

Book Review

Immigrant networks and social capital

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The book "*Immigrant Networks and Social Capital*" is a comprehensive research on social capital's outcomes that aims to describe social networks patterns and social capital. It discusses the main issues of social connections patterns and social capital, and finally explains how networks patterns and social capital approaches can accounts for immigrant networks and outcomes. Therefore, the book is divided into eight chapters and would be describe in the following manner.

The first chapter begins with general idea of social network in immigration through describing how networks are considered as communication patterns. Based on communication perspective, the flow of information states the relationship between people. The movement of communication lines comes along with factual information (availability of jobs, house, and education) and cultural information (norms and values, understanding of life style), which are the two ways networks are interrelated. This chapter also discusses networks as connections within and across boundaries, where social networks are based to link individuals as groups. The connections are within and across boundaries flow information on the issues of ethnic stratification and specialization. Furthermore, the chapter discusses theoretical consideration of social capital considering networks as bridging ties and bonding ties. The concept of social ties is to bring information and resource to groups (bridges), and also to create strong ties of support (bonds).

Chapter two initially begin with the concept of social capital. It also discusses how researchers consider social relations as assets for advancement; and social relations particularly network ties, create outcomes for social groups members. Social capital is considered as solidarity and norms through examining how social ties create resources via enabling people to collaborate for collective actions. Moreover, the chapter examines the three types of investments of social capital that are important for immigrants:

1. Using social relations to increase and create financial capital through encouraging trust that increase credit.
2. Social networks create human capital by providing support to education for the young people.
3. Immigrant networks find opportunities and resources by mutual cooperation.

Chapter three describes that the structure and outcomes of networks is different between the migrant groups due to social, political, and economic conditions within and across national boundaries of the host country. The author focused on three major immigrant groups in the United States (Mexicans, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Filipinos). He compared the influences of the networks forms of each case and used them as a reference point for several reasons. The main focus of the author is to examine how social networks function as resources among major immigrant groups. Chapter four investigates the family ties by defining the role of family and the function of family ties in bringing immigrants into the United States, and recognizes how family networks reformed through immigration. The author has done this investigation of family ties through discussion of the four major immigrant groups.

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In Chapter five, the author discusses on moving from family ties to larger immigrant network groups. The author considered social relations and resources consisting three types of communities as enclave, neighborhood and communities. Between these three, enclave is relatively closest to the dense and considered as primary source of social capital; and the idea of ethnic enclave is associated with the enclave economy. The neighborhood was identified as residential area of an ethnic group or immigrants, and in addition the immigrant communities encompass residential areas and are not clearly defined by geography. Moreover, the author describes different types of communities and discusses how networks beyond families create social capital in societies.

In Chapter six, the author focuses on the role of formal institutions in immigrant communities and the way in which they fit in the kinds of communities as discussed in previous chapter. Moreover, the work of Scott Feld¹ in the nature of social networks is the main part of this chapter, he argues that formal institutions are identified as focal points that coordinate network relations. It also focuses on the significances of immigrants weak institutions, and as well discusses the strong institutions contain of networks that are distinguished internally and are controlled by the group members. Lastly the chapter discuss on networks and symbolic institutions such as their capacity to provide group identity, and maintaining network ties and cooperation between group members regularly.

Chapter seven discusses the effect of social ties in employment. However, the author was able to differentiate among ethnic jobs, as associated with different types of work and ethnic economies, where ethnicity become foundation of economic interaction between members of group. This chapter mainly focuses on ethnic jobs by referring to United States as having substantial portion of immigrant nationalities. Beside the issue of ethnic jobs, the author examines network and social resources that can increase economic relations between the groups and ethnic in the United States.

Finally, Chapter eight describes that the network constrains or social capital might be good or bad related to educational achievement or any of possible goals that migrants might want to pursue. Though immigrant network connections are seen as compensatory that makes possibility of mobility for the margins of American economy and also seen as complementary, connect to other group members and enhance higher human capital to their children. Moreover, the chapter discusses the role of social ties in economic adaptation to educational adaptation through considering economic cooperation and relations in one generation that may impact on rising mobility.

Although the author in the book discussed and focused on the nature of immigrant networks and social capital, but the weak point of this approach is that it does not deliver a general knowledge and several questions raised in the book are not clearly answered. Moreover, the main purpose of the book remains relatively limited, though it is not much clear for the readers to know about the impact of migration related processes to the economy and society of the host country. The author did not address some policy recommendation for the entire issues discussed in the book, but the end of the last chapter mentioned issues regarding the socioeconomic disparities needed to develop among groups.

In addition, the other issue that would be worthy of examination is the role of Internet. However, the author focus deeply on the influence of geographical location, distance, and network development of migrants; while the literature in social science studies analyzes how internet-mediated communication impact on to change social connections, therefore this is a significant issue, worth mentioning during interpreting migration processes. Online network through Internet mediate communication is considered effective to strengthen the weak ties and to serve the chase of the members aims.

The strength of the book is that the author clearly and descriptively discusses the concepts of several issues raised in the book, including the concept of bonding and bridging social capital and the roles played for the objectives of individuals and groups. The book also illustrates that social capital is the concept or idea for both community and individuals that at the beginning shows its effects at the micro level in a society. The social capital analyses throughout the country are mainly relied on macro level indicators via highlighting and focusing on social capital's outcomes. The economist, in order to find out the primarily effects using social capital and to highlight the impacts of social capital, they definitely have to focus considerably on the work of sociologists. Such as Bankston's work that offers a very significant service by describing and demonstrating a well-defined sociological definition of social capital and the literature of social networks.

In summary, the book seems informative and well structured; and in the conclusion part the author illustrates the ways of social networks functioning between different immigrant groups, and suggested that social networks and social capital could combine with traditional types of immigration that will shape interpersonal relations among the groups.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

¹ Scott Feld is a professor of Sociology who create concept of "network focus".