

Bonding, bridging, and believing
Social capital of Dutch-American Reformed communities

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Peter Ester
(P.Ester@uvt.nl)
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

Abstract

A major theme within the emerging tradition of Dutch-American Reformed studies is the historical analysis and descriptive sociological understanding of Dutch emigration to America and the social adventures of Dutch immigrant communities. This tradition has resulted in many fine publications. The downside, however, is a certain neglect of theoretical issues, among which the explanation of why - in general - Dutch protestant immigration groups have been relatively successful in maintaining their core cultural identity and religious distinctiveness. This paper argues that in line with modern sociological thought it is their solid *social capital* that made many Dutch immigrant communities rather flourishing, together with a somewhat flexible “in-but-not-from-the-world” perspective. Strong community ties, a basic sense of a shared past, present, and destiny, strict religious self-perceptions and in-group/out-group attitudes, firm socialization practices, physical proximity, and a - however shallow - cultural notion of being Dutch, appear to be key indicators of social capital.

Having solid social capital is a major factor affecting collective survival of immigrant groups. But particularly in a cultural context of growing globalization and pluralism, social capital needs to be permanently maintained in order to not erode and remain effective. The role of the next generation is crucial in this respect.

Peter Ester is Professor of Sociology at Tilburg University, The Netherlands (p.ester@uvt.nl). He published widely (over 200 publications) on cross-national and intergenerational cultural changes. In 2001 and 2004 Peter Ester was visiting professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is former chairman of the Dutch Association of Social and Cultural Sciences. Recent books: *Culture and sustainability* (2003), *Comparing cultures* (2004), *Amish people* (2005), and *Globalization, value change, and generations* (2006).

Introduction¹

A central issue within the emerging tradition of Dutch-American studies is the historical analysis and descriptive understanding of Dutch emigration to America and the social adventures of Dutch Calvinist immigrant communities.² This tradition has resulted in many fine publications on various subjects such as immigration histories and immigrant experiences, church evolution and religious conflicts, cultural heritage and Dutch folklore, and portraits of pastors and community leaders.³ These historical and descriptive studies have certainly enlarged our factual understanding of Dutch-American Calvinist history and culture. The downside, however, is a certain disregard of theoretical and conceptual issues, among which is the explanation of *why* – in general – Dutch Calvinist immigration groups have been quite successful (relatively speaking) in preserving their core cultural identity and religious distinctiveness. This paper argues, in line with modern sociological thought, that it is their solid *social capital*, together with a somewhat flexible “in-but-not-of-the-world” perspective, that has helped many Dutch immigrant communities thrive. A basic sense of a shared past, present, and destiny, strict religious self-perceptions and in-group/out-group attitudes, firm socialization practices, physical proximity, high trust, and a – however shallow – cultural notion of being Dutch, appear to be key indicators of social capital. It seems that *on balance* strict Protestant groups such as Dutch Calvinist communities maintain their distinctiveness particularly by holding sustainable social capital: strong social networks, social compliance, and social participation accompanied by strong social trust, social identities, and strong religious values and norms. Having solid social capital, so this paper will reason, is a major factor affecting collective survival of immigrant groups. But in order to remain effective, social capital needs to be maintained and secured; i.e. future generations of Dutch-Americans have to be successfully socialized in what constitutes their central community features. If not, social capital, like any form of capital, may inflate, erode, and lose its distinct cultural characteristics. Successful and effective intergenerational transfer of social capital is particularly important in an era of rapidly increasing globalization and cultural pluralism.

The main aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical and conceptual perspective inspired by social capital approaches that may be used in explaining why some immigrant groups – such as Dutch Calvinist communities – are more successful than others, not only economically but also in conserving a unique cultural identity.⁴ A number of hypotheses and relevant questions will be put forward that can be tested empirically in subsequent research. The paper wants to provide a conceptual mind set that can, I believe, be quite functional in developing a theoretical understanding of the social and historical adventures of communities such as the Dutch-American Calvinists that is also useful, innovative, and comprehensive, and may even succeed in integrating seemingly unrelated topics in the developing tradition of Dutch-American studies and that may facilitate the co-operation between sociologists and historians.

I will first of all address the issue of the assumed decline of community as currently *en vogue* among many observers of American culture and society. Typically, this loss of community is framed as a loss of social capital. Next, the concept of social capital will be clarified and related to the ongoing sociological debate on community weakening, social mistrust, and civic decline. It will be argued that Dutch Calvinist immigrant communities stand out by possessing *relatively* substantial social capital that is inherently part of their (comparative) cultural achievements. The pressing issue is, of course, how social capital can be preserved among traditional communities such as Dutch-American Calvinists in a cultural context that is rapidly penetrated by globalization, pluralization, and multiculturalism. The answer lies – as the paper concludes – in designing and applying convincing strategies to socialize the *next generation* of community members. Successful intergenerational transfer of social capital is the main impetus behind community survival and determining for the degree to which community identity and community bonds can be assured.

The loss of community: Bowling alone

Many scholarly and popular accounts of contemporary American society express deep concerns about the decline of community and social cohesion, as in Robert Putnam's both much applauded and criticized book

*Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.*⁵ Putnam's main message is that in the last quarter-century Americans have become increasingly disconnected from their families, friends, neighbors, communities, social institutions, and public life; in short, American communities are confronted with a serious and painful loss of social capital. In metaphorical language: individual bowling goes up but *league* bowling is going down. Using a wide variety of (rather conventional) empirical indicators, Putnam shows that Americans are less committed to civil and political activism, they are less involved in religious and secular social activities, and their social connections have substantially thinned. Americans feel that honesty and morality are weakening, both among individuals, institutions, and political authorities.⁶ "Our growing social-capital deficit threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness."⁷ The postwar boomers, Putnam argues, have never been able to renew the social capital that was so vigorously accumulated by prewar generations. Community decline, so the argument goes, is directly related to the loss of social capital. The revival of community life needs a fresh shot of social capital, a new investment in what makes a civil society.⁸

Social capital, trust, and civil society

Many observers besides Putnam claim that a thriving civil society presupposes high levels of social trust, cohesion, and participation.⁹ Mutual social trust among citizens is assumed to create community bonds, to positively affect the functioning of social institutions, and to generate a cultural climate in which pro-social behavior, cooperation, and democratic involvement are secured. Trust reflects community health and indicates *Gemeinschaft*. High trust societies appear to be economically more prosperous, politically more effective, and institutionally more stable than low trust societies as they are rooted in cultures of reciprocity, moral obligation, shared ethical values, and duty towards community.¹⁰ Social trust reinforces spontaneous sociability, voluntary participation, and the advancement of common goals. Trust is a prerequisite of social order, is the touchstone of social capital, facilitates social integration and solidarity, secures co-

operation, diminishes social dilemmas, stabilizes social interactions, and cultivates face-to-face relationships.¹¹

The widespread decline of trust at all levels of society that Putnam and many others depict is directly linked to the loss of civil society, or the weakening of the private commitment with the public cause through collective participation in the wide range of voluntary associations.¹² It is *bon ton* among the vast majority of US civil society theorists to sketch the contemporary moral climate in pessimistic terms. “We do not have to read deeply in the philosophy and literature of today to sense the degree to which our age has come to seem a period of moral spiritual chaos, of certainties abandoned, of creeds outworn, and of values devalued.”¹³ American society has become a nation of strangers. The general idea in the contemporary concern about what constitutes the good life, the good citizen, and the good society is that prime social institutions such as the family, the school, the neighborhood, the church, and civic organizations – the “little schools of citizenship,” according to Alexis de Tocqueville¹⁴ - no longer fulfill essential psychological and symbolic functions in providing people with basic values and meaning structures.¹⁵ These institutions that traditionally mediate between the individual and society have lost their significance and led to a fraying of the social fabric, de-unification of moral standards, and fragmentation of individual pursuits. Social capital as embedded in primary social institutions has inflated and the postmodern citizen becomes detached, non-affiliated, and feels no personal loyalty to the wider community.¹⁶ Malcontent is supposedly booming.

I believe that on balance communities like the Dutch Calvinist immigrants do a better job in preserving their communities *precisely* because they have higher levels of social trust, social cohesion, and social participation, and because their social and cultural institutions still function relatively well - in short, because they have stronger and more sustainable social capital. The degree to which this is empirically true needs, however, considerable additional research. Compared to mainstream American community life, Dutch-American Calvinist immigrant groups still have a tradition of “bowling together,” although this tradition is facing cultural set-backs as well. But

before making this point in a little more detail, we have to be more specific conceptually on what we mean by social capital.

The concept of social capital

The late leading American sociologist James Coleman was among the first scholars to systematically conceptualize the notion of social capital. In essence, social capital entails the social resources – structures, institutions, traditions, and networks – that can be mobilized to serve and strengthen the community and its members.¹⁷ The more social capital a community possesses, the stronger the community is.¹⁸ Coleman defines social capital as a multi-dimensional concept that has two key characteristics: “they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure.”¹⁹ Social capital is the aggregate of collective social-structural resources available to group or community members; it enables actors to improve their social position.²⁰ The creation, maintenance (and destruction) of social capital, according to Coleman, is determined by factors such as closure of social networks for the emergence of group norms, the stability of social structure, and the role of ideology - including religious ideology. In this sense the notion of social capital both has a structural component (integration in networks) and a cultural component (network values, norms, and trust). Coleman stresses that social capital needs to be conserved, since “social capital is one of those forms of capital which depreciate over time. Like human capital and physical capital, social capital depreciates if it is not renewed.”²¹ Social relationships die out if not maintained; expectations and obligations wither over time; and norms depend on regular communication.²² To be less abstract, social capital is composed by salient macro factors such as trust, social norms, social networks, and organizations that influence relations among people and are an asset for the individual and collective production of well-being.²³ Social capital indicates the resources individuals derive from group or community membership, it enhances predictability of group members’ behavior and increases access to community information channels.

Putnam has further popularized the concept of social capital. He defines social capital as referring “to connections among individuals – social

networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.”²⁴ It is closely related to the basic phenomenon of civic virtue, it has both a private and public face, and is both an individual and collective good. The Golden Rule of social capital is generalized reciprocity: “trustworthiness lubricates social life.”²⁵ Putnam distinguishes between two main functions of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital is exclusive and inward looking and tends to reinforce group identity and group solidarity. Bridging social capital refers to inclusive and outward looking social networks across diverse cleavages. Bonding social capital describes closer connections between people and is characterized by strong bonds, e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic or religious group; it is good for ‘getting by’ in life. Bridging social capital describes more distant connections between people and is characterized by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties, e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic or religious groups, friends of friends, etc; it is good for ‘getting ahead’ in life. Traditional collectives such as Dutch Calvinist immigrant communities are usually better in bonding than in bridging. Historically and theologically this phenomenon of bonding-over-bridging is closely related to the classic Calvinist dogma of separation from the world.

Social capital and Dutch-American Calvinist immigrant groups

Religion, or perhaps more accurately, traditional religion, and social capital are close conceptual friends.²⁶ Historically robust “Dutch” denominations such as the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) are no exception to this rule. Says Putnam: “Faith communities in which people work together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America Churches provide an important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment.... Religiosity rivals education as a powerful correlate of most forms of civic engagement.”²⁷ Religious social capital according to Corwin Smidt has certain particular qualities that are distinctive from other forms of social capital in terms of its quantitative availability, durability, range, capacity to nurture reciprocity, and the disproportional benefits it wields.²⁸

Having their own churches – albeit with a rich history of conflicts and schisms²⁹ -- provided and still provide Dutch-American Calvinist communities with distinctive social, cultural, and even economic assets. Their religion-based *group* immigration to specific geographical regions (e.g. Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, South Dakota, Wisconsin) furnished Dutch communities not only with a shared past, but also with a common future and destiny.³⁰ From the very beginning of their group immigration in the mid-nineteenth century, Dutch-American Calvinists started their own communities based on strong religious convictions and the deeply felt need to survive and make a living as an ethnic and religious community.³¹ The church was *the* leading social institution in community development. The shared Dutch language also facilitated this process of community building – at least in the early years of Dutch immigration – along common Dutch geographic and social origins, common Dutch cultural practices and routines, and Dutch in-group marriages.³² Cultivating Dutch cultural mores was a basic strategy to survive in a new and strange country and at the same time emphasized and reinforced Dutch community identity.

In his magnum opus *Dutch Chicago*, Robert Swierenga presents a vivid and comprehensive history of Dutch immigration to the Windy City.³³ He shows how important local church-related networks – in our terminology, social capital – were in preserving Chicago’s early Dutch Calvinist culture and community. “Most Dutch took their savings to Dutch-owned banks, bought homes through Dutch realtors, drew up their wills with Dutch attorneys, went to Dutch doctors and dentists with their hurts, and patronized fellow merchants and craftsmen. Employers preferred to hire relatives and fellow church members.”³⁴ Besides this local Dutch support system, the conservation of Dutch culture was further assured by an isolationist structure of Dutch church services, private elementary and secondary schools, social clubs and societies, and independent businesses. This religiously and ethnically based “exclusive” local institutional infrastructure preserved the Dutch cultural heritage for a considerable period – into the 1950s – and kept the world at a distance. Swierenga also nicely shows how Dutch Chicago eventually became subject to cultural erosion, or, to social capital inflation.

In due time Dutch immigrant social capital gradually but clearly became Americanized, but building and maintaining solid social networks remains a culturally recognizable feature of many Dutch-American communities.³⁵ These networks are not only profitable in a cultural sense but also economically. Traveling in areas with a dense population of Dutch-Americans (e.g. Holland, Michigan; Pella, Iowa) underpins the notion that the Dutch did and still do fairly well.³⁶ Religion and social capital are close friends but religion and financial capital are no strangers either, as Max Weber already stated a century ago.³⁷ Dutch-American Calvinist “enclaves” are generally quite prosperous, both in agricultural and more developed areas, which not only reflects successful individual entrepreneurship but also strong economic development through available macro community resources and assets.³⁸ The Dutch cultural alter ego in American society is clearly one of a hard-working ethnic group that is economically flourishing. Dutch-American communities are by and large relatively solid, close, and supportive networks which means, sociologically, that they are high-trust communities. The standard list of community problems instantly mentioned by the average American culture watcher – crime, drugs, alcoholism, suicide, unemployment, single parent families – are simply less observable in most Dutch-American communities. Without sketching an exaggerated rosy or nostalgic picture of Dutch communities, the observation holds (at least from a comparative point of view) that these communities are indeed based on mutual trust, solidarity, voluntarism, and participation. Ethnic communities such as the Dutch-American ones have a long history of mutual help – which is typical for many immigrant groups – and they stress the importance of voluntary participation in bringing about collective interests and community goals.³⁹ Volunteering in church and community life is generally seen as the right and civic thing to do, a moral obligation that is evidently religiously legitimized.

These statements, it is true, are first and foremost observations that are clearly in need of (much) more solid empirical research in order to determine the actual cultural and economic success of Dutch-American Calvinist communities and to assess their actual social capital. A prime issue on the Dutch-American studies agenda, consequently, is the more precise empirical

assessment of the broadly assumed social cohesion of Dutch-American Calvinist communities *vis-à-vis* other immigrant communities.

It is important to emphasize in this context that social capital does not equal ‘good causes’; especially communities that excel in bonding but lack bridging social capital, are very likely to fail in reaching out and to advance more general collective goals. In those cases social capital may degenerate into social enmeshment, narrow-mindedness, or intolerance.⁴⁰

As stated above, the church is the main social institution in Dutch-American Calvinist communities. It regulates social life, offers a joint existential perspective and *theodicy*, prescribes and guards guiding norms and values, strengthens personal identity and reinforces community distinctiveness, promotes community belonging and involvement, regulates interaction with the “outside world,” and exercises community leadership and control. Having their “own” colleges for higher education is a major institutional asset too.⁴¹ Higher education performs a double function: it socializes the next generation in fundamental church doctrines and it recruits and trains new (church and community) leaders. The community, the church, and education are the institutional pillars *par excellence* of Dutch-American Calvinist immigration groups. It is quite true that these fundamental pillars have become subject to secular trends, too, but far less than is the case with, for instance, mainstream Reformed churches in the Netherlands.⁴²

Religion is the main cultural representation of Dutch-Americans’ social capital, probably even more so than their “Dutch” self-identification.⁴³ “At best their sense of ethnicity – of Dutchness – is no more than a rather vague sentiment that affects their behavior only in certain areas, in their choice of friends or of their marriage partners.”⁴⁴ *Dutch* self-presentation by Dutch-Americans is by and large quite superficial and their factual knowledge of the old motherland is usually almost absent.⁴⁵ Reformed religion and its imprinting on Dutch-Americans’ existential worldviews and the Reformed church as its institutional representative are much more influential than being *Dutch-Americans* as such.⁴⁶ There is not much deeply rooted Dutch ethnicity behind the cultural paraphernalia of tulips, windmills, and *Sinterklaas*.⁴⁷

A defining feature of Dutch-American Calvinism is the separation from the world, at least in a theological meaning. Boundary maintenance –

including omnipresent but benevolent social control mechanisms and socialization canons – is an intrinsic part of internal social capital management. But this “in-but-not-of-the-world” mentality has generally been somewhat flexible as Americanization of Dutch Calvinist immigrant communities progressed. Ingroup/outgroup attributions were part of their cultural heritage and day-to-day lives but hardly in extreme or rigorous ways. The outside world became increasingly part of the activity span of Dutch-Americans, but at times the boundaries need to be drawn again. As Rob Kroes concludes in his ethnographic study of Dutch Calvinist pioneers in Amsterdam, Montana, “In spite of the blurring of boundaries, in spite of the community’s increased interwovenness with the outside world, there is still something like an iron cohort that sees its self-assigned duty as standing guard at the gate and, whenever it sees fit, pulling up the bridge and closing the doors.”⁴⁸ Social capital is a treasure and treasures need to be protected.

Conclusion

The steadily developing tradition of Dutch-American studies of the historical roots and social adventures of Dutch Calvinist immigration groups has come up with many fine descriptive studies. These studies have surely improved our factual understanding and knowledge of how these immigrant groups have done in American society. Its theoretical basis is less advanced, though. In this paper I have argued that the theoretical notion of social capital, as presently progressing in sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics, may very well serve as an umbrella concept to study and explain the social, cultural, political, and economic adventures of these communities. Theoretically, the *relative* societal and cultural success and advancement of many Dutch-American Calvinist communities can be attributed to its comparatively strong and sustainable social capital. A strong sense of a common history and a common future, the (Christian) Reformed church as *the* overarching local institution, a self-directed system of (higher) education, a strong focus on socialization, shared religious “antithetical” visions, strong Calvinistic norms, values, and traditions, strong ethics, a common identity, high mutual social trust, strong networks, geographical proximity, being part but also apart from the world, and a sense of being

Dutch, all contributed to its substantial social capital, which in turn explains its relative societal and cultural accomplishments. This does not, of course, imply that Dutch-American social capital is not subject to inflation, only relatively less so than other immigrant cultures. The degree to which this is indeed true is a prime issue for much more advanced and detailed empirical research. The statement that high trust *and* strong antithetical outlooks can co-exist among Dutch-American Calvinist groups has to do with the fact that these groups are particularly wealthy in *bonding* (i.e. internally accumulated and invested) social capital and (comparatively) not so good in *bridging* (externally oriented) social capital.

In closing, I want to propose that the empirical study of the various forms of social capital of Dutch-American Calvinist communities - also and in particular in comparison with other immigrant groups - should receive a more prominent place on our joint research agenda, not only in reconstructing their past but also in speculating on their future. Pressing questions include: do different Dutch Calvinist immigrant groups and communities (also) differ in social capital? How is social capital maintenance affected by geographic location, i.e. differences between urban and rural communities? Is social capital linked to economic capital? How is social capital accumulation related to community leadership? Can systematic intergenerational differences in social capital be observed and if so what are its cultural impacts? Is the (assumed) slower secularization among Dutch-American Calvinists related to a (maybe) slower process of social capital erosion? Is there a trend from bonding to bridging social capital? Do the components of social capital change over time or are they relatively stable? Does it make sense to distinguish religious or spiritual capital from social capital? What are the negative community impacts of social capital conservation? In developing such a common research agenda we can stimulate multidisciplinary research, particularly by sociologists and historians, strengthen the conceptual cohesion and integrative knowledge of our studies, detect white spots in our research focus, and advance our core understanding of the social adventures of Dutch-American Calvinist communities.

Strong social capital is very likely the key factor in explaining community advancement and progress, *but* - and this is crucial - social capital

needs to be maintained and secured in order to remain successful. If not, social capital may deflate and erode. The importance of social capital maintenance and updates for Dutch-American Calvinist communities implies and requires a highly successful socialization of next generations in its core value systems. This is particularly true in the present cultural *Epoche* of strongly competing religious and secular meaning systems. Will globalization, pluralization, and multiculturalism strengthen Reformed community responses based on bonding, inward-looking social capital or responses based on bridging, outward-looking social capital? In the first case these global cultural forces will reinforce stricter boundary maintenance between Reformed communities and the wider world, in the second case Reformed communities will open up with the danger of facing identity inflation. This, in a nutshell is the cultural dilemma that Reformed communities have to deal with.

In *any* case, *if* the next generation – the generation *par excellence* affected by globalization, pluralization, and multiculturalism - is not reached, social capital may easily decline. Effective socialization strategies are an indispensable part of effective social capital protection and growth. The next generation, in this sense, is always the best test of the sustainability of the social capital accumulated by immigrant groups such as Dutch-American Calvinists.

Notes

¹ I want to thank Paul Dekker (Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office and Tilburg University) and Henk Vinken (Komazawa University, Japan) for our stimulating discussions and collaboration on the (cross-cultural) role of social capital (see Dekker et al., 2003). I also want to thank Hans Krabbendam (Roosevelt Institute, the Netherlands and former AADAS president) for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper. This paper is a reworked version of my chapter “Still Bowling Together. Social Capital of Dutch Protestant Immigrant Groups in North America,” which appeared in George Harinck and Hans Krabbendam, eds, *Morsels in the Melting Pot* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2006) and my chapter “Religion and Social Capital. Bonding and Bridging in Dutch-American Calvinist Communities: A Review and Research Agenda” which appeared in Paul Fessler, Hubert Krygsman & Robert Swierenga, eds, *Dutch Immigrants on the Plains* (Holland, MI: Hope College, Joint Archives, 2006).

² In using the term “Dutch Calvinist immigrant communities” I refer to Dutch-American Protestant communities standing in the classic Reformed tradition, with a dominant role of the Reformed Church of America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Its immigrant pioneers were often part of the “Afscheidingsbeweging.” See Jacob van Hinte, *Nederlanders in Amerika. Een studie over landverhuizers en volksplanters in de 19e en 20ste Eeuw in de Vereenigde Staten van Amerika. Twee delen* (Groningen: P. Noordhoff, 1928); Henry Lucas, *Nederlanders in America. Dutch Emigration to the United States and Canada, 1789-1950* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955); Robert Swierenga, ed., *The Dutch in America. Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985).

³ I particularly refer to the established research tradition inspired by AADAS, the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies.

⁴ It cannot be stressed enough that immigrant group success is always relative, i.e. in *proportion* to other immigrant groups. Throughout this text, this proportional notion has to be kept in mind.

⁵ See Peter Ester and Henk Vinken, “Debating Civil Society: On the Fear for Civic Decline and Hope for the Internet Alternative,” *International Sociology* 18 (2003): 659-680, for a more detailed analysis.

⁶ See again Ester and Vinken, “Debating Civil Society,” for a critique of these indicators. The main issue is the lack of sensitivity in civil society Putnam-like studies to new, alternative, and innovative forms of solidarity, connectedness, and civic and political engagement, particularly those facilitated by the Internet. In short: Putnam seems to confuse change with decline.

⁷ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. (New York etc.: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 368.

⁸ Putnam concludes that “[W]e desperately need an era of civic inventiveness to create a renewed set of institutions and channels for a reinvigorated civic life that will fit the way we have come to live.” *Ibid.*, 401.

⁹ Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus, *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1996); Paul Dekker and Eric Uslaner, eds., *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2001); Paul Dekker, Peter Ester and Henk Vinken, “Civil Society, Social Trust and Democratic Commitment,” in *The Cultural Diversity of European Unity. Findings, Explanations, and Reflections from the European Values Study*, eds. Wil Arts, Jacques Hagenaars and Loek Halman (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003); Bob Edwards, Michael Foley and Mario Diani, eds., *Beyond Tocqueville* (Hanover: Tufts University Press, 2001); Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996); Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Francis Fukuyama, *Trust. The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (London: Penguin Books, 1995); Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); and *idem.*, *Modernization and Postmodernization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) found that interpersonal trust and similar cultural orientations are strongly associated with both economic development and democratic stability. See also David Halpern, *Social Capital* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), which summarizes (micro, meso, and macro) evidence on the positive relationships between social capital and e.g. employment, economic productivity and growth

mental and physical health, educational attainment, and more effective and less corrupt government.

¹¹ Misztal, 1996.

¹² Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1963). In line with the classic Almond and Verba study on civic culture, Putnam points at 'virtuous circles' of trust and involvement that are directly related to the quality of democracy.

¹³ Robert Nisbet, "The Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom", In: *The Essential Civil Society Reader*, Don Eberly, ed., (Lanham: Rowman & Klittlefield, 2000), 33.

¹⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Scribner Books, 1969 [1835]).

¹⁵ Nisbet, "The Quest for Community".

¹⁶ The enlargement of scale, the professionalization and bureaucratization of the welfare state, the 'thickening' of the state, have disintegrated the societal midfield, so many civil society analysts hold.

¹⁷ See for a good overview and permanent update of social capital research, indicators, and literature: <http://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/>

¹⁸ Cultural capital is a related concept and refers to the values, beliefs, and trust a community possesses to motivate its members to act. Cultural capital - like social capital - indicates community resources and skills.

¹⁹ James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 302; Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 119. At about the same time leading French sociologist Bourdieu stated that "Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Acknowledging that capital can take a variety of forms is indispensable to explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies."

²⁰ Sjoerd Beugelsdijk, "Culture and Economic Development in Europe" (Dissertation, Tilburg University, 2003).

²¹ See David Halpern, *Social Capital*, 3-9, for a distinction between financial capital, physical capital, human capital, and social capital.

²² Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*, 321.

²³ Says Halpern: "Societies are not composed of atomized individuals. People are connected with one another through intermediate social structures – webs of association and shared understandings of how to behave. This social fabric greatly affects with whom, and how, we interact and co-operate. It is this everyday fabric of connection and tacit co-operation that the concept of social capital is intended to capture" (Halpern, *Social Capital*, 3). Social capital is described as "Social networks and the norms and sanctions that govern their character. It is valued for its potential to facilitate individual and community action, especially through the solution of collective action problems" (Halpern, 4). In this perspective, social capital is composed of three basic components: a network, a cluster of norms, values, and expectancies, and sanctions.

²⁴ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 19. Elsewhere Putnam refers to social capital as "Features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act more effectively to pursue shared objectives.... Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust" (Putnam, 664-665).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21. Putnam realizes that strong social capital can have a dark side too, e.g. as collected and cultivated by organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan or the Mafia.

²⁶ See Peter Ester, *De Stillen op het Land. Portret van de Amish-gemeenschap in Amerika*, 3rd revised edition (Kok: Agora, 2001); *idem.*, "Group Maintenance and Religious Orthodoxy: The Amish Model." Paper presented at the conference "Morsels in the Melting Pot", Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, September 29-30, 2004; *idem.*, *Die Amish people. Überlebenskünstler in der modernen Gesellschaft* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 2005) for using a social capital approach in understanding the Amish community. Donald Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, revised edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 143, points at social rituals, networks, extended family, endogamy, and local base as the prime Amish social capital resources.

²⁷ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 66-67. Coleman states that "The sociological evidence linking religion to social capital seems overwhelming", John A. Coleman, S.J. "Religious Social

Capital. Its Nature, Social Location, and Limits”, in Corwin Smidt, *Religion as Social Capital. Producing the Common Good* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003), 33.

²⁸ Corin Smidt, *Religion as Social Capital*, 216-218. See for a discussion of religious or spiritual social capital: http://www.metanexus.net/spiritual_capital/research_articles.asp

²⁹ See Elton Bruins and Robert Swierenga, *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999).

³⁰ In this sense Dutch Protestant immigration to the US differed markedly from Catholic immigration that was more individually based. See Henk van Stekelenburg, *Landverhuizing als regionaal verschijnsel. Van Noord-Brabant naar Noord-Amerika, 1820-1880* (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1991); *idem.*, “*Hier is alles vooruitgang*”. *Landverhuizing van Noord-Brabant naar Noord-Amerika, 1880-1940* (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1996).

³¹ Jacob van Hinte, *Nederlanders in Amerika*; Henry Lucas, *Netherlanders in America*.

³² I believe that the linguistic study of intergenerational trends in the use of the Dutch language among Dutch-American Protestant communities can greatly improve our understanding of the actual social capital development and transfers within these communities. See Jaap van Marle and Caroline Smits, “De ontwikkeling van het Amerikaans-Nederlands: Een schets,” in *Overzees Nederlands*, Jan Berns and Jaap van Marle, eds., (Amsterdam: Meertens Instituut, 2000).

³³ More precisely to Dutch enclaves in the Old West Side, Englewood, Roseland and South Holland.

³⁴ Robert Swierenga, *Dutch Chicago. A History of the Hollanders in the Windy City* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 26.

³⁵ Elton Bruins, *The Americanization of a Congregation*. Second edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995); Rob Kroes, *The Persistency of Ethnicity. Dutch Calvinist Pioneers in Amsterdam, Montana* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

³⁶ Lucas Ligtenberg, *De nieuwe wereld van Peter Stuyvesant. Nederlandse voetsporen in de Verenigde Staten* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 1999); Maas, *et al.*, 1998.

³⁷ Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik. Eine Aufsatzsammlung. Herausgegeben von Johannes Winckelmann* (München/Hamburg: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1969 [1904/05]).

³⁸ It is important to emphasize that due to drastic processes of enlargement of agricultural scale and ditto rising land prices, farming in (many) rural areas by the next generation becomes increasingly problematic if not impossible.

³⁹ For immigrant groups, mutual help systems and solidarity obligations both reflect community interests as well as pure individualistic interests.

⁴⁰ Putnam speaks of the “dark side of social capital”, 350-363.

³⁹ Such as Hope College (RCA) in Holland, Michigan; Calvin College (CRC) in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

⁴² Gerard Dekker, Donald Luidens and Rodger Rice, eds., *Rethinking Secularization. Reformed Reactions to Modernity* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997).

⁴³ See Alejandro Portes, ed., *The Economic Sociology of Immigration. Essays on Networks, Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995), for a more general discussion of the relationship between immigration and social capital.

⁴⁴ Rob Kroes, *The Persistency of Ethnicity*, 101.

⁴⁵ Dutch self-presentation of several Dutch-American communities is often a deliberate local strategy to attract visitors and tourists (cf. the yearly tulip festivals in cities such as Holland, Michigan; Pella, Iowa; Orange City, Iowa).

⁴⁶ Hans Krabbendam, “Dutch-American Identity Politics: The Use of History by Dutch Immigrants” Inaugural lecture, Visiting Research Fellows Program (Holland, Michigan: Van Raalte Institute, Hope College, 2003). Krabbendam offers the plausible hypothesis that “the stronger the religious identity of a group the less it has a need for an explicit ethnic identity” (17). In this sense Dutch-American Protestant immigrants “were more interested in justifying their existence than in making ethnic statements” (17).

⁴⁷ At least not among the younger generations.

⁴⁸ Rob Kroes, *The Persistency of Ethnicity*, 133.