The effect of social capital on community co-production: Towards community-oriented development in post-disaster recovery

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Abstract

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of social capital for disaster recovery. Yet, relatively few studies have paid attention to how bonding and bridging social capital facilitate disaster recovery differently. The paper highlights the specific role of bridging social capital in rebuilding communities, recognizing it as a ‘catalyst’ of co-production. This paper is structured around the theoretical themes of social interaction, emphasizing that reciprocal interaction constitutes strong social capital that enables communities to work together. Although the literature emphasizes the positive effect of social capital on co-production, this paper offers a more nuanced view based on the following two points: (a) bonding social capital, which relies on tightly-knit bonding social networks is crucial for short term disaster recovery as it draws upon the supports from close community members such as family, relatives, neighbors, and friends; and (b) bridging social capital plays a key role in long-term disaster recovery, as individuals expand their social interactions outside their community through the recovery effort. The argument is then put forward that it is bridging social capital that supports the creation of co-production. This leads to greater opportunities for community-oriented development, which emerges due to better integration among various actors. The paper makes its contribution by proposing bridging social capital as a necessary condition for co-production for disaster recovery.

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Keywords: Bonding and bridging social capital; Community co-production; community-oriented disaster recovery; resilience

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1. Introduction

Extant studies purporting to address the role of social capital in disaster recovery draw on the concept of community resilience [e.g., 1, 2, 3]. Community resilience research is burgeoning, within the disaster recovery literature with a particular focus on the contribution of community competence, citizen participation, and sense of community for community development in post-disaster recovery [4, 5]. The central place of social capital as a core element of community disaster resilience seems widely accepted despite its conceptual nuances [6, 7, 8]. Several studies have asserted, conceptually and empirically, the importance of social capital for disaster recovery, stressing that communities with stronger social capital are likely to achieve faster recovery [1]. In order to capture the role of social capital, extant studies have sought to understand how social capital influences community-oriented disaster recovery, positing that community members whose social capital is strong are not just recipients getting support from state, but they are more active citizens who cooperate with government agencies for rebuilding their community. Effective cooperation between various actors is considered critical in order to achieve a successful disaster recovery [2, 4, 5]. The role of inter-group collaboration is reminiscent of the concept of co-production, which is described as the synergistic relationship between community members and government agencies, where community members are considered co-producers for effective public service delivery [4, 5]. However, relatively few studies have looked at how bonding and bridging social capital assist this collaboration within the context of disaster recovery. In order to clarify the role social capital plays in post-disaster community recovery, this paper reviews the relevant literature to present current knowledge within the context of disaster recovery. The focus of this review is to elucidate imperative attributes that provide a better understanding of: 1) the discretion between bonding and bridging social capital; and 2) the association between bridging social capital and community co-production [9]. The paper is laid out as follows: first we present the effects of social interaction on the development of social capital, conceptually separating the development of bonding and bridging social capital. Second, the concept of co-production is reviewed. Whereas co-production has been linked to bridging social capital within the literature, there has been little discussion in the context of disaster recovery. The contribution is that it proposes the conceptual linkages between bridging social capital and co-production and their potentially benefits for community-oriented development. The definition of terms used in this paper is summarised in the Table 1.

Table 1. Definition of terms.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of terms</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Bridging Social Capital:</strong></td>
<td>a type of social capital which community members can utilize to derive own benefits and group benefits. Bridging capital is accumulated within a local community by frequent, heterogeneous and horizontal interaction among various actors, including non-community actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Bonding Social Capital:</strong></td>
<td>a type of primitive social capital which community members can utilize to derive own and group benefits. Bonding capital is accumulated by frequent, homogeneous and horizontal social interaction among individuals of a single group (‘the community’).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Disaster Resilience:</strong></td>
<td>capacity of the community to adapt to environmental changes after disasters and to recover faster and better from acute natural or economic shocks.</td>
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<td><strong>Community-oriented disaster recovery:</strong></td>
<td>disaster recovery driven by community-based initiatives. This requires community’s active involvement in recovery after they experience shocks of disasters, involving decision making process, monitoring, and inherently sharing responsibility as well as ownership of the recovery process.</td>
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<td><strong>Community co-production:</strong></td>
<td>collaborative action of various actors in order to achieve a synergistic effect on a common objective, where potential benefits are distributed to the entire community.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of Community:</strong></td>
<td>Individual’s psychological sense of interpersonal connection to her/his community group. The sense of community promotes members to engage voluntarily in activities likely to create cohesion and cooperation so as to achieve their common goal</td>
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2. Key Themes in the literature

In order to gain a better understanding of the conceptual division between bonding and bridging social capital, and the association between bridging social capital and co-production, several thematic discussions were identified
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