

The Cheap Side of Social Capital: Part 1

Lindon J. Robison*

Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

Email: ROBISON@msu.edu

How to cite this paper: Robison, L. J. (2023). The Cheap Side of Social Capital: Part 1. *Modern Economy*, 14, 510-537. <https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2023.144028>

Received: February 23, 2023

Accepted: April 27, 2023

Published: April 30, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Important social capital definitions focus on relationships, how people are connected. Relationships depend on commonalities, what people share. Commonalities may be earned or inherited and include shared emotions. Empathy is an important shared emotion because it enables us to internalize each other's well-being, the motivation for important economic outcomes. This article supports the definition of social capital as the empathy one person or group has another person or group, the object(s) of their social capital. Because Adam Smith emphasized the importance of sympathy (what we now call empathy), we recognize him as contributing to the social capital definition supported here. Members of social capital-rich networks, compared to nonmembers, are more likely to produce and exchange relational goods (intangible signals that satisfy our socio-emotional needs). They are also more likely to exchange commodities (things that satisfy our physical needs) on preferential terms, more likely to cooperate, more likely to invest in public goods, more likely to support institutions, more likely to enjoy equal commodities incomes, more likely to limit negative externalities, and more likely to be happy. Social capital, however, has a dark side. It is that the benefits enjoyed by members of social capital-rich networks are often denied or not available to network nonmembers. The disadvantages of being excluded from social capital networks can sometimes lead nonmembers to develop antipathy toward social capital network members. The antipathy one person or group has for another person or group is defined here as negative social capital. Negative social capital working alone is of little consequence. However, when nonmembers of social capital network share negative social capital toward the same object, they may develop cheap social capital relationships and cheap social capital networks that have influence. Motivations for creating cheap

*Lindon J. Robison is emeritus Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AFRE), at Michigan State University, East Lansing Michigan. He thanks Tristan Claridge for reviewing and commenting on this paper; Meghan Rollins Wilson for editorial assistance; Julie Taylor and Lana Bailey for contributing to the ideas contained in and the organization of this paper; and Peter J. Barry for distinguishing between negative and cheap social capital.

social capital networks include resentment, envy, real or imagined threats, and lack of commonalities. We call cheap social capital networks cheap because they are inexpensive to create, inexpensive to maintain, and produce inferior (cheap) products compared to those produced in social capital networks. Finally, cheap social capital networks are ubiquitous. They can be found in social, business, sports, entertainment, religious, and science. Future investigations should also focus on discovering the conditions that lead to the formation of cheap social capital networks and what measures can be adopted to impede and mitigate their costly consequences.

Keywords

Social Capital

1. Introduction

Despite lacking an agreed-on definition, social capital has become an increasingly popular concept. One reason for its popularity may be that its fuzzy definitions have facilitated its applications to research in diverse settings and disciplines (Portes, 1998). Another possible explanation for its popularity is that it provides an alternative to traditional economic theory that ignores relationships, emphasizes selfishness, and fails to explain many predictably irrational choices (Robison & Oliver, 2019). Finally, social capital may be popular because, like love and risk, it may be difficult to define but it is easy to recognize.

This article supports the definition of social capital as the empathy one person or group has for another person or group (Robison, Schmid, & Siles, 2002). To defend this definition, this article describes the relationship focus of important social capital definitions. Continuing, this article points out that relationships depend on commonalities (what people share), the most important of which are emotions. This article claims that empathy makes it possible for one person or group to internalize the conditions of another person or group, allowing them to make decisions simultaneously in their own interests as well as in the interests of others. Decisions made in the collective interest of social capital networks members, this article points out, produce important economic benefits.

To support the definition of social capital as empathy, this article distinguishes it from what it is not, negative social capital. Negative social capital is the antipathy one person or group has for another person or group. Negative social capital has limited value because, by itself, it fails to facilitate network formation or to produce the economic benefits associated with social capital networks. However, when persons share negative social capital for the same person, group, or object, it becomes a commonality that enables the formation of cheap social capital relationships and cheap social capital networks.

This article introduces and explains why cheap social capital is cheap and ubiquitous. It also explains why cheap social capital networks form and why they

often employ destructive and defensive actions with costly consequences. Finally, this paper concludes by proposing that future research finds ways to limit the formation of cheap social capital networks and mitigate their costly social, economic, and political consequences.

To achieve its goals, this article reviews insights of other researchers, cites relevant literature, observes, makes logical deductions and inductions, and asks questions. This paper also draws on concepts from several disciplines, including exchange theory, utility maximization, networks, commonalities, needs and motives, and attachment value for things.

2. Social Capital

Social capital and relationships. Despite social capital's lack of a commonly accepted definition, there is general acknowledgement that it has to do with human relationships. For example, the Oxford dictionary defines social capital as "networks of relationships among people" (Hellerstein & Neumark, 2020). Lin viewed social capital as an investment in social relations (Lin, 2001). Hanifan, one of the first to use the term social capital, connected it to relationships characterized by goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit (Hanifan, 1916). Putnam, one of the most influential contributors to the social capital literature, argued that it facilitates cooperation and mutually supportive relations in communities and nations and that we would suffer from its neglect (Putnam, 2001). Coleman associated social capital with networks of relationships that facilitate individual or collective action, including the development of human capital (Coleman, 1988). Finally, the World Bank defines social capital as "the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions" (The World Bank, n.d.). Many other social capital definitions are related to those just described (Claridge, 2004).

Relationships, connections, and empathy. A relationship is defined as a condition in which two or more persons are connected (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). People can connect to each other in many ways including through their emotions. Brené Brown quoted Eduardo Bericat, who declared: "As human beings we can only experience life emotionally" (Brown, 2021; Bericat, 2016). Brown then described eighty-seven feelings or emotions that could connect us.

Empathy is an emotion with a unique capacity to connect us. It is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference. It is the capacity to "walk in another person's shoes," to understand and feel what another person is feeling. Empathy is characterized by a song made popular by Barry Manilow that includes the lyrics, "I feel sad when you're sad/I feel glad when you're glad" (AZLyrics, n.d.). When people internalize each other's well-being, they are connected and motivated to act simultaneously in the interest of others as well as their own.

Adam Smith: sympathy and empathy. Adam Smith is generally recognized as

the father of modern-day neoclassical economics. His famous description of the selfish butcher in his book on the causes of the wealth of nations has provided cover for the claim that selfishness is essential for efficient allocation of privately owned resources (Sen, 2010). However, despite Smith's emphasis on selfishness, he recognized the importance of sympathy, what we now call empathy. He opened his famous work on moral sentiments by calling attention to empathy: "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it" (Smith, 1892).

For Smith, moral ideas and actions are products of our very nature that interest us in the well-being of others (Butler, 2017). Smith described the important balance between concern for one's own well-being and the well-being of others: "Every man feels his own pleasures and his own pains more sensibly than those of other people... After himself, the members of his own family, those who usually live in the same house with him, his parents, his children, his brothers and sisters, are naturally the objects of his warmest affection" (Smith, 1892).

Defining social capital. This paper supports the definition of social capital as the empathy one person or group has for another person or group because: 1) social capital scholars generally agree that social capital has to do with relationships; 2) relationships have to do with how people are connected; and 3) empathy connects two or more persons emotional in especially productive ways. Furthermore, if we define social capital as empathy, then Adam Smith should be recognized as an early contributor to the idea, if not its originator.

The social capital definition supported here, is not intended to be exclusive or narrow. Indeed, sympathy, compassion, regard, and trust, as well as other connecting emotions may all enable persons to internalize each other's well-being and produce economic and other benefits beyond those motivated by selfish interests. As a result, emotional connections that enable persons to internalize each other's interest and act in the community's interest as well as their own can be viewed as "cousins" to the empathy definition of social capital supported here.

Social capital theory (Robison & Flora, 2003). A theory is a system of ideas that provides an explanation of something. Social capital theory explains that social capital is capital and like other forms of capital, can produce goods without itself being used up (Smithson, 1982). For my purposes here, goods are things over which ownership and control can be established and which satisfy physical and socio-emotional needs and wants.

For the purposes of this article, commodities are goods that satisfy physical needs, such as food, shelter, and safety, are called commodities. Relational goods are intangible signals exchanged between persons and groups that satisfy the socio-emotional needs for belonging; internal and external validation; transcendence (Robison, Malone, Oliver, Bali, & Winder, 2020). Social capital theory also includes a description of attachment value goods, things whose value and

meaning are changed by their being associated with the objects of our social capital that embeds them with relational goods (Schifferstein & Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, 2008; Cordes, Allen, Bishop, Lynne, Robison, Ryan, & Shaffer, 2003). Things embedded with relational goods include songs, sunsets, hometowns, flags, keepsakes, and favorite foods. They also include institutions, traditions, and customs that have standing and provide for orderly exchanges and the maintenance of property rights.

Social capital theory is also supposed to explain the terms and levels of commodities and relational good exchanges and the selection of exchange partners. Therefore, the test for the usefulness of social capital theory is determining whether it allows us to explain and understand exchanges beyond that provided by other theories, including neoclassical economics (Robison & Oliver, 2019).

3. Investing in Social Capital

We invest in social capital by exchanging relational and attachment value goods. Commodities exchanged on preferential terms of trade implies that relational goods are included in the exchange. As a result, commodities exchanged on favorable terms may also produce social capital investments. Social capital investments may include investments in the social capital others have for us, the social capital we have for others, and the social capital our ideal self (our conscience) has for ourselves.

Exchanging relational goods. Exchanging relational goods is like consuming food—there is an immediate increase in one's well-being as the food is consumed; then there is a long-term effect as the consumed food is retained by the body and becomes a supply of potential energy. Exchanging relational and attachment value goods and commodities on preferential terms, which we will refer to later as relational goods, provides an immediate and future increase in the consumer's well-being, though the increase depends on the socio-emotional and physical needs that the goods supply. Relational goods can be exchanged through alternative conveyances that include written and oral communication, touching, giving gifts, obeying customs and traditions, participation in celebrations, and visual signals.

Dale Carnegie wrote his self-help book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* in 1936. Since its publication, it has sold over 30 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling books of all time. From the perspective of social capital theory, we might refer to his book as a manual on how to produce and exchange relational goods that enable us to invest in social capital (i.e., winning friends) and altering the terms and level of commodity exchanges by including relational goods with commodity exchanges (i.e., influencing people). His suggestions for exchanging relational goods include becoming genuinely interested in other people, smiling, remembering other people's names, talking about things that interest others, being a good listener, and finding things about another person to admire and commend (Carnegie, 1936).

Personal examples of exchanging relational goods. Next, I provide personal examples of exchanging relational goods and commodities on preferential terms that satisfied my needs for internal and external validation, belonging, and transcendence (Robison, Shupp, Jin, Siles, & Ferrarini, 2012).

1) I once attended a banquet. When I arrived, most of the seats were filled. As a result, I felt awkward and uncomfortable. Then, one of my friends at the event saw me and motioned for me to join him at his table. I appreciated my friend offering me a place to sit and his gesture strengthened our friendship. My friend offered me a relational good by inviting me to sit at his table. The relational good he offered me, satisfied my need for belonging and increased the social capital I provided my friend.

2) I once attempted to replace a standard light switch with a dimmer switch in my house. Unsure how to proceed, I called my electrician friend, Kevin. I described my problem, and he told me how to install the switch. He also reminded me that I could have answered my own question by reading the instructions included with the dimmer switch. Kevin's free advice saved me the money that I would have spent to hire an electrician. His help also increased my desire to return the favor in the future. The opportunity to compensate Kevin presented itself later when I hired him to install a light in my four seasons room. When he finished installing the light and presented his bill, I paid him a generous tip. In sum, Kevin provided me with a commodity on favorable terms when he told me how to wire my switch. Later, he received a commodity gain when I gave him a generous tip. Our social capital enabled us to exchange commodities on favorable terms and relational goods. The exchange also increased our social capital available for encouraging future exchanges.

3) Last winter, my wife and I spent a month learning how to paint landscape scenes using acrylics. We were both pleased with our efforts and showed off our paintings whenever we had the opportunity. They now hang on our family room wall. As a result of my painting success, I experienced internal validation and increased social capital from my ideal self.

4) One time I was invited to discuss a topic I had studied and written about to a class of young single adults. After my lecture, some of those attending told me that they enjoyed my presentation and that they had learned some useful information. Since they had no obligation to commend my efforts, I believed their feedback was sincere and it provided me with external validation.

5) During one holiday season, my family and I volunteered to serve meals at a local homeless shelter. Those who organized the event seemed to appreciate our efforts. Those we served seemed to appreciate the food. After spending time in this effort, I felt differently about the homeless people in our community and those helping feed them, experiencing what is called here transcendence.

4. Commonalities

Exchanging relational goods. Opportunities to exchange relational goods and

commodities are enabled by exchange partners' commonalities. Commonalities are traits, attributes, ideas, feelings, and characteristics we share. Commonalities include what we can identify in others because we find them within ourselves; what we agree to do for and with each other; what we regard in others and strive to imitate; and our compatible views that contribute to our desires to cooperate. The durability of commonalities depends on whether they are inherited or earned. Finally, the commonalities that connect us are often distinguished by the degree to which they enable us to internalize each other's well-being.

Commonalities and attraction. Commonalities enable us to exchange relational goods and commodities on favorable terms because we find comfort with those who are like us, an attraction described by an English proverb: "birds of a feather flock together." For example, scientists have recognized the attraction of similar objects in nature and have found that similar plants, shrubs, and trees are attracted to the same climate and soils. In fluid mechanics, the principle of attraction is called the "Cheerios's effect," a reference to the phenomenon of floating objects appearing to either attract or repel one another (i.e., how Cheerios floating on the surface of a bowl tend to clump together or stick to the side of the bowl).

Another application of the principle of attraction is the inheritability of some professions. For example, in a study of 27,788 physicians, where the educational background for both parents was known, 14 percent had a parent who was also a physician, and 2 percent had two parents who were physicians. The proportion of physicians with at least one physician parent increased significantly over time, from 6 percent for physicians born between 1950 and 1959 to 20 percent for physicians born between 1980 and 1990 ($P < 0.001$). The same pattern of increasing occupational inheritability was not seen for individuals with law degrees (Polyakova, Persson, Hofmann, Jena, Newhouse, 2020). These results leave this unanswered question: What are the commonalities of parents and children that lead to inheritability of some professions and not others? Or is it the case that some professions have characteristics that make inherited commonalities within families more important?

Us versus them. Commonalities also help explain why we identify with some groups and not others. Henri Tajfel and John Turner introduced Social Identity Theory in 1979. Social identity theory implies that we join social networks based on our commonalities. The networks to which we belong become important when they contribute to our internal and external validation. Furthermore, we tend to adopt the identity of model network members and highlight their positive qualities. On the other hand, we tend to highlight the negative qualities of those who are not in our network. Thus, the result of highlighting the positive qualities of those in our group and the negative qualities of those not in our group leads to an us versus them view of social relationships (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

On the other hand, some groups include both us and them. For example, one group may consist of members who share a synergistic commonality, but also within the same group, there may exist persons who share competitive commonalities. For example, members of the same business may share a synergistic

commonality to produce and market a product. But within the business, there may exist competitive groups that compete for a share of the businesses' budget. Such was the case of scientists with similar interests in stem cell research who were competing for limited grant funds ([Harvard Stem Cell Institute, n.d.](#)).

5. Comparing Commonalities

Which commonalities matter? The importance of commonalities depends on their capacity to enable the creation and exchange of relational goods and commodities on preferential terms that satisfy our physical and socio-emotional needs. Important commonalities enable relational goods to be embedded in things, including commodities and institutions, creating what we called earlier attachment value goods ([Robison & Flora, 2003](#)). Consider some examples of how commonalities enable the exchange of relational goods.

While performing their duties, work companions may find their success requires cooperation, presenting them with opportunities to exchange relational goods. Other networks may have similar opportunities to cooperate and exchange relational goods. For example, musical groups may create relational goods when they produce music that would be impossible to create alone. Persons facing a shared crisis may create and exchange relational goods when they contribute to the resolution of the problem and to each other's emotional support. Members of the same club or people attending the same political event may find opportunities to confirm each other's values. Agreeing on causes and solutions to problems, supporting shared objectives and ideals, and promoting their group's success can all lead to the creation and exchange of relational goods.

Unimportant commonalities do little to enable the exchange of relational goods. For example, as the number of people sharing a commonality increases, the time and effort available per person to exchange relational goods decrease. As a result, the commonality is less important. For example, the commonality of living in the same large city matters little unless we live close to each other.

In cases where large numbers of people share the same commonality and interpersonal contact is limited, people must create and maintain high attachment value goods to and connect through it to sustain their relationships. Other commonalities that are less important are those that enable only limited contact, such as being on the same flight with another person. Unless a commonality enables and encourages the sustained exchange of relational goods, it is unlikely to be important for altering the terms and level of exchange, the selection of exchange partners, and investments in social capital.

Competitive versus synergistic commonalities. Whether commonalities enable the exchange of relational goods or bads may depend on whether they create a competitive or a synergistic environment. Competitive commonalities create environments in which one person or group can only win relational good and commodities if another person or group loses. Synergistic commonalities create environments in which one person or group is more likely to win if another

person or group also wins.

The win/lose outcomes of competitive sports have produced well-known examples of antipathy, often between team fans. For example, after an Indonesian soccer match, police fired tear gas to stop brawls between fans of the competing teams. In response, fans panicked and trampled to death at least 125 persons (Fox 11 LA, 2022).

In contrast to competitive environments, persons or groups facing a common challenge whose solution requires synergistic cooperation may produce social capital. For example, the movie *Bitter Enemies* describes how Klu Klux Klan leader C. P. Ellis and Black activist Ann Atwater cochaired a charrette in which the resulting majority vote would determine the fate of East Durham's Black students who'd been displaced by a school fire. At first, Ellis and Atwater were each other's object of antipathy, but then as they worked together to resolve the problem, they eventually became lifelong friends, demonstrated by Ellis delivering the eulogy at Atwater's funeral (Henderson, 2019).

Earned and inherited commonalities. Commonalities may be earned or inherited. Earned commonalities can be acquired with effort and experience. These may include such things as where people live, where and how they play, what they study, and how they worship.

A special class of earned commonalities are covenants, agreements, bonds, commitments, promises, laws, contracts, conventions, vows, treaties, oaths, pledges, and declarations that connect one person or group to another person or group. Commonalities may also be inherited and determined by the conditions of our birth, such as genealogy, gender, race, native language, the world conditions during our lifetime, and the nationality of our parents.

Emotional commonalities. If we live life emotionally, as Eduardo Bericat claimed, and if our relationships depend on what we have in common, then empathy has a special place in Brene Brown's emotional "atlas." Empathy facilitates the creation of emotional commonalities which are essential to the creation and exchange of relational goods and commodities on favorable terms that satisfy our physical and socio-emotional needs.

Commonalities of degree. Commonalities may be viewed in terms of their density, intensity, grade, rank, or degree. For example, persons may work at the same place of employment, but they may also be paid differently, hold different positions of responsibility, have worked at the company for different lengths of time, and have different comfort levels. One commonality with important differences in quantity is a person's income. This variable matters because it influences the accessibility of so many other commonalities including where people, who will be their friends, where they are likely to worship, what political views they will support, and where their children will go to school.

6. Commonalities and Kinds of Social Capital

Some have found it helpful to connect different kinds of social capital and

commonalities and intensity levels of social capital. Three kinds of social capital have been identified: linking, bonding, and bridging social capital. Enabling commonalities include earned and inherited. Social capital intensities that describe our ability to internalize the well-being of our social capital object range from strong to weak.

Earned commonalities and linking social capital. Earned commonalities acquired and maintained through exchanges of commodities and relational goods in horizontal relationships between equals are consistent with what Granovetter referred to as weak ties and what we call here linking social capital (Granovetter, 1973). Linking social capital is what exists between coworkers, neighbors, members of the same faith, students in the same class who often study together, people traveling on the same conveyance, and people sharing information about a variety of topics, including employment opportunities. And because the commonalities that enable the development of linking social capital are earned, they are depreciable and require continual exchanges of relational goods and commodities to be maintained. Emotional connections especially depend on the continual exchanges of relational goods to be maintained, especially since emotional memories are inaccurate and may be short-lived (Miller, 2010; Amieiro, Orr, Magdoline, & Basile, n.d.). Furthermore, once social capital investments through exchanges of relational goods and commodities no longer occur, linking social capital diminishes.

Inherited commonalities and bonding social capital. Inherited commonalities that are acquired at birth and enable the exchange of commodities and relational goods over time, are likely to produce a strong form of social capital called bonding social capital. Of course, not all inherited commonalities enable the formation of bonding social capital. Family members may enjoy social capital as well as negative social capital. Finally, some earned commonalities such as agreements, covenants, promises, and contracts may enable the formation of bonding social capital.

The strength of social capital ties, including linking and bonding, may be measured by value of commodities and things exchanged for relational goods. For example, one exchange associated with bonding social capital is the exchanging of one's kidney for socio-emotional goods. The commonality enabling such an exchange was, at first, inherited familial connections: In the 1950s, the first successful exchange was between identical twins. In the 1960s and 1970s, live donors were also generally genetically related to the recipient. In the 1980s to the 1990s, the donor pool was expanded further to include emotionally related individuals (spouses and friends). More recently, however, the exchange has occurred between acquaintances and sometimes even strangers (Massey, Kranenburg, Zuidema, Hak, Erdman, Hilhorst, et al., 2010).

Bonding social capital was also illustrated in a five-state land-value exchange study. In that study, colleagues and I found that compared to the market price, farmland sellers discounted the sale price of their land to family members by

6.78 percent, compared to the average discount of 5.57 percent offered to friendly neighbors (Robison & Ritchie, 2010).

Vertical commonalities and bridging social capital. Some commonalities enable the development of asymmetric or vertical levels of social capital. We refer to asymmetric or vertical social capital as bridging social capital. For example, two persons may be members of the military and may have served during similar circumstances. However, their military service commonality may be gradated if they held different ranks that made their relationship to each other asymmetric. Two persons may be siblings but occupy different birth orders. Other asymmetric commonalities may include work experiences shared by an employee and a supervisor, educational experiences shared by a teacher and a student, athletic experiences shared by an athlete and a coach, and family experiences shared by parents and children. In each of these relationships, the asymmetry may change the nature of the commodities and relational goods that are exchanged.

Defining kinds of social capital. There is much to learn about commonalities that enable the exchange of relational goods and the kinds of social capital such exchanges produce. Therefore, what has been inferred about earned versus inherited commonalities and linking, bonding, and bridging social capital needs to be verified. And there is another point: social capital scholars disagree about what to call strong and weak ties, horizontal ties between equals, and vertical ties between persons in different positions or roles. For example, much of the literature treats bridging social capital as horizontal relationships while referring to linking social capital as vertical relationships (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). I have defined here and elsewhere that linking social capital (like links in a chain) relates to horizontal relationships between equals. Bonding social capital may also be horizontal ties, but durable and strong compared to linking social capital. Finally, I define bridging social capital (like a bridge that connects two different lands) to vertical relationships between persons in different positions and possessing different levels of available resources.

7. Why Is Social Capital Important?

What makes social capital, defined as the empathy one person or group has for others, such an important concept? Consider the following explanations: First, it satisfies the requirements for being capital. Second, it facilitates specialization and trade. Third, it facilitates collective action. Fourth, it encourages investments in public goods. Fifth, it explains the production of positive externalities and the reduction of negative ones. Sixth, it provides solutions for managing common resources. Seventh, it reduces commodity inequality. Eighth, it explains the production of attachment value goods. And ninth, it likely leads to increased happiness.

What is it that makes social capital such an important resource that produces so many individual and societal benefits? It is that by internalizing the well-being of others, it is then possible for us to act simultaneously in our own interest and in

the interests of others. While selfishness is heralded in modern economics as the foundation for commodity exchange and the efficient allocation of private resources, selfishness also leads to commodity inequality and the allocation of resources based on dollar votes which limit collective action, promotes free riding, and encourages the creation of negative externalities. Selfishness and the desire for material gain may sometimes promote cooperation when investing parties stand to benefit. On the other hand, selfishness and the desire for material gain may sometimes promote antisocial behavior such as robbing a bank when the odds are small of being caught.

Social capital and capital. Capital, in its simplest form, represents a supply of potential services with the following properties: First, the service capacity of capital can be increased through maintenance and reinvestments. Second, capital's service capacity can be depreciated through time and use. Third, service enabled by capital must have the capacity to transform the value of other things. And fourth, we generally consider capital to be location specific, while capital's services can take on multiple kinds of properties and locations (Robison, Schmid, & Siles, 2002).

Specialization, trade, and increased productivity. People are more productive when they specialize in doing what they do best (and not doing what they don't do well). This is the point Adam Smith made with his famous pin example. He noted that one person working alone could scarcely make one pin per day. However, ten people working together and specializing in a specific pin-making task could produce 28,000 pins a day. Still, being able to specialize in a productive task requires that people can exchange what they produced for what they gave up producing when they specialized.

Perhaps the benefit of belonging to a social capital-rich network explains the importance of family businesses (which are now included in reports as small businesses). For example, there are 5.5 million family businesses in the United States, and "family-owned businesses contribute 57% of the GDP and employ 63% of the workforce" (Grand Valley State University, n.d.). In addition, family-owned businesses employ over 98 million people! Finally, family businesses are responsible for 78 percent of all new job creation (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003).

Collective action. Sometimes, large-scale projects with many contributing persons may produce benefits that are difficult to distribute based on individual efforts. In such cases, it may be difficult to motivate individuals to act collectively when their participation depends only on their personal gain. But when participants internalize the benefits received by members of the larger group and when individuals experience vicarious rewards from helping others, individual rewards become less important and project participation in such units as religious and service groups becomes more rewarding.

Increased production of public goods. A public good is one whose benefits are nonexcludable and nondepletable. A public good is nonexcludable if one cannot

exclude individuals from enjoying its benefits or impose costs on those that do. Nondepletable means that the use of a public good does not diminish the services it can produce. Streetlights may exemplify a public good. It is hard to exclude passersby from benefitting from the light, and its supply is not diminished when some persons enjoy its benefits.

Selfish persons may underinvest in public goods because the individual commodity benefits are less than the investment. But when persons internalize the benefits of public goods for the objects of their social capital, the additional benefit is often sufficient to make the public-good investment attractive. As a result, social capital increases individual rewards from public goods and makes their being funded more likely.

Increased (and decreased) production of positive (and negative) externalities. An externality is a cost or benefit one person or group imposes on another person or group without their consent. However, social capital that internalizes the consequences of one's actions, in effect, internalizes externalities, thus increasing the benefits (and costs) of what would otherwise be a positive (or negative) externality.

One example of a positive externality is cleaning the snow off sidewalks. In my neighborhood, homeowners are expected to keep their own sidewalks free from snow. However, one of our neighbors is a single parent, and her neighbor is retired, is in good health, and owns a snow blower. When he cleans the snow from his sidewalk, he also cleans the single parent's sidewalk as well. Of course, he benefits from the clean sidewalk in front of his neighbor's house when he takes his dog for a walk.

Noise can be a negative externality. In college towns, for neighborhoods located next to large student populations, noise is a frequent problem. Imagine parents of a baby who after some effort, coax their baby to sleep. Do the parents need a complaint from their neighbor to limit their noise? No! They know their baby needs to sleep and have externalized their baby's well-being. Single student neighbors, however, may not share the parent's concern for noise.

Managing common resources. Commons refers to shared resources in which stakeholders lack the ability to control the rate of service extraction by other stakeholders (Hess, 2006). As a result, there is a tendency for common property resources to be overused and their service capacity to be exhausted. Although commons originally referred to common land, we now include information, natural resources (such clean air, clean water, and wildlife), and shared urban spaces as commons. Failure to regulate the use of commons is referred to as the tragedy of the commons. This term describes a condition where individuals are guided by their selfish interests, as opposed to the interests of the group, and thus overuse and often destroy the commons resource (Hardin, 1968). For example, Nobel Prize-winning social scientist Elinor Ostrom described how Switzerland dairy farmers employed their social capital to properly manage their common grazing land (The Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University, 2021).

Managing exhaustible resources. Some resources are exhaustible and can be viewed as having a fixed supply such as oil, gas, and even land. For exhaustible resources, the question becomes: What is the proper trade-off between our current use of resources versus preserving the resource for future users who are not present to vote their preferences? The argument supporting using resources now is the so-called need for economic growth. Growth is the be-all and end-all of mainstream economic and political thinking. Without a continually rising gross domestic product (GDP), we're told that we risk social instability, declining standards of living, and pretty much any hope of progress. But what about the possibility that our current pursuit of growth might cost more than it earns? That possibility—that prioritizing growth is ultimately a losing game—is one that Herman Daly, has been exploring for more than fifty years. In so doing, he has developed arguments in favor of a steady-state economy, one that forgoes the insatiable and environmentally destructive hunger for growth, recognizes the physical limitations of our planet, and, instead, seeks a sustainable economic and ecological equilibrium (Daly, 2007).

Encouraging environmentally friendly behavior because it is profitable overall may not be effective. Instead, there must be other incentives to care for the “nest” we live in. Creating attachment values for public goods such as schools, forests, and public water sources encourages the substitution of relational goods for profit incentives, threats, or fear of penalties. For this substitution to be effective, we must be willing to accept relational goods as legitimate and effective substitutes for commodity gains that harm the environment and are allowed because nature lacks a voice at the boardroom.

Reduced commodity inequality. Another benefit of belonging to a social capital-rich network is having the ability to exchange relational goods for commodities that reduce commodity inequalities. The principle of comparative advantage teaches that individuals will exchange with their partner the goods in which they have in relative excess. As a result, when those with more social capital than commodities exchange relational goods with those who own more commodities than social capital—their commodity differences will decrease.

To illustrate, we expect parents to exchange commodities for relational goods with their children: a smiling baby is exchanging relational goods for its care and feeding. In fact, exchanging commodities for relational goods outside of their families led Americans to give \$471 billion to charities in 2020, breaking a record for charitable giving despite living in a global pandemic (Hadero & The Associated Press, 2021). In sum, income variations decrease, and average income increases among members of a social capital-rich network as social capital increases (Robison, Siles, & Songqing, 2011).

Particularly visible are the consequences of a lack of social capital resources on household networks. For example, two-parent households have access to more social capital resources and benefits than single-parent households because a household of two parents connects to and benefits from two different extended

family and friends' networks. In contrast, a single-parent household, often connects to only one social capital network.

Consider some of the consequences of reduced social capital for single-parent households. According to the US Census, the poverty rate for single parents with children in the United States in 2009 was 37.1 percent. The rate for married couples with children was only 6.8 percent. Understandably, Robert Rector called marriage one of the greatest weapons against child poverty (Rector, 2010). Other consequences for children raised in single-parent households include lower educational achievements, higher crime rates, and higher chances of themselves becoming single parents (Gillespie Shields, n.d.).

Attachment value goods. Individuals and groups change the value and meaning of things when they embed them with relational goods often by associating them with persons who are social capital objects. In a 1992 study, Bowlby and Ainsworth identified a concept similar to attachment value that is now referred to as object attachment (Bretherton, 1992). Furthermore, abnormal hoarding may be related to strong attachment values. Other less extreme examples of attachment values may be keeping favorite photos of friends and family, keepsakes from loved ones, and religious symbols.

Two personal examples may help to illustrate the importance of attachment value goods. When I married, and before I moved to a different part of the country than where my mother lived, she gave me a ring owned by one of our pioneer ancestors. The ring connected me to my mom and to my ancestors. Years later, while I was visiting my mom, she noticed I was still wearing her ring. She showed visible signs of approval knowing that I valued her gift. As this story illustrated, shared attachment values can strengthen social capital ties.

Sustainable institutions. Things that can acquire attachment value include laws, customs, rules, and accepted best practices. An orderly society in which persons respect, obey, and sustain their laws require that their laws acquire attachment values, otherwise selfish individuals will often find it to their advantage to ignore them.

Jackson et al. reviewed the reasons people obey the law. The traditional explanation is that people want to avoid sanctions and penalties. However, according to Jackson et al., people comply with the law because they believe it is the right thing to do. Furthermore, when institutions (laws) are justly administered in the eyes of the people, they acquire attachment value, and society can avoid the cost, danger, and alienation that are associated with policies based on rules without attachment value enforced by threats and penalties (Jackson, Bradford, Hough, Myhill, Quinton, & Tyler, 2012).

Increased happiness. Happiness is an intrinsically important outcome of social capital. It relates to social capital's capacity to produce relational goods that satisfy socio-emotional needs. In a longitudinal study, researchers repeatedly examined the same individuals to detect any changes that might occur over time. Robert Waldinger, the director of the study, and his colleagues concluded that

social connections are “good for us and that loneliness kills.” It turns out, according to Waldinger, that people who are more socially connected to family, friends, and community are happier and physically healthier, and they live longer than those less well connected (Waldinger, 2016).

8. Negative and Cheap Social Capital

Negative social capital. To define social capital as the empathy a person or group has for another person or group suggests that its opposite exists as well. Its opposite is called here negative social capital: a person or a group’s antipathy (as opposed to empathy) for another person or group who is the object of their negative social capital.

Persons who have empathy for each other are likely to form social capital networks. However, persons who are the objects of each other’s negative social capital are more likely to avoid each other than form a network and to compete rather than cooperate. And instead of investing in public goods that produce benefits for their objects, persons with negative social capital for their objects are more likely to choose destructive and defensive acts that harm or disadvantage the objects of their negative social capital.

Cheap social capital. Antipathy toward the same person, group, or thing can provide an important commonality that can enable the formation of a network. Persons in networks whose connection to each other—their commonality—is their shared antipathy for the same person or group is in what we call here a cheap social capital network. We call the connection between members of a cheap social capital network, cheap social capital. And we call those they view with antipathy as objects of their cheap social capital. Cheap social capital relationships have been described as “strange bedfellows” or “marriages of convenience” (Robison & Oliver, 2019).

An example of cheap social capital. Consider this example of cheap social capital, cheap social capital networks, and cheap social capital objects. Recently, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, traveled to Iran to solidify an Iranian-Russian alliance that has been emerging as a counterweight to American-led efforts to support Ukraine against Russia’s war efforts. This alliance has all the trappings of a cheap social capital network with America as its object. “Russia and Iran still don’t trust one another, but now need each other more than ever,” wrote Ali Vaez, the Iranian director for the International Crisis Group. “This is no longer a partnership of choice, but an alliance out of necessity” (Troianovski & Fassihi, 2022).

9. What Makes Cheap Social Capital Cheap?

Recognizing the benefits of belonging to important social capital networks, and lacking membership, nonmembers often look for alternatives. Cheap social capital networks can be an attractive alternative to social capital networks.

But what makes cheap social capital cheap? First, cheap social capital is cheap

because there is an abundance of potential cheap social capital objects. Second, it is cheap because it is inexpensive to maintain. And third, it is cheap because its products that are inferior imitations of goods produced in social capital networks.

Earlier, this article described the benefits of belonging to social capital networks. However, such networks are sometimes expensive to build and maintain, and they may not exist where their contributions are needed to enable important exchanges. Furthermore, they are fragile and subject to destruction or manipulation when faced with an imagined or real provocation and influenced by a strong leader. As a result, we often belong to some cheap social capital networks even when we also belong to social capital networks.

Kenneth Boulding may have summarized the popularity of cheap social capital versus social capital when he wrote, “And love, with longer pull than hate, is slow indeed to propagate” (Boulding, 1963). In the end, the easy access to and the universal appeal of cheap social capital—despite its limited usefulness—makes it a popular alternative to social capital.

An abundance of potential cheap social capital objects. Cheap social capital networks are cheap (inexpensive) to create because there are so many objects that can be viewed with antipathy—negative social capital. Persons and groups can view objects with negative social capital for several reasons. These reasons may include one’s differences or lack of commonalities; fear that one will be disadvantaged or harmed in competitive struggles; resentment over real or imagined offensives; and being excluded from the advantages enjoyed by an object due to its membership in social capital networks. Sometimes, just being alone is also sufficient to view others with negative social capital.

The differences that can lead to the creation of cheap social capital objects are more easily recognized than the subtle similarities that can produce objects of social capital and social capital networks. Persons who are different from us, who have unknown or unacknowledged commonalities, who we can blame for our shortcomings or limitations, whose efforts impede our own, and who disagree with us can all become objects of our antipathy and can thus lead to the formation of cheap social capital networks.

Pointing out the lack of commonalities between cheap social capital network members and their object(s), however, is rarely enough to produce cheap social capital. Cheap social capital objects must be viewed as having the intent and ability to compete with cheap social capital network members for limited resources and ideological perspectives. Or cheap social capital objects must be viewed as threats to one’s physical well-being, to the status quo, or to the progress of network members. Also, those who command power and resources can be, and often are, blamed for one’s current unpleasantness, which, in most cases, exaggerates the power and influence of high-profile persons.

Not only is there an abundance of potential cheap social capital objects, but there is also an abundance of lonely persons wanting to belong to any network,

including cheap social capital ones. The loneliness could be a result of one's inability to find and form relationships with like-minded others. For whatever reason, loneliness is a national disease that creates the need to belong—to belong somewhere or, sometimes, anywhere (National Institute on Aging, 2019).

Low (cheap) maintenance costs. Cheap social capital networks are cheap to maintain relative to social capital ones. Maintaining a social capital network requires the constant exchange of relational goods, which may be difficult. In addition, earned commonalities that enable the exchange of relational goods are depreciable. Finally, the exchange of emotional bads can also quickly destroy the social capital that has taken a long time to create.

In contrast, maintaining cheap social capital does not require the social skills of effective communication, emotional intelligence, or empathy that maintaining social capital requires. Instead, maintaining cheap social capital only requires that its object(s) be viewed as morally or physically threatening and prevent the formation of commonalities.

Some methods of maintaining this negative social capital include the following: using misinformation to blame the object for one's disadvantages, using discrimination to limit exchanges with the cheap social capital object to prevent the development of commonalities that might enable the exchange of relational goods; emphasizing commodity gains possible at the expense of the cheap social capital object; creating barriers to joining social capital networks that the objects of cheap social capital cannot meet; and establishing conflicting loyalties that would isolate the cheap social capital object.

Low (cheap) value products. Additionally, cheap social capital is cheap because it is an inferior imitation of social capital relationships. We refer to an imitation or a counterfeit of a genuine thing as cheap—as in a cheap imitation. Synthetic diamonds, knockoff clothing brands, fish parts sold as crab, college degrees acquired from mail-order universities, and copies of art masterpieces might all qualify as cheap imitations. In fact, the sale of cheap and counterfeit products is a major problem for Amazon, whose third-party sales have increased from 3 percent in 2000 to over 50 percent of Amazon sales in 2019 (Suthivarakom, 2010). The real benefit of membership in social capital networks is having access to relational goods and the benefits associated with members internalizing each other's wellbeing. The cheap alternative to relational goods is whatever is produced in relationships based on a shared cheap social capital object.

10. What Motivates People to Form Cheap Social Capital Networks?

Consider several motivations people have for forming cheap social capital networks. The first motivation is holding resentment for being denied the benefits of membership in social capital networks; second, is having envy for those who enjoy the sought-after advantages; third, is defending against imagined or real threats and protecting one's resources from being lost to other social capital

networks; and fourth, is lacking the commonalities required to build social capital. Overlaying these motives are the pursuit of power, status, and wealth, wanting to feel special, fearing conspiracies, and wanting others to know one's 'truth.'

Resentment. Exchange theory predicts that we expect fairness when exchanging commodities and relational goods. Exchanges that leave one better off than before are likely to motivate future exchanges. Furthermore, exchanges of relational goods may lead to increased social capital. When one is denied the opportunity for participating in synergistic exchanges, the result may be a production of relational bads and the development of negative social capital. The deficit, real or perceived, in the exchange, motivates persons to redress the deficit and often leads to the formation of cheap social capital networks and defensive and destructive acts against the objects of one's negative social capital.

Envy. It is easy to associate cheap social capital networks and their objects with envy, which often results from disparities between social capital network members and nonmembers (Ben-Ze'ev, 1992). Defined, envy is a negative attitude toward another person's superiority and the desire to gain what this person possesses through either reducing the benefits of the person in a superior position or increasing the benefits of the person in an inferior position. According to this view, reducing inequality should reduce envy. However, research finds that reducing envy is much more difficult. It may require support for the view that the inequality is undeserved and that therefore reducing it is morally justified. In any event, envy contributes to negative and cheap social capital. Other contributors to negative social capital (like envy) include conflicting attitudes toward high attachment values such as political, religious, and other moral values, in which the conflict produces relational bads.

Real and imagined threats. An advantage due to belonging to a cheap social capital network is the increased resources one has from the network to respond to threats and perceived dangers from objects of their cheap social capital. In this instance, the desire of network members to preserve themselves leads them to cooperate because doing so increases their own emotional and physical safety.

When social capital networks are dissolved, what was once social capital, empathy, is replaced by negative social capital, antipathy. For example, following the discovery of threats to her household network, Elin Nordegren, Tiger Woods's then wife, attacked his car with a golf club and sued for divorce, eventually receiving one hundred million dollars in the settlement (NJeri, 2022).

Lack of commonalities. Individuals who are members of different networks may not only hold different commonalities, but these commonalities may conflict with one another. Such may be the case when persons hold opposing views that cannot be reconciled. For example, whether persons support the death penalty, abortion, immigration, gun rights, limited government, and so on may be conflicting commonalities that lead to the development of negative and cheap social capital. When a persons' views are strongly held and represent one's social identify, these views can acquire high attachment values that can lead persons to

create or join opposing cheap social capital networks. For example, Stanislav Kucher writes that support for Vladimir Putin and the war in Ukraine has become a kind of battleground within households creating a generational divide between parents (especially those over 55) and their children (Lucas, 2022).

In other cases, persons may lack commonalities that are inherited, maintaining their inclusion from social capital networks. For instance, Washington Booker said the following about being Black and growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, in the 60s: “Some [White] restaurants would let you come in, go up to the counter, and order.” Booker continued, “[But] you had to have a certain kind of posture. You had to just stand there, couldn’t just be looking around. And then, when your sandwich came, you took it and you left” (Yeager, 2014).

11. Examples of Cheap Social Capital Networks

When I started looking for examples of cheap social capital networks and their objects, I wondered how difficult they would be to find. What I discovered was that examples of cheap social capital networks and objects were ubiquitous; they were in music, art, theater, literature, science, media, business, politics, athletics, law, and health practices. Some examples of cheap social capital and their objects are reported below.

Music. A once-popular love song created objects of cheap social capital focusing on persons who tried to discourage the couple’s romantic relationship by telling them that they were “too young to really be in love” (AZLyrics, n.d). The implication was that the young couple’s connection would be strengthened by making persons who oppose their union the objects of the couple’s cheap social capital network.

Art. In 1937, at the request of the Spanish nationalist government, Nazi Germany bombed the Spanish town of Guernica, inflicting death and destruction on its people. Pablo Picasso expressed his outrage by painting an enormous mural that depicted the suffering and destruction that resulted from the bombing. Picasso’s painting was displayed to millions of visitors at the Paris World’s Fair. His painting was intended to make the Nazi and the Spanish nationalist governments responsible for the bombing, the objects of the world’s cheap social capital. It also appears that Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and Spain’s leader Francisco Franco were connected by nothing more than cheap social capital. After a frustrating exchange, Hitler, emphasized the cheap nature of their relationship by declaring that he “would rather have four of his teeth pulled out than deal with that man [Franco] again” (History Extra, 2016).

Movies. “Mean Girls” is a movie about a cheap social capital clique called “the Plastics” who create a burn book that unfavorably describes persons not in their network. The movie is about the Plastics’ defensive and destructive acts that alter the composition of their network and disadvantage their objects. At the end of the movie, Cady, the latest queen bee of the Plastics concludes that making fun of other people doesn’t make you any smarter, funnier, or more attractive, etc.

(IMDb, 2004).

Theatre. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* tells the story of a brave Scottish general who learns from a trio of witches that he will one day become king of Scotland. To realize the prophecy, Macbeth and his wife form a cheap social capital network with King Duncan as their cheap social capital object. After murdering King Duncan, Macbeth is appointed king of Scotland. Macbeth then becomes a tyrannical ruler, committing murder and leading his country to war. At this point, Macbeth views his subjects as the object of his cheap social capital, and he has become their object. In the end, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are killed and commit suicide, respectively.

Literature. George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* describes the totalitarianism, mass surveillance, and repressive regime led by Big Brother. Big Brother's regime creates a cheap social capital network using an imaginary enemy as the object of the people's cheap social capital. The imaginary enemy is referred to as Eurasia, which is later changed to Eastasia, with whom Big Brother's regime is perpetually at war. Antipathy and fear of Eastasia are taught during hate week (Orwell, 1950).

Science. Senator Ted Cruz told the attorney general that Dr. Anthony Stephen Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, should be prosecuted for lying about the pandemic. Dr. Fauci was asked by CBS's "Face the Nation" anchor, Margaret Brennan, if he believed that Cruz and others were trying to make him a scapegoat for President Trump's mishandling of the health crisis? Dr. Fauci acknowledged as much and then expressed his frustration that "we had this devastating plague out there that [was] killing hundreds of thousands of Americans, and we're having public health principles being decided on the basis of political ideology." Dr. Fauci believed that Cruz and others intended to make him the object of their cheap social capital network for their own political gain (Reuters, 2021).

Media. Fake news is false or misleading information that is presented as accurate reporting of events and happenings. The aim of fake news is often to make advertising income by destroying the reputation of a person or entity. Former president Donald Trump has been credited with popularizing the term and using it to describe any negative press coverage of himself (CNN, 2017). Calling unfavorable news coverage fake news is also a way of making news reporters and news outlets cheap social capital objects.

Business. Cutthroat businesses treat their employees as though they are important only to the extent that they contribute to the business's bottom line. Amazon delivery drivers complained that they were not allowed to stop when they needed to use a bathroom. As a result, they were forced to pee in cups and defecate in bags. Amazon acknowledged the problem after initially denying that the company had a problem with "pee bottles" (Hautala, 2021). Will Yakowicz of Inc. magazine claims that cutthroat business culture is bad for business, possibly because the businesses make themselves the objects of their employees' cheap social capital, an outcome that fails to inspire cooperation, loyalty, and best ef-

forts (Yakowicz, 2015).

Politics. Gaius Julius Caesar, a Roman general, political leader, and dictator of the Roman Empire, defeated his political rival, Pompey, in a civil war. As a result of his military successes, Caesar became dictator of Rome in 49 BC. His populist and authoritarian reforms angered the elites, who began to conspire against him, making him the object of their cheap social capital. The conspirators, led by a group of rebellious senators, including Brutus and Cassius, stabbed Caesar to death in 44 BC. The connections between the conspirators were cheap and they failed to unite the Roman empire after they accomplished the assassination (Parenti, 2003).

Sports. Athletic teams often make cheap social capital objects of their rivals to gain fan support. Ten famous rivalries include the following: Green Bay Packers versus Chicago Bears (professional football); Los Angeles Lakers versus Boston Celtics (men's basketball); Joe Frazier versus Muhammad Ali (men's boxing); Boston Red Sox versus New York Yankees (baseball); Ohio State versus Michigan (college football); Duke versus North Carolina (men's college basketball); Chris Evert versus Martina Navratilova (women's tennis); and Arnold Palmer versus Jack Nicklaus (men's golf) (Wallenfeldt, 2022). Sharing a cheap social capital object unites fans in a cheap social capital network and sometimes leads to defensive and destructive acts between opposing fans, known in football as hooliganism (BBC Newsround, n.d.).

Religion. Religions sometimes objectifies an individual or group because of their religious beliefs. The defensive and destructive acts perpetuated against religious objects often include violence. Atheists are popular objects of cheap social capital networks. Today, atheism is punishable by death in thirteen countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Fenton, 2016). Threats and actual violence against nonbelievers is often intended to discourage defection from a religious tradition and to maintain the integrity of cheap social capital networks.

Law. Legal cases are designed to be a contest in which prosecutors attempt to make the defendant into an object of cheap social capital. A well-known example of this effort was the trial of O. J. Simpson. Once a popular sports figure, Simpson was tried in criminal court for the murders of his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman. Simpson was acquitted of the murders but was later found responsible for both deaths in a civil trial. In the criminal case, the prosecutors' efforts to make Simpson the object of the jury's cheap social capital failed (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013).

Health. Abuse usually involves dehumanizing the victims and making them the object of cheap social capital because the abuser believes that the abuse is justified, is acceptable, or is unlikely to be reported. Women and children are the most frequent victims of abuse (Planstreet, 2022). Developmental neuropsychiatrist Martin H. Teicher revealed some startling connections between abuse

of all kinds and permanent debilitating changes in the brain and psychiatric problems ranging from panic attacks to post-traumatic stress disorder (Mass General Brigham McLean, n.d.).

12. Summary and Conclusion

This article emphasized that important social capital definitions focus on relationships, how people are connected. Next, this article emphasized that relationships of empathy depend on the exchange of relational goods enabled by commonalities that can be either earned or inherited.

Eduardo Bericat reminds us that we live life emotionally (Bericat, 2016). And because we live life emotionally, our shared emotions can be important commonalities. Shared empathy is an important commonality because it enables us to internalize each other's well-being, the source of important and beneficial economic outcomes described in this paper. Because of the importance of empathy, this article supports the definition of social capital as the empathy one person or group has for another person or group, the object of their social capital. Other emotions that connect us, such as sympathy, trust, and regard, are closely related to empathy and are sometimes used to define social capital (Fukuyama, 1995). Because Adam Smith emphasized the importance of sympathy (what we now call empathy), we recognize him as contributing to the social capital definition supported here.

Social capital tells a happy story. Members of social capital-rich networks, compared to nonmembers, are more likely to exchange relational goods and commodities on preferential terms, more likely to cooperate, more likely to invest in public goods, more likely to support institutions, more likely to enjoy equal commodities incomes, more likely to limit negative externalities, and more likely to be happy. However, social capital has a dark side which is that social capital network member benefits are often denied or unavailable to network nonmember. The disadvantages of being excluded from social capital networks can sometimes lead nonmembers to develop negative social capital toward social capital network members, especially when membership is denied because of inherited commonalities such as age, race, gender, nationality, and genealogy.

Working alone, negative social capital is of little consequence. However, when nonmembers of social capital network share negative social capital for the same object, they develop cheap social capital and cheap social capital networks and increase their influence. Motivations for creating cheap social capital networks include resentment, envy, real or imagined threats, and lack of commonalities. We call cheap social capital relationships and networks cheap because they are inexpensive to create, inexpensive to maintain, and produce inferior (cheap) goods compared to those produced in social capital networks. Cheap social capital relationships and networks appear to be ubiquitous. They can be found in social, business, sports, entertainment, religious, and scientific activities.

It remains for a future work to detail the destructive and defensive (cheap)

acts cheap social capital networks may direct against their objects and their awful consequences. Most importantly, future research should search for measures that will impede the formation of cheap social capital networks and mitigate the costly consequences of their defensive and destructive acts.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Amieiro, A., Orr, N., Magdoline, & Basile, G. (n.d.). *Do Emotions Affect Short-Term Memory*.
https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/contentgroups/sasp/poster_gallery/poster_97.pdf
- Astrachan, J. H., & Shanker, M. C. (2003). Family Businesses' Contribution to the U. S. Economy: A Closer Look. *Family Business Review*, 16, 211-219.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08944865030160030601>
- AZLyrics (n.d.). *Barry Manilow Lyrics*.
<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/barrymanilow/cantsmilewithoutyou.html>
- AZLyrics (n.d.). *Nat King Cole Lyrics*.
<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/natkingcole/tooyoung.html>
- BBC Newsround (n.d.). *What Is Football Hooliganism?*
http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/sport/international_football/newsid_3089000/3089728.stm
- Ben-Ze'ev, A. (1992). Envy and Inequality. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 89, 551-581.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2941056>
- Bericat, E. (2016). The Sociology of Emotions: Four Decades of Progress. *Current Sociology*, 64, 491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392115588355>
- Bolding, K. E. (1963). Towards a Pure Theory of Threat Systems. *The American Economic Review*, 53, 424-434. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1823883>
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 759-775.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.28.5.759>
- Brown, B. (2021). *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of the Human Experience*. Random House Publishing Group.
- Butler, E. (2017). *The Nature of Morality, According to Adam Smith*.
<https://www.acton.org/publications/transatlantic/2017/04/28/nature-morality-according-adam-smith>
- Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). *Relationship*.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/relationship>
- Carnegie, D. (1936). *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Simon & Schuster.
- Claridge, T. (2004). *Social Capital and Natural Resource Management: An Important Role for Social Capital?* Master's Thesis, University of Queensland.
<https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/definition/>
- CNN (2017). *Donald Trump Shuts Down CNN Reporter: "You're Fake News"*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vqpzk-qGxMU>

- Coleman, J. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228943>
- Cordes, S., Allen, J., Bishop, R. C., Lynne, G. D., Robison, L. J., Ryan, V. D., & Shaffer, R. (2003). Social Capital, Attachment Value, and Rural Development: A Conceptual Framework and Application of Contingent Valuation. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 85, 1201-1207. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2003.00530.x>
- Daly, H. E. (2007). *Ecological Economics and Sustainable Development: Selected Essays of Herman Daly*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781847206947>
- Fenton, S. (2016). *The 13 Countries Where Being an Atheist Is Punishable by Death*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/the-13-countries-where-being-an-atheist-is-punishable-by-death-a6960561.html>
- Fox 11 LA (2022). *Indonesia Soccer Match Brawl Leaves 127 Fans, Police Dead*. <https://www.foxla.com/news/indonesia-soccer-match-brawl-leaves-127-fans-police-dead>
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Free Press.
- Gillespie Shields (n.d.). *Forty Facts about Two Parent Families*. <https://gillespieshields.com/40-facts-two-parent-families/>
- Grand Valley State University (n.d.). *Family Firm Facts*. <https://www.gvsu.edu/fobi/family-firm-facts-5.htm>
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360-1380. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225469>
- Hadero, H., & The Associated Press (2021). *Americans Gave a Record \$471 Billion to Charity in 2020*. <https://fortune.com/2021/06/15/americans-gave-a-record-471-billion-to-charity-in-2020-pandemic/>
- Hanifan, L. J. (1916). The Rural School Community Center. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 67, 130-138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271621606700118>
- Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162, 1243-1248. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.162.3859.1243>
- Harvard Stem Cell Institute (n.d.). *The Impact of Federal Policy on Global Competition in Stem Cell Research*. <https://hsci.harvard.edu/impact-federal-policy-global-competition-stem-cell-research>
- Hautala, H. (2021). *Amazon Adjusts "Time off Task" Policy That Critics Said Limited Bathroom Breaks*. <https://www.cnet.com/tech/tech-industry/amazon-adjusts-time-off-task-policy-that-critics-said-limited-bathroom-breaks/>
- Hellerstein, J. K., & Neumark, D. (2020). *IZA DP No. 13413: Social Capital, Networks, and Economic Wellbeing* (pp. 1-44). IZA Discussion Paper, 13413. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3636642>
- Henderson, O. (2019). *The Best of Enemies*. <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-best-of-enemies-2019>
- Hess, C. (2006). *Research on the Commons, Common-Pool Resources, and Common Property*. <https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/contentguidelines>
- History Extra (2016). *Hitler's Fury, Franco's Guile and the Bribe That Saved the World*. <https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/hitlers-fury-francos-guile-and-the-bribe-that-saved-the-world/>

- IMDb (2004). *Mean Girls*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377092/>
- Jackson, J., Bradford, B., Hough, M., Myhill, A., Quinton, P., & Tyler, T. R. (2012). Why Do People Comply with the Law? Legitimacy and the Influence of Legal Institutions. *British Journal of Criminology*, 52, 1051-1071. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azs032>
- Lin, N. (2001). Building a Network Theory of Social Capital. In N. Lin, K. Cook, & R. S. Burt (Eds.), *Social Capital: Theory and Research* (pp. 3-31). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315129457-1>
- Lucas, R. (2022). *Ukrainian-Russian Families are Being Torn Apart by Russia's Invasion*. <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/06/1084800742/relationships-across-the-ukraine-russia-b-order-feel-the-strain-of-war>
- Mass General Brigham McLean (n.d.). *Martin Teicher, MD, PhD*. <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/profile/martin-teicher>
- Massey, E. K., Kranenburg, L. W., Zuidema, W. C., Hak, G., Erdman, R. A. M., Hilhorst, M. et al. (2010). Encouraging Psychological Outcomes after Altruistic Donation to a Stranger. *American Journal of Transplantation*, 10, 1445-1452. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-6143.2010.03115.x>
- Miller, G. (2010). *How Our Brains Make Memories*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-our-brains-make-memories-14466850/>
- National Institute on Aging (2019). *Social Isolation, Loneliness in Older People Pose Health Risks*. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>
- Njeri, E. (2022). *Tiger Woods' Ex-Wife Chased Him with Golf Club after Texting His Mistress from His Phone on Thanksgiving*. <https://news.amomama.com/288940-tiger-woods-ex-wife-chased-him-golf-club.html>
- Orwell, G. (1950). *1984*. Secker & Warburg.
- Parenti, M. (2003). *The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome*. New Press.
- Planstreet (2022). *Quick Facts about Domestic Violence in the United States*. <https://www.planstreetinc.com/quick-facts-about-domestic-violence-in-the-united-states/>
- Polyakova, M., Persson, P., Hofmann, K., Jena, A. B., & Newhouse, R. L. (2020). Does Medicine Run in the Family—Evidence from Three Generations of Physicians in Sweden: Retrospective Observational Study. *BMJ*, 371, m4453. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4453>
- Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.1>
- Putnam, R. D. (2001). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster. <https://doi.org/10.1145/358916.361990>
- Rector, R. (2010). *Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon against Child Poverty*. <https://www.heritage.org/poverty-and-inequality/report/marriage-americas-greatest-weapon-against-child-poverty-0>
- Reuters (2021). *Fauci Laughs off Ted Cruz Prosecution Comment*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9_ZCKLe-MI
- Robison, L. J., & Flora, J. L. (2003). The Social Capital Paradigm: Bridging across Disciplines. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 85, 1187-1193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2003.00528.x>

- Robison, L. J., & Oliver, J. R. (2019). Rationalizing Predictably Irrational Choices: The Social Capital Synthesis. *The Annals of Regional Science*, 10, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00168-019-00945-8>
- Robison, L. J., & Ritchie, B. K. (2010). *Relationship Economics: The Social Capital Paradigm and Its Application to Business, Politics, and Other Transactions*. Routledge.
- Robison, L. J., Malone, T., Oliver, J. O., Bali, V., & Winder, R. E. (2020). Social Capital, Relational Goods, and Terms and Level of Exchange. *Modern Economy*, 11, 1288. <https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2020.117092>
- Robison, L. J., Schmid, A. A., & Siles, M. E. (2002). Is Social Capital Really Capital? *Review of Social Economy*, 60, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346760110127074>
- Robison, L. J., Shupp, R. S., Jin, S., Siles, M. E., & Ferrarini, T. H. (2012). The Relative Importance of Selfishness and Social Capital Motives. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 41, 118-127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2011.10.008>
- Robison, L. J., Siles, M. E., & Songqing, J. (2011). Social Capital and the Distribution of Household Income in the United States: 1980, 1990, and 2000. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 40, 538-547. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2011.04.004>
- Schifferstein, H. N. J., & Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, E. P. H. (2008). Consumer-Product Attachment: Measurement and Design Implications. *International Journal of Design*, 2, 1-14. <http://www.ijdesign.org/index.php/IJDesign/article/view/325/218>
- Sen, A. (2010). Adam Smith and the Contemporary World. *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, 3, 50-67. <https://doi.org/10.23941/ejpe.v3i1.39>
- Smith, A. (1892). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. G. Bell & Sons.
- Smithson, C. W. (1982). Capital, a Factor of Production. In D. Greenwald (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Economics* (pp. 111-112). McGraw-Hill.
- Suthivarakom, G. (2010). *Welcome to the Era of Fake Products*. <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/amazon-counterfeit-fake-products/>
- Szreter, S., & Woolcock, M. (2004). Health by Association? Social Capital, Social Theory, and the Political Economy of Public Health. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 33, 650-667. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyh013>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. In J. T. Jost, & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political Psychology: Key Readings in Social Psychology* (pp. 276-293). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984-16>
- The Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University (2021). *The Environmental Optimism of Elinor Ostrom*. <https://www.thecgo.org/book/the-environmental-optimism-of-elinor-ostrom/>
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2013). *O. J. Simpson Trial*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/O-J-Simpson-trial>
- The World Bank (n.d.). *What Is Social Capital*. https://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01360/WEB/0_CO-10.HTM
- Troianovski, A., & Fassihi, F. (2022). *Putin Finds a New Ally in Iran, a Fellow Outcast*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/19/world/europe/putin-ayatollah-erdogan-summit.html>
- Waldinger, R. (2016). *What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KkKuTCFvzI>
- Wallenfeldt, J. (2022). *10 Best Sports Rivalries of All Time*. <https://www.britannica.com/list/10-best-sports-rivalries-of-all-time>
- Yakowicz, W. (2015). *Why Your Company's Culture Is Crucial to Its Value*.

<https://www.inc.com/will-yakowicz/company-culture-can-make-break-company-study.html>

Yeager, A. (2014). *Forced to Seat Blacks, Ala. Restaurant Complied with History.*

<https://www.npr.org/2014/12/13/370470745/forced-to-seat-blacks-ala-restaurant-complied-with-history>