SEYMOUR J. MANDELBAUM

Foreword

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, intrigued by the attention devoted to Robert Putnam's account of regional differences in the practices of Italian polities, I gave myself a short course on the concept of social capital. The social extension of the ideas of physical and fiscal capital was intellectually interesting, even if the fortunes of bowling leagues in the United States never seemed so luminous a measure of communal vigor. (But oh to have thought of that title!)

By reading these Philadelphia essays in 2005, my interest is refreshed. I have read much of the social capital literature as a cautionary tale about good words and the ways in which they are connected: *social capital, trust, cooperation, democracy, community, collaboration*. Enhance the practices associated with one of the words and all will benefit: More democratic communities will facilitate collaboration; fuller cooperation will increase the stock of social capital. These Philadelphia stories raise the possibility that these virtues (like many legal and ethical principles) often conflict with one another or are so deeply entangled that they cannot be separated and measured on a stable linear scale. In that event, what becomes of the metaphoric comparison of social, physical, human, and monetary capital? If the complementarities are neither demonstrated nor defended—if they are simply neglected or obscured—is the metaphor ironic? Does it assert a figurative similarity of function that is at best superficial?

I approached the concept of community in the Philadelphia tales with a certain introspective curiosity. I've labored in the dark forest of community for a long time without explicitly connecting community and social capital. How, I wonder, is my reading of the tales influenced by my authorial commitments? Have I changed—or enlarged—my mind in the course of reading?

I think of communities as groups that recruit members, socializing them (for good or ill) into a moral order in which they have both rights and obligations. In some settings, the moral order and the community that sustains it touch virtually every aspect of life. The Philadelphia tales, however, describe a complex field of overlapping communities that are necessarily partial in scope and responsive to shifting contingencies. Some of the communities in the field struggle with profound issues; others have little moral weight. Whatever their form or heft, communities of all types must also manage relations with "strangers" who—without rights and obligations of their own—might threaten the communion of members. They must also collect resources that allow them to care (at least minimally) for their own well-being and to protect themselves from hostile attacks. (Some, of course, are exhausted by a struggle for existence that often seems both endless and futile.)

This conception of community creates a political and intellectual role for the synthetic idea of social capital. The hint of that idea encourages me to ask about

the level and effectiveness of resources devoted to the recruitment, socialization, and retention of prospective members; about the resources that sustain and repair communal practices and the relations with strangers. The essays in this volume begin to answer these questions, and I found myself an eager reader, curious and prepared to put myself in the authors' hands.

Richardson Dilworth

Introduction: The Place that Loves You Back?

> Last week, I went to Philadelphia, but it was closed.
>   —W. C. Fields

"The Place that Loves You Back" is one of the official slogans of the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC). Developed as part of the GPTMC's first advertising campaign in 1997, the slogan was part of an effort to brand the metropolitan region, and especially the city, as "a genteel, relaxing place that appeals to people of all ages." There is no doubting the success of the campaign, which in its first year generated over a million new tourist trips to the region.[1] Yet the idea that a place wants to "love you back" seems a bit more aggressive than relaxing, and maybe even a little threatening—especially if that place is a city with an exceptionally low median household income and employment rate but an especially high degree of racial segregation and in which every year more than 300 people are murdered, more than 1,000 people are raped, and more than 10,000 people are physically assaulted.[2]

The purpose here of identifying some of Philadelphia's problems is not to deride the efforts of the GPTMC, which provided much-needed tourist dollars through a long-overdue image makeover, but instead to ask why a large American city with all its attendant social ills would be marketed as a place of warmth and intimacy—"a place that loves you back." Why that slogan, at that time?

The GPTMC clearly capitalizes on the notion of Philadelphia as a strong, close-knit community. However false that notion may be, it seems no coincidence that American tourists welcomed the GPTMC's invitation at exactly the same time they began to recognize the extent to which their own communities had disintegrated over the past forty years. As political scientist Robert Putnam has explained

---

[1] These quotes, and the figure of 1 million new tourists, comes from the GPTMC's *Report to the Industry* for 1999 (available online at www.gophila.com/research; accessed September 10, 2004).

[2] The figures for murder, rape, and physical assault come from the Uniform Crime Reports for Philadelphia, as reported on the Web site of the Philadelphia Police Department (www.ppdonline.org/hq_statistics.php, accessed March 23, 2005). The figure for murder is an average of the annual murders from 1998 to 2004. The averages for rape and aggravated assault are for the years 1999 to 2004. In 1999, the Philadelphia Police Department reclassified certain crimes, which affected the figures reported in these two categories.

through a veritable mountain of data, today we are far less likely than we were a generation ago to step out our front doors and attend a community meeting or political rally, join a local club or voluntary association, or simply go to a neighbor's house to pay a social visit. And today, as we sit alone at home in our gated communities, watching television shows that overrepresent crime and thus make us even more antisocial, many of us clearly feel isolated, alienated, and lonely. As Putnam has explained the remarkable level of attention that his research garnered after its initial publication in 1995, "I had unwittingly articulated an unease that had already begun to form in the minds of many ordinary Americans."[3]

Putnam defined the decreasing level of social activity among Americans as a decline in social capital. The term has come to take on a variety of related meanings as it has been more widely used—prominent scholars have variously called it "a victim of its own success" and "a metaphor [that] tends to expand in all directions like a swamp in wet weather."[4] By most accounts, however, *social capital* implies that community is meaningful as the means to further ends. As Putnam has explained, "By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value."[5] People with greater social networks and higher levels of civic participation also tend to be wealthier and even healthier than those who are less social.[6] As if being lonely weren't bad enough, it turns out that our antisocial behavior also has real health and economic costs.

---

[3] Quote is from Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), p. 506. The reference to Putnam's "initial publication in 1995" refers to his article "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (January 1995): 65–78. Putnam had actually discussed the decline in communal activity in the United States earlier, in his article "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," *American Prospect*, Spring 1993.

[4] Quotes are from Xavier de Souza Briggs, "Social Capital and the Cities: Advice to Change Agents," *National Civic Review* 86 (Summer 1997): 111; and Claude S. Fischer, "*Bowling Alone*: What's the Score?," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA, August 2001 (available online at sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty_html/fischer/fischer_pdf/bowling_alone.pdf). For reviews of the social capital literature, see Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 1–24; Michael Woolcock, "Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework," *Theory and Society* 27 (April 1998): 151–208 (see esp. p. 193n20); Stephen Baron, John Field, and Tom Schuller, eds., *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and John Field, *Social Capital* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[5] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 18–19.

[6] Ibid., chaps. 19–20. In terms of the relationship between health and social capital in Philadelphia, see also the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation's Community Health Data Base, 2002, Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Survey (www.phmc.org/chdb); and

If the GPTMC's attempt to sell Philadelphia as a close-knit community seems suspicious, so does the social capitalist's attempt to define the value of community by the individual benefits we derive from social networks. Though useful because it emphasizes the importance of community where it had previously been neglected, such as in economic development, the notion of social capital also denies the constitutive qualities of social networks. If we are understood to gain our sense of self from the communities to which we belong, then community has a cardinal and incommensurable value. Community, by this understanding, has strictly a "use value," and not an "exchange value." Yet community understood as a form of capital implies that communities are fungible and thus do have an exchange value.[7] Indeed, in one of the earlier formulations of the term, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argued that social capital was economic capital instantiated as social ties.[8] Social capital explains the importance of community by suggesting that people join communities for their own selfish ends.

As a conscious attempt to commodify community for the sake of tourist dollars, "the place that loves you back" is thus a nearly perfect example of social capital. If the slogan is thus understood as a pale reflection of what community can mean, it also fits comfortably into the classic tradition of social theory that understands urbanization to be antithetical to communal ties. Cities have traditionally been the centers of capitalist production, and city life has thus been defined by capitalist alienation.[9] In *The Private City*, his classic work on Philadelphia, historian Sam Bass Warner noted that "the goal of a city is to be a community of private money makers."[10] Large masses living close together can ultimately only relate to one another as the means to their own self-serving ends. We are all factors to one another's production in the urban milieu, and community is thus not constitutive of the self but instrumental to self-serving ends. Urban society is social capital writ large.

Although they thus appear to be closely related concepts, there has been little research on the relationship between urbanism and social capital. Plenty of

---

Marian Uhlman, "Healthy Places: A Study of 45 Philadelphia Neighborhoods Shows a Connection between Close Social Bonds and Social Wellness," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 1, 2004.

   [7] For a critique of social capital in terms of use value and exchange value, see Randy Stoecker, "The Mystery of the Missing Social Capital and the Ghost of Social Structure: Why Community Development Can't Win," in Robert M. Silverman, ed., *Community-Based Organizations: The Intersection of Social Capital and Local Context in Contemporary Urban Society* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004); and Judith Goode and Robert T. O'Brien, "Whose Social Capital? How Economic Development Projects Disrupt Local Social Relations," this volume.

   [8] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in John G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

   [9] For a review of this literature, see Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978), chaps. 1–2.

   [10] Sam Bass Warner Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), p. x.

books and articles examine social capital within cities, but most authors have used cities merely as convenient places to examine social capital at work. Those few authors who have examined the relationship between urbanism and social capital have mostly used national-level survey data that rely on broad proxy measures of civic participation, which tends to confirm the traditional position that urban life is impersonal, superficial, and alienating; people who live in large cities and metropolitan regions take a less active role in their communities and have a more "private-regarding orientation" than people who live in small towns.[11]

Survey data fail to tap into the more detailed and site-specific social networks that sustain the life of cities.[12] By contrast, this book addresses the relationship between social capital and urbanism by bringing together separate in-depth studies of particular social networks within a single city, Philadelphia. The authors of the chapters that follow examine the role of social networks in voter behavior, large-scale cultural projects, park advocacy, education, economic development, neighborhood life, church participation, and political activism. The range of subjects covered reflects an attempt to take seriously the unique quality and diversity of social networks that exist within a large, dense, and heterogeneous population, and in doing so this book moves beyond a definition of social capital that relies on broad measures of civic participation such as group membership or attendance at community board meetings.

Although survey data can very effectively test existing theories, case studies are often more helpful in raising questions or complications to theoretical suppositions. Thus many of the chapters in this book bring attention to the complication raised by Seymour Mandelbaum in the foreword. As a relatively blunt instrument for studying a complex social phenomenon, survey research must often treat such terms as *trust*, *cooperation*, *community*, and *collaboration* as synonyms of one another or at least as complementary virtues. Yet as Melina Patterson points out in chapter 5, and as Judith Goode and Robert O'Brien point out in chapter 8, such terms often define or characterize larger systems of power in which some communities lose the right or ability to collaborate. Patterson notes, for instance, that prior to its popularization through Putnam, *social capital* was a term often used to explain how capitalism creates a social system that sustains an unequal economic system. Goode and O'Brien use a case study of local economic development to show how the city's concern with the exchange value of urban land creates new bridging social capital in a way which divides a struggling community by rewarding those best positioned to benefit from such policies and marginalizing those who are using local social relations in strategies to sustain community based on the use value of the land. As Mandelbaum points out, *social capital*, *trust*, and

---

[11] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 138, 206; J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 2, quote on p. 66.

[12] Oliver acknowledges the shortcomings of using survey research to examine social capital in *Democracy in Suburbia*, p. 15.

community are terms that can just as easily come into conflict as they can complement one another, depending on who's using them.

The relationship between social capital and urbanism of course ultimately depends on how these two notoriously nebulous terms are defined. The authors of each chapter provide their own definition of social capital as a means of capturing the full complexity of the term. For the purposes of this introduction, I introduce only two basic distinctions. First, there is the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital, which bears at least a family resemblance to earlier distinctions between folk society and urban society or between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Bridging social capital refers to an explicitly instrumental and outward-looking form of networking perhaps best captured by the exchange of business cards, whereas bonding social capital refers to the benefits of membership in small, intimate, tightly knit, and generally exclusive social groups.[13] Second, sociologist Alejandro Portes has made the distinction between individual and collective social capital. Individual social capital refers to the benefits that accrue directly to individuals as members of a specific social network, whereas collective social capital refers to the benefits that accrue indirectly to individuals by virtue of their living in a more civically oriented society that functions better because it has a greater collective "stock" of social capital.[14]

The bridging/bonding and individual/collective distinctions between types of social capital overlap in various ways. For instance, individuals can of course benefit directly from both bridging and bonding networks, but a society characterized more by bonding rather than bridging networks will probably tend to provide less collective benefits than a society characterized more by bridging rather than bonding networks. The big city political machine is a classic case in point. The forms of corruption associated with political machines—kickbacks on city contracts, insider real estate deals, patronage, and electoral fraud—were mostly executed through exclusive and relatively small social networks, and they all worked to the detriment of the greater public good. The Tweed Ring, for instance, is possibly an example par excellence of the direct individual benefits that can be derived from bonding social capital in city government. Similarly, in Philadelphia, the Women's League for Good Government in 1919 described politics in the city as "a tacit understanding of mutual helpfulness between men who make a business of using the machinery of popular government for the furtherance of their own personal ends."[15]

It is possibly the unique nature of life in large cities that fosters bonding social networks that are inimical to a larger, collective good. As sociologist Claude

---

[13] On bridging and bonding social capital, see Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 22–24.

[14] Alejandro Portes, "The Two Meanings of Social Capital," *Sociological Forum* 15 (2000): 1–12.

[15] Quoted in Peter McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine, 1867–1933* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 129.

Fischer has argued, large cities bring into close quarters great numbers of people from different cultures, with different tastes and ways of life. Surrounded by difference, shared traits and interests become all the more significant, and those commonalities thus form the basis for relatively intense bonding networks or subcultures. Large cities, by bringing so many different people so close together, are characterized by strong bonding networks that serve to accentuate the differences between groups.[16]

The notion that cities are characterized simultaneously by both strong communities and a heightened sense of social difference has given rise to the hope among political philosophers and others that urban life might serve as the basis for a form of community-building that is uniquely accepting of difference—what Iris Marion Young has called "an ideal of city life as eroticized public vitality where differences are affirmed in openness"[17] or what Gerald Frug has more recently referred to as "fortuitous association—a group of people in which individuals simply find themselves, one that demands an ability to get along with other members of the group no matter how different they are."[18]

The flip side of the coin, of course, is that rather than creating a greater tolerance for difference, bonding social networks might increase the overall level of intergroup intolerance, making cities uniquely hostile and unwelcoming places. Indeed, the history of American cities is replete with examples of intergroup hostility and violence, and Philadelphia is exemplary in this regard. During the 1830s and 1840s, the city was a hotbed of racial and ethnic violence. White Philadelphians agitated by the abolitionist movement targeted the city's African American community, which came under severe attack during three nights of antiblack rioting in 1834. In what appears to be an example of bonding social capital based on race, white residents living near the black ghetto ("a shanty town on the south side of the city") protected themselves from the pillaging by lighting candles in their windows.[19] In 1838, antiabolitionist mobs set fire to a black orphanage and succeeded in burning to the ground an abolitionists' meeting hall. A race riot between blacks and Irish in 1842, in which Irish rioters attacked and severely beat the city's sheriff among others, precipitated a shift in the focus of violence, away from abolitionists and blacks toward more recent immigrants. Native American clubs formed throughout the city, and their public meetings

---

[16] Claude S. Fischer, "The Subcultural Theory of Urbanism: A Twentieth-Year Assessment," *American Journal of Sociology* 101 (November 1995): 543–77.

[17] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 241.

[18] Gerald E. Frug, *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 174.

[19] Warner, *Private City*, pp. 126–29; shanty town quote is from p. 126. For more on the race riots of the 1830s and 1840s, and for a more detailed description of housing conditions among black Philadelphians in the nineteenth century, see Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), chaps. 1 and 2.

proved to be ideal opportunities for ethnic clashes, with the result that public order collapsed entirely in the summer of 1844. Large crowds fought with the state militia as they attempted to burn down Catholic churches or bombard them with cannon fire—attacks that have been characterized as "the most violent in the history of America's Catholic community."[20]

As the case of the Native American clubs indicates, much of the bonding networks in antebellum Philadelphia crystallized in the form of voluntary associations—the very organizations that Putnam uses as a major indicator of social capital.[21] Fire companies and gangs were particularly abundant, and they formed the primary bases of political party support—useful especially for getting out the vote, guarding the polls, and scaring political opponents away from the ballot box—though they made dubious contributions to the civic life of the city. The clubs fought constantly among one another, driven to violence by the differences engendered in bonding networks based in political factions, neighborhood ties, racial or ethnic identity. As historian Bruce Laurie notes, the fire companies "fought to regulate who lived near them, who socialized at their pubs and taverns, and which companies serviced their people."[22]

It was not only the city's working class that formed into mutually hostile bonding networks. Philadelphia's upper classes, though they did not necessarily riot or engage in other forms of physical violence, were well known for their insularity, exclusivity, and clannishness. Sociologist and Philadelphian E. Digby Baltzell spent much of his career analyzing the deep historical roots that underlay this insularity and the resultant lack of civic spirit in his native city. According to Baltzell, Philadelphia has long been characterized by a uniquely individualistic and materialistic culture, stemming from the egalitarian and antiauthoritarian heritage bequeathed by the city's Quaker founders. An individualist and materialist culture was more tolerant of dissent, but it was also one in which people tended to break off into inward-looking groups. As one "proper Philadelphian" wrote of his

[20] Ibid., pp. 132–51. Final quote is from E. Digby Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia* (New York: Free Press, 1979; reprint, Beacon Press, 1982), p. 423. For more on the long-term political effects of the 1844 riots, see Howard Gillette Jr., "The Emergence of the Modern Metropolis: Philadelphia in the Age of Its Consolidation," in William W. Cutler III and Howard Gillette Jr., eds., *The Divided Metropolis: Social and Spatial Dimensions of Philadelphia, 1800–1975* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980).

[21] See Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, chap. 3. See also Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (July 1938): 1–24, who saw membership in a wide variety of groups to be a reflection of the alienated, impersonal, and "schizoid" nature of urban life. For a more contemporary critique of the link between voluntary associations and civic engagement, see Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[22] Bruce Laurie, "Fire Companies and Gangs in Southwark: The 1840s," in Allen F. Davis and Mark H. Haller, eds., *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower–Class Life, 1790–1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), p. 79. See also McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, pp. 11–14.

city in 1859, it "is wanting in civic personality, or what is perhaps a better phrase for the thought, a family unity or identity."[23]

The darkest picture ever painted of Philadelphia's elite, which can also be considered a study in the negative outcomes of bonding social capital, is George Lippard's *Quaker City*, one of the first American urban dystopian novels, and the bestselling novel in the United States prior to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. *Quaker City* tells the story of Monk Hall, a hidden mansion on the southern outskirts of the city, with vast subterranean spaces where Philadelphia's elite—bankers, politicians, and men of the cloth especially—gathered in secret to drink, smoke opium, seduce young maidens, and perform the occasional murder.[24] Later generations of novelists and journalists also found the city's upper class to be insular and secretive, if not necessarily so sinister. One of the characters in Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner's novel *The Gilded Age* notes of social life in Washington, DC, that "it doesn't need a crowbar to break your way into society there as it does in Philadelphia."[25] Forty years later, journalist Edward Hungerford noted that "there is little use carrying social ambitions to Philadelphia.... No city in the land, not even Boston or Charleston, opens its doors more reluctantly to strange faces and strange names, than open these doors of the old houses roundabout Rittenhouse Square."[26]

Although many observers have thus claimed it to be a uniquely antisocial place, Philadelphia probably only differs in quantity and not quality from other large American cities. Warner, who coined the term *private city* in regard to Philadelphia, noted that the city's "history has been repeated, with minor variations, again and again across the nation, in Cincinnati, in St. Louis, in Chicago, in Detroit, in Los Angeles, and in Houston." Warner formulated a notion of the private city where residents were too concerned with the pursuit of individual interest to deal adequately with pressing public problems, and he did so against the backdrop of urban turbulence during the 1960s—Philadelphia along with other cities erupted in riots in the summer of 1964, followed by the much larger riot in Watts the next summer. What American cities lacked, Warner claimed, were "habits of community life, an attention to sharing scarce resources, and a willingness to care for all men, not just all successful men."[27]

A generation later, Putnam, who has also identified the 1960s as an important turning point in the civic life of Americans, used social capital as a way to more

[23] Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*, quote on p. 341.

[24] George Lippard, *The Quaker City, or the Monks of Monk Hall: A Romance of Philadelphia Life, Mystery, and Crime* (1844; reprint, University of Massachusetts Press, 1996). See also the discussion of *Quaker City* in the context of other early urban dystopian novels in Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), p. 284.

[25] Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-day* (American Publishing, 1873; reprint, Penguin Books, 2001), p. 143.

[26] Edward Hungerford, *The Personality of American Cities* (New York: McBride Nast, 1913), p. 87.

[27] Warner, *Private City*, quotes from pp. x, xi.

rigorously define Warner's heartfelt but nebulous appeal for greater community spirit and shared resources. By analogy to other forms of capital, the notion of social capital attempts to clarify the palpable benefits of community, which, in lieu of other resources, might be put to use for economic gain. Yet in holding out the promise of economic uplift through civic spirit, social capital also runs the risk of obfuscating genuine structural inequalities that close off life opportunities for many. The authors in this volume return the focus to Warner's private city to test the limits of the social capital concept.

THE FIRST CHAPTER in this book, by Jerome Hodos, on the city's 1876 Centennial Exposition, challenges the traditional and popular image of Philadelphia as a uniquely antisocial city marked by clannishness and insularity. As a large-scale economic development policy that promoted Philadelphia to the outside world and also served to unite the city's elite behind a nonpartisan cultural project, the Centennial served to create bridging social capital between different groups within a city that had become increasingly fragmented as a result of massive population growth, immigration, party politics, and the establishment of an industrialist elite that had begun to eclipse the older mercantilist elite. The Centennial even served to at least partially bridge the class divide, as much of the city's working class looked favorably on the employment opportunities provided by the project.

If the Centennial was a physical expression of community will as an economic development program, so was Republicanism an ideological expression of community spirit—especially the Republicans' support for protectionist tariffs, which were understood to benefit worker and manufacturer alike. Hodos argues that, in large part through the bridging function served by the Centennial, elites also succeeded in establishing the ideological hegemony of Republicanism in the city. Even as late as 1923, one Philadelphia newspaper made reference to "the childish unreasoning belief that obsesses the average Philadelphian, that all governmental virtue reposes in the Republican party."[28] Yet ironically, Republican hegemony ultimately became a straitjacket for the city's reformist elite, who were bitterly opposed to the emerging political machine in the city and the state but who refused to oppose the machine by supporting Democrats. Thus Philadelphia's upper class voted Republican or not at all, with one result being that voter turnout was about twice as high in the city's working-class wards than in the upper-class wards by the turn of the twentieth century.[29]

The problem of low upper-class voter turnout at the turn of the century is of course the reverse image of our contemporary problems with turnout, which is today more common among those lower on the socioeconomic scale.[30] In the

[28] McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, p. 143.

[29] Ibid., pp. 139–40.

[30] See, for instance, Arend Lijphart, "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma," *American Political Science Review* 91 (March 1997): 1–14. See also Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 31–33.

second chapter of this book, Mark Brewin argues that the origins of low voter turnout among the lower classes can be traced to the disappearance of election day rituals. Progressive reforms such as voter registration are well known for depressing turnout, but Brewin argues that an often overlooked result of electoral reform that also dampened enthusiasm for voting was the disappearance of the celebratory and communal aspects of election day.

Elections in the latter half of the nineteenth century involved far more unmediated, face-to-face, grassroots campaigning than is true today, and the party ballot served as a public announcement of how one intended to vote. As an activity that was thus public in a sense that it is not today, voting served different purposes. First, public voting served as a way for individual residents to visibly signal their allegiance to the city's political machine. This became especially important in the late 1880s, as the machine became more centralized, and political leaders began to distribute patronage based on how many votes for machine-picked candidates each ward leader produced.[31] Second, Brewin argues that the voting ritual was an important moment of bridging social capital among the participants. Paradoxically, a public ritual that involved rival political alliances actually brought voters together into a stronger sense of community, thus contributing to the collective stock of social capital no matter who won the election.

In the third chapter, David Contosta and Carol Franklin bring the discussion of social capital up to the present through their examination of social networks in the creation and maintenance of Wissahickon Park. At its best, a large city park like the Wissahickon can serve as a site for bridging social capital or, as Frederick Law Olmsted put it, "the coming together of the poor and the rich on the ground which is common possession."[32] Yet park stewardship has also been marked by neighborhood-based class conflict, with civic associations from the upper-class neighborhoods of Chestnut Hill, Germantown, and Mount Airy at odds with business interests in the working-class neighborhood of Roxborough (see the map on p. xiv for neighborhood locations). Reflecting the dominance of upper-class interests in park advocacy, the civic association that emerged in the 1920s as the primary steward of the park, the Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW), drew most of its members from the eminently upper-class enclave of Chestnut Hill, a place steeped in bonding social capital. As Baltzell described it in the 1950s, "Chestnut Hill has all the qualities of the small village: the social life is inbred, as it were; everyone knows everyone else; gossip travels very fast. Above all, there is the quaint ethnocentrism of the village, with more than the normal amount of pride of place."[33]

---

[31] McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, p. 90.

[32] Quoted by David R. Contosta and Carol L. Franklin, "Community Advocacy and Volunteerism in Wissahickon Park, 1895–2005," this volume.

[33] E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (New York: Free Press, 1958; reprint, Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 205. For more on Chestnut Hill, see David R. Contosta, *Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850–1990* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992).

Reflecting the insularity and exclusivity of the culture from which it origi-
nated, the FOW was not much more than a social club as late as the 1970s. Yet by
the 1990s, Chestnut Hill was no longer so much of an upper-class enclave as a
community of affluent professionals, and the nature of park advocacy had shifted
as well, from conservation to environmental preservation. New members with new
concerns thus restructured the FOW in 1992 under a new president, David Pope,
an engineering professor at the University of Pennsylvania. In place of the bonding
networks that served originally to sustain volunteer park advocacy, the FOW today
is a professionalized association with a paid staff that relies on consulting scien-
tists and planners.

In the history of the FOW we can also see a reflection of larger changes in the
city's economic structure. At the time of the founding of the FOW, Philadelphia was
at the center of the publishing industry—home to the Curtis Publishing Com-
pany and the J. B. Lippincott Company[34]—and the first president of the FOW,
Charles Jenkins, was himself publisher of the *Farm Journal*. Today, publishing is
no longer a major industry in Philadelphia, and universities have replaced man-
ufacturers as the leading industry of the city, as reflected in the fact that the first
president of the reorganized FOW was a university professor who worked for the
city's largest private employer.

As some of the city's largest employers, Philadelphia's universities play an
especially important role in defining the types of professional and interpersonal
networks that define the social life of the city, a topic addressed in the chapters
by Barbara Ferman and Melina Patterson in the second section of this book. The
leading industry of any city creates an economic multiplier effect, as its revenues
sustain ancillary local businesses. Ferman and Patterson both suggest that there is
an analogous social multiplier effect, where the social networks created and sus-
tained through Philadelphia's universities have provided the basis for bridging
connections to the social networks of more locally based institutions, in particular
neighborhood public schools.

Ferman examines Youth VOICES, a program run by the University Community
Collaborative at Temple University, in which Philadelphia low-income youth par-
ticipate in youth-driven, project-based learning activities in community centers and
at Temple University, are exposed to a wider social network, and given the skills
needed to make use of that network. Participants take courses taught by Temple
students and participate in a variety of other programs hosted by local nonprofit
organizations. Patterson examines the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps
(WEPIC) program, a partnership with faculty and students from the University of
Pennsylvania and neighboring public schools to run community education pro-
grams. Thus WEPIC attempts to generate social capital by extending university
social networks into disadvantaged communities, whereas VOICES places youth
from disadvantaged communities in the more advantageous environment of the

---

[34] Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, p. 148; see also *Puritan Boston and Quaker
Philadelphia*, p. 286.

university. Both programs have clearly been effective in exposing students to new people and experiences, yet Patterson concludes in the case of WEPIC that a community education program ultimately cannot overcome the structural inequalities that reduce the life opportunities of inner-city youth.

The final chapters of the book look further at the role of local institutions in social capital production. Michael Janson, Jennifer Lee, and Judith Goode and Robert O'Brien all examine the relationship between social capital and neighborhood economic development in the face of deindustrialization and disinvestment. Janson looks at the relationship between social capital and access to financial capital in his history of Philadelphia credit unions. The history of credit union formation in Philadelphia challenges Putnam's claim that social capital is only relevant in horizontal (that is, coequal) rather than vertical (that is, hierarchical or patron–client) relationships.[35] Janson finds instead that vertical organizations such as the Catholic Church and factories provided the institutional leverage through which parishioners and workers formed credit unions through their horizontal ties to one another. At the same time, more horizontally organized credit unions based in neighborhoods gained significance during the 1960s and 1970s, as an effort by neighborhood residents to pool resources to provide credit for home improvements, as at least a small attempt to counter the blight that accompanied disinvestment from the city.

Lee examines ethnic succession in small business ownership, starting with the transfer of ownership from Jews to African Americans after the inner-city riots of the 1960s, the ultimate failure of the African American store owners to keep these businesses afloat, and the relative success of the Koreans who began to move into inner-city retail in the 1970s. Lee argues that Jews and Koreans have been successful in retail in part because bonding social networks provided them with access to financial capital on relatively flexible terms. By contrast, African American store owners have had to rely on more formal government and bank loan programs that are less flexible and have thus exacerbated the risks inherent in running a small business.

For both Janson and Lee, local, horizontally organized financial arrangements that arise in large part through bonding networks have been central to efforts at neighborhood economic development. Lee makes the further point that the intervention of larger financial institutions was in many cases unhelpful, especially in times of dire financial need. This is a theme that Judith Goode and Robert O'Brien continue in their examination of economic development in Kensington, a neighborhood northeast of downtown Philadelphia that experienced more than its fair share of disinvestment and blight during the 1960s and 1970s (see map, p. xiv).

---

[35] See Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 174–75. For another critique of the horizontal/vertical distinction in organization as it relates to social capital, see William Maloney, Graham Smith, and Gerry Stoker, "Social Capital and Urban Governance: Adding a More Contextualized 'Top-down' Perspective," *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 802–20.

Disinvestment sparked community activism in Kensington, as residents organized around sweat equity programs designed to enhance the use value of neighborhood space and organized politically to protest the city's neglect of their community.[36] Ironically, however, increased government funding for neighborhood development (in the form of federal Community Development Block Grant money distributed through the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development, starting in 1974) served to divide community-based organizations into those that sought to enhance the exchange value of land in Kensington for the purposes of gentrification and development and those that sought to maximize the use value of the neighborhood for existing residents.

Whereas Goode and O'Brien see bonding social capital as an important element in maintaining neighborhood use values, Patricia Stern Smallacombe examines the ways in which local social ties constrain the ability of Kensington residents to participate in the larger society and economy. Through her ethnographic study of the section of Kensington she calls the Parish neighborhood, Smallacombe argues that local institutions have provided white working-class residents with a sense of stability and community in the face of disinvestment and increasing social isolation. However, with increasing economic and social strains affecting individuals, families, and local institutions over the past thirty years, forms of bonding social capital rooted in local culture have reinforced an insular worldview, thus cutting off opportunities for personal and professional advancement. In contrast to Goode and O'Brien, who found bridging social capital between racial groups, Smallacombe found increasing social isolation combined with the negative consequences of bonding social capital to have exacerbated a sense of abandonment as white majority citizens, and bitterness toward policies addressing racial discrimination, such as affirmative action.

Among the local institutions of the Parish neighborhood, Smallacombe finds that the Catholic Church, and especially the connected parochial school, provide bridging social capital and a more healthy variety of bonding social capital. Unfortunately, the church itself has recently had less to offer because of a decline in financial, social, and religious participation and as the Philadelphia archdiocese currently struggles to provide necessary resources and personnel to urban parishes.

The impact that the declining role of the local church might have on a neighborhood stock of social capital is suggested by Valeria Harvell in her examination of the church as a catalyst for civic engagement among African American women. Through a questionnaire survey distributed to predominantly African American churches throughout the city, Harvell found strong evidence that active church participation is closely related to participation in the larger world of voluntary associations, social service programs, and political activism. Unfortunately, Harvell's

---

[36] On the city's relative neglect of Kensington during the 1950s and 1960s, at least in terms of education spending, see Conrad Weiler, *Philadelphia: Neighborhood, Authority, and the Urban Crisis* (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 63.

survey evidence is unable to show if church participation among African American women is itself a cause of greater civic engagement, or if more civically engaged women simply tend to also be more active church members—a problem compounded by the fact that the women in Harvell's study are generally middle-aged and well educated and thus fall into a category that is more civically engaged in general than the rest of the population.

To the extent that local institutions such as churches foster and sustain the civic life of the city, most indications are that they have their work cut out for them in the future. Several trends suggested by the 2000 census point to future declines in Philadelphia's collective stock of social capital. For instance, most evidence indicates that the city is becoming poorer as it loses middle-class residents. Of the nation's one hundred largest cities, Philadelphia ranks eighty-fourth in terms of median household income, and it was one of only six of the Brookings Institution's twenty-three "livable cities" to suffer a decline in median household income during the 1990s. Yet during the same period, the number of households with annual incomes over $81,000 remained basically the same; the city lost households making between $81,000 and $34,000 a year, and gained in households making less than $34,000. Accompanying the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth, more than 180,000 white residents left the city during the 1990s, whereas the number of African American, Asian, and Hispanic residents increased. Despite this growing diversity, in 2000 Philadelphia ranked eighth in residential racial segregation (between white, black, and Hispanic residents) among the largest one hundred cities. Philadelphia ranks especially high in residential segregation between whites and the fastest-growing minority group in the city, Hispanics.[37]

Other indicators also suggest a declining stock of social capital. For instance, scholars have found significant correlations between social capital and homeownership.[38] And although Philadelphia has a relatively high rate of homeownership— second highest among the Brookings livable cities at 59 percent—the city was also unique for being one of only five livable cities where homeownership rates declined during the 1990s.[39] There is also some evidence that suburban sprawl is associated with declining levels of social capital, primarily as a result of longer commutes to work and the creation of socially homogenous communities.[40] In terms of commuting, Philadelphia seemed in good shape in 2000, as it ranked thirty-fourth among the one hundred largest cities for the percentage of its population working in the city. Yet the percentage of people driving alone to work increased dramatically during the

---

[37] *Philadelphia in Focus: A Profile from Census 2000* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003), pp. 15–19, 22, 55–61. Philadelphia's Hispanic population also suffers from a poverty rate (42 percent) higher than any other racial group in any of the other Brookings livable cities.

[38] See Edward L. Glaeser, David Laibson, and Bruce Sacerdote, "An Economic Approach to Social Capital," *Economic Journal* 112 (November 2002): F437–58.

[39] *Philadelphia in Focus*, p. 64.

[40] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 210–15.

1990s, up from 45 to 49 percent, and people taking public transit dropped from 29 to 25 percent.[41] The increase in people driving to work is undoubtedly at least in part a function of more people working in the suburbs. For instance, data from the Census Bureau's annual County Business Pattern report indicates that "while key clusters persist in central and West Philadelphia, major employment centers are in lower and central Bucks County, along the often-cited Rt. 202 corridor at the juncture of Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties, and in the Mt. Laurel area of Burlington County in New Jersey."[42] As business has dispersed, so have residents. The populations of suburban communities in the metropolitan region grew more than twice as fast as did the region overall during both the 1980s and 1990s.[43]

Despite these looming threats to the civic life of Philadelphia, there are some signs of hope. First, the fact that homeownership rates and the percentage of people working in the city are still relatively high indicates hope that Philadelphia has a healthy stock of social capital with which it can face the future. Possibly more telling in this regard is recent survey evidence from Temple University's Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project, which shows that Philadelphians are more likely than most of their suburban counterparts in the region to have contacted local officials, met informally with neighbors, or attended a neighborhood meeting. Sixty-three percent of Philadelphians agree or strongly agree that "there is a strong sense of community in my neighborhood," and 69 percent identify their neighborhood as "home, not just a place to live." Philadelphia residents also give, on average, a larger proportion of their incomes to charities than do residents in any of the surrounding counties.[44] And finally, education, a leading indicator of social capital, is on the rise in Philadelphia. Though the city ranks ninety-second among the one hundred largest cities in the percentage of residents who hold at least a bachelor's degree, the percentage of both residents with at least a high school diploma or with at least a bachelor's degree rose substantially during the 1990s.[45]

The significance of these signs of civic vitality in the city are to a great extent determined by the larger political context, which Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg in their concluding essay define as an era of "personal democracy," characterized by increasingly apolitical forms of civic activity. It is one of the great ironies of twentieth-century American political development that as government became increasingly open to citizen participation through such reforms as sunshine laws, mandatory public hearings, and public interest lawsuits, citizens increasingly became less interested in participating politically, thus making politicians and other elites less responsive to popular demands. According to Crenson and

---

[41] *Philadelphia in Focus*, pp. 52–53.

[42] Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project, *Where We Stand: Community Indicators for Metropolitan Philadelphia* (n.p., 2004), p. 48.

[43] *Philadelphia in Focus*, p. 12.

[44] Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project, *Where We Stand*, pp. 69–72.

[45] *Philadelphia in Focus*, p. 42.

Ginsberg, the very reforms intended to open up the political process actually created a new system of advocacy groups that relied more on money than on an active constituency and thus began to diminish the need for elites to seek public support for their political actions.

The growing divide between civic life and political participation is readily apparent in Philadelphia. A recent federal investigation into corruption surrounding city contracts has exposed obvious wrongdoings on the part of various officials and other interested parties, and recent survey evidence has revealed that only 16 percent of Philadelphia residents report being pleased by city government performance. Lesser charges of corruption brought a sweeping reform movement to the city fifty years ago, whereas today the city council has rejected a proposed ethics bill with apparently little public reaction. As one local reporter recently put it, "Philadelphians may love to grumble about the lack of integrity in City Hall while downing beers at their local pub. But they certainly aren't bombarding Council members with letters or phone calls on the issue."[46] And it seems entirely likely that an increasingly unequal distribution of wealth, racial segregation, decreasing homeownership, and suburban sprawl will only exacerbate the effects of personal democracy.

So welcome to the place that loves you back.

---

[46] Gwen Shaffer, "Ethical Dilemma," *Philadelphia Weekly*, April 6–12, 2005, p. 21; the survey results come from a Pennsylvania Economy League poll, quoted on pp. 20–21.