type of architecture is most conducive to the development of social capital in dysfunctional regions.

This thesis addresses that question. It proposes that social capital in support of development processes is mostly likely to be generated through:

- 1) Networks that have a horizontal, open architecture.
- 2) Networks that reinforce community and identity (that is, *purposive community-reinforcing utilization*).

A horizontal network architecture is desirable because it is most conducive to fostering the repeated interactions that lead to the formation of trust and reciprocity,

both of which are central to the development of social capital. For, by definition, horizontal networks include redundancy in the connections between actors in the network, enabling multiple information channels among them. Redundancy reduces the power of potentially opportunistic actors who, under alternative designs, might position themselves as information bottlenecks, limiting the flow of information and exchange. A horizontal network arrangement is thus likely to facilitate and encourage multiple and repeated interactions between people in a community while reducing the power of those who could seek to gain by hindering such exchanges. Along similar lines, an open network architecture is desirable because it reduces barriers to entry into the social network, thereby reducing the potential dysfunctional institutions rooted in exclusive or discriminatory behavior. In essence, openness limits the ability for the horizontal network to become a bottleneck within broader social networks in which it may be embedded.

However, network architecture on its own is an incomplete tool for a development strategy—it is a staple gun without staples. The notion of purposive network utilization for community reinforcement is a key component of this proposed strategy. Community reinforcement allows members of a social group to develop not only a sense of collective ownership, but also provides the mechanisms for a transition between informal institutions based on small-scale exchanges to the formalization of these norms into a broader, shared institutional framework. Community-reinforcing utilization emphasizes language that delineates the benefits of

community membership and the shared social history of the community. It bolsters the value of cooperative and participatory behavior (thus enhancing trust), while increasing the potential negative repercussions of violating community norms and trust.

It is important to emphasize that this is not a simple causal relationship. Rather, this thesis proposes that two intertwined independent variables (*network architecture* and *purposive network utilization*), in conjunction with one another, are a precondition for the emergence of the dependent variable (*strong social capital*). An open horizontal network on its own will not have the desired effect: even in settings with very limited social capital, people still talk to each other in all sorts of decentralized interactions. Likewise, on their own, attempts to reinforce a sense of community ownership are unlikely to strengthen social capital without efforts to foster ongoing linkages between the members of the community. It is when decentralized, open, structured communal interaction meets with language and rhetoric designed to encourage a sense of economic agency, political ownership, and local identity that the necessary social bridges and ties are built, leading towards the various institutions, values and social arrangements that continue to regenerate social capital.

This thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 discusses the literatures on social capital, institutional performance, governance and development. Based on this literature, it conceptualizes and operationalizes the research question and further

examines the propositions. The chapter also draws on the literature describing the role of shared language in creating senses of community and membership. It then engages the literature on network architecture, current research in social communications, and combines these as a way of linking the various dimensions and components of social capital.

Chapter 3 serves as a case study to examine the proposition, presenting the story of Villa El Salvador (VES) in Peru, a city that started as a desert plain in 1970 with 10,000 landless, dislocated migrants and, without large amounts of external or state intervention, grew to be an incorporated city recognized worldwide as a case of successful development. This chapter argues that, of particular importance in VES is the role of its *Centro de Comunicación Popular*, a popular communications center built through community action and focused on an explicit mission of reinforcing the values, cultures, and interests of the poor and working-class inhabitants of the community through street theater, newsletters, cartoon workshops, political mobilization and eventually a radio station and a UHF television channel. Villa El Salvador may prove to be a telling example because it is a community that in 20 years developed what many other communities have been struggling to obtain for much longer.

Chapter 4 pursues a statistical evaluation of the proposition's linkages by investigating the presence of open communications networks with community reinforcing processes in Colombian municipalities where social capital is strong and

weak. This analysis provides both geographic depth to the proposition, by situating it within different contexts, as well as a quantitative test of the relationships between open network architecture and social capital formation.

Chapter 5 then brings us back to our core question of what forms of network architectures and uses of these architectures are most conducive to the development of social capital. This chapter evaluates the degree to which openness, horizontality and purposive utilization of designed or modified networks can be linked to social capital formation in both the case of Villa El Salvador and in the study of communications networks in Colombian communities.

Chapter 2: Network architecture, purposive utilization and social capital

To address the problem of how to design networks that foster social capital formation in the context of dysfunctional institutions, we must first define social capital and describe its relationship to three other concepts: institutional dysfunction, networks, and community. We begin by discussing various types of social capital and their interplay with history, institutional performance, property rights and effective governance. Next, we discuss social networks and the role they play in generating social capital. Finally, we explore the concept of purposive community-reinforcing utilization. When combined with open horizontal communications networks, purposive utilization can lead to social capital formation by encouraging community, common identity and the shared social history required for establishing effective institutions in hitherto dysfunctional environments.

2.1: Social capital, institutions and governance

Broadly defined, social capital represents the value inherent within social networks, stemming from constitutive norms and relationships that facilitate productive activity through embedded trust, reciprocity, and coordination of action and goals (Narayan-Parker, 1999; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). This value may reside within the “good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse” among individuals in society (Hanifan, 1916 cited in Putnam, 2000: 19). Likewise, it may emerge from the enhanced productivity due to close-knit relationships of trust and

reciprocity and the sanctions that maintain them. It may also inhere in improved information sharing through social networks (Coleman, 1988).

While some definitions of social capital emphasize the value available to individuals based on their associations and relationships (Granovetter, 1983; Burt, 1992; Lin, 2001), others view social capital as a collective, common good. This latter definition is most relevant to a discussion of community-oriented networks. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, we will employ the concept developed by Ostrom, treating social capital as "the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity" (2000: 276).

Although initial conceptualizations of social capital locate it within the bonds of tight social networks (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000), subsequent analyses view this 'bonding' social capital as but one of many types. The most prominent alternative is 'bridging' social capital, which encompasses the value in gap-bridging relationships between otherwise disconnected social networks. This concept emphasizes the utility in loose associations and cross-cutting ties with parties outside of the immediate social environment (Granovetter, 1983; Burt, 1992; Lin, 2001).¹

Social capital and a polity's quality of governance and economic success are causally related. (Putnam et. al, 1993). A community's stock of social capital is closely

¹ Additional forms of social capital have also been identified. Narayan-Parker (1999), for example, adds *consummatory* social capital, which is embedded in affective ties of kinship, family and class, and *instrumental* social capital, which is driven by norms of expected reciprocity. To the extent that all these concepts address the value that a group derives from the relationships amongst its members, we can safely consider them part of the broader definition of social capital advanced by Ostrom.

linked to the degree of participation in community and civic organizations. This kind of social engagement leads to evolving formal and informal norms and institutions, which facilitate coordination, minimize uncertainty and reduce transaction costs. Economic performance is enhanced as a result (North, 1990: 3). As Putnam puts it, “Strong society, strong economy; strong society, strong state.” (1993: 176).

Social capital, however, does not emerge in a vacuum. Beyond the demonstrated and almost deterministic influence of the past on civic participation (Putnam et. al., 1993), historical legacies also play a key role in determining whether existing and emerging institutions foster trust and reciprocity. Institutions become path-dependent as members of a community adapt to the increasing returns generated by their embedded presence. As Douglass North suggests, “[O]nce a development path is set on a particular course, the network externalities, the learning process of organizations, and the historically derived subjective modeling of the issues reinforce the course” (1990: 99). The sense a community has of itself, therefore, exists within a cycle that can either virtuously strengthen members' sense of membership or viciously undercut the cohesion and reciprocity that builds trust and effective institutions.

A history of dysfunctional governance makes it difficult for effective formal institutions or semi-effective informal institutions to survive. In contrast to an effective state, which creates the political and social space for the emergence of civil society and citizen action that checks the power of the state and holds it accountable,

(Narayan-Parker, 1999: 12), a dysfunctional state often fails to enforce the rule of law, protect citizens' rights, or competently fulfill its governance responsibilities (17). Ineffective states may also inhibit social inclusion insofar as they make it difficult for underprivileged citizens to resort to the law in case of conflict. This exclusion leads to the growth of alternative informal norms that operate on a parallel but detached level (De Soto, 2000). Over the long term, these informal institutions become embedded practices, which may conflict with formal and informal rules. The result is increased uncertainty and reduced trust.²

A dysfunctional context also highlights how social capital, while often beneficial, may have potential ill effects. Although close social ties can reinforce norms of proper conduct, provide social safety nets and boost educational performance, they can also reinforce exclusion, promote the lowering of collective standards, or restrict individual freedom (Narayan-Parker, 1999). Similarly, although cross-cutting ties can open up a group's access to other social networks and assure that close-knit associations do not become exclusionary or isolated from ties to centers of power and resources, they can also enable opportunistic behavior allowing some community members to become social bottlenecks controlling or restraining access to external

² In *The Mystery of Capital*, Hernando De Soto (2000) uses the example of poorly coded or highly bureaucratic processes for formally establishing property rights that are inaccessible to poor people. The result is a set of informal, alternative property rights schemes that may function for the simple sale and transfer of property amongst close groups, but which provide little protection and few mechanisms to make the underlying capital in the property fungible. This problem leads to a paradoxical situation, common in large developing-nation capitals, in which parcels of land in poor, urban-fringe squatter settlements such as *favelas*, *bidonvilles* or *pueblos jóvenes* may be as or more expensive than prime real estate in the commercial centers but cannot be used as collateral for financing because the property rights for the land are unclear.

groups (Burt, 1992). Because different types of social capital represent differing capabilities depending on an individual's or group's positioning in a social network, we must understand the role of network positioning to adequately assess the range of possible outcomes, since a history of individuals controlling access to other groups can become embedded in a social network and limit the community's opportunities.

2.2: Social capital and development

The combination of institutional path-dependence and governmental dysfunction constitute the conundrum that development specialists face when trying to build social capital. Even though the importance of social capital is well established, the mechanisms for building it are still unclear. The reality of poorly functioning states only compounds the problem. Notwithstanding this difficulty, we can look to a variety of studies about how social capital may be generated as a launching point for discussion.

Some empirical efforts focus on building both cohesive and crosscutting ties. Gittel & Vidal (1998), for example, discuss efforts to generate social capital in low-income communities in Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana and Pennsylvania by building both economic capacity and relationships to support organizations outside of the community. However, while they show that building social capital is possible, their measures of success are economic indicators rather than civic engagement or trends of participation. Their model may also be inapplicable in dysfunctional contexts. Even

though the communities under study have histories of decline and neglect, they are located in the United States, where the rule of law, well-defined (if not always well-executed) roles of state authorities, regimes for protecting property rights, and access to mechanisms for transforming capital are all in place.

Other authors discuss mechanisms for building bridging social capital in areas that are in transition between authoritarian and democratic regimes. Kunz, for example, looks to the Internet, given its open, flexible architecture, as a tool for creating bridging social capital (Kunz, 2003). According to Kunz, the Internet's characteristics aid in balancing horizontal and vertical ties, thereby allowing bonded groups to maximize their access to power and resources. However, for our purposes, reliance on information technologies may be unrealistic. Such a model assumes the deployment of a functioning infrastructure, which entails the leading-edge problem of rolling out wired or wireless network access points to the more basic problems of incomplete electrification, technical education infrastructures, hardware distribution, maintenance and repair, and so on. In a dysfunctional environment, creating such an infrastructure of such complexity appears highly impractical.

Clearly, then, building social capital assumes the existence of networks and associations. However, in areas where geographic and economic dislocation compels people to migrate to urban peripheries, existing networks and associations are likely to be relatively new, weak, and not necessarily accessible to newcomers. In the context of developing countries with histories of conflict, displacement, exclusion,

poverty and ineffective government, relying on existing associations and social networks seems like a recipe for repeating past mistakes.

2.3: Network design and architecture

Because social capital is rooted in community relationships, the process of building the structure to support community processes may provide an opportunity to restructure relationships. Just as social networks can reinforce specific social arrangements and organizations of power, they can also alter them (Powell & Smith-Doerr, 1994). In particular, social networks may be designed to create power relationships that encourage trust and reciprocal exchange. Thus, understanding the social impact of specific network designs, in terms of their ability to encourage social change, is very important.

The model that Garcia (2001) presents for assessing the social impacts of communications networks can serve as a starting point for this analysis. While her framework focuses specifically on communications networks, it can also be used to analyze social networks in general. Communication is not merely a mechanism for information exchange; at one and the same time it is a ritualistic process that serves to reinforce community, an inherently social process (Carey, 1989). Thus, in our analysis, we will consider communication infrastructures to include not only telephony, broadcasting and wireline media but also art groups, public hearings, street performances and other forms of collective expression. In fact, when communication

is viewed as a community-reinforcing ritual, communications networks and social networks are one and the same. Instead of two separate phenomena, they are different manifestations of the same patterns of linkages between people (Wellman, 2001).

According to Garcia, networks can be analyzed and compared by focusing on three basic variables: their components, their architecture, and their capabilities. Depending on these three aspects, networks may set the stage for diverse social and cultural impacts.

Components refer to the elements or nodes that comprise the network itself, and that perform its essential functions. Components may be human, procedural or physical. The interconnection of components provides structure and the degree of interdependence among network nodes. This structure shapes the power relationships among interconnected components.

A network's **architecture** consists of both the norms and rules that govern interactions among components—that is, the network's *protocol*—and the structure of relationships amongst them—its *topology*. Network protocols affect how exchanges can take place. For example, a protocol requiring cooperative, reliable, direct links as well as the acknowledgement of completed communication between parties will tend to reinforce close relationships while at the same time limiting the network's potential in the absence of such links. In contrast, a protocol that assumes that links between parties are unreliable or frequently changing may require that messages be sent

repeatedly through multiple intermediaries who may know how to contact the intended receiving party. Such a protocol relies on trust between members of the network. As a result, it can serve to reinforce that trust. However, it also depends on cooperation for it to be effective, and as a result may undermine social trust if it fails. Topologies, for their part, may consist of centralized relationships with hub-and-spoke designs, hierarchical arrangements between parties, horizontal connections with limited hierarchical information flows, or decentralized with redundant links. Certain protocols are more appropriate for certain topologies: depending on the interaction between a network's protocol and topology, the network may either have high barriers to entry or be open and easily accessible.

The characteristics of a network's components, in conjunction with the architecture that constrains or enables component interaction, determines the network's **capabilities**. These capabilities include the network's *reach* (extent over space), its *density* (information richness), its *modes* (pointcast, narrowcast, multicast or broadcast; synchronous or asynchronous), its *costs* (including economies of scale and externalities), its *versatility* to support new applications, its *flexibility* in the face of changes and modifications, its *functionality* (ability to execute procedures, dependent on capacity and distribution of intelligence within the network), and its *accessibility* in terms of both usability and barriers to entry.

The arrangement of components, architecture and capabilities determine how communication processes take place, and therefore their potential to facilitate social

transformation. Network design affects how parties perceive themselves and the world around them. For example, a global network such as the Internet allows people to communicate and perceive themselves as neighbors even though they may live halfway around the world. Similarly, a network's design may transform the relationships among members of a network. For example, small-scale producers in developing countries have been able to access the global market directly without working through a middleman. This shift in relationships allows producers to not only retain a greater proportion of their earnings, but also to work directly with their buyers, thereby enhancing the value of their products.

2.4: Network architecture and social capital

As we have seen, the potential negative effects of social capital rooted in the emergence of social bottlenecks is directly linked to the social network's design. Parties who link disparate groups may enhance the resources available to both; they can also become bottlenecks restricting and controlling the flow of relationship resources (Burt, 1992). Bonding capital is also related to architecture: closed networks serve to enhance opportunities for their members, but if networks are too closed, their benefits may be restricted to a select few.

Potential solutions to problems of bottlenecks and exclusion are likewise related to network architecture. For example, a horizontal, open network reduces the chance for bottleneck emergence. By definition, horizontal networks include

redundancy, enabling multiple connections among components. Redundancy reduces the power of potentially opportunistic actors to position themselves as social bottlenecks. A horizontal network is likely to foster the repeated interactions that lead to the formation of trust and reciprocity. As a result, open horizontal design encourages trust building while reducing incentives for social bottlenecks.

An open network architecture also reduces barriers to entry, thereby reducing the likelihood of dysfunctional institutions rooted in exclusive or discriminatory behavior. Open networks reduce the ability of gatekeepers to generate a potentially destructive sense of insider/outsider status within the community. In essence, openness limits the ability of horizontal networks to become bottlenecks within the broader social networks in which they are embedded.

However, horizontal network designs may be insufficient in areas with dysfunctional institutions. As we shall see, to build social capital, a horizontal, open architecture network must be combined with mechanisms that reinforce a sense of community ownership. Decentralized, horizontal interactions do not guarantee social capital. At the same time, efforts to reinforce community ownership through traditionally closed and vertical broadcast media do not provide mechanisms for encouraging the reciprocal interactions required for interpersonal trust. Rather, for social capital to develop there must not only be decentralized and open communal interactions but also language and rhetoric designed to encourage economic agency, political ownership and local identity.

Community is an admittedly nebulous concept. Benedict Anderson's (2003) discussion of the “imagined community” is perhaps the most apt for our purposes. In his discussion of the origin of nationalism, Anderson proposes that national identity is an imaginary concept created through the confluence of print media and capitalism. In other words, through the use of media, nationalism invents nation by creating a sense of shared identity amongst people who may never meet each other, by constraining this identity to specific territory, and by conceiving this shared identity as being deeply rooted (5-7). Along similar lines, community, as we will use it, is a sense of shared identity that is assumed to be deeply rooted, is geographically circumscribed, and is reinforced through the use of communications media.

We can call this process of using language and rhetoric to build community *purposive community-reinforcing network utilization*. Community reinforcement contributes to a sense of collective ownership. It also provides the mechanisms for a transition between informal institutions based on small-scale interactions between neighbors and friends as well as formalized versions of these norms in a broader, shared legal framework. Community reinforcement bolsters the value of cooperative and participatory behavior, thereby enhancing trust, while reinforcing sanctions for violations of community norms.

Indicators of purposive network utilization include the presence of locally produced artistic, audiovisual and entertainment content; the use of public art and performance art; the use of accessible language reflecting local sensibilities and

realities, and the discussion of local issues and their resolution. Community-reinforcing utilization employs language that emphasizes the benefits of community membership and the shared social history of the community.

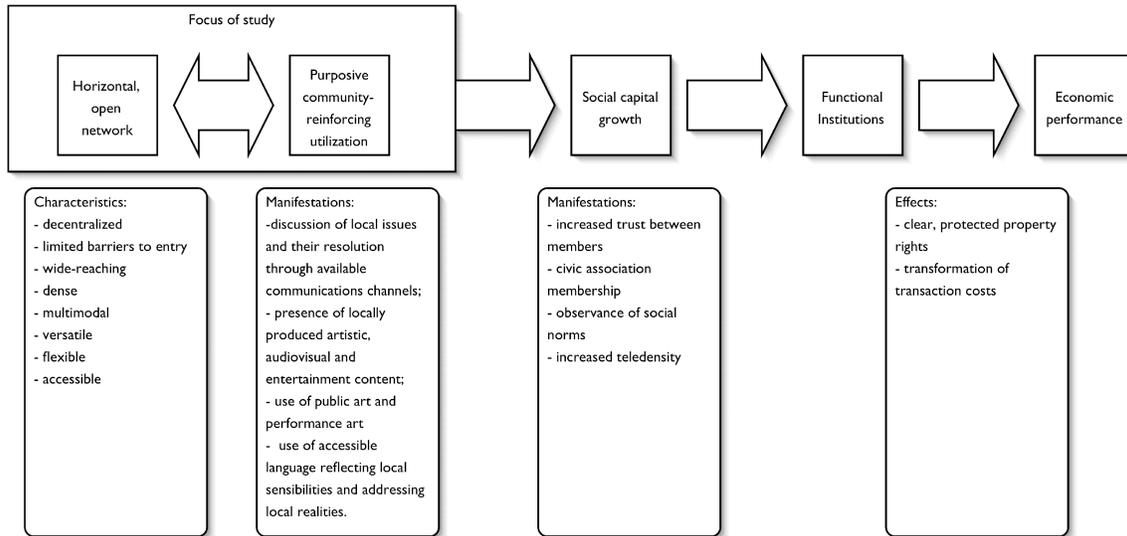


Figure 2.1: Proposed role of network architecture in social capital formation

The relationship between horizontal, open network architectures, and purposive community-reinforcing network utilization in generating social capital is not a simple causal relationship. Rather, it represents a set of two intertwined independent variables (network architecture and purposive network utilization), both of which create the condition for the emergence of the dependent variable (strong social capital). This relationship is depicted in Figure 2.1.

This model will be used in the following chapter to help unravel the mystery posed by the success of Villa El Salvador in Peru. Villa El Salvador evolved from a squatter settlement established in 1971 into a city with significantly higher indices of

political participation, associational activity and community cooperation than those seen in other Peruvian settlements established at around the same time. In this chapter we investigate how a plot of barren desert plane populated by 10,000 dislocated migrants develop into a world-recognized model for civic development and community empowerment in the context of three decades of political and economic instability, Maoist insurgency and widely recognized governmental corruption.

Chapter 3: Villa El Salvador: building social capital out of sand

In 1971, on a barren plot of arid coastal desert 20 km. southeast of Lima, Peru, now known as Villa El Salvador (VES), 10,000 destitute immigrants from the mountains and residents of inner-city slums had the chance to start building social capital from scratch. What began as an overnight invasion of private property became, in the brief 17 years it took for VES to become an incorporated city and a district of Lima, a world-class example of civic participation, effective planning and successful development. Villa El Salvador has been internationally recognized as a model of citizenship and civic participation, earning awards and accolades including the Príncipe de Asturias prize in recognition of its civic organization. The city has hosted the Pope, the International Conference of Mayors, the South American games, the secretary general of the UN, and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize multiple times.

Villa El Salvador developed a thriving civil society in the desert. Ninety-percent of the citizens vote in elections—in a country with 20-30% absenteeism—and fully 20% of the inhabitants play some form of leadership role in the community (Azcueta, 2000). To date, VES has built neighborhoods, schools, libraries, roads, parks, community organizations, industrial parks, green corridors, potable water systems and sewer services. Its residents boast a 98% literacy rate; its proportion of citizens with a secondary or higher education rose from 27% in 1973 to 70% by 1993 (Zapata Velasco et. al., 1996). Most surprisingly, VES accomplished this feat relying mostly on

organized resident participation, leadership, and cooperation, with only a minimal amount of help from the national government.

When compared to the regional and national environment in which VES existed—characterized by dysfunctional governance, poor economic performance and a weak rule of law—Villa's success is even more surprising. Since the founding of Villa El Salvador, Peru's government has functioned under four different constitutions, two consecutive military dictatorships and four democratically elected regimes with ideological positions scattered all over the map. Of the democratic governments, the second, Alan Garcia's 1985-1990 presidency, was characterized by graft, a semi-permanent state of siege, and world-record hyperinflation. The third, Alberto Fujimori's 1990-2001 presidency-cum-dictatorship, gained worldwide notoriety for an extensive network of bribery, blackmail and corruption spearheaded by the regime's national intelligence chief. The country's economic reality has been equally harsh, given large volumes of accumulated national debt in the 1970s, recession throughout the 1980s, 5-digit hyperinflation in the latter half of that decade, structural adjustment policies in the 1990s, and chronic institutionalized corruption throughout. As if this were not enough, Peruvians suffered under the violent and well-organized Maoist and Marxist insurgencies of Sendero Luminoso and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru, and fought a losing battle against an endemic international drug trafficking problem.

In light of these conditions, Villa El Salvador's success in establishing a world-recognized example of civic participation and cooperation is all the more puzzling. How did the city's residents and leaders manage to build a foundation of strong social capital in one generation despite living in such a dysfunctional national milieu?

This chapter pursues answers to this question. Any attempt to discuss how institutions evolved within a community must consider its history. Thus, the chapter begins by describing the founding of VES and critical aspects of its past based on primary oral and recorded histories. It then analyses these primary accounts to see how they might account for VES's success. The analysis then shows how these potential explanations can all be linked to a common source and mechanism, Villa's own Centro de Comunicación Popular (CCP). The chapter concludes with a study of the design of the CCP, the reasoning behind its inception, and how it has operated.

3.1: “We do it all because we have nothing”

Like hundreds of other *pueblos jóvenes* scattered on the periphery of Peruvian cities, Villa El Salvador began as a squatter settlement on private land.¹ On April 28, 1971, a few hundred migrants from the interior of the country, tired of their dire living conditions in the alleys and slums of downtown Lima, invaded a plot of land in the southern reaches of Lima called Pamplona Alta, now known as Las Casuarinas.

This land, which belonged to the government, had been slated for the construction of

¹ The following section relies heavily on different histories consolidated by Blondet (1991), Zapata Velasco (1996), Solon (1998), Azcueta (1996), the Villagers of Villa El Salvador themselves through the city's website, (Amigos de Villa, 2004) and in various documentaries such as “Villa El Salvador: A Desert Dream” (Coté et. al., 1998).

a new urban, middle-to-high income housing development for the southern tier of Lima.² When police arrived to expel the squatters, a violent confrontation ensued, during which more than 50 police officers were injured and one of the squatters, Edilberto Ramos, died from a bullet wound. The subsequent outrage over the death of Ramos prompted the national government to step back temporarily while a number of Catholic Church leaders helped defuse the situation. The squatters' self-appointed organizers presented their demands to the government, calling for a solution to the dearth of housing for thousands of immigrants who had moved to Lima from the mountains, escaping the combined consequences of a persistent drought in the mountains and a catastrophic earthquake in the province of Ancash.

Despite their initial mass of a few thousand and the involvement of the Church in advocating for their cause, the squatters at Pamplona felt that their relatively small numbers made them vulnerable. In a strategic move, they organized and, *en-masse*, canvassed overcrowded areas of downtown Lima, particularly the slums around El Agustino and the Rimac river, telling people that an invasion was going on and that the government had promised to formalize titles of ownership (Coté et. al., 1989). Soon, the number of squatters in Pamplona Alta grew to more than 7000 families.

In what would prove to be a fortunate coincidence for the squatters, as this was going on President Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado was hosting a meeting of the

² Casuarinas is, as of the date of this publication, one of the most exclusive neighborhoods in Lima, with multimillion dollar mansions, waterfalls and pools overlooking the city. Beyond its stunning views, one of its most salient features is the 30-foot high, 2-feet thick wall with turrets that separates the neighborhood from the adjacent pueblo joven.

Inter-American Development Bank in Lima, only a few kilometers from Pamplona alta. This coincidence created a tight position for Velasco: his self-described “revolutionary” regime had come to power claiming to represent the interests of the marginalized underclasses. With international observers present, he could not simply employ the government’s usual harsh ejection tactics without subjecting himself to an embarrassing ideological contradiction or risking a potentially bloody riot.

Faced with this potential public relations disaster, Velasco took an unusual step for the head of a Peruvian national government. Rather than forcibly dislocate the squatters, he offered to move them to Tablada de Lurín, a desert plain 20 km south of the city with nothing to offer other than dunes and rocks. Despite the prospect of starting a new phase in their lives many kilometers from nowhere, the squatters agreed to relocate. As Blondet has describes it, “esta era la primera vez en muchos siglos de historia peruana, en la que se expresaba una relación de coincidencia entre un proyecto popular y la respuesta por parte del gobierno.” (1991: 31)³ Thus, on May 11, 1971, VES was born.

Seeing an opportunity to put into practice the rhetoric of the revolutionary government, Velasco’s regime became visibly involved. Taking advantage of the opportunity for positive publicity, the government went so far as to provide guidance and assistance in designing a master plan for the development of the city. In addition, the government provided clear title to all the settlers over homogeneous 10 m² lots

³ "this was the first time in many centuries of Peruvian history in which a popular project and the government’s response coincided". This and all subsequent translations are my own.

laid out in grids as per the master plan. The regime even coined the term *pueblo joven* (“young town”) to replace the pejorative term *barriada*, the era’s common name for similar settlements.

Noting how the first residents of VES had successfully organized into cooperative teams, Velasco’s government tried to capitalize on the local mobilization by establishing a new agency, the *Sistema nacional de movilización social* (SINAMOS). While the expressed goal of SINAMOS was to encourage a similar model of social mobilization to address community needs in other parts of the country, VES leaders were skeptical of the motives that inspired the government’s new agency. In their past experience, the central government had shown a tendency to fulfill its responsibilities to the poor only in exchange for dependence and political fealty (Moyano et. al., 2000; Zapata Velasco et. al., 1996). Having worked hard to build their own social capacity, VES residents saw SINAMOS as an attempt by Velasco to convert the grassroots organizations’ positive efforts into goodwill for himself (Blondet, 1991: 36).

Despite the government’s initial support, it failed to act proactively, and to deliver the resources necessary to carry out the master plan. The early VES settlers responded by taking matters into their own hands. Neighbors helped neighbors to set up makeshift shacks of woven straw mats. Groups of residents dug trenches for waste water, and spent long weekends flattening macadam roadways so that water trucks could reach their neighborhoods. Organizers who did succeed in working with SINAMOS operated with deliberate caution to avoid clientelism and political

dependence. For instance, a new migrant to VES from the northern coast of Peru, noting the absence of any school for her kids, organized with her neighbors and asked SINAMOS for construction materials. SINAMOS agreed. However, the neighbors accepted the materials only under the explicit condition that they would do the work themselves (Blondet, 1991: 68-70).

Over time, and based on this self-generated organizational capacity, leadership structures within VES took on more formal shape. Block assemblies, consisting of all of the owners of a group of houses—at that point no more than cubes made from straw mats—became the core decisionmaking structure. These block assemblies met on a regular basis to coordinate community labor for the construction of essential infrastructure. Block assemblies within a neighborhood coordinated with each other through a neighborhood council, which, in turn, participated in a central, local governing body known as the *Comunidad Urbana Autogestionaria de Villa El Salvador* (CUAVES). The inaugural session of the CUAVES in 1973 brought together 700 delegates, 67 general secretaries and 2000 representatives from the block assemblies (Amigos de Villa, 2004a).

The CUAVES's philosophy explicitly rejected clientelist mindsets that residents associated with SINAMOS:

Los pobladores de Villa El Salvador rechazamos, condenamos y repudiamos toda organización social, económica, política y cultural basada en el sistema capitalista e incorporamos a nuestra conducta social, a nuestra organización vecinal y a nuestras creaciones económicas, políticas y

culturales los principios socialistas de solidaridad y fraternidad entre los pobladores. (Blondet, 1991: 32)⁴

Based on this mission, the CUAVES served as both a regional governance entity and as an advocacy organization for VES's interests at a regional level. In this capacity, the CUAVES coordinated, over the course of 17 years, larger community efforts at building city-wide infrastructure such as roads, schools and food storage facilities. In addition, through its collective organizational authority, CUAVES successfully lobbied national government agencies for connections to Lima's water, electricity, and sewer services. Upon VES's incorporation as an autonomous city and as a district of Lima in 1984, the CUAVES decisionmaking process was enshrined in district law (Amigos de Villa, 2004a). The oft-quoted motto of the CUAVES reflects the assembly's commitment to building community capacity: *lo hacemos todo porque no tenemos nada*—we build it all since we have nothing (Blondet, 1991: 34).

The women of Villa El Salvador were at the helm of many of these efforts. From the early days of Villa El Salvador, women adopted leadership roles in neighborhood associations, urban federations, and in campaigns for fundraising and construction of necessary infrastructure. Communal infrastructures such as the *Vaso de Leche* program and the central soup kitchens helped address immediate family concerns in an environment where community women often had to fend for themselves with limited resources. The organized leadership and action committee,

⁴ “We, the residents of Villa El Salvador, reject, condemn and repudiate any and all social, economic, political or cultural organization based on the capitalist system; to our social conduct, our neighborhood organizations and our economic, political and cultural creations we add the socialist principles of solidarity and fraternity amongst residents.”

FEPOMUVES, allowed women in the community to not only address their primary concerns but also to develop the necessary skills for continued involvement in leadership roles (Blondet, 1991; Milosavich Túpac in Moyano, et. al., 2000). Through its successes, FEPOMUVES became a unique women-identified and women-centered organization in a what was otherwise a strongly patriarchal society.

Unfortunately, Villa El Salvador's success at building local organizational capacity led certain national leaders to treat VES's organizational capacity as a source of popular organization that could either be coopted for political purposes or undermined lest it encourage unrest. Social mobilization organizations created by subsequent regimes, such as *Cooperación Popular* under President Belaúnde, the *Programa de Apoyo de Ingreso Temporal* (PAIT) under Alan García, and the *Programa de Emergencia Social* (PES) under Fujimori tended to centralize organizational effort, channel efforts based on political patronage, and undermine non-affiliated grassroots efforts through deed or omission (Blondet, 1991). The junta led by Morales Bermúdez, far from trying to capitalize on the grassroots, seemed openly hostile to it, treating the same popular mobilizations that Velasco had celebrated and encouraged as a destabilizing force. The new Junta's structural adjustment policies prompted riots all over popular neighborhoods in Lima, including VES. After establishing curfews and states of emergency, the Junta actively and repeatedly pursued and imprisoned VES leaders and prohibited community meetings and assemblies (Blondet 1991: 43).

VES's success also brought attention from insurgent groups with more destructive agendas. Sendero Luminoso's campaign to install a Maoist regime in the country had little use for grassroots social and civic organizations that worked with a system that they had pledged to destroy. As a result, over the course of a two-year escalation of violence in Lima, Sendero placed car bombs outside the community-built city hall, the food storage facility for the community soup kitchen run by FEPOMUVES, and the community-owned station, Stereo Villa (Centro de la Mujer Flora Tristán, 2004). They carried out multiple assassination attempts against Michel Azcueta, the city's first mayor. In one of their most grisly actions, Sendero murdered the president of FEPOMUVES and first lieutenant mayor, María Elena Moyano, in front of her children and other villagers. They then blew up her corpse with dynamite in a public square (Milosavich Túpac in Moyano et. al., 2000). Two days later, 10,000 residents of Villa El Salvador, not allowing fear to set in, participated in Moyano's funeral procession.

Despite these hardships and setbacks caused by the country's broader economic troubles, the self-reliance model at VES continues to thrive. Recently, Villa El Salvador, through a community process, created a new 8-year integrated development strategy geared at mobilizing the community's social capital (Municipalidad de Villa El Salvador, 2004b). The community-developed industrial park hosts 315 enterprises ranging from metalworking and fabrication facilities to

petrochemical processing. Almost half of these are linked to guilds that share resources and coordinate activities (Municipalidad de Villa El Salvador, 2004a).

3.2: Social capital can be created from scratch

Much has already been written about the history of Villa El Salvador, the different factors that contributed to its success, and its foundation of civic participation. These accounts help to explain a project so at odds with the large-scale, dams-pipelines-and-bridges development mindset of the times. These stories provide a basis for us to investigate how Villa El Salvador succeeded in creating the underlying social infrastructure that gave wing to these activities.

Some analysts have attributed VES's success in generating citizen participation to the community leaders' focus on shared cultural backgrounds. The communal public works projects that VES residents were encouraged and expected to perform resemble the ancestral Inca systems of the *minka* and the *mita*, both processes of communal labor for community needs, one based on community initiative and the other based on mandatory service to the Empire. Through *minkas* and the *mitas*, the empire built suspension bridges, aqueducts and communal farming terraces. *Minkas* are still common in many of the Andean communities from which 60% of the original inhabitants of VES originated; this fact points to the importance of a shared Andean heritage (Kliksberg, 2000: 16-17). In addition, residents of VES, who were interviewed in documentaries and oral histories, frequently refer to a common identity rooted in

shared hardship, social class and cultural affinity towards an immigrant history (Coté et. al, 1989; Solon, 1998; Amigos de Villa, 2004b).

Villa El Salvador's success can also be linked to a history of good leadership. The early willingness of its leaders to leverage nontraditional sources of financing, adopt nontraditional organizational designs based on communal participation, and take principled positions played a crucial role in the community's ongoing success (Kliksberg, 2000; Degregori et. al., 1986). From the beginning, community organizers demanded clear land titles and effectively negotiated with central governments for the delivery of services (Blondet, 1991). In fact, because of their effectiveness and commitment to independent principles of community, leaders such as María Elena Moyano and Michel Azcueta became targets of terrorist attacks (Zapata Velasco et. al., 1996).

Together, these explanations suggest that VES's success emerges from the community's effective leverage of core components of social capital. Villa El Salvador focused on building identity and encouraging reciprocity. Trust in neighbors and neighborhood rules and institutions went hand-in-hand with driving and requiring associational activity. As the community evolved, residents continued to demand accountability from local leaders. In turn, community leaders effectively built bridges to other national and metropolitan organizations in order to access required resources.

This account, however, is only a partial explanation. Establishing core components of social capital requires overcoming a significant problem of collective action, and the level of organization and coordination needed to do so does not simply emerge on its own. Some structure must have facilitated this process. The presence of the *Centro de Comunicación Popular* (CCP), the community's popular communications center, may provide an explanation to how VES managed to coordinate the necessary activity to address those key aspects of effective community functioning. For a more complete answer, we need to look at the the genesis and evolution of the CCP.

3.3: Villa El Salvador's *Centro de Comunicación Popular*

In November 1971, just a few months after the initial settlement on the desert in Tablada de Lurín, residents of the new village began to build a new school. The Centro de Educacion Communal (CECOM-VES) opened its doors in early 1972. It was built with assistance from the Ministry of Education, a Jesuit organization for the promotion of educational programs known as *Fe y Alegría*, and UNESCO (Peirano, 1993: 99). A group of recent and idealistic graduates from the Catholic University's program in education volunteered to move into the community to staff the school. They were trained in the educational liberation theories of Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire as well as in Liberation Theology and non-traditional educational methods (Blondet, 1991: 34; Peirano, 1993: 99). From the start, the new teachers broke away

from the traditional process of rote memorization so characteristic of Peruvian schooling:

The work of the staff of this school was exceptional, not only as regards their academic activities, but also in respect of their total commitment to the young people of the community for whom they planned a body of extra-scholastic events to round out their political and humanistic background, with the emphasis on their role as members of the Villa El Salvador community. (Peirano, 1993: 99)

One of the new teachers was a Peruvian man of Spanish origin, Michel Azcueta, a figure who was to become a recurrent theme in VES's history. Among the extra-scholastic activities that he encouraged were the *círculos culturales*, a set of workshops for students geared around the performing and visual arts. Popular expression via street theater provided entertainment to a community that had few other sources of leisure activity. In particular, this medium served as an artistic forum through which participants aired communal experiences and problems. The *círculos culturales* also included other activities such as community journalism (provided through a home-grown magazine), musical performance, and slide shows with audio soundtracks (Peirano, 1993: 99). Eventually these *círculos* grew to include cartooning, neighborhood film screenings, additional community publications, and a makeshift community radio using a network of loudspeakers hanging on poles and sticks throughout the neighborhoods.

Given the success of the *círculos culturales*, a group of teenagers and community members proposed to the CUAVES the creation of a formal center for popular communication. As a result, the *Centro de Comunicaciones Populares* was founded

in October of 1974. The community rallied to construct a home for the CCP in a central location of VES, where it stands today. As Peirano describes it, the CCP was an “open-ended community communication project” geared towards the “development of an identity for the inhabitants of Villa El Salvador and the promotion of democratic organization.” (1993: 100).

The CCP workshops played a key role in building both the sense of communal ownership and the grassroots leadership skills that became a staple of VES life (Blondet, 1991; Peirano, 1993; Amigos de Villa, 2004b). From the early days of the center, participants were somewhat cynical about organizations such as SINAMOS and the political dependence they seemed to foster. They offered cautious but critical support to the Velasco regime's efforts and staunchly avoided clientelism (Blondet, 1991: 36) To this end, the CCP's activities taught its young participants to treat communication as an everyday tool for resolving their issues. As characterized by Peirano,

[f]or the young people of Villa El Salvador, communication meant, first of all, an effort to think about themselves and express what they had inside them. ‘To reflect upon and put to the test activities that show us how to solve our problems’ was the most common answer given by the members of the Center when asked about the reason for their work in communication (100).

Michel Azcueta, who previously had been involved in educational and community communications efforts in the Peruvian provinces of Jaen and Ancash, laid out the center's initial direction. Azcueta held that “only through direct communication would it be possible to manage the subjects and issues that gave

meaning to their role as inhabitants of the desert plains who were building their own city” (Peirano, 1993: 100) Hence the workshops quickly became a link between the Center’s activities and the reality of the community. Members of the theater workshop learned to create their own brand of street theater, which aired the history and issues of the community in street corners and parks. The cartooning workshop evolved from a drawing class into a graphical document of daily life in VES through the sporadic *Piola* magazine. While *Piola* was short-lived, the model of graphic representation of popular history spread from VES’s CCP to become a tool used in rural communities elsewhere in Latin America to document and communicate their condition (Peirano, 1993: 102).

This process of reflection and critical evaluation of community problems took on very practical forms. For example, one participant of the theater workshops describes the origin of a series of public performances addressing the community's water problems and some ways of addressing them:

Hacíamos teatro, analizábamos, nos creíamos pues la verdad, ¿no?, grandes pensadores y que hacíamos las cosas, teatralizábamos el problema del agua, porque luego pusieron un pilón en cada grupo residencial para dar agua a los vecinos. Entonces hacían grandes colas y peleas entre vecinos porque cada uno quería llenar primero su balde. Entonces discutíamos entre todos los muchachos, quién va a hacer cada papel. Y la genta iba, traíamos latas de leche vacías, hacíamos bulla y caminábamos invitando: venga vecino, vamos a estar en el parque, venga. (in Blondet, 1991: 87)⁵

⁵ “We would do theater, we'd analyze, we thought we were, yeah?, great thinkers and that we did things, dramatizing the water problem, because they put a tap in each block to give the neighbors water. And then they'd get into long lines and [there would be] fights among neighbors because each wanted to fill his pail first. And the folks [from the center] would go, we'd carry empty cans of milk, we'd make noise and walk around, inviting people: come, neighbor, we're going to be in the park, come.”

During its early years, VES's isolation from existing media reinforced the need for a center to provide community information. Even if television signals from Lima had been able to travel over the dunes to reach Villa, the requisite electricity was still generally unavailable. Because of—or despite of—said obstacles, community building rather than the rollout of communications infrastructures was the primary focus of the center's activities.

After 15 years of successful grassroots operation through workshops, CCP volunteers expanded their activities and reach by building a community-based broadcast service. In July 1990, VES once again engaged in a major community project, building Radio Stereo Villa (102.5 FM). Staffed by the participants of the CCP, the station became a self-sustaining, self-governing broadcaster, whose main goal was “to achieve truly local programme production with direct community participation” (Peirano, 1993: 104). Two year later, buoyed by the station's success, the center built a television station, Canal UHF 45, to provide locally-originated television to the residents of Villa. By then, commercial television broadcasters had extended their signals to VES. Despite the competition, Villa's communal spirit was sufficient to sustain Channel 45, so that it still manages to sustain 8 hours of daily, community-generated programming. The groundwork of self-sustainability and a focus on local issues continues to play an important role in the operation of both networks (Lama, 2000).

3.4: Organic popular intellectuals constructing a new society

Throughout its activities—from the early *círculos culturales* to the success of its broadcasting initiatives—CCP expressly sought to reinforce the critical consciousness of the inhabitants (Azcueta, 1986: 102). Its formal objectives were as follows:

- to raise participants' awareness of community issues through the practice of popular communication;
- to build an environment for self-development through popular communication;
- to develop new forms of organization, grounded in the idea that the link between communication and organization is fundamental for the democratization of society;
- to develop a new breed of leaders, seeking the eventual elimination of political middlemen who seek to control access to information;
- to defend and celebrate the different aspects of popular culture, beyond folklore and music, as “the most authentic expression of the way in which the people understand life, reality, social relations and history.” (Azcueta, 1986: 97);
- to push forward the exchange and development of networks of popular communication beyond the borders of VES, understanding that VES cannot be the only one pursuing this strategy if the model is to succeed (Azcueta, 1986: 98).

Although the CCP emerged from a popular initiative, the logic behind it is theoretical grounded. Michel Azcueta understood communications as a ritual entailing shared collective experience rather than the mere transfer of data from point to point. For Azcueta, interpersonal communication is the mechanism for “de-massification” (1986: 8) as well as the the main process through which people formulate their self-identity. As such, communication, according to Azcueta, is

un avance de conciencia, como un enriquecimiento en base al intercambio de ideas, de descubrimientos, como un a crítica/autocrítica permanente. Diríamos, para resumir, que el proceso de comunicación humana, es, a la vez, una necesidad de las masas y una gran creación colectiva, comunitaria. (1986: 9)⁶

Azcuela’s ideas of *comunicación popular*—popular communications—can be traced to both Louis Althusser’s formulation of the ideological state apparatus and the ideology of mass media perspectives advanced by scholars of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt (Althusser, 1994). He understood that mass communications can mediate the formation of self-identity (1986: 11). Echoing the mass-media-as-instruments-of-ideological-domination perspectives advanced by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Azcueta argues that descriptions of mass media as empowering mechanisms in and of themselves miss the mark:

descubrimos que, en este proceso [de comunicación] a pesar de que, a primera vista, parece que las masas aumentan su ‘participación’ ocurre precisamente lo contrario: los medios de comunicación de masas son medios de comunicación de una minoría. (1986: 12).⁷

⁶ “a furthering of awareness, a source of enrichment based on the exchange of ideas, of discoveries, a permanent process of critique/self-critique. We could say, in summary, that the process of human communication is, at once, both a need of the masses and one great collective, communal creation.”

⁷ “we discover that, within this [communications] process, even though, at first sight, it looks as if the

He starts from the perspective that messages visible within mass media contribute to a sense of isolation from the national and local context by privileging the values of a small urban elite over the rural values held by the majority of Peruvians of modest means.

However, Azcueta does not remain permanently wedded to the *Institut für Sozialforschung* perspective that sees mass media uniquely and exclusively as mechanisms for capitalist domination. Instead, Azcueta goes beyond the ideology of mass media and takes on a position more in line with the postmodernist view advanced by the scholars from the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. Echoing their position that everyday people are not mere puppets of mass media, but are rather potential creators of their own reality by using new media or interpreting and re-interpreting media to which they have access, Azcueta suggests that the practical theorizations of mass media that were broadly used in the early 1970s treat the “mass” in “mass media” as mere receivers of communication rather than as potential generators, reinterpreters or exchangers of it. In contrast, Azcueta argues that there is a fundamental difference between the culture of the people (“*cultural popular*”) and one that is not of the people (“*cultura no-popular*”).⁸ Non-popular culture is characterized by individualism, materialism, consumerism,

masses have greater participation, what happens is precisely the opposite: mass communications media are mechanisms for communication by a [powerful] minority.

⁸ The keen observer or reader of cultural studies may notice that *cultural popular* does not translate to “popular culture” or “pop culture”. This is an important distinction: Azcueta does not distinguish based on notions of high versus mass culture within this definition, but rather focuses on whether it is produced by an economic elite for elite consumption or whether it is produced by working-class people for their own consumption.

massification, bourgeois values, and emulation of imported cultural patterns whether they are highbrow or lowbrow (1986: 17-18). The culture of the people, according to Azcueta, lives within the immediate: while individual people may have a tendency to imitate, follow certain arriviste attitudes, and reflect a culture of violence and machismo, the culture of the people is collectivist, communitarian, concrete and rooted in daily living, pluralistic, universalist, proletarian and creative (1986: 19-20).

If the People lack control over the mass media, how then can they express and disseminate their culture to each other? Azcueta believes that they can do so through daily living, for one, but also through popular organizations. Popular organizations, basing their message on traditional and ancestral roots and using theater and folk song as a medium, can carry the culture of the people. To Azcueta, the type of audiovisual and theater techniques used by the initial *círculos culturales* are fundamental elements of horizontal communication, which are more effective than existing vertical networks such as radio, press and TV in promoting understanding and the construction of identity. As he notes:

Ante la dificultad natural de tener que relacionarse pobladores llegados simultáneamente de diferentes puntos del país, con la única característica común de anhelar un trozo de terreno para habitar ellos y sus familias, comprobamos la urgencia de fortalecer la comunicación entre los pobladores, hombres, mujeres, adultos o jóvenes, padres e hijos.

Por otro lado, vimos la necesidad de resguardar y fomentar todos los valores propios de la cultura popular, comprobando también que los medios masivos de comunicación (prensa, radio, TV, etc.) no ayudaban a ello, si no, al contrario nos dividían y nos confundían, nos apartaban de nuestros intereses y de la realidad concreta en que vivíamos, objetivos que

quienes controlan dichos medios siguen intentando lograr hasta el presente. (1986: 102)⁹

To this end, Azcueta advocates a new model aimed at shaping popular leaders “en el sentido que hablaba Antonio Gramsci: transformarnos nosotros mismos y formar más INTELLECTUALES ORGANICOS POPULARES” (1986: 85, original emphasis)¹⁰. A popular organic intellectual is connected to popular organizations dynamically, understands the experience and reality of the people themselves, and is fluent in the language of social engagement and practice.

Popular communications, according to Azcueta, are essential for communities to break away from the ideological apparatus maintained by elites who own the mass media. Unlike commercial mass media that focus on the quantity of information transferred as a mechanism for the advertising of products, popular communication must focus on making people actors in communications rather than passive recipients. Accordingly, content should reflect and defend the interests of the peoples by discussing community problems and objectives. The definition of these objectives, which constitute a blueprint for designing a new society, should start from a popular ideology that defines affirmative visions and goals. To be effective in creating

⁹ “Facing the difficulty of the need to relate of settlers arrived simultaneously from different parts of the country, with the only common characteristic being the longing for a slice of land for them and their families to inhabit, we determined the urgency of fortifying communications between settlers, men, women, adult or young, parent or child.

“On the other hand, we saw the need to protect and encourage all the unique values of popular culture, proving in the process that mass media (press, radio, TV, etc.) did not help in this process, but, to the contrary, divided and confused us, distanced us from our interests and from the concrete reality in which we lived, a goal that those who control those media are still trying to accomplish to this day”

¹⁰ “in the sense spoken of by Antonio Gramsci: transform ourselves and create more ORGANIC POPULAR INTELLECTUALS”

affirmative objectives, the choice of communication technique is important. Selected media practices should be “no alienadas; técnicas y medios al alcance de cualquier persona; que permitan una práctica de comunicación de corto y mediano alcance”¹¹. When carried out this way, these short-reach techniques can form the foundation for the eventual use of mass media, once grounded in the method and mindset of popular communication (1986: 87).

The *comunicador popular*, the practitioner of popular communications, works directly to break away from these ideological state apparatuses by interpreting events, creating new methods and symbols for presenting a popularly accessible reality, and redefining and reinforcing linkages within her group, community and social class (Azcueta, 1986: 87). To aid in breaking away from the grip of mass-media ideology, Azcueta argues that groups working on cultural and ideological issues must reshape themselves into a variety of institutions: into Centers for Popular Culture where values are reinforced and built/rebuilt; into Centers for Popular Communication where new relations are encouraged and where knowledge is transferred and advanced with whatever methods are most expedient and appropriate; into Centers for Popular Coordination and Development, where the realities built from cultural and communications efforts can be transformed into civic organizations; and into Centers for Social Relations and Recreation, where people can interact safely and freely, enjoying themselves and building more community. (1986: 88)

¹¹ “not alienated; techniques and media accessible to anyone; that allow a practice of short and medium range communication.”

All of this theoretical grounding is most succinctly stated in the motto of the CPC:

EN EL CENTRO DE COMUNICACION POPULAR
NO QUEREMOS SEPARAR ESTOS TRES CONCEPTOS:

- * COMUNICACION DE MASAS
- * CULTURA POPULAR, Y
- *CONSTRUCCION DE LA
NUEVA SOCIEDAD (1986: 89)¹²

The actual praxis at the CCP followed the horizontal model that Azcueta found so important. Anyone who attended regular meetings, which were announced and open to the public, could advance a topic or theme that represented some concern, issue, problem, or aspect of living in Villa El Salvador. These topics generated a process of research and discussion. Following the discussion, the topic was submitted to the workshops, where it was further developed according to the medium of each workshop. The content was then made available to the neighborhood and block associations, as well as other organizations including women's and church groups. In turn, these groups engage the material and redefine it. This cycle is represented in Figure 3.1.

As we can see, from the outset, the CCP was designed as a distributed system that encouraged direct communications. As a vehicle for local expression, the CCP played a crucial role in mobilizing collective action towards the formation of a VES

¹² "AT THE CENTER FOR POPULAR COMMUNICATIONS, WE DO NOT WANT TO SEPARATE THESE THREE CONCEPTS: MASS COMMUNICATIONS, POPULAR CULTURE, CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW SOCIETY." The formatting is original.

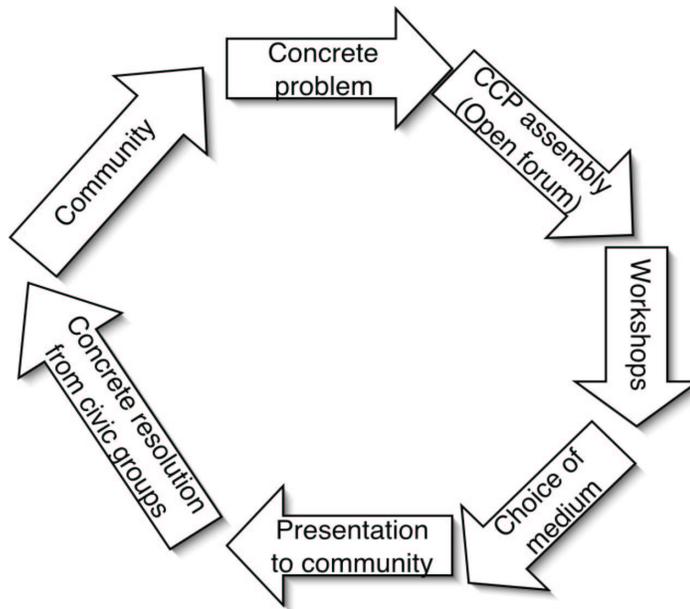


Figure 3.1: Idea Generation Process Flow, Villa El Salvador

Centro de Comunicación Popular (Azcueta 1986)

identity and in spreading those crucial values to the construction of viable institutions. However, it was not merely the existence of the CCP that made this possible: the design and the use given to the CCP operation was essential in allowing it to perform this mission and yield its widely applauded results.

3.5: Design meets use: CCP as a redefinition of mass communications

To understand how the CCP's functioning reflects its design as a social network, we must understand how its components, architecture and capabilities interact with each other. Table 3.1 describes and lays out these relationships.

A few things become apparent when we look at the CCP's design this way. For example, within this network, radio and TV are not considered individual networks, as might be assumed under other forms of analysis. Rather, they are components of a broader networked mission. Their broadcast modality reinforces the horizontal mission of the center by giving wider voice to everyday residents' concerns. The workshops are not the center of the network either. Instead, they are the means by which the core values embedded in the network's architectural arrangement are reinforced. In addition, the horizontal and open participation model, beyond being simply the way that information flows in the community, is the factor that allows participants to not only transfer and reinforce what is already known, but also to incorporate the ideas and attitudes of other, newer participants. This structure gives the network flexibility and versatility. Furthermore, the network's designers assume that everyone in the network is a communicator. By distributing intelligence to every participant of the network, the importance of technical skills and training diminishes.

The repercussions of this design are clear. By creating channels for circumventing existing mass-media bottlenecks, the network has the external effect of allowing non-commercial, community-related issues to take center stage. These discussions often lead to community resolutions that further reinforce the value of participation in the center's activities.

Table 3.1 Network design analysis, Centro de Comunicación Popular, Villa El Salvador, Perú

Components:	
CPC building The community (i.e. VES as a phenomenon in national context) Community leaders, both through neighborhood associations and cultural groups. Volunteers and members	Workshops (AV, Song, Cinema, Publications, Radio station Television station Open University Azcueta and other educators
Architecture:	
<i>Structure:</i> Horizontal and open Process of content generation and development open to all; participation in workshops open to all; members and many citizens have keys to the building Express beliefs that “everyone is an educator and a communicator” (Azcueta, 1986: 105) and that “learning	comes from practice” reinforce idea relative equality <i>Protocol:</i> Respect and cordial dialog Encouragement of dialog and respect for others, despite political ideology differentials, age differentials Process of discussion reinforces notions of equal worth
Capabilities:	
<i>Speed:</i> Activity is direct and nimble (two-hour session can generate 5 scripts for a slide show, for example) <i>Reach:</i> through theater groups, publications, loudspeakers and radio, and through open participation, can include all of residents of Villa and neighboring areas <i>Density:</i> locally generated content based on interests and issues raised by locals <i>Modes:</i> multimodal. While employing broadcast model in Radio and TV, structure is such that access to the infrastructure is not restricted <i>Versatility:</i> Loose arrangement provides ability to reconfigure (case of cartoon workshops that ended, cartoonists absorbed into journalism group) <i>Flexibility:</i> Ability to assimilate new members easily through flexible arrangements and acceptance of rotating participation; construction of Radio and TV Stations <i>Functionality:</i> Members empowered to develop and deliver content, shape direction of center <i>Accessibility:</i> participation in content generation open to all; participation in technical tasks open to all after training; multiple people have keys to center, functional 24/7	
Repercussions:	
<i>Disintermediation:</i> of traditional media owners (Peruvian TV channels, national newspapers, commercial radio programmers); elimination of power by those who “have the key” (i.e. to the building) <i>Externalities:</i> continuous reinforcement of self-sustaining, cooperative model based on civic participation and sense of local identity becomes path-dependent; local media can give air to local issues, and their resolution, when attributed to CCP’s role, reaffirms its mission in community <i>Bottlenecks:</i> while breaking traditional media bottlenecks, creates new ones; those who develop the skills to operate equipment can become controls to access; perception that Azcueta may be seen as too important a figure due to leadership history.	

This analysis suggests that the success of this project lies in the the participants' understanding, through constant reinforcement of the concept, of how civic engagement aids in the building of a dynamic civil society and how the use of the CCP network would facilitate that engagement. The center's success also resides in members' ability to recruit new core membership through projects that engaged all residents as participants rather than as a passive audience. It was the networking of participants in an open and level playing field with the purpose of building and reinforcing a sense of community, not the ability to construct a radio tower, that allowed CCP to serve as a dynamo of social capital and cultural construction by enabling repeated interaction amongst Villa residents.

This network architecture was crucial to the success of the project. Failure to take this fact into account can lead to misinterpretations of the network's importance. For example, Peirano (1993), while applauding the CCP's success at developing leadership skills and disseminating a sense of local voice, predicts that the center will no longer be able to support its grassroots and collective airing of communal positioning because its new radio and television operations force it to weigh "public opinion" into their content mix. Furthermore, Peirano suggests that the lack of systematization of CCP's experiences and processes will hinder continued development of the technical skills needed by members for careers in communications media (Peirano, 1993: 106). Through Peirano's prism, methods (radio, TV, workshops) become ends in and of themselves, and the organization

becomes a training camp for them. This assessment, however, discounts the Center's mission. Far from being a vocational training institution, the CCP was a social engineering project in which communications media were tools for furthering the Center's community-reinforcing and identity-building goals.

Attempts at establishing similar centers in other developing regions could meet with failure if such centers are treated only as places for vocational training in mass media rather than as vehicles for community reinforcement. The reasons for the CCP's ability to sustain a 28-year history have less to do with their having built a radio station and a television channel: these were projects that came many years afterwards, once it was apparent that the community could sustain the projects. The CCP's mission was not to develop journalists or specialists in AV: it was to develop *comunicadores populares* following Azcueta's ideas of building identity. By analyzing only the components of the network and not how these are put together or used, we would find that a transplanted version of this project, focusing for example on mobilizing teens to learn visual arts or journalism or on building a radio station from the ground up, could fail to generate the kind of crucial social involvement necessary for the project to operate synergistically with other efforts at building a base of social participation.

Certainly, there are other variables that played a crucial role in CCP's founding that might not be present elsewhere. To begin with, and for a number of years, CCP was the only game in town and one of the only sources of entertainment

for a hard-working and tired desert population with no electricity. Furthermore the CCP was able to focus on building local identity because the wide variety of places of origin of its residents made it difficult for conflicting senses of identity to take root. In addition, the initial efforts at formal land titling, a well crafted urban plan, and exceptional leadership played an essential, coordinated role. However, and as we have seen, all of these collective efforts were made possible through an information-disseminating and community-creating institution that allowed residents to develop a broader sense of collective purpose.

Chapter 4: Measuring social capital development: practical considerations

Social capital is a relatively new device in the development practitioner's toolkit. Notwithstanding its youth, researchers have taken significant strides towards measuring and quantifying it, defining a number of proxies and purposeful instruments for social capital measurement. Despite their success in providing quantitative grounding for theory, however, these instruments still present limitations for the study of social capital development.

In this chapter, we discuss these instruments and their limitations. Aware of them, we then turn toward a specific assessment of social capital conducted in Colombia in 1997, the *Barómetro del Capital Social (BARCAS)*. We then address how the BARCAS findings may serve to test the proposition of this thesis regarding the role of horizontal networks and community reinforcement in building social capital.

4.1: Quantifying social capital: from World Values Survey to SOCAT

The task of measuring and quantifying social capital is fundamental for the development field. A set of comprehensive and theoretically informed assessments of social capital are key to understanding the interaction between this concept and the contexts in which it operates. Reliable and comparable indicators of social capital can facilitate the process of evaluating existing development initiatives that aim to improve governance. Thus, these tools can assist in proposing alternative social programs for strengthening institutional performance.

The extensive amount of theoretical insight encouraged researchers to begin efforts at extrapolating social capital indices from extant data sources. Social capital's origin within sociology emerged from an empirical study of the factors leading to successful educational completion, quantifying social capital as a confluence of indicators such as the ratio between the number of adults in a family and the number of children that could rely on them for educational support, the number of times a family moved, and average church attendance (Coleman, 1988). Further expansions of the concept included an extensive set of proxy indicators for social capital, including ratios of political and civic participation, church attendance, and associational activity (Putnam, 1993)¹. More recently, through the use of results from the World Values Survey, proxies such as the strength of trust and civic norms (Knack & Keefer, 1997) have expanded the set of internationally comparable indicators of social capital.

Despite their useful and initially encouraging results, the use of proxies for measuring social capital introduces methodological and statistical limitations that subsequent efforts at measuring social capital have sought to address. For instance, the recent development of the Social Capital Analysis Toolkit (SOCAT) developed at the World Bank (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002) provides a theoretically grounded and tested instrument for measuring social capital through the use of a multi-dimensional questionnaire. SOCAT examines dimensions such as associational activity,

¹ We might also include the various indicators Putnam developed in his study on social capital change in the United States, *Bowling Alone* (2000). However, given the specificity of Putnam's indicators to the US context, these may not necessarily hold across geographic boundaries or in different cultural and economic contexts.

civic trust and cooperation, participation and religious involvement, to name but a few. The SOCAT tools have been used to measure social capital at the regional and national level in Mali and India. A similar instrument, the BARCAS, developed by the National Planning Commission in Colombia (Sudarsky, 1999), provides a robust data set measuring individual social capital extant throughout various regions of Colombia.

Unfortunately, these available instruments only measure existing social capital rather than the process through which that social capital emerges. The authors of these studies themselves caution against the use of these findings on their own to investigate social capital emergence². For one, they provide very limited information in terms of causal linkages involved in social capital creation and evaluate little in terms of its evolution. Furthermore, the instruments measure social capital held by individuals rather than the communal social capital that is theoretically linked to a community's chances for effective governance and economic success.

In fact, a quantitative effort at evaluating the relationship between social capital development and network architecture would require a design both ambitious and complex. Such a study would incorporate both a longitudinal measure of communal social capital using an instrument like SOCAT as well as a social networks analysis of respondents' social links over the same time period. In addition, any institutions,

² Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002), for example, caution against using results from SOCAT to study the process through which Social Capital emerges: "We caution therefore against expectations that the data from the SOCAT can be used to explain how social capital is created and why it is weak or strong in certain communities. The dynamics of the creation of social capital are complex and involve many political, social and cultural factors. Efforts to analyze these dynamics need to rely on a wider range of tools than the SOCAT. We emphasize that the tool was primarily designed to assess the contribution of social capital and not the process of its creation" (77-78).

organizations or communications mechanisms facilitating those links would undergo a network architecture analysis similar to the one used in Chapter 3 to describe the architecture of Villa El Salvador's CPC.

The necessary data sets needed for such a longitudinal study of social capital do not currently exist, and the scope of this work does not allow for the extensive field work required for an appropriate social networks assessment. Therefore, to evaluate the causal proposition presented and reinforced by the case of Villa El Salvador, we must instead rely on snapshots in time, looking for a comparable region where a measurement of social capital has been conducted. With such a measurement, locales with higher-than-average indices of social capital can be examined for the presence of purposeful community-reinforcing horizontal networks.

Fortuitously, the BARCAS assessment provides a data set that we can use as a launching point for such a study. The BARCAS measures social capital based on dimensions emerging from the same theoretical frameworks that guide this thesis. At the same time, using BARCAS as a starting point allows us to control for a variety of contextual variations. Colombia's national context during the time the BARCAS was conducted—the late 1990s—is similar to the Peruvian reality within which Villa El Salvador evolved. Besides the cultural similarities of a shared colonial history, the influence of Catholicism, parallel trajectories of *mestizaje*, and the importance of heavily agrarian economies, we can see that Colombia, from a governance perspective, shows dysfunction similar to that which we described in Peru.

Governmental corruption and the violent influence of narcoterrorism and guerrilla war have created similar challenges of endemic poverty and displacement. In short, the results of the BARCAS assessment provide the closest available data set to one that we would hope to obtain through purposeful design. We will therefore turn to describing in more detail the process and findings of BARCAS, building upon its results to examine the role of community networks in developing social capital.

4.2: Social capital in Colombia: the *Barómetro del Capital Social*

The BARCAS emerged from a project of the Colombian *Departamento Nacional de Planeación* (DNP), the country's national planning division. The DNP sought to determine the best mechanisms for enabling the kind of participatory democracy that is enshrined in Colombia's relatively new constitution. Based on emerging literature in development and governance, the DNP's initiative sought to measure existing levels of social capital and to determine the reservoirs (regional, communal, civil) in which it can be located.

The instrument's designers group the survey's questions into a set of more than 50 variables through regression analysis. These variables are similarly categorized into 10 dimensions of social capital: Social Control, Hierarchy (Vertical Connection), Political Participation, Institutional Trust, Media, Civic Republicanism, Solidarity and Mutuality, Civic Participation, Horizontal Relationships, Information, and Transparency. In 1997, after two validations of the instrument with smaller samples,

3079 citizens participated in a nationwide survey that included 29 departments and 53 municipalities (departmental subdivisions) of Colombia.

The final data set became the source for a factor analysis through which the different dimensions' relationships to the desired value of social capital (coded as KSOCIAL) could be studied. From this factor analysis emerged a second factor, "Faith in unsubstantiated information sources" or FENOVAL. This factor, previously not described in social capital literature, shows a strong inverse relationship between the faith that a person has in what is communicated by mass communications media and the available independent sources of validation or critique of that information such as friendships, associations or social networks. The FENOVAL factor suggests that social associations serve as a mechanism for "collective rationality" (Sudarsky, 1999: 13) through which information is evaluated. People high in FENOVAL tend to be not only socially isolated and disconnected, but also convinced that their sources of information are valid and of enough quality to allow them to continue being socially uninvolved (41), thus affecting their available social capital indirectly.

4.3: Social capital, informational faith and networks

The identified relationship between KSOCIAL and FENOVAL provides a meaningful pair of criteria that we can use for evaluating different communities in Colombia. From the individual responses, we calculate the average and median levels of KSOCIAL and FENOVAL at a municipal level, which provides a rough view of

which municipalities may be at either extreme of either factor, with an absolute value of 0.5 or higher on KSOCIAL or -0.5 or lower on FENOVAL.³ We then look at those municipalities, outside of the BARCAS data set, to determine the degree to which those with high KSOCIAL or low FENOVAL have established some level of community network capability. These data come from a variety of sources: the Colombian Culture Ministry's *Distribución de Recursos Culturales en Colombia*, which provides tallies of the number of cultural and community organizations at the departmental and municipal level nationwide, the Ministry's *Sistema Nacional de Información Cultural* (SINIC), which describes tallied cultural and educational entities nationwide; and municipal websites that highlight activities of particular salience in the community.

Of the 53 municipalities included in the BARCAS, eight had average KSOCIAL indices of 0.5 or higher. These are listed in Table 4.1.

³ There are, of course, some limitations to this approach. For one, the process of calculating social capital at a community level from the indices of social capital held by individual residents of that community generates questions about the validity of such an aggregate; after all, social capital is defined by its existence within a network of people. It is likely that useful collective measurements may only come about through extensive social networks analysis

Secondly, the findings of the BARCAS assessment regarding the potential repositories of social capital suggest that KSOCIAL resides most visibly at the neighborhood level, with no observable presence at the municipal or departmental level. Nevertheless, given that it is the most comprehensive assessment of social capital conducted in Latin America to date, we must work within those limitations.

Table 4.1 Colombian municipalities with highest median KSOCIAL

Municipality	Median KSOCIAL	N
Pamplona (Norte de Santander)	0.99	20
Puerto Carreño (Vichada)	0.92	20
Suárez (Cauca)	0.82	20
Chivata (Boyacá)	0.78	20
Yopal (Casanare)	0.62	25
Leticia (Amazonas)	0.58	25
El Banco (Magdalena)	0.57	25
Quibdó (Chocó)	0.52	55

Without a more extensive study of each of these communities on the ground, assessing the presence of the kinds of communications networks of interest to this study is difficult at best. For one, grassroots organizations are not always visible from outside of the community, making it difficult to establish their existence. In addition, those that are readily visible may not be community organizations but rather individual efforts and initiatives. Furthermore, and as suggested in Chapter 2 above, it is not merely the existence of networks but also their use that is of interest to us. Our only certain way for drawing conclusions about the role of community communications networks would be to have an informed eye on the ground prepared to look at the types of relationships between inhabitants. Unfortunately, the costs and logistical difficulties of such a study are well beyond the resources available for this study.

As a result, and in order to make some estimates as to whether such networks exist, we must make a certain set of assumptions about the level of visibility we should expect from successful community networks. Social capital does not emerge overnight. If, as we suggest, an open, community-reinforcing network is vital for developing social capital, then we must expect that such a network should have been in existence for a significant amount of time (i.e. 10 years or more) if its effect is to be discernible at all. Any organization with a modicum of success would be noted, at the very least, by departmental or national registries of regional organizations such as those held by the departmental governments or the Ministry of Culture, perhaps having received funding, recognition, or note. With the caveat that failure to be noticed or reported by departmental or national authorities does not necessarily mean such networks do not exist, we will assume that such an absence suggests that any existing networks have not reached a functional scope significant enough to have a social-capital-building role in the community.

Following these assumptions, and based on information from SINIC, departmental, and municipal sources, we generated a list of institutions, organizations and entities that reflect, in their described mission, a community-reinforcing focus within each municipality. Some of these make explicit a horizontal and open participative approach; in others, it must be assumed or may not exist at all.

4.3.1: Pamplona (Norte de Santander)

The City of Pamplona, seat of the municipality that bears the same name, has a long history of cultural expression and engagement in national affairs. Founded in 1555, it was at one point an administrative and political center of the Spanish crown. In 1810, it was the first city of what would become Colombia to declare independence from Spain. It was also the birthplace and home to many Colombian statesmen, novelists and poets (Ciudad de Pamplona, 2004). The 53,742 residents that live within the city itself (out of a municipal total of 130,000) have access to a number of cultural and communications institutions, many of them tied to the University of Pamplona (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Cultural and communications entities in Pamplona, Norte de Santander

Entity	Description
Pamplona City website	City-run website detailing city's history and its contribution to national politics and cultural expression
Universidad de Pamplona	Offers a degree in Social Communication, and is host to both the city's community center and a community radio station.
Radio HFJ Estéreo	Community radio station, run out of the University of Pamplona, with an office dedicated to social outreach (Universidad de Pamplona, 2004)
Casa Águeda Gallardo de Villamizar	University-run culture center offering community tutoring, open education and extension, a virtual library, computer training for city youth, and social and cultural activities focused on reinforcing the community's development and history as a center of cultural expression and political innovation. Some of the center's programs involve government participation or assistance.

4.3.2: Puerto Carreño (Vichada)

Puerto Carreño, sitting close to the border with Venezuela, lies in the middle of the Llanos Orientales, a region of plains and grasslands that have developed a distinct and unique cultural flavor and musical tradition. The cultural and communications activities listed by the Colombian Ministry of Culture for this municipality reflect that focus (Table 4.3).

Despite this cultural strength, Puerto Carreño remains isolated. For example, its electrical grid was not connected to the national electrical network until 2003, relying instead on locally generated and sporadically available electricity. Supply averaged 10-12 hours during weekdays and 14 hours during weekends (Servicio de Noticias del Estado, 2003).

Table 4.3 Cultural and communications entities in Puerto Carreño, Vichada

Entity	Description
Casa de cultura Indio Venancio	A city-wide cultural center focused on promoting the traditional arts of Vichada.
Fondo mixto para la promoción de la cultura y las artes del Vichada; Secretaría de educación y cultura del Vichada;	Departmental agencies, based in Puerto Carreño, tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources
Musical festivals: Festival Internacional Infantil de Música Llanera 'La Palometa de Oro'; Torneo internacional de corrío llanero	Festivals for diffusion of Llano culture funded by national Ministry of Culture

4.3.3: Yopal (Casanare)

Yopal sits in a strategic location for Colombia. The Casanare is a gateway for

access to Venezuela, Colombia's largest trading partner in the region. Many of Colombia's petroleum and natural gas reserves lie under these grasslands and plains. These factors have made it a site for frequent confrontations between the two major guerrilla groups—the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN)—and paramilitary organizations. Despite the tension created by that level of violence, Yopal enjoys many benefits not available to smaller municipalities by virtue of being the departmental capital. Amongst its cultural institutions are youth folklore associations, national musical competitions of traditional llano musical forms, and a number of community radio stations. Of the radio stations, Emisora Casanare Estéreo boasts ratings that are amongst the highest of radio stations in the region (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Cultural and communications entities in Yopal, Casanare

Entity	Description
Concejo Departamental de Cultura;	Departmental agencies based in Yopal tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources
Grupo de Cultura de Casanare; Corporación deportiva y cultural El Topocho — Cotopocho	Non-governmental groups and organizations for cultural development and promotion
Emisora Casanare Estéreo	Community radio station with an express mission of being a participatory educational and informational communications medium promoting Llano culture (Gobernación de Casanare 2004). Its ratings are the highest amongst regional radio stations, and broadcasts from within the campus of the local University.

Entity	Description
La Voz de los Lanceros	Municipal radio station, broadcasting from within a national army battalion headquarters, with a focus on general community services.
Emisora Corporación Cravo Sur	Community radio station focused on promoting Casanarian culture and ecological values

4.3.4: Leticia (Amazonas)

Leticia is the southernmost city in Colombia, on the triple border with Peru and Brazil. It is geographically separate from the rest of the country by thousands of square kilometers of rain forest, and is only accessible by air or riverboat. Leticia and the neighboring Brazilian city of Tabatinga are the largest urban centers in the vast expanse of Amazon rain forest between Iquitos in Perú and Manaus in Brazil.

Despite its geographic isolation, or perhaps as a result of it, Leticia boasts a large number of cultural, artistic and communications media with a community focus, as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Cultural and communications entities in Leticia, Amazonas

Entity	Description
Organización Regional Promotora de Acción Comunal; Concejo Departamental de Cultura del Amazonas; Fondo mixto para la promoción de la cultura y artes del Amazonas	Departmental agencies based in Leticia tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources.
Centro de Participación Juvenil en Formación Cultural y Comunicación	Organization promoting youth participation in cultural awareness and communications projects

Entity	Description
Taller de poesía urbana	Urban poetry workshops for youth groups from diverse neighborhoods in Leticia, with the express goal of creating a forum for the exchange of literary thought and experiences shared by participants (SINIC 2004b)
Musical festivals: Concurso musical Piraña de Oro; Festival internacional de música amazónica Piracurú de oro;	Festivals for diffusion of Amazonian musical culture funded by the national Ministry of Culture
Desfile de muñecos viejos	Citywide parade in which citizens are encouraged to make and promenade with rag dolls alluding to local themes.
Festival de la confraternidad amazónica	A 5-to-8-day festival promoting sports, cultural, culinary and artistic exchange region-wide

4.3.5: Suarez (Cauca)

Suarez is the smallest of the municipalities showing high median indices of KSOCIAL. According to the 2002 census, the total population of the municipality of Suarez is of roughly 24,000 people. Not only is the total population small, it also tends to be more rural: the 2002 census reports that of these 24,000 people, only 8,621 were considered urban dwellers (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Population projection by age group, Suarez, Cauca

Age Groups	2002						2003					
	URBAN	%	RURAL	%	TOTAL	%	URBAN	%	RURAL	%	TOTAL	%
< 5	774	6	835	8	1609	7	758	6	889	8	1647	7
6 – 12	938	7	934	8	1872	8	918	7	993	8	1911	8
13 – 17	1828	14	1778	17	3606	15	1792	14	1893	17	3685	15
18 – 60	2193	17	1767	17	3960	17	2144	17	1881	17	4025	17
> 60	6912	52	4887	46	11799	49	6770	52	5207	46	11977	49
TOTAL	13198		10608		23806		12926		11300		24226	

Source: Gobernación Del Cauca (2004a)

The community also is markedly skewed towards older residents, most of whom have probably been lifetime residents of the region. Of these, more than half (52%) are 61 years or older. Individually, none of the other reported age groups account for more than 17% of the population (Gobernación del Cauca, 2004a).

In terms of cultural and communications entities, the SINIC reports only two such institutions within Suarez (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Cultural and communications entities in Suarez, Cauca

Entity	Description
"Minga" departamental	Departmental initiative encouraging use of the "Minga", an adapted form of the Inka communal work practice of the Minka. (Gobernación del Cauca 2004).
Other cultural institutions: one public library and a municipal center for sports and culture	The SINIC reports only these two cultural entities in Suarez.

Beyond this, the town of Suarez has two each of pre-school through secondary educational institutions. When accounting for rural schools, the number rises to 80, with the highest concentration focusing on elementary schools in rural areas of the municipality (56 total) (Gobernación del Cauca - Secretaría de Educación, 2003).

4.3.6: Chivata (Boyacá)

The Colombian ministry of culture reports only one cultural organization in Chivata: a municipal cultural council managed by the city's mayor that has not been functional since 1996 (SINIC, 2004a). There are many possible explanations for this.

Chivata's population is mostly rural: of a total population of 4505 in 2002, only 507 were considered urban residents (Departamento Nacional de Planeación de Colombia 2004). Chivata, like most of Boyacá, has strong Catholic traditions and roots, including the feast of the Virgen del Carmen and the Virgen del Rosario; both the BARCAS assessment and previous findings by Putnam (1993) in Italy suggest that these high degrees of religious participation, in the best of cases, do nothing to augment social capital. In addition, since Chivata lies in the outskirts of Tunja, the departmental capital, it is likely that many of the institutions that would be available within Tunja could demonstrate spillover effects. Furthermore, Boyacá, like much of the central portion of the country, has been caught in the middle of the struggle between leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary forces, which likely has diverted resources from community building towards basic subsistence and security.

4.3.7: El Banco (Magdalena)

The Colombian ministry of culture reports four major cultural and communications entities in the municipality of El Banco (Table 4.8)

Table 4.8 Cultural and communications entities in El Banco, Magdalena

Entity	Description
Consejo Municipal de Cultura de El Banco; Instituto de Cultura de El Banco;	Municipal agencies tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources.
Emisora Palomeque Stereo	Community radio station formed under the 2003 Community Radio Act

Entity	Description
Cultural festival: Festival Nacional de la Cumbia	National festival focused on the Colombian national dance, the Cumbia.

Of all the municipalities with high median KSOCIAL indices, El Banco is probably one of the most affected by the armed conflict that has afflicted Colombia for the last 50 years. The central portion of Magdalena has seen some of the most bitter fighting between guerrilla forces, paramilitaries, and the Colombian Army in the country. El Banco, located at the southernmost tip of the department, has been somewhat removed from this fighting. Large numbers of refugees have fled the central Magdalena region trying to escape the conflict and have settled in El Banco (Gobernación de Magdalena, 2004). As a result, international agencies such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have engaged in projects focused on building social capacity and social capital in El Banco and other refugee-receiving communities within the last 10 years.

One of these projects, the *Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio* (PDDM) has been in effect since 1995. The PDDM—financed jointly by UNDP, the Colombian National Planning Division, an international petroleum extraction corporation, and the World Bank—has focused on building grassroots capabilities, reinforcing citizen networks to develop social capital, and providing technical and financial support for citizen-generated developmental priorities (World Bank, 2002: 1-2). This project, administered through a purpose-built NGO, concluded in 2001 and has been described as a success by both the Colombian government and the World

Bank. The World Bank attributed part of this success to the creation of a voluntary citizens' network within each municipality, charged with developing long-term development strategies for the municipality. Over time, these networks became an integral part of municipal decision making (2).

4.3.8: Quibdó (Chocó)

Quibdó is the capital of the Pacific coastal province of Chocó, a department demographically and geographically distinct from the rest of the country. The Chocó is a cultural center for the Afro-Colombian community. It is a region that has remained traditionally culturally isolated if not economically disconnected (Fox & Starn, 1997).

Quibdó is host to a number of cultural and communications entities as reported by SINIC (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Cultural and communications entities in Quibdó, Chocó

Entity	Description
Fundación para el desarrollo de la cultura y las artes escénicas Barracón	Theater workshop focused on identity reinforcement and reconstruction and social transformation through communal development of artistic and cultural projects.
División de Cultura y Turismo del Chocó; Consejo Departamental de Cultura del Chocó; Fondo Mixto para la promoción de la cultura y las artes del Chocó	Departmental agencies based in Quibdó tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources.
Fundación Cultural Amor y Alegría Miguel A. Caicedo M.	Local foundation engaging in development activities with refugee youth in the El Reposo neighborhood of Quibdó

Entity	Description
Festival internacional de la música, las danzas y la cultura popular del Pacífico y del Caribe	International dance festival for promotion of regional dance and culture

4.4: Cultural institutions in municipalities with low median social capital

Each of the municipalities with high indices of KSOCIAL showed at least a few institutions dedicated to reinforcing local identity and culture. However, without knowing if these kinds of institutions are unique to those municipalities, we cannot make any valid inferences regarding their possible relationship to the observed indices of social capital. What kinds of institutions does SINIC report for those municipalities with the lowest median KSOCIAL in the BARCAS assessment?

Three municipalities within the BARCAS showed median KSOCIAL indices of less than -0.5 (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Colombian municipalities with lowest median KSOCIAL

Municipality	Median KSOCIAL	N
Moñitos (Córdoba)	-0.8	20
Armenia (Quindío)	-0.7	80
Pereira (Risaralda)	-0.62	100

4.4.1: Moñitos (Córdoba)

Moñitos is a municipality on the Atlantic coast of Colombia, in the province of Córdoba, the ancestral homeland of the Zenú people and source of many of the gold

relics housed in national museums or taken by the Spanish crown during the conquest. It was a center of the banana and coconut industry in the 19th and 20th centuries, but various blights knocked out the region's crops and diminished its importance.

The Colombian Ministry of Culture reports two community radio stations as communications entities in Moñitos: Emisora Comunitaria Ecos del Mar and Emisora Comunitaria de Moñitos.

4.4.2: Armenia (Quindío)

Armenia, the capital of Quindío, is one of the economic axes of Colombia's coffee industry. As such, it boasts of a well developed infrastructure. Its electronic government services are robust, as is its tourist bureau. Armenia also boasts six theater groups and a plethora of folk dance troupes. The SINIC database reports a similar wealth of cultural and communications entities in the city (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 Cultural and communications entities in Armenia, Quindío

Entity	Description
Casa de la cultura; Instituto de formación artística; Fundación cultural del Quindío	Non-governmental agencies that sponsor and run community cultural events.
Fondo mixto de promoción de la cultura y las artes del Quindío; Gerencia de Cultura del Quindío; Corporación Municipal de Cultura de Armenia	Departmental and municipal agencies based in Armenia tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources.
Universidad del Quindío; Universidad La Gran Colombia	Both local universities co-sponsor a radio station, "La U FM," and offer degrees in social communication, journalism, and social development.

Entity	Description
Taller juvenil de fabricación de instrumentos típicos	Workshop encouraging youth from marginal communities to learn skills for constructing traditional musical instruments.
Reconstruyamos nuestra imagen	Project for encouraging youth to build community spaces for improving community welfare
Emisora Quimbaya Stereo	Community radio station

4.4.3: Pereira (Risaralda)

Pereira is the capital of Risaralda, an economically successful central Colombian province closely linked to the coffee trade. The total valuation of Pereira's economic activity is of more than 6 trillion Pesos (\$2.3 billion in 2004 US\$) (Cámara de Comercio de Pereira, 2004).

Its communications and cultural scene is similarly rich, as per SINIC (Table 4.12). Pereira boasts of eight theater groups, multiple folk dance groups, six public libraries, and is host to a national competition of Bambuco, one of Colombia's traditional musical types.

Table 4.12 Cultural and communications entities in Pereira, Risaralda

Entity	Description
Fondo mixto de promoción de la cultura y las artes de Risaralda; Dirección de cultura de Risaralda	Departmental and municipal agencies based in Pereira tasked with administering cultural programs and activities funded from national government and departmental sources.
Casa de la cultura de Quinchia; Casa de la cultura;	Non-governmental cultural centers focused on promotion of local folkloric arts
Instituto de cultura de Pereira	City-run institution focused on cultural reinforcement, capacity development and cultural education.

Entity	Description
Emisora Cultural Remigio Antonio Cañarte	Community radio station run by the Instituto de Cultura de Pereira: its focus is on musical broadcasts, focusing on classical, jazz and traditional Colombian musical forms.

4.5: Purposive reinforcement or isolation?

The results of this analysis do not validate the suggested relationship between the presence of community-reinforcing horizontal networks and the development of social capital. Some of the municipalities with high indices of KSOCIAL as indicated in the BARCAS had few if any long-lived organizations focusing on building social capacity. On the other hand, all three of the municipalities showing the lowest median indices of KSOCIAL had a wealth of community cultural and communications institutions tracked by the Colombian Ministry of Culture.

Some alternate explanations do emerge from the data. The municipalities with the highest median KSOCIAL tend to be distant from the traditional Colombian center of economic and cultural activity, the mountain region in the center and northwest of Colombia (Figure 4.1). Of the municipalities listed, Puerto Carreño and Leticia are disconnected from the rest of Colombia by vast expanses of rain forest and floodplains, accessible only by air; both of them sit on the borders with Venezuela or Brazil, respectively. Pamplona, in the department of Norte de Santander, sits in the eastern mountain region of Colombia, also close to the Venezuelan border. The municipality of Suárez lies in the Cauca province, in the far south reaches of

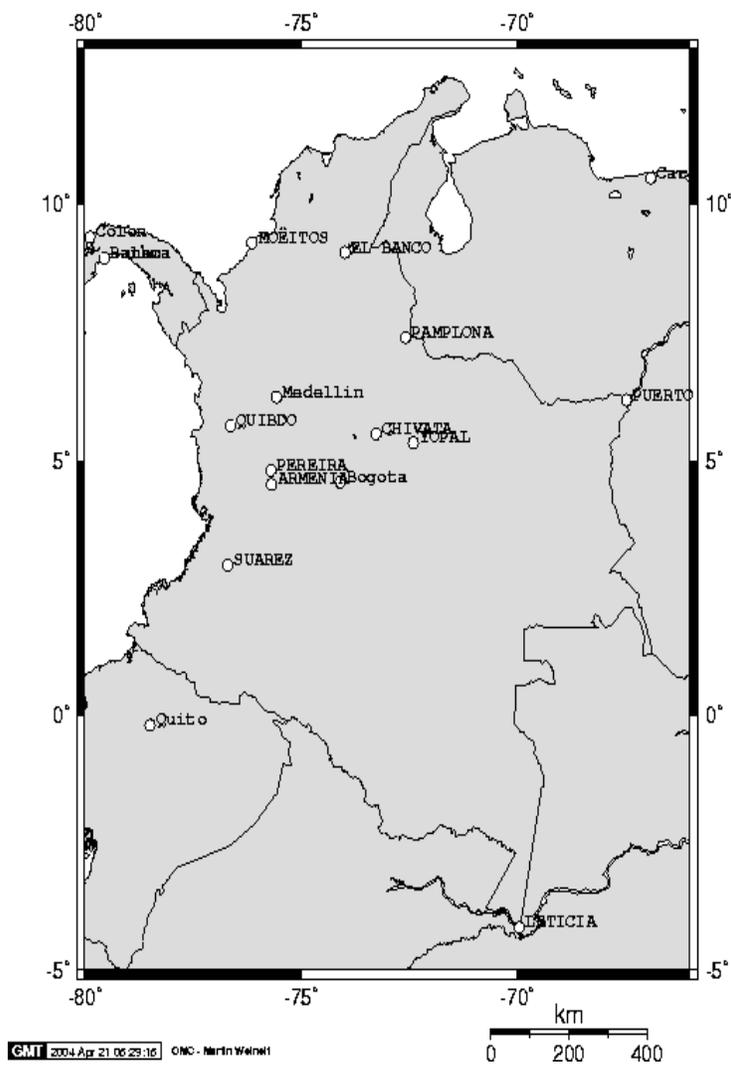


Figure 4.1: Map of Colombian municipalities selected from BARCAS sample (Courtesy of Online Map Creation, <http://www.aquarius.geomar.de/>)

Colombia. Quibdó is the capital of the Pacific coastal province of Chocó, traditionally culturally isolated if not economically disconnected (Fox & Starn, 1997). Only three of the listed municipalities, Yopal, in the Casanare province; El Banco, in the northern

province of Magdalena; and Chivata, in Boyacá, sit in relative proximity to the center of the country. None of them reside in traditional centers of economic activity such as Antioquia, Valle del Cauca and Cundinamarca. This suggests that geographic isolation may play a stronger role in the formation of social capital than either community organizations or history by encouraging closer bonds between geographically proximate citizens.

We must also consider a number of alternative hypotheses for the higher KSOCIAL index in Suárez despite the low incidence of community-reinforcing networks. For instance, because of the large number of older residents residing in the communities within the municipality, these communities have had many years during which their residents could build and reinforce social ties. Turning towards history, the historic tensions between indigenous groups and non-indigenous farmers over control of the land may also have reinforced in/out group dynamics. Beyond this, the mathematics of social networking may also play a role. The smallness of the urban centers in Suarez may require and encourage increased interaction between residents, given that the pool of potential social contacts is smaller.

The specific case of El Banco in Magdalena is also important to note. Of all of the municipalities under study, it is perhaps the one most heavily affected by the extensive violence that has afflicted Colombia for many decades, and nevertheless shows a high median KSOCIAL. Beyond its high statistics, the success of the *Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio* (PDDM) suggests that a concerted, non-

governmental effort at providing mechanisms for citizen participation and leadership in the formation of local initiatives may be the appropriate strategy even within dysfunctional contexts, even if such an effort is not focused on communications and cultural activities.

The results from the municipalities with the lowest median KSOCIAL also suggest different interpretations to the relationship between community organizations and social capital. Armenia, for example, boasts a wealth of institutions focused on reinforcing local identity and providing mechanisms for communal interaction. Nevertheless, its median KSOCIAL index is the second lowest of the sample. The wealth of institutions, however, may explain why Armenia is also one of the municipalities with lower FENOVAL (-0.12). Perhaps, rather than directly fostering social capital by encouraging repeated interactions, the role of community communications entities is to provide enough incentive for citizens to seek alternative validation of mainstream media from other community members.

We must also reiterate that the process for gathering this data was, by necessity, imprecise and likely to introduce significant noise. Firstly, and as noted above, the BARCAS focused on measuring social capital held by individuals rather than at the community level. Furthermore, analysis conducted by BARCAS researchers regarding potential repositories of social capital showed that neighborhoods and civil society, not municipalities or departments, were the locus of social capital. As a result, the median KSOCIAL value used to select the municipalities analyzed may not be an

accurate reflection of the community's resident social capital. Only a thorough social networks analysis within each of the municipalities would provide the type of communal index of social capital needed for more firmly grounding this analysis.

In addition, while the analysis of municipal communications organizations assumed that mention in SINIC's database would represent some communal success, in practice the only way of establishing this definitively would be through an extensive qualitative analysis of the different kinds of projects, access mechanisms and community impacts of listed organizations. Without this kind of analysis, unsuccessful or moribund communal organizations that linger in databases cannot be differentiated from successful grassroots groups that might not be considered formal enough for inclusion.

These results raise more questions than they answer. Firstly, what is the relationship between geographic isolation, social capital and the role of faith in unsubstantiated information sources? The role of national cultural entities also comes to focus. All of the departmental organizations described cultural development as a key component of building human and social capacity and community. However, if they have any influence over that process and if the goals are so similar, why are the results in different regions so dissimilar? These questions remain for future studies.

Chapter 5: Concluding remarks

The concept of social capital plays an increasingly important role in both the development field and the social sciences. It is a theoretical hub of sorts, tying together the mystery of disparate economic success and government effectiveness to the quality of relationships between members of the communities in question. This concept reinforces the importance of qualitative aspects of human interactions in economic and political affairs. However, embracing this idea also opens up the need to understand how those relationships come about, take shape, change and are mediated through the networks that facilitate them.

With an awareness that social capital resides in a historical feedback loop—that is, it is strongest where it has been strong in the past, and weakest where it has lagged—we set out in this work to investigate the types of network architectures most conducive to aiding the process of social capital development in areas characterized by political and social dysfunction, where social capital is and has been demonstrably weak. To this end, we started from the proposition that horizontal and open communications networks that reinforce a sense of community identity are effective mechanisms for encouraging the kinds of interactions that form the foundation of strong social capital.

The story of Villa El Salvador (VES) in Perú provided a qualitative evaluation of this proposition. Over 17 years, this community, founded by a few thousand landless migrants on a desert plain outside of Lima, developed a strong core of citizen participation, self-assistance and civic engagement. After looking at the variety of community organizations developed by residents of VES, such as neighborhood associations, community soup kitchens and a city-wide governance council known as the CUAVES, we identified the *Centro de Comunicación Popular* (CPC) as communications network that played a central role in VES's functioning.

The CPC's activities combined both training in communications techniques for community youth as well as content development focused on addressing and finding solutions for local concerns. An analysis of the design of the CPC network, focusing on its components, architecture and capabilities, showed that the center operated as an open-access entity with a horizontal governance structure. Further analysis of the activities and goals showed that its central missions were to circumvent traditional media bottlenecks, reinforce a sense of local identity, and mobilize residents of the community to participate in local affairs. In combination with other community-initiated efforts, the CPC served as a mechanism for encouraging and advancing the self-assistance mindset that VES leaders had adopted from the first months of the community's existence.

This case study suggests that there is some form of relationship between participatory and open community-focused networks and a stronger civil society. To

investigate whether this relationship holds more broadly, we employed a quantitative validation using established measurements of social capital. Using data from a social capital assessment conducted in 1997 in Colombia, the *Barómetro del Capital Social* (BARCAS), we studied the 8 municipalities with the highest median index of social capital in the BARCAS sample and the 3 municipalities with the lowest index. After tabulating the number and type of cultural and community communications institutions within each of these municipalities, based on information from the Colombian Ministry of Culture, we failed to find a correlation between the presence, absence, or quantity of these community networks and the indices of social capital present within them.

Despite the absence of a demonstrable statistical relationship, these cases do provide insights into the potential links between community networks and social capital formation. First, we found that skepticism about traditional information sources may play an indirect role in mobilizing community members to seek associational activity. Second, geographic isolation may play a role in setting the stage for communal cohesion. Third, and last, is the important role of community initiative and leadership.

5.1: Skepticism as a development strategy

The notion of faith in unsubstantiated information sources presented by Sudarsky (1999) suggests that socially isolated residents tend to trust central

information sources more readily. Thus, they may be less predisposed to seek information from external sources. This tendency may be a mechanism linking community networks and social capital. In other words, an open horizontal network architecture with purposive community-reinforcing utilization may not be directly tied to social capital creation as proposed in Chapter 2. Rather, community information networks may play an indirect role in social capital creation by increasing the degree of skepticism that community members have towards central information sources such as the government or central media. By disseminating community perspectives that either contradict or are unavailable on more traditional channels, a horizontal community network may encourage citizens to seek alternative sources of information about their community from within their community.

This concept would appear to hold true, and help to account for the link between the *Centro de Comunicación Popular* and the community's civic strength. The CPC may have succeeded in its mission not by building social connectedness through communications but by encouraging citizens to seek out alternate information sources about their community. The philosophy advanced by Michel Azcueta encouraged residents to look towards other community members, not to mainstream media, for information about their daily reality. As a result, citizens may have felt a greater need to get linked to their neighbors and community associations, in the process building the necessary kinds of relationships on which other forms of participation depend. While planting doubt does not sound like the ideal starting place for building

communal trust, the CPC's success suggests that there may be a place for such strategically planted skepticism in development.

5.2: Communing alone: a role for geography

This study also suggests that distance and isolation may play a supportive role in social capital formation. Villa El Salvador was only poorly connected to Lima for many of its early years. Roads did not reach the community; broadcasts could not travel the distance; electrical power was unavailable. Similarly, five of the eight Colombian communities with the highest median indices of social capital are on the geographic periphery of the country, distant from historical centers of power.

Of course, isolation alone is not the answer. We could readily create a long list of moribund and geographically communities that show very little social capital. However, isolation, when combined with some level of autonomy and enough resources for self-sustenance, may foster social capital formation by encouraging in-group dynamics and local identity. The findings of this study suggest that there is room for studying the potential impacts of geography on social capital.

5.3: The tough love of self-help

The residents of Villa El Salvador and the citizens of El Banco, Magdalena, have something in common with the Northern Italian communities Robert Putnam found to have the strongest social capital: a history of self-assistance and mobilization. All three demonstrated degrees of self-reliance, self-agency and communal engagement.

that created not only immediate solutions but also histories of communal solution making. The CUAVES process in Villa El Salvador and the self-help, self-directed community initiative process used by the *Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio* (PDDM) in El Banco both relied on citizens taking ownership over the solutions to their own problems.

This also may shed some light on a debate in the social capital field regarding which form of social capital, bridging or bonding, is the most conducive for effective governance. Cross-cutting ties are certainly important if disenfranchised groups are to be included in the broader functioning of a national system (Narayan-Parker, 2000). However, the story of VES shows that Narayan-Parker's assessment that “networks of those excluded or disempowered [...] do not become *agents of transformation* into high return production groups or into powerful social movements which challenge the powers of the state” (35) is not a constant. In fact, VES's power as an agent of transformation of the national space—its Vaso de Leche Programs and its organizational mechanisms for communal soup kitchens became standards for other similar communities nationwide—came about even as the community actively resisted becoming closely tied to the national system of patronage. This suggests that the real purpose should be to enable communities to address their own needs and to encourage them to build relationships to improve on those capabilities only after there is a level of local capacity.

That is not to say that communities in trouble should simply be told to pull themselves up by the bootstraps. Along with the role of citizen participation is the role of leaders in setting the stage for facilitating that participation. Leaders in VES and World Bank program managers in El Banco focused on facilitating, encouraging and requiring citizen participation rather than on executing completed projects. This reaffirms that the ideal role of the development specialist is not to execute projects but to teach people how to execute projects themselves.

This study reinforces the established understanding that active citizen participation is clearly the single most effective path towards a functional civic society. The mechanisms for encouraging that degree of participation will continue to be studied for many years. However, it is clear that only through active citizen participation will community members create the meaningful set of collective conceptualizations, norms of interaction and expectations of others that constitute social capital.

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