

What is the Relevance of Social Capital to the Welfare of Immigrant Women? A Multi-Level Analysis of Four Communities

Investigators	Uzo Anucha , PhD, Principal Investigator, School of Social Work Nombuso Dlamini , PhD, Faculty of Education Michael Holosko , PhD, School of Social Work Miu Chung Yan , PhD, University of British Columbia
Research Coordinator	Kizzy Bedeau
Schedule	April 2004 – August 2005
Funder	Status of Women Canada

DESCRIPTION & POLICY RELEVANCE

This research will examine how social capital is created and used by immigrant women in four ethnic communities in Windsor. Social capital is defined as the networks with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within and among groups. This research will also examine the impact or “return” of immigrant women’s use of social capital on social and economic performance indicators. Informed by Lin’s conceptual framework, we see social capital as having three components: the *investment* in social capital (a community’s collective assets); *access* to social capital (individuals’ interaction with these assets) and *return* of social capital (the outcome of the interactions).

In collaboration with a community advisory group that will be made up of key stakeholders, this research project will utilize a multi-method research strategy (construction of organizational and community profiles, in-depth interviews and a cross sectional survey) to achieve the research objectives outlined below. The findings will be used to develop a conceptual framework that explains the creation and use of social capital among immigrant women within a broader context of inequalities. This framework will identify possible leverage points where policy at different levels (micro, mezzo and macro) can facilitate the creation and use of social

capital as well as to minimize inhibitors that block the creation of social capital.

Examples of questions that the findings will contribute answers to include: how can policy facilitate the creation of forms social capital that are beneficial to the welfare of women in general and immigrant women in particular within intersecting oppressions such as race, age and social class? How can policy build on the ‘realities’ of women’s contributions to the economy such as unpaid work and caring responsibilities by lessening barriers around these forms of participation that prevent women from building and accessing certain types of social capital?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the *structure* (type, size/capacity, spatial, structural, relational) and *types* (bonding, bridging and linking) of social capital within immigrant communities in Windsor, Ontario.
2. Examine how *gender* and other variables such as *race/ethnicity*, *age* and *socioeconomic status* mediate access to social capital.
3. Examine the *outcomes or return* from women’s access and use of social capital.

Contact:

Uzo Anucha, 519-253-3000 x 3074
 anucha@uwindsor.ca

