

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TO  
SOCIAL CAPITAL IN A SMALL KANSAS TOWN ON THE HIGH PLAINS**

**by**

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**Emporia, Kansas**

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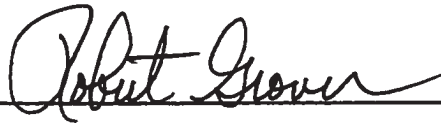
**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the Degree**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The School of Library and Information Management**

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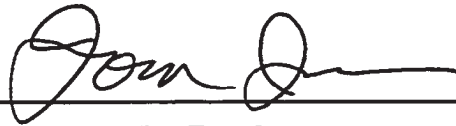
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION  
FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE  
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Catherine Thompson Hoy

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Title: An Exploration of the Contribution of Civic Engagement to Social Capital in a Small Kansas Town on the High Plains

Abstract approved: Maitha J. Hale  
(Chair)

This dissertation explores the role of social capital in the civic life of a rural community. Stockton is located on the High Plains of Kansas, an area traditionally important for farming and mineral production but currently suffering from economic decline. The study tests Robert D. Putnam's theory that civic engagement is represented by participation in volunteer-supported organizations and social networks, newspaper readership, a higher than average voting record, and a community history of social interaction. According to Putnam these elements of civic engagement create norms of reciprocity and contribute to cooperative action for mutual goals. This qualitative research study includes a review of Putnam's findings that relate to the study as well as a review of authors who are using his findings to study civic life. Research began with the local public librarian, who provided entree to the community. The research methods included interviews with people living in the community and participating in civic life, observations of the community, and analysis of related records and documents, including the local newspaper. The data report, based on the interview transcripts, observation notes, and document analysis, appears in narrative form. The final chapter provides an integrative analysis, drawn from the narrative, and indicates that this town does have identifiable assets of social capital: active participation in volunteer-supported organizations and social networks, consistent local newspaper readership, a relatively high voter turnout, and a record of a substantial history of social interaction. It also reveals that although this civic engagement does result in collective action to accomplish common goals, it is not sufficient to overcome all of the declining economic and social forces facing Stockton. Building on the strength of this social capital, the community could look for direction from other models of civic success. Implications are also indicated for the relevance of the study to community libraries.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Orientation**

An ambiguous attitude toward the way of life that exists in small, agricultural-based towns on the High Plains of the United States inspired this study. This way of life is in some ways ordinary to the point of the mundane, but it also seems on the way to becoming as exotic as the bison that once roamed the prairies. The attitude is ambiguous because while there is definitely an attraction to the way of life that exists in small towns, perhaps even a tendency toward idealization, there are many stifling aspects as well. It seems that the people themselves who live in these communities, especially the young ones, are leaving them with hardly a backward glance. The main purpose of the project was not to attempt to find answers to the dilemma about whether or not this way of life should be preserved or even to determine whether there is any possibility that it could be preserved, but rather to take a closer look at the social components of such an environment. The work of Robert D. Putnam on social capital offers theoretical grounding for doing so. This introductory chapter includes (a) an orientation to the study, (b) a brief overview of civic decline, (c) the parameters of the study, (d) a model based on Putnam's theory of social capital, (e) the statement of the problem, (f) the research questions, (g) the description of the setting in which the study was conducted and the need for such a study, and (h) a brief summary of data collection and data analysis procedures used for the study.

The dissertation includes the introductory chapter and five additional chapters.

Chapter two provides a more comprehensive summation of Putnam's theory on the development of social capital and background on his research. Chapter three is a review of literature that utilizes Putnam's scholarship on social capital that is relevant to this study. Chapter four describes the research design of the study and explains the procedures followed. Chapter five contains the narrative presentation of data as related to the research questions that were designed to investigate the existence of social capital in this particular setting and to provide analysis on the static or evolving nature of this social capital. Chapter six discusses the conclusions and implications of the study and considers how the study relates to the field of library and information science.

#### Civic Decline

In contemporary American society politicians, journalists, ethical and religious leaders, scholars, and community leaders are describing a perceived erosion of community with a resultant decline of social and civic trust (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, and Tipton, 1987; Berry, 1987; Elshtain; 1995 ; Etzioni, 1993; Jackson, 1994; Kemmis, 1995; Theobald, 1997). Prominent among these commentators is Robert D. Putnam, Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. Putnam has published widely on international and domestic political issues, but it is his current research on American democracy that informs this study. His 1995 article, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," has been discussed in publications from such organizations as the Penn National Commission on Society, Culture and Community; the Brookings Institution; and the Public Religion Project (Frederickson, 1996; Martin, 1983 ; Merritt, 1996). In these publications Putnam is credited for his

insight in recognizing the decline of civil society in United States communities as well as for providing guidance in seeking a reversal of this decline.

For more than twenty years Putnam (1993a) studied the success of regional governments in Italy. He found that communities with the most effective regional government and civic satisfaction were characterized by higher levels of membership in local organizations, by widespread newspaper readership, by a tradition of civic engagement, and by higher voter turnout than were found in less successful communities. These findings led him to theorize that “successful outcomes are more likely in civically engaged communities” (Putnam, 1995a, p.2). These successful outcomes as determined by Putnam are better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government. In the “Bowling Alone” article, Putnam (1995a) documented the decline of these characteristics in United States towns and cities and noted that even with the social activity of bowling there had been a change. Although more people than ever were going bowling, the number of bowling leagues had declined significantly, as had memberships in organizations such as Elks, Jaycees, Masons, League of Women Voters, PTA, Boy Scouts, and others.

In a follow-up article Putnam (1996b) discussed, in more detail, the causes for this decline of participation in civic and social organizations. He listed what he described as “the usual suspects” or the explanations that are most commonly given for waning participation in civic life in the United States. The characteristics of contemporary American society that Putnam (1996b) suggests have contributed to a decline in memberships in civic and social organizations and events are such aspects of modern life

as time pressures, economic issues, mobility, cultural changes, and technological change, including the electronic revolution and the influence of television. After exploring each of these suspected causes, Putnam declared television a major culprit, citing how much of our time is now occupied in this, often solitary, activity. Putnam saw the time people spend watching television as causing a “reduction in participation in social, recreational, and community activities among people of all ages. In short, television privatizes our leisure time” (Putnam, 1996b, p. 20).

#### Parameters of the Study

This study does not attempt to continue the dialogue about the cause or causes of the decline of citizen participation in organizations and events, but instead looks at how such participation contributes to social capital within a particular community. The study follows a recommendation Putnam (1995a) made for further inquiry when he suggested that the dimensions of social capital should be examined by investigating what constitutes social capital.

The study does examine that part of Putnam’s theory of social capital concerned with civic engagement. It does not, therefore, utilize all aspects of his research. Nor does it look at social capital from other perspectives, such as critical theory. Putnam did, however, rely on the work of James Coleman (1990) in formulating his theory of social capital and therefore that influence is briefly explored in chapter three.

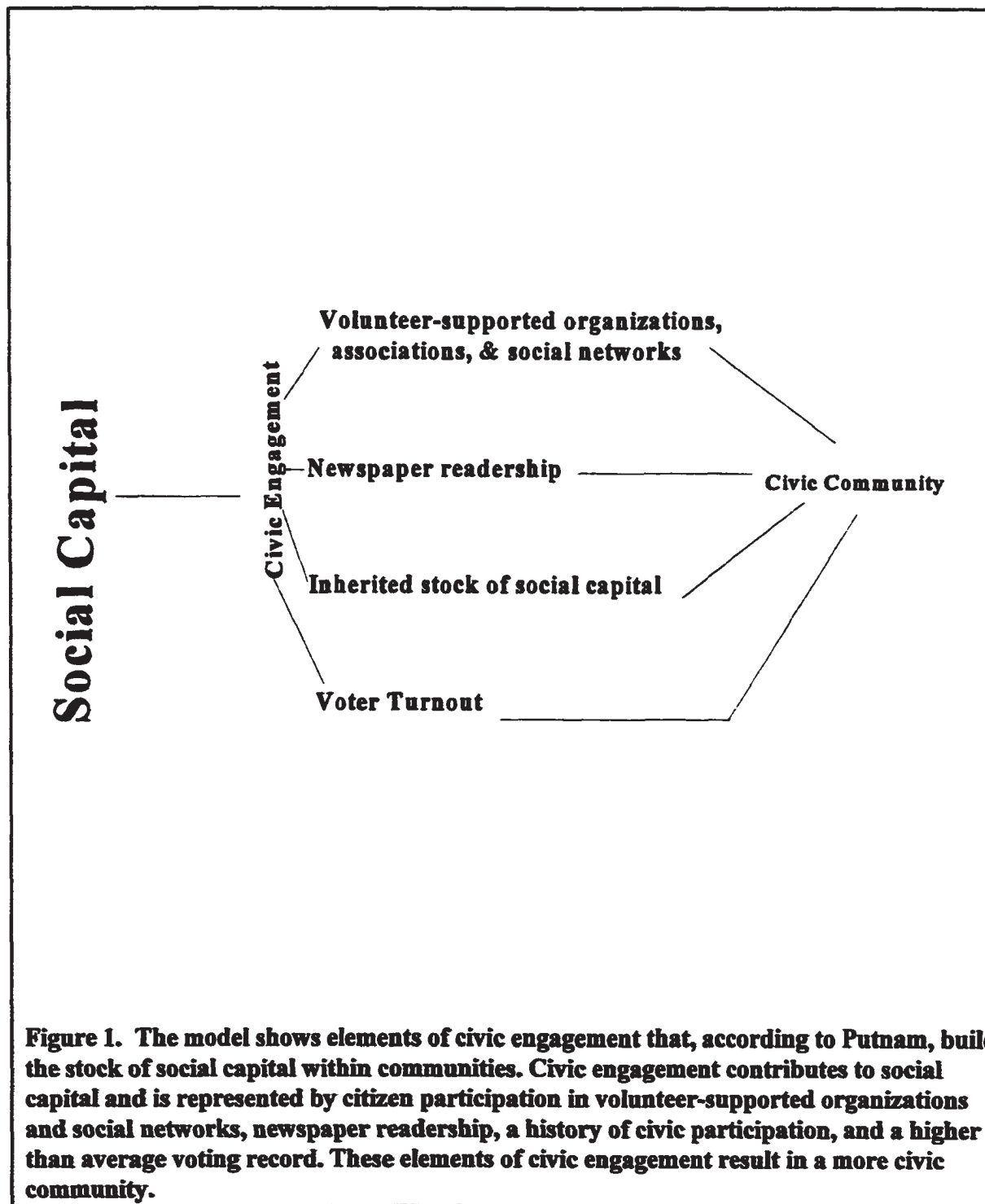
Putnam defined social capital as referring to “features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993a, p.167). He described civic engagement as civic and

community participation and political activity. An increased fund of social capital results when citizens are involved in civic engagement within the community. The elements or assets of civic engagement that Putnam found through his research to contribute to increased civic engagement and thereby to create social capital were (a) participation in volunteer-supported organizations and social networks, (b) newspaper readership, (c) an inherited stock of social capital, and (d) voter turnout in elections. These elements result in the creation of norms of reciprocity and trust that allows for cooperation in order to accomplish reciprocity and trust that allows for cooperation in order to accomplish acts for the well being of the community.

#### Statement of the Problem

A small community in Kansas located in the High Plains was examined with the intent of investigating the assets of social capital as determined by Putnam, including participation in volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, the extent of newspaper readership, inherited social capital, and the voter turnout. A qualitative narrative research approach was utilized to examine the written and oral language of people living in the community in order to analyze their own words for evidence of the participants' perspectives on how these elements contribute to civic engagement within the community. For this study, Putnam's theory on social capital has been distilled into the model as shown in Figure 1 in an attempt to provide a visual guide to the project.

## MODEL FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL



### Research Questions

The research questions for this study were based on the more primary inquiry:

What assets of social capital does this community exhibit?

Research Question 1: Is civic engagement demonstrated through participation in volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, both formal and informal, resulting in successful cooperation to work for the welfare of the community?

Research Question 2: Is civic engagement demonstrated through local newspaper readership and does the newspaper reflect and report on those aspects of social capital described in question one?

Research Question 3: Is civic engagement demonstrated through evidence of an inherited stock of social capital?

Research Question 4: Is civic engagement demonstrated through voter turnout and other evidence of political participation?

Research Question 5: Are the aspects of social capital found in this town static or evolving?

### Description of the Setting and the Need for the Study

Much of the contemporary public debate about the decline of social and civic trust, as described above, is concerned with urban issues. There is a great deal to be learned, however, by examining this issue within smaller, rural communities. First, because of the commonality of communication and media both nationally and globally, there are fewer differences among rural and urban residents than there would have been in past years. The concerns, desires, and interests of both groups have much more in



common because of a shared access to news, entertainment, and advertising. Second, looking at a small, contained environment is more manageable and possible to accomplish, allowing for a holistic analysis that can be applied in other settings. A smaller, less complicated setting allows for the extrapolation of issues about community building and enhancing social capital.

In addition, the community that was selected for the study is located in a region that merits attention. The Kansas town selected was Stockton (population 1,406) in Rooks County, located in northwest Kansas in the High Plains of the central United States, an area some people regard as “fly-over country” (Frazier, 1989). In the past this area has had some economic importance because of farming and mineral production, but in recent years these factors have declined and the area has become more and more stressed economically and socially. The High Plains, the short-grass area of the Great Plains that covers parts of ten states and three Canadian provinces and lies between the Rocky Mountains on the west and the tallgrass prairies of the Midwest and South on the east, are often thought to be either part of the farming heartland or as unusable desert. In fact the High Plains region is not reflected accurately in either of these scenarios, which are based on limited understanding of the region. Carl Frederick Kraenzel (1955) in a classic mid 20<sup>th</sup> century sociological, economic, and historical analysis of the area described the problems that would and already had developed as a result of the attempt to live on, farm, and build towns on the Great Plains in the same manner as had been done in the more humid areas of Europe and the Eastern United States. He pointed out that the failure to understand the difference between a semiarid land and a humid land was

responsible for such man-made catastrophes as the destruction of the wild bison herds, and thus the sustainable way of life of the American Indian, and the plowing of the native prairie with its resultant erosion. Kraenzel said that the unique problems and needs of the Plains have not been understood. The Plains “are not semiarid in that the climate is halfway between humid and arid. They are not half dry and half wet; rather, some years they are dry and even arid; other years they are very wet; and still other years they are wet or dry at the wrong times from the standpoint of agricultural production and yields. It is this undefinable aspect of semiaridity that gives the Plains their distinctiveness” (p. 12).

In the late 1980s Frank and Deborah Popper (1987) began writing articles that described the growing desolation of the High Plains. They pointed out the geographic features that made the area difficult to live in, such as having “America’s hottest summers and coldest winters, largest daily and weekly temperature swings, worst hail and locusts and range fires, fiercest blizzards and droughts (rainfall typically totals less than 20 inches a year) and shortest growing season. It occupies about 20 percent of the contiguous United States, yet has barely 2 percent of the nation’s population. It is not uncommon to drive 40 miles to a school or movie, a hundred to a clothing store or dentist. Young people flee, leaving towns with a disproportionately aged citizenry” (Popper, 1987, p. 12 ). While the town selected for this study is located in a county on the eastern edge of the High Plains region and is not subject to the most severe of these characteristics, nevertheless, it has been affected by the problems related to soil erosion, water depletion, changes in farming and ranching practices, and the general urbanization of America, factors that are inevitably leading to the decline of this naturally harsh but potentially

sustainable environment. Again, Kraenzel (1955) predicted the continuing depopulation of the area saying “the sparse rural population in the Plains always has been, and certainly is now, at that point where it is too small to support certain institutional patterns, unless there is far reaching change in the organization of those institutions and the manner and type of service rendered” (p.161). Many communities, however, have survived in this region for more than one hundred years (a significant history considering the relatively short record of Euro-American life in this country), but they need help in achieving a realistic plan for survival in the future. The Poppers (1992) proposed a federal deprivatization plan in which the government would buy back land from owners, eliminate fences, replant native short grasses, and reintroduce native animals such as the bison, creating what they call the Buffalo Commons, thus eliminating all but the largest population centers. Understandably most of the people living in this area, many of whose families came to the area as pioneers, are opposed to such a plan.

Kraenzel’s (1955) percipient ability to envision the future for this area provides a guide for the proposed study. He observed that “group life and social organization are vitally affected by sparsity of population, extensive geographic distances, high mobility of the population, low participation because of distance, and the weakness of neighborhood and community functions” (p. 206). This closer look at how voluntary organizations and networks contribute to a greater accumulation of civic engagement, social trust, and social capital in such a community offers another means of building understanding about the potential for the survival of communities in this region, in addition to providing insight into the enhancement of social capital in general.

### Summary of Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

The methodical approach utilized for this study was determined by the nature of the initial research question as suggested by Putnam that was to examine the dimensions of social capital by investigating what constitutes social capital in a particular setting. The qualitative research methods triangulated to learn about social capital for this study include interviews, observation, and analysis of records and newspapers. Interviews were used as the most effective means of learning what members within the chosen setting understand about the indicators of social capital. Interview transcripts, observational notes, archival materials, such as brochures, phone books, webpages, and especially the local newspaper, were analyzed and coded according to how they informed the research questions. As each part of this information was assembled, the results were synthesized into a narrative report, as described in the discussion of Polkinghorne's work on narrative research in chapter five of this study. This method of reporting data provided a means of utilizing the words of the individuals from the interviews and the information derived from observation and written records to produce a unified narrative in order to attempt to create a higher level of understanding about social capital in this community.

The present chapter is an introduction and overview of the plan for the study as a whole. The next chapter will provide background on Putnam's theory concerning social capital, the theory that has been used as a framework or lens for observing the elements that constitute social capital in this community.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY: PUTNAM'S SOCIAL CAPITAL

#### Putnam's Development of Social Capital

##### Introduction

Because Robert D. Putnam's research on social capital is a primary theoretical influence for this study, the purpose of this chapter is to review Putnam's research on social capital in order to provide background for the study. Social capital is a phrase that resonates so broadly that it is in danger of being overused and thus diluted in effectiveness. Social capital is also a phrase that seems to be flexible enough to be meaningful in nearly any discussion of "civicness," whether the author is lamenting the decline of citizen participation or proposing guidelines for building more effective communities. It is essential, therefore, to consider what Putnam says about how he has developed his theories about civic life.

##### Background

Putnam (1993) spent many years researching civic life in Italy. His purpose was to examine the elements that contribute to effective government. What he learned in his research in these Italian communities about the characteristics of civic life or of a civic community is what relates to this study. As a result of this research he determined that the civic community is characterized by the presence of citizens who are actively interested and participatory in the community. He also found that the civic community is characterized by equity of status and power and mutual trust and cooperation among

citizens. In addition, he determined that active, horizontal social networks lead to positive civic engagement, while hierarchical politics and social networks are related to social distrust and isolation. Examining networks and norms as identified by Putnam and determining the role they play in a small town in the Great Plains in the center of the United States was the inspiration for this study, which attempts to extend knowledge about the existence and essence as well as of the enhancement of civic engagement.

### Civic Engagement and Social Trust

Putnam (1993a) defines and interprets civic community by identifying central themes. He begins with “civic engagement,” which he relates to participation and political activity. “Citizenship in a civic community is marked, first of all, by active participation in public affairs” (p. 87). He refers to Tocqueville in saying that citizens learn that while there is virtue in altruism it is also true that one’s own needs are often met by promoting broader public needs. “Political equality” is another important theme for Putnam (1993a) because he says that equality and mutual obligation are essential in a successful civic community that “is bound together by horizontal relations of authority and dependency” (p. 88). A certain level of “trust and tolerance” must exist among the citizens of a civic community as evidenced in what Putnam refers to as norms and values of the community that are embodied in social structures and practices.

For Putnam (1993a) each of the necessary themes or elements that constitute a civic community is reinforced by the associations within the community by way of their influence on the individuals within the associations and also through the influence the organizations exert in the community. He asserts that participation in organizations

produces a shared responsibility, an increased ability and inclination toward collaboration and cooperation, a unification of goals, and thus contributes to the principles of democracy.

Putnam's theory that, "a dense network of secondary associations both embodies and contributes to effective social collaboration" (Putnam 1993a, p. 90), encourages investigating what kinds of organizations and social networks exist in an attempt to determine their role in generating social capital. Putnam's (1993a) research in the six political regions of Italy has convinced him that citizens living in civic communities are more satisfied and content with their lives, have greater social trust and confidence in their fellow citizens, and are more likely to follow the rules of society and expect others to do the same. In the following extensive quotation Putnam makes a strong case for the importance of maintaining social capital by contrasting descriptions of "civic" and "uncivic" communities.

Some regions of Italy have many choral societies and soccer teams and bird-watching clubs and Rotary clubs. Most citizens in those regions read eagerly about community affairs in the daily press. They are engaged by public issues, but not by personalistic or patron-client politics. Inhabitants trust one another to act fairly and to obey the law. Leaders in these regions are relatively honest. They believe in popular government, and they are predisposed to compromise with their political adversaries. Both citizens and leaders here find equality congenial. Social and political networks are organized horizontally, not hierarchically. The community values solidarity, civic engagement, cooperation, and honesty.

Government works. Small wonder that people in these regions are content.

At the other pole are the “uncivic” regions, aptly characterized by the French term *incivisme*. Public life in these regions is organized hierarchically, rather than horizontally. The very concept of “citizen” here is stunted. From the point of view of the individual inhabitant, public affairs is the business of somebody else—*i notabili*, “the politicians” —but not me. Few people aspire to partake in deliberations about the commonweal, and few such opportunities present themselves. Political participation is triggered by personal dependency or private greed, not by collective purpose. Engagement in social and cultural associations is meager. Private piety stands in for public purpose. Corruption is widely regarded as the norm, even by politicians themselves, and they are cynical about democratic principles. “Compromise” has only negative overtones. Laws (almost everyone agrees) are made to be broken, but fearing others’ lawlessness, people demand sterner discipline. Trapped in these interlocking vicious circles, nearly everyone feels powerless, exploited, and unhappy. All things considered, it is hardly surprising that representative government here is less effective than in more civic communities. (Putnam, 1993a, p. 115)

### Social Capital

How do Putnam’s (1993a) findings about these regions in Italy relate to American communities? Conventional wisdom suspects that small towns in rural America seem to be losing assets in their social capital fund, but is this view valid? Are they moving closer to being like those regions Putnam describes as “uncivic” where in the past they would



have more closely resembled the regions that exhibit a strong degree of civic engagement? Many small communities are losing ground because they are losing the most essential component for active civic engagement, population. According to Putnam, however, there are other issues. They could be losing ground because the social organizations and networks that have created trust and mutual cooperation in the past are no longer as vibrant and active as they once were. He also says, however, that communities that have inherited a considerable stock of social capital from their past are more likely to generate cooperation and social trust. Social capital from this perspective, indicated by such things as trust among citizens, gains momentum through use and is depleted if not practiced within a community. Norms and networks also increase with use and become insignificant or cease to function if not kept in use. Looking at both the current features of social organization and at the indications of inherited social capital were important directions for this study. According to Putnam, "Building social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work" (p. 115).

#### Norms of Reciprocity and Networks of Civic Engagement

Norms of reciprocity, as defined by Putnam (1993a), are those actions that are controlled by modeling, socialization, and sanction or disapproval. He provides an example of how such norms influence citizens in a community from his own experience in his neighborhood. He admits that on some Saturday afternoons he finds himself raking leaves in his yard rather than following his desire to watch a sporting event on TV, because in his neighborhood the norm is to have a cleanly raked yard. The authority that

mandates raking the leaves does not come from any kind of formal enforcement, but from the sanction of public disapproval.

Putnam (1993a) notes that reciprocity as a norm is essential in creating social trust and describes two forms, balanced and generalized. “Balanced reciprocity refers to ... a simultaneous exchange of items of equivalent value, as when office-mates exchange holiday gifts or legislators log-roll. Generalized reciprocity refers to a continuing relationship of exchange that is at any given time unrequited or imbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future. Friendship, for example, almost always involves generalized reciprocity” (p. 172).

Generalized reciprocity is an important norm in civic communities promoting social trust and exchange and is usually associated with the existence of networks of civic engagement. “Any society — modern or traditional, authoritarian or democratic, feudal or capitalist — is characterized by networks of interpersonal communications and exchange, both formal and informal. Some of these networks are primarily ‘horizontal,’ bringing together agents of equivalent status and power. Others are primarily ‘vertical,’ linking unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence” (Putnam, 1993a, p. 173). The horizontal networks are cooperatives, neighborhood associations, interest groups, sports clubs, and other such organizations found in many communities. “The denser such networks in a community the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1993a, p. 173). Putnam (1993a) explains that a dense component of civic engagement within a community is beneficial to the community and leads to greater cooperation and a rich supply of social capital. According to Putnam,

active and vibrant civic engagement in a community encourages citizens to participate in order to receive the benefits that result from that participation. The reciprocal nature of civic engagement reinforces behavior that leads to more participation and builds networks of mutual expectations. These networks thus encourage and facilitate communication and the flow of information in the community. The improved communication and information flow, in turn, contribute to mutual trust and more cooperation, creating what Putnam calls “virtuous” circles of reciprocity.

### Bowling Alone

While Putnam (1993b) was substantiating the importance of social capital in promoting successful outcomes in regions in Italy, he began relating this information to his observation of American culture. There he found many social scientists and other observers of society bemoaning the demise of civic engagement, noting low voter turnout and general apathy on the part of citizens in the role of government. Putnam (1995a, 1996b) and his researchers examined statistics from such entities as the Roper Organization, the General Social Survey, the Labor Department’s Current Population Surveys of 1974 and 1989, the 1991 World Values Survey, membership records from various groups and organizations, and other surveys and studies by individual researchers. Indeed, he found much evidence that civic engagement, or the fund of social capital in American society, has declined in a measurable way in the past two to three decades. He cites the reduction in voter turnout in national elections (down by almost a quarter from the 1960s to 1990). He found that fewer people are attending public meetings concerned

with civic events, that membership in organizations, both service and social, as well as church-related groups, labor unions, and volunteer organizations had declined.

Some counter trends were also evident but not indicative, in Putnam's (1995a, 1996b) opinion, of contributing to social capital in individual communities. There are some new active organizations that have formed during this period while membership and participation in the types of organizations mentioned above was falling away. These are environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, demographic interest groups, such as those interested in women's issues, (e.g. the National Organization for Women), or for those interested in issues that concern older people, (e.g. the American Association for Retired Persons). Putnam (1995a) admits that the political influence of these organizations is significant, but does not see that they contribute to community social connectedness in the same way as local associations. He calls them "tertiary associations," noting that for most of the members their only participation is paying membership dues and perhaps reading a newsletter. Because the membership of these organizations is national or even world-wide in scope, there are few opportunities to attend meetings close to one's home or to meet other members. The members have some common ties and interests, but have little possibility of interaction.

Putnam (1995a) also acknowledges the growth in nonprofit organizations as being similar to the growth of these tertiary organizations in having political influence on a national level and in contributing to the success of particular organizations, agencies, or causes, such as museums, but again not in contributing to community social connections. Self-help or support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, play yet another role. The

focus in these groups, however, is on the needs of individuals where they are more concentrated on what the group will do for them rather than on how the group contributes to community goals.

The present study attempts to investigate aspects of Putnam's thesis that indicates community norms and networks are essential in building social capital in communities. If he is correct in this prescription, then we need to know more about how such organizations function in communities. What is their history? How are they being sustained or being allowed to atrophy? How do the people in the community see their importance or lack of it? In this country great emphasis has traditionally been placed on the rights of individuals, perhaps at the expense of community strength and welfare. If investing in rebuilding social capital is as important as investing in human, economic, and physical capital in attempting to improve the well-being, success, and satisfaction in American communities, then we need to know more about the assets that contribute to it.

In this study answers are sought for some of the questions posed by Putnam and others by searching for the answers through a close look at the dimensions of social capital in a particular community. The purpose of this chapter has been to provide insight into Putnam's research in order to establish a foundation for its integration within the study. Chapter three, which follows, will continue to explore Putnam's influence in civic discourse by reviewing the work of authors who have written about his theoretical and practical work on social capital.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Current Dialogue on Civil Society

This portion of the literature review focuses on scholars who are interested in Putnam's influence on the current, ongoing dialogue in the United States concerning civil society. For the purposes of this study it was not possible or necessary to review "the tens of thousands of documents, manuscripts, reports, and clippings" (Putnam, 2000, p. 513) that have been generated by Putnam's work. Thus, the literature review is representative rather than inclusive. This review concentrates on scholarly works in which the writers are engaged in a thoughtful consideration of the role that social capital plays in civic life. The time frame for the literature review extends from the publication of Putnam's "Bowling Alone" article in 1995 through the beginning of the interview period of this study during fall, 1999. The works selected for review, in which the writers were applying, criticizing, or enhancing Putnam's ideas on social capital, contributed to each phase of the study—composing the interview questions, analyzing the interviews, constructing the narrative, and writing the final chapter of conclusions and implications. The questions these authors raised and the applications they made to Putnam's theories enriched this project by bringing forth many points of view to influence the study.

A search of *Dissertation Abstracts Online* since 1989 (when Putnam first began publishing on this topic) revealed that while a number of researchers have utilized Putnam's theoretical work on social capital, none has taken what he says about the importance of local organizations and investigated how these organizations have

contributed to civic participation and thus to the enhancement of social capital in small communities, as this study attempts to do.

Groper's (1997) dissertation examines the possibility that electronic discussion groups can foster community networks and norms of reciprocity as described by Putnam. Groper explores whether or not social capital can be enhanced through online computer discussion. He expands on Putnam's definition of social capital by describing additional benefits from computer participation as adding the collective goods of knowledge capital and communion among citizens to the concept of social capital, all of which contribute to political participation and an engaged citizenry. For the present study Groper's work provides insight and questions to pursue for further study about computer availability and online connectivity in the small communities to be investigated.

Poarch (1997) examines changes in patterns of sociability and civic engagement in everyday life in eight suburban communities in four United States cities. Putnam's work and that of other authors who are concerned with declining community participation provided background for the study. Based on the analysis of two hundred interviews, Poarch concludes that, at least in these suburban environments, the work environment is becoming the main area where sociability and civic engagement occur, thus replacing or adding to traditional association based on residence. The results of the study are interpreted by the researcher to indicate that the emerging locus of community will exist within organizations rather than in communities. In relation to this study the issue of whether or not the work environment is becoming more important for the development of

social capital is not as relevant because of the small population and rural setting of the geographic community studied.

Warren (1995) uses Putnam's theory on social capital to examine the relationship between the activities of a network of community organizations called the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and political participation in urban areas in Texas. The study demonstrates how his model has generalizable applications for Putnam's definition of civic engagement.

Two masters theses from Canadian universities use Putnam's theory on social capital as a means of looking at civic aspects of Canadian society. Piche (1999) considers the relationship between associational belonging, particularly in religious associations, and various kinds of social capital with an emphasis on tolerance. Labrie (1999) looks at the relationship between social associations and political participation. Both authors had reservations about whether or not there was a positive correlation.

#### Issues of Civic Renewal

Putnam's work on social capital has also been a catalyst in discussions of the problems in contemporary society and of the importance of civic renewal in such journals as the *National Civic Review* and the *American Behavioral Scientist* in which the authors are concerned with citizen participation in community life. While none of these articles relate specifically to examining the elements of social engagement in a small community, they provided useful background information. The *National Civic Review*, a publication of the National Civic League, has been publishing articles by authors responding to Putnam's work since the publication of the "Bowling Alone" article. These authors are



concerned with the status of civic engagement in America. Special issues were published in Fall 1996, Winter 1996, and Summer 1997 that relate to the role that citizens play in local government, community building, and increased social capital (Fredrickson, 1996; Cortes, 1996; Potachuk, 1996; Louv, 1996; Merritt, 1996; de Souza Briggs, 1997; Lappe and DuBois, 1997; Potapchuk, Croker, and Schechter, 1997; Henton, Melville, and Walesh, 1997; Miller, 1997).

In the *National Civic Review* (vol. 85, no. 4), Fredrickson (1996) uses Putnam's ideas about norms of reciprocity to contribute to a discussion of the difference between a city as an institution and as a community. He states that the breakdown of such norms has contributed to the creation of cities that function as institutions where those in power are more concerned with efficiency and equity than in civil discourse and trust. The emphasis in an "institutional city" is on hierarchical administration and governance whereas a "community" is heterarchical with many centers of influence directed by the norms that contribute to responsible action and consensus among the groups and individuals.

Cortes (1996) is concerned that even though in the past one hundred years more citizens have gained the right to vote, fewer of them seem prepared to make the decisions vital to a democracy. He believes that the level of civic participation has been diluted in United States politics and views citizens as "consumers of politics rather than producers of politics" (p. 49). Cortes argues that the decline of what he refers to as mediating institutions (e.g. schools, churches, community organizations) has reduced the level of public conversation and citizen political participation. He notes Putnam's treatment of this decline in civic engagement in the United States as support for his thesis that policies

affecting “the disconnected and disengaged majority” (p. 52) are made by a well-organized minority. He advocates encouraging and supporting mediating institutions in order to teach people how to speak and act collectively.

Potachuk (1996), writing as Executive Director for the Program for Community Problem Solving, examines the need for all citizens to have a voice. He applies Putnam’s definition of social capital to his focus on the processes and strategies of governance that are required in order to produce a community that is environmentally and economically viable or, in his words, sustainable politically. He is concerned with participatory democracy and the institutional interaction that fosters it. He insists that vibrant connections among government and community institutions are essential to sustainable communities. He says that the practice of sustainable politics employs “strategies that not only get the job done, but heal and strengthen a collaborative and inclusive political culture” (p. 58) by helping to define social capital and by studying its status and role in American communities.

The *National Civic Review* (vol. 85, no. 4) has an article by Louv (1996) that contributes to the discussion of the community renewal movement by attempting to define and describe civil society. He agrees with Putnam’s findings that indicate that the norms of reciprocity that lead to trust and civic engagement are the most important elements in the success or failure of communities and regions. He uses Putnam’s conclusions to support his contention that “building a civil society — a civil infrastructure, community, the web — is every bit as important as creating transportation or sewer systems” (p. 55). Merritt’s (1996) article on civic journalism also draws on what

Putnam said about the success of civically engaged communities. Merritt is concerned about the decline in public life, citing Putnam's description of the breakdown of community associations and networks as resulting in an "atomization of civic purpose" (p.22). Merritt builds on this analysis to describe information as the plasma of the civic organism and thus as a responsibility of civic journalism. "The narrative of a community, the stories it tells about itself, are joint narratives, publicly produced. Journalism is only half of the equation, and the journalism in a community can be no better than the civic story the community is itself producing" (p. 24). Merritt emphasized the need for civic journalism to tell all of the small stories based on the local networks and norms of reciprocity as described by Putnam, as well as identifying and reporting the public narrative of the community.

The *National Civic Review* (vol. 85, no. 4) continues the dialog about civic issues with an issue devoted to the concept of social capital as related to civic infrastructure. In his article de Souza Briggs (1997) says that social capital consists of accumulated resources resulting from human relationships. He distinguishes it from civic engagement but says that civic engagement builds social capital by forming interconnections among people. He indicates that trust is also different from social capital but that social capital comes from the trust generated in the system of human relationships. Further, de Souza Briggs praises Putnam for bringing to center stage the notion of the collective nature of social capital that occurs in social networks and organizations and notes that the most successfully functioning communities are those that are rich in social capital as described by Putnam.

Lappe and Du Bois (1997) credit Glenn Loury with coining the term “social capital” when he was writing about race relations in the 1970s. They say, however, that Putnam is responsible for the expansion of the concept and has awakened a renewed interest in community building. They acknowledge that citizen participation in voluntary activities, networks, and organizations is indicative of social trust and increased social capital. The decline of this involvement as described by Putnam provides a way of assessing civil society. According to these authors the voluntary sector that Putnam’s work has highlighted is “the glue that holds us all together and creates these norms of decency needed if other aspects of society are to function” (p. 120). But these authors caution against retaining nostalgia for earlier forms of social capital. They argue that lamenting the disappearance of organizations or institutions that no longer provide the rich community bonds of the past is not productive, but rather we should be looking at new civic initiatives that did not exist fifteen years ago.

Four articles in the Summer 1997 *National Civic Review* by Potachuk, Crocker, and Schechter; Chang; Henton, Melville, and Walesh; and Miller (1997) refer to Putnam’s work. Potachuk, Crocker, and Schechter (1997) advocate speaking of building social capital in a community in broad terms, making sure it exists in all of the interconnections within a community. They also call social capital “the glue that holds a community together” (p. 130) and credit Putnam for putting the concept on our intellectual map. They note, however, how Putnam identified social capital in his original study of civic society in Italy and maintain that this model does not fit perfectly in an American society that is much more culturally diverse. They propose a “ladder of

community building” (p. 131) that rests on the social capital that is built on inclusion, collaboration, and collective community action from the individual level through the most broad and diverse social interactions.

Chang (1997) is also concerned with the importance of understanding and responding to the cultural diversity in United States communities in establishing social policy. She accepts Putnam’s definition for social capital and argues that social capital is essential to the welfare of all communities, but she says it is especially vital to build “cooperation and mutual support *among* and *across* people from different racial, cultural, and linguistic groups” (p. 142). She offers suggestions for creating and encouraging social capital among such groups. Henton, Melville, and Walesh (1997) acknowledge Putnam’s documentation of the decline of social capital and his linkage of the influence of social capital to the economic success within communities. They advocate a proposal for restoring civil society that rests on the role of “civic entrepreneurs” (p. 149) who will link business with government, education, and community. “Like the business entrepreneur, the civic entrepreneur operates in a time of dramatic change, sees opportunity, and mobilizes others in the community to work toward their collective well-being” (p. 151).

Miller (1997) uses Putnam’s findings about social capital as a lens to evaluate and understand the significance of a social program in Boston, the Healthy Boston effort. She notes Putnam’s contribution to social discourse through his theory that community interaction is cyclic and self-reinforcing, creating “enduring traditions that are beneficial or detrimental to the community” (p. 158). She says that Putnam contributed to the

common understanding and appreciation of organizing and relationship building within a community. She concludes, in common with Putnam, that in some communities “horizontal relationships are too Balkanized to be able to build a force powerful enough to negotiate vertical relationships” (p. 166).

A 1997 issue of *American Behavioral Scientist* (vol. 40) is “devoted to social capital, civil society and contemporary democracy” (p.1). The articles were written by scholars in political science and sociology, all of whom cite Putnam’s work, although some do not accept his findings completely. Foley and Edwards (1997), in the introduction to the issue, address the current usage of the terms “social capital” and “civil society” and point out what they perceive to be faults in the way they are utilized in current popular and academic writing. They argue that the terms are undertheorized and oversimplified, suppressive of the conflictive character of civil society, and suppressive of the economic dimension of social conflict. Foley and Edwards lay out some questions and definitions as background for the articles to follow. They maintain that much of the recent interest in social capital is influenced by Tocqueville, but that this influence is too selective. They also note that while Coleman’s definition of social capital is considered to be influential in the discussion, his definition has not been adequately understood. They argue that social capital for Coleman is a neutral force and that while Putnam claims to rely on Coleman’s conception, his use of social capital is not neutral, but is positive in contributing to building trust and reciprocity.

Berman (1997) classifies Robert Putnam, Francis Fukuyama, and Benjamin Barber as neo-Tocquevillians and says they fail to answer crucial questions about societal

and cultural issues and misinterpret important elements of political development. She compares the neo-Tocquevillians, particularly Putnam, with mass society theorists such as Hannah Arendt (1973) saying they both “see participation in civil society organizations as producing the patterns of individual behavior and social interaction necessary for healthy democratic governance” (p. 564). But she claims that they also share a weakness in that they fail to distinguish the positive and negative elements of associational life, considering any collective endeavors as positive when in reality they might not be so. “Indeed, civil society activity often serves to fragment, rather than unite a society, accentuating and deepening already existing cleavages” (p. 565). Berman points out that in Germany the Nazis utilized choral societies and bird-watching clubs to infiltrate German society. She argues that to understand the difference between civil and uncivil societies, we should not consider societal and cultural factors, but rather look closely at political institutions. She contends that Putnam and other neo-Tocquevillian theorists are mistaken in looking to cultural and social collaboration, but should be encouraging the creation of political institutions that would be better able to solve problems in developing societies. Berman blames the decline of civil society on “the inability of political institutions to respond to the new challenges confronting American society” (p. 571).

Newton (1997) uses the elements of Putnam’s definition of social capital, norms, values, and networks as a framework to discuss what he considers to be the nature of social capital. He re-examines the concept in an attempt to determine what contributes to civic engagement and citizen cooperation. He notes the growth of new types of national associations that are based primarily on some mutual concern, but that generate little face-

to-face contact. He disagrees with Putnam in that he believes that these groups may be important in the development of social capital because of their ability to influence change. Greeley, (1997) is concerned about the way the term social capital has been “misused and abused in American social science” (p. 587). He regards it as a popular coinage with little grounding in fact. He offers his understanding of the way James Coleman used the term and says that Putnam and others have misinterpreted it, especially in straying from considering social capital to be neutral in value. Greeley further contends that, contrary to Putnam’s findings, volunteer rates in the United States have increased, especially when related to religious involvement. His main emphasis, and something that he believes has been overlooked or purposefully ignored by most United States social scientists, is the importance of religion in society. “Religion is (at least potentially) a powerful and enduring source of social capital in this country, and indeed of social capital that has socially and ethically desirable effects. Only the deliberately blind will continue to ignore religion as a source of social capital or deal only with its negative effects” (pp. 592-3).

Wood (1997) refutes some of the previous authors in this issue who have said Putnam substitutes social capital for strong political institutions. Wood shares Putnam’s view in seeing social history as based on a complex interplay of “causal processes” (p. 598). He argues that Putnam’s conceptualization of social capital does provide a framework for understanding the processes of democracy, but that it then must lead to “the hard work of politics, rather than the illusion of a conflict free civil society” (p. 602).

Minkoff (1997) sees a discrepancy in Putnam’s attitude toward national social



movement organizations (SMOs) in that although Putnam observes that they are growing he does not seem to believe that their growth prevents the over-all decline of civil society. Minkoff disagrees and goes on to analyze how the role of these organizations is minimized in the discourse on civil society. He further describes the critical role they do play in society, arguing that they should not be ignored.

Youniss, McLellan, and Yates (1997) take a pro-active stance in the discourse on civil society by choosing not to focus on Putnam's attempt to determine which social factors contribute to the decline of interactions in civil society, but rather they propose to investigate how civic identity is constructed. They examine data that support the view that civic participation during youth is important in creating civic identity and encouraging participation as adults. "In contrast to the search for structural causes of 'social capital's strange disappearance (Putnam, 1996)', we focus on what is already known about engendering civic engagement in individuals and generations of youth" (p. 621).

Portney and Berry (1997) indicate that Putnam and many other scholars of civic life are united in their recognition of citizen disengagement, but they fail to recognize the importance of neighborhood associations. They make their point by investigating data from studies of five American cities in which they find government-sponsored neighborhood associations to be especially effective in empowering minority communities and generating a sense of community if the associations are given real power.

Kenworthy (1997) looks at an aspect of Putnam's writing on civic engagement in

which Putnam says that the factors that contribute to healthy civic participation and discourse also contribute to or are critical to a flourishing economy. This aspect, according to Kenworthy, is frequently overlooked in the widespread discussions that have been inspired by Putnam's work. Kenworthy, whose research is related to institutional economic arrangements, policy choices, and performance patterns in industrialized nations, argues that while cooperation is important in economic success it has little to do with social capital and civic engagement as put forth by Putnam. Kenworthy notes that cooperation is a significant factor in successful economic performance, but says Putnam is incorrect when he attributes it to the trust generated through social capital. He asserts that the cooperation resulting in economic health comes not from participation in voluntary associations "energizing norms of generalized reciprocity," but from the cooperating economic behavior of institutions based on business incentives and strategies. "To the extent these efforts generate cooperation and improve performance, they may become self-sustaining. In the process they will likely foster trust, but such trust will be largely a consequence, rather than a cause, of cooperation" (p. 649).

Heying (1997) finds Putnam's primary suspect for the cause of the decline of social participation—too much time spent watching television—to be inadequate and simplistic. Heying thinks Putnam was too hasty about dismissing alternative suspects, such as time pressure, mobility, and changing social roles. He says that Putnam focuses on only one element in a group of changes in society that must be considered because they inter-relate. "... Putnam's correlation of cohort effects (TV generation) with a decline in social engagement is a classic case of false attribution, mistaking one of the more

visible and pervasive expressions of social transformation for the whole” (p. 658). Heying concerns himself with one aspect of change in society as an example of the macrophenomenon of structural change. He provides data that indicate that business corporation delocalization, or changes in corporate location and management, is responsible for deterioration of elite involvement in civic engagement in several cities.

Edwards and Foley (1997) summarize this issue of *American Behavioral Scientist*, identifying significant points made by each author. They determine that the source of our sociocultural malaise “lies in the political-economic trends of the past quarter century, which has been fed by three increasingly significant tributaries: economic restructuring, welfare state downsizing, and the devolution of government” (p. 676). They question whether the debate about social capital has offered new theoretical tools for understanding contemporary democracy. They concede that these essays indicate that the discussion of social capital adds to theory “by bringing mediating levels of social structure into a new cultural analysis in a systematic way” (p. 677).

A 1999 issue of *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (vol. 21) reports on a symposium that resulted from a Faculty Research Project on Civic Capacity funded by Portland State University. Jun (1999) in editorial notes writes of the guiding direction for the symposium. “The contributors share a common definition of social capital, largely relying on the ideas introduced by Robert Putnam (1993; 1995) on networks of civic engagement and the emergence of social trust and by James Coleman (1990) on the analysis of the structure of social relations” (p. 1). The essays in this issue provide background for the

dissertation from a public administration perspective, a field in which there is a focus on issues of citizen participation and organizational activities (Morgan and Shinn, 1999).

Johnson (1999) explores the origins of the definitions of social capital, considering the contributions of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. He examines the elements and influences on social capital according to Putnam and then asks what institutions or associations create social capital. Finally, he considers how social capital might be measured and utilized in community building. He argues that if communities identify reliable ways of measuring social capital then the mindfulness created by attempting to measure it will perhaps encourage more civic development and engagement. He suggests one such measure as the Civic Index developed by the National Civic League. The categories of this index were useful to this study which evaluates the extent of social capital in a small city. These categories are citizen participation, community leadership, government performance, volunteerism and philanthropy, inter-group relations, civic education, community information sharing, capacity for cooperation and consensus-building, community vision and pride, and inter-community cooperation. Johnson contends that measuring social capital will perhaps help communities better understand what social or economic programs build or diminish social capital. He says that it will help us determine a “social capital input statement” (p. 18) for economic or government programs and promote looking at the interaction of all community agencies, institutions, and organizations as a unified system.

Kass (1999) argues that the concept of social capital is “evaluative” rather than “descriptive” in character (p. 23) and that designating social or political interaction as

social capital is based on normative judgements by those involved. He forms his essay about social capital from the works of Bourdieu and Coleman, but cites Putnam's work when discussing how normative judgments about social capital have been shaped. Welsch and Heying (1999) utilize Putnam's idea about connections and networks to discuss community-building partnerships that result in improving the delivery of civic services. They provide a case study describing a watershed program in Portland and test their thesis "that stewardship programs that enhance civic capacity significantly improve awareness of watershed issues and promote watershed friendly attitudes and behaviors" (p. 88). They found correlations between learning and trust building among neighbors "created bridges between university, neighborhood, and government" (p. 98).

Shinn (1999) reviews all of the preceding essays in the issue and distinguishes the term civic capacity from Putnam's definition of social capital. Shinn claims that civic capacity has more clarity and relates more usefully to reflective practice in the field of public affairs. He defines civic capacity as "the ability of communities to respond to events in ways that are self consciously directed at shaping a common future. Civic capacity includes social capital but goes beyond social capital in a search for theory to explain the social requirements for democratic governance" (p. 103).

#### James S. Coleman

Putnam says that Coleman's work "laid the intellectual foundations for the study of social capital and its effects" (Putnam, 2000, p. 302). Putnam (1993) refers to Coleman when discussing norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, saying that they improve efficiency by coordinating actions. He also refers to Coleman when writing

about the way social norms and networks are sustained by activity and become stagnant with disuse. These social norms and networks, as Putnam interprets Coleman, result in social capital, which is different from other forms of capital in that it is produced as a byproduct of these social actions.

The chapter entitled “Social Capital” in Coleman’s now classic treatise on sociology, *Foundations of Social Theory*, helps clarify how Putnam was influenced by and utilized Coleman’s theory as a basis for the development of his conclusions about social capital and the importance of civic engagement. As a sociologist Coleman’s examples and explanations provide additional insight into evaluating the social networking that exists in the community analyzed for this study. Coleman did not originate the terminology or the concept of social capital, however. He credits Loury for introducing the term in 1977 when he used it to describe the resources that are found within families and social organizations that contribute to the cognitive or social development of a child. According to Coleman (1990), Loury was the first to note that the resources accumulated from social capital differ among individuals and result in significant advantages or disadvantages in the development of human capital for children and young adults. Coleman also recognizes that Bourdieu (1980) and Flap and de Graf (1986) have “used this term in a similar fashion” (Coleman, 1990, p. 300).

Coleman (1990) contends that the purpose of social science is to explain or explore social phenomena rather than the behavior of individuals and that these social phenomena are part of an interconnected system. Within this social system exist individuals who have certain resources or elements over which they have at least some

control and in which other individuals have an interest. Because of these interrelated interests, exchanges and transfers of control give rise to the formation of social relationships establishing relations of authority and trust and consensual allocations of rights. These relationships of authority and trust and consensual allocations of rights produce norms of behavior that become accepted in a social system. Coleman identifies social norms as specifying “what actions are regarded by a set of persons as proper or correct, or improper or incorrect” (Coleman, p. 242). These social relationships that are formed can become resources for individual members of the social system. Social capital, according to Coleman, is formed from relations of authority and of trust and from norms of behavior. “Social capital, in turn, is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action” (p. 304). It is created from the relations among persons in the social system and it facilitates productive activity. “For example, a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust” (p. 304).

Coleman (1990) indicates that the function that results from social capital is to provide value from those aspects of social structure that can be utilized by persons to attain their own interests. Coleman questions whether social capital can be considered in the study of social science to have the same weight of value as do the concepts of financial capital, physical capital, and human capital. In 1990 he saw the value in social capital as residing “primarily in its usefulness for qualitative analyses of social systems and for those quantitative analyses that employ qualitative indicators” (p. 305-6). In

considering obligations and expectations that are formed in social systems, Coleman says that the essential elements of social capital are the “level of trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be paid, and the actual extent of obligations held” (p. 306). He offers many examples of how social capital exists in various social settings. One in particular that has resonance for the current study was of a family who moved from a suburb in Detroit to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the parents felt safe letting their young children travel to school on public transportation or to play without supervision in a city park when they had not been able to allow this freedom in the Detroit suburb.

Although some scholars take issue with Putnam’s interpretation of Coleman’s work, this brief synopsis illustrates that the influence exists. There were numerous references to Coleman’s work in Putnam’s (1993) earlier work, *Making Democracy Work*, while in his most recent work, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam (2000) credits Coleman for providing the intellectual foundation for social capital and otherwise makes reference to Coleman’s work extensively.

This chapter reviewed some of the current literature utilizing Putnam’s ideas about social capital as background for the study and considered the influence of James Coleman on Putnam’s theory of social capital. The next chapter (four) consists of a specific description of the research methods and procedures for the study.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Introduction

Chapter four describes the research process of the study. It begins with an introduction that explains why qualitative research methodology was appropriate for the design of the study and continues to summarize each step of the process.

Interpretive research based on interviews, observation, and document analysis was selected as the research methodology appropriate for this project. The purpose of the present study was to hear what the people who live in the community have to say about the importance of civic engagement and how it does or does not contribute to social capital.

An essential step in the research process was the formulation of the primary research question: What assets of social capital does this community exhibit? The nature of the question and the need to conduct the study in a natural setting called for an interpretive inquiry, influenced by ethnographic methods suggested by Lofland and Lofland (1995). The research needed to be conducted in such a way that the point of view and understanding of the people in the community being studied emerged. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) offer a description of qualitative research that is appropriate for the conceptual requirements of this study. "Qualitative research is multimethod in approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (Densin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). Maxwell (1996) maintains that there is a

great deal of flexibility inherent in qualitative research. He emphasizes that qualitative research is a reflexive process that changes, based on the development of the project. Acknowledging this flexibility while the study was in process allowed for new developments and changes during the process. Janesick (1994) describes qualitative research as holistic, designed to investigate and understand the larger picture, not just selected parts. She reflects on the importance of the role of the researcher in needing to have the ability to recognize one's own biases and ideological orientation. She also alludes to flexibility in saying that a researcher needs to have the skills to observe and interact in the field and to conduct continuous analysis and reflection.

Narrative research was utilized as a means both of understanding the meaning that the participants and the document analysis brought to the study, but also as a means of reporting the data collected. Polkinghorne (1988) equates research with knowledge creation, arguing that narrative is an appropriate methodology for use in the human sciences. Human action, according to Polkinghorne, (1997), is most appropriately described through discourse. With these precepts of qualitative research as a guide, the research plan was formulated and implemented.

### Research Questions

The research questions for this study were derived from Putnam's suggestions for further study, from the review of his research on social capital, and from the assimilation of the work of other scholars who have written on his theory of social capital and civic discourse. Maxwell (1996) advises that research questions are designed to articulate what

the researcher hopes to understand from the study. The research questions continued to evolve and be refined slightly throughout the study.

### Setting for the Study

Chapter one of this study describes the setting for the project in some detail. A desire to look more closely at how social capital works in a small town on the High Plains, one that has an extended history of community but seems to be struggling to maintain itself, inspired the choice of the setting. According to Lofland and Lofland (1995) this interest, if it has meaning for the researcher and will provide data about what one is attempting to understand, is sufficient justification for selecting a particular setting. “The process of deciding what is meaningful to the study and whether you have (or can gain) ethical and appropriate access to rich data may involve conversations and consultations with others, but the decisions themselves are *personal*. When decision is translated into action, when your intention to do research is translated into beginning that research, then you encounter the first truly *social* moment of naturalistic investigation: getting in or gaining the acceptance of the people being studied” (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 31).

### Preliminary Data Collection

After selecting Stockton as the site for the study, preliminary data were obtained from print and electronic sources by consulting census records and searching online for webpages describing Stockton and Rooks County. These sources of information provided population statistics and a description of the community authorized by members of the community. This virtual visit was followed by an impressionistic drive-through of

Stockton, with a stop to collect information from the city building and to obtain a current issue of the local newspaper, the *Stockton Sentinel*. Once this information had been assembled and studied, a phone call was made to the local public librarian, who was selected to be the first contact person in Stockton. The librarian was contacted first because of the researcher's connection to the field of library and information science and because one of the proposed outcomes for the study is that it will inform the conception of civic librarianship, or the promotion of an active role in the community for public libraries. Past experience in working with public librarians in small towns also influenced the belief that the public library would have a visible and central position in the town and the librarian would be in a position to assist the researcher in locating sources of information and identifying appropriate citizens for interviews.

#### Walk-around

The librarian was receptive to the project and agreed to an appointment for a visit. During this visit the librarian conducted a walk-around tour for the researcher, going around town, from business to business, introducing each person encountered. She encouraged the researcher to give each person they met a brief introduction to the project, which was met each time with friendly interest. From this visit contacts for interviews were made and field notes resulting from observations and impressions were collected and recorded.

#### Interviews

Meeting and talking to people in the community, in addition to gleaning information from the materials gathered from the preliminary study, such as the

newspaper and the webpage and the Chamber of Commerce publications, resulted in the collection of names of people who would be informative and knowledgeable about volunteer-supported organizations in Stockton. Seidman (1998) notes the importance of going in person to make the initial contact for a study and also suggests making contact to select participants for interviews through both formal and informal gatekeepers, techniques utilized by the researcher. As this study proceeded, it became evident that informal rather than formal gatekeepers would be most accessible and more appropriate for discussing volunteer activities. The persons who themselves consented to participate in the interview, or made suggestions about who should be interviewed, agreed to cooperate, not because they were required to or felt obligated in connection with a job or elected position, but because of their own volunteer status or interest in volunteer contributions to the community. The public librarian assisted in identifying the informal gatekeepers and provided a reassuring introduction to them for the researcher. Seidman's (1998) advice to select participants who can be presented in the report of the data for the study in such a compelling way that they will lend validity to the study and deepen the understanding for those who read the results guided the choice of participants. A description of the persons selected for interviews is found in chapter five of this study.

Another important step at this point in the study was to determine how many participants to interview. Seidman (1998) offers two criteria, sufficiency and saturation of information. Sufficiency relates to the necessity of conducting enough interviews to reflect the range of experience. Saturation occurs at the point in the study when the interviewer is hearing the same information repeated with little new material coming

forth. Keeping these criteria in mind while selecting participants for the interviews and while conducting and transcribing the interviews resulted in a natural and efficient identification of a sufficient range of persons appropriate for the interviews and led to a point in the interviewing process when the data was considered to be rich enough in answering the research questions.

Once participants were identified and their permission obtained, the interviews were scheduled and carried out over a four-month period. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were developed from the research questions according to Maxwell's (1996) contention that research questions are designed to articulate what the researcher hopes to understand from the study, while interview questions are designed to ask people what the researcher needs to know in order to achieve that understanding. The interview questions were informally pilot-tested with a few people known by the researcher to be involved in volunteer activities in different communities. The librarian offered accommodations in the library to conduct the interviews, so some took place there and some in the participants' workplaces; all interviews were recorded on audiotape. The interviews were approximately one hour to one hour and a half in length and at the beginning of each the researcher began by relating the background and purpose of the study in a conversational manner (See Appendix A). Even though none of the participants was aware of Putnam's work, each was quick to grasp the significance of the study to the Stockton community and immediately responded with a comment that indicated that he or she considered volunteer-related activities and civic engagement to be vital in this community. Each participant agreed to sign a human subject form that the researcher had prepared in

accordance with university regulation, after a brief explanation of its purpose (see Appendix B).

Transcripts of the recorded interviews were made by the researcher as soon after the interviews as possible and were supplemented by accompanying field notes. Analysis of the data began and continued as the recorded interviews were initially transcribed and then listened to several more times as the printed transcripts were checked for accuracy. Although listening to the interviews several times was time-consuming, this process enhanced the analysis because of the reinforcement of hearing each participant's voice and inflections multiple times, which contributed to a clearer understanding of the content. This repeated listening to and reading of the interviews allowed information about what the participants had to say about civic engagement, especially as related to volunteer-supported organizations, to emerge from the data. Once the transcripts of the interviews were accurately recorded, they were numbered by line and reformatted to allow for conceptual notes to be added in the margins. These coded notes resulted in the identification of the words and phrases in the text in each interview that spoke to each of the research questions and revealed interrelating relationships and patterns concerned with aspects of social capital. The text of the interviews gave credence to Polkinghorne's (1988) contention that the researcher should work from the premise that people strive to organize their own experiences in order to create understanding and that they use narrative as a means of tying together the occurrences in their lives. In the analysis of these unstructured interviews, the researcher looked for the emergence of patterns and for the uniting of events into themes relating to each of the research questions and was

guided by Polkinghorne's admonition that language is neither "neutral or transparent" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 158), but that it imposes form and meaning on understanding. The narrative report that follows in chapter five of this study illustrates this premise.

Maxwell (1996) contends that coding, such as was done in this study, to relate the words of the participants to the research questions, is the primary categorizing strategy in qualitative research. He argues that this method of coding attempts to break down or sort the data to rearrange it into categories, themes, or issues or to develop theoretical conceptions. With this method the researcher looked at the data holistically, in context, searching for relationships that connected elements within the interviews. To further understanding of the findings, grids for each participant were constructed, in which the research questions were matched with the line numbers in the transcripts, showing the density of the occurrences of text that related to the research questions. A chart was also constructed that listed each participant and the organizations or events as had been identified in the interview. The next step consisted of using the words and phrases of the participants, as they related to the research questions, to create the narrative report of the data.

### Newspaper Analysis

Based on Putnam's (2000) finding that one of the indicators of social capital in a community is local newspaper readership, the next step in the research process was an analysis of the *Stockton Sentinel*. Polkinghorne (1988) points out that examining written words in such places as correspondence, newsletters, and memos can uncover and describe the narrative or mutual understanding of the members of a group. This



contention was adopted as an appropriate guide for examining the community voice as represented by the local newspaper. Thus, phrases, stories, and incidents were recorded for each research question, both for a single issue (September 2, 1999) and for a study of a seven-month run (March 23, 2000 through November 9, 2000) of the weekly *Stockton Sentinel*. From this data the narrative report, initiated with the data from the interviews, was continued in order to transform “a mere succession of actions and events into a coherent whole in which these happenings gain meaning as contributors to a common purpose” (Polkinghorne, 1997, p. 13). As with the data from the interviews a chart was constructed listing the organizations and events documented in the newspaper that could then be compared to the chart constructed from the interview data.

### Validity

Janesick (1994) says that methods of triangulation include the utilization of diverse methods, settings, or data sources. For this study three types of data sources were utilized, interviews, observation and field notes, and document analysis. Maxwell (1996) contends that this strategy is important because it “reduces the risk of chance associations and systematic biases,” (pp. 93-94). Maxwell further argues, however, that validity is a goal rather than a product and can be determined only in relation to the purposes and circumstances for the research. In this study, utilizing diverse data sources, seeking advice and feedback from advisors who were knowledgeable about the study, and mining the data sources to produce detailed descriptions, “complete enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on” (Maxwell, 1996, pp. 92-95), were the methods used to validate the study. “Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and

explanation, and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description. In other words, is the explanation credible?" (Janesick, 1994, p. 216). A goal for this study is that the rich description of the narrative report of the data provides such a credible explanation.

This chapter described the steps of the research design and provided methodological background for using qualitative research procedures. The next chapter explains why a narrative presentation of the data was used and contains the narrative report of the data.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

#### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this chapter is to report the data from the study in narrative form. The chapter begins with an introduction to the methodological background and purpose for using narrative research. The narrative of the study begins with a description of the preliminary investigation and observation for the study and a description of the subjects selected for the interviews. These are followed by the major body of the narrative, which consists of the reporting of the results relating to the research questions in narrative form. The narrative for each of the five research questions is introduced with a brief reference to the parts of Putnam's work that contributed to the formulation of the questions.

#### **Narrative Approach**

From the beginning of this project it was important to find a way to report on the findings that could do justice to the many complexities, layers of meanings, and interactions that represent a community and that would represent what the people who live there say about the community. The richness of this culture and the nature of the research that was directed toward looking at social interconnections and relationships resulting in collaborative action and trust could not be conveyed in numbered lists of organizations or the percentage of citizens participating in particular activities. It was necessary to find a method that would provide a holistic report of what embodies social capital in this community. The study called for the more layered development that results

from a narrative presentation. A goal of the research was to create this written representation with as much influence as possible from the people who live in and know the community, as suggested by Van Maanen (1988).

Polkinghorne (1988) was a major influence in choosing narrative methodology as a way to report the data for this study. In turn Polkinghorne cites Heidegger's influence on the development of the narrative form. He refers to Heidegger's analysis of temporal experience saying that Heidegger's "primary insight was that experience is organized into strata analogous to a symphony made up of several melodies, each going on at the same time" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 130). Polkinghorne claims that the dominant theme of human reality has its essence in the experiences and interpretation of time and that by using narrative it is possible to structure and organize time according to hermeneutic principles and thus to achieve multiple levels of interpretation. He also uses the work of Paul Ricoeur as a guide to investigating how narrative organizes language to reflect how humans experience time. "By telling stories and writing history, we provide a public shape for what ordinarily remains 'chaotic, obscure, and mute,' lying outside the daily focus on getting things done" (p. 135).

Language, is not neutral, rather, its structures such as grammar, rhetoric, and narrative impose form on what it is describing. In other words, language exists as information that influences human experience and creates meaning. Humans experience and understand the world in which they live on the basis of language. Human action, according to Polkinghorne, is most appropriately described through discourse. "Narrative discourse produces stories whose subject matter is human action. Stories are concerned

with human attempts to progress to a solution, clarification, or unraveling of an incomplete situation. Narrative transforms a mere succession of actions and events into a coherent whole in which these happenings gain meaning as contributors to a common purpose. The research narrative draws together into a story the diverse actions and events that contributed to the research outcome—the findings” (Polkinghorne, 1997, p. 13).

Narrative provides a holistic structure for building events into an understanding of the world and is the common way in which people make sense of their lives and the lives of others. Most clearly narrative discourse provides the means of transforming a sequence of events within such a research project as this into a consolidated story with a comprehensible theme. This comprehensible theme is the plot that weaves together all of the multiple events, subplots, layers of meaning, and complexities that occur in any human transaction. “Narrative reporting is a matter of composing a series of ordinary happenings of human events into a unified story and thereby creating a higher level of understanding than would have been evident in everyday life as a series of events.... A narrative report, however, displays the acceptability of a claim rather than argues for it” (Polkinghorne, 1997, pp. 15-16).

Because Polkinghorne’s background is in psychological research and practice, he commonly applies narrative research to studying individual action. Polkinghorne (1988) points out, however, that narrative research is used by organizational researchers who attempt to use the words of members of groups or organizations to describe or uncover the values, practices, and assumptions that the members hold in common. He says that by examining such things as correspondence, newsletters, and memos, in addition to

conducting interviews with the members, the researcher can uncover and describe the narrative scheme or mutual understanding of the members of the organization. A small community, such as the one selected for this study, is similar to an organization in the roles the participants play. By exploring and interpreting the historical and contemporary episodes that participants related and by gleaning information from the archival sources, the common narrative was formed.

Interviewing is crucial in narrative research because the researcher is seeking information from the thoughts and words of the participants of the matter that is being studied in order to create the narrative. Polkinghorne (1988) says that this created narrative is not immediately obvious and apparent to the investigator but needs to be uncovered, reconstructed, and interpreted. The story will not be complete with any one person or artifact, but must come about by assembling fragments of the story. This process is effective because it is the way that people make meaning from their own experience. "The premise the researcher works from is that people strive to organize their experience into meaningful wholes and to use the narrative form as a pattern for uniting events of their lives into unfolding themes" (p. 163). He suggests, therefore, that the natural response in unstructured interviews is for people to offer a story or narrative to answer the questions the investigator asks. The stories may not be told in chronological order and portions may be missing or glossed over, but they do provide a pattern for uniting events into themes. Polkinghorne says there is no difficulty in collecting stories from individuals because most interviewers will find that even when seeking specific or factual answers to questions researchers are often faced with digressions or stories about

those answers. Rather than requiring that the investigator cut stories short to get to the “right” answer, narrative methodology provides a natural and fluid way to collect information. In the same way that the people being interviewed are telling their own stories by trying to organize experiences and give them meaning, the researcher then attempts to organize the story or stories into a meaningful pattern. Using this grounding in narrative research proved to be an effective method for telling a unified story about social capital in Stockton.

### The Narrative of the Study

#### Introduction

Question one asks about volunteer-supported organizations and cooperation in Stockton. The narrative for this question is based entirely on the responses of the people interviewed. Question two concerns newspaper readership and is based on the interview responses and on a lengthy analysis of the local newspaper, the *Stockton Sentinel*.

Question three looks at the inherited stock of social capital in the community and the narrative is based on the interviews, the local newspaper, a historical diary, and other archival materials. Question four concerns voter participation in the community. The narrative is based on the interviews, the newspaper analysis, and other local informants.

Question five asks if social capital is static or declining in the community. This part of the narrative is based on the responses from the people interviewed for the study.

#### Preliminary Investigation and Observation

Preliminary investigation through census information and its geographic location revealed that Stockton met the criteria of the study. It is a small town on the High Plains

that is not situated on a major highway or near a large town or metropolitan area. The 1990 census data lists the population as 1,507, but later investigation revealed that number to be approximately one hundred fewer in 1999. Stockton is located in an area in which farming and the oil industry have figured prominently in economic development in the past but where those means of making a living have been on the decline along with the population.

Stockton is located in north central Kansas approximately 40 miles from the Kansas/Nebraska border. It is the county seat for Rooks County (population 6,039), but it is not the largest town in the county. Plainville is larger with 2,173 inhabitants and is located 15 miles from Stockton. Seven other small towns have existed or still exist in the county: Codell, Damar, Laton, Palco, Webster, Woodston, and Zurich. Codell, Laton, and Webster are no longer listed as having population. School systems are located in Palco, Plainville, and Stockton. Palco and Damar have a combined school system with junior high in Damar and the grade school and high school in Palco. Stockton and Plainville have their own school systems. There are public libraries in Stockton, Plainville, and Palco and weekly newspapers are published in Stockton and Plainville. Besides Stockton and Plainville only Damar, Palco, and Woodston still have post offices. Residents from the other towns and from throughout the county travel to Stockton to conduct county business.

On the Stockton web page the town is described succinctly.

Nestled in the valley of the South Fork of the Solomon River at the junction of US highways 24 and 183, Stockton, the county seat of Rooks county, offers both rural



and urban amenities. Located just 38 miles from Fort Hays State University and within an hour's drive of five large man-made lakes with over 40,000 acres of public hunting area, Stockton residents can choose how they spend their leisure time.

Local auctions, art and craft fairs, and summer festivals add variety to community life. Civic, professional, and community organizations meet regularly to bring together people separated in their daily activities. An outstanding feature of the community is the Rooks County Free Fair, the Fair of Champions since 1879.

The old log hotel sits on the west side of the busy downtown; be sure to visit it and the Rooks County Historical Museum on the south side of town. The marvelous old Carnegie Library building, built in 1916, on North Cedar sits adjacent to its more modern replacement and is available for tours or meetings.

([Http://skyways.lib.ks.us/towns/Stockton.html](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/towns/Stockton.html), retrieved August 15, 1999).

#### Drive-through and Collection of Printed Information

Following a virtual visit to Stockton, the next step for the researcher was a drive-through with an opportunity to collect more information about the town. Driving north on United States Highway 183 for the thirty-six miles from Hays, the nearest large town to Stockton with a population of 17,767 (according to 1990 census figures), the landscape is rolling and the farms and homes become increasingly far apart after passing through Plainville. Wheat and milo fields, hay meadows, and beef cattle indicate the agricultural emphasis. Halfway between Plainville and Stockton is the Rooks County Country Club and Golf Course, shared by the two towns. Oil wells also appear frequently in the fields

and pastures, some pumping steadily but many frozen in disuse. The Stockton Municipal Airport, with a lighted grass runway, is on the east side of the highway just outside of the city limits, as is a small manufacturing plant where trailers are evidently built. The State Correctional Facility is on the south end of town, as is the Stockton Ag Center, which is dominated by several large elevators. A quick trip around town reveals the fairgrounds, a couple of well cared for parks, the high school and grade school complex located close to the center of town (with a large sign proclaiming that this is the home of the Tigers), several churches in various parts of town, two health-related centers, and a sign pointing toward the Solomon Valley Manor. The importance of history to the town is indicated by signs at each entrance to town stating "our past reflects our future" and by an interesting-looking historical museum. The Stockton Public Library, the Rooks County Courthouse, and the City Hall are prominently located near the center of town. Two worn signs advertise motels but the motels themselves are not obvious in the first drive-through and when finally located appear to be somewhat run down, with perhaps only one still in business. Main Street is quiet with a few cars parked along the sides. Some of the businesses are easy to spot with obvious signs, but with some of them it is difficult to see their purpose. There are many empty store fronts, especially at the east end of Main Street. An old art deco-style theater has a banner hanging on the front proclaiming that a renovation project is in progress. The *Stockton Sentinel*, whose motto is "coming to you from the heartland of America," is located on Main Street. The most recent issue is available for fifty cents in a dispenser on the sidewalk in front of the newspaper office.

A stop at City Hall provides an opportunity to collect print information about

Stockton and the surrounding area. On display and available to take are several Chamber of Commerce/Community Development-designed brochures and flyers, Webster State Park information and a Stockton hunters guide, and two area phone books. The Six Lakes Directory is published by the Rural Telephone Service Co. that serves fifteen counties and sixty towns in northern Kansas and two towns in Nebraska. For each city, including Stockton, it lists city, county, state, and United States offices along with a city map, special services, schools, information and maps for the six lakes in the area, and places to go (for Stockton, the historical museum, the Old Log Hotel on Main Street, and Webster State Park). An events calendar for the entire area is included, in which Stockton appears only twice--in August for the County Fair and in October for the Sigma Phi ESA Annual Craft Fair. The Feist directory for Northwest Kansas covers twenty counties and eighty-seven towns. For Stockton and the other towns it lists city, county, state, and United States offices, and schools. Because Stockton is the county seat, various state and United States offices are located in the town. The state offices include the Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources, Department of Wildlife and Parks Webster State Park, Stockton Correctional Facility, Department of Transportation, Highway Patrol, and Social and Rehabilitation Services. The United States offices are the post office and USDA Service Center including Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rooks County Conservation District.

#### First Visit and Walk-around

Initial contact with Neola Breckenridge, the librarian at the city library, was made by email and telephone. Her response to the proposed study about how people work

together in small communities was friendly and encouraging. Neola provided the name of the city development director indicating she would be an important person to meet. The first research visit occurred the third of September, 1999. Neola was as helpful in person as she had been on the phone. An immediate connection with the project became evident when Neola indicated that she had participated in a continuing education program conducted by the School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University (the graduate school affiliated with this study) and a program the researcher had worked with in the past. This seemed a good omen for the project, an example of the importance of networks or what Putnam calls "weak ties" (Putnam, 2000, p. 320). It is these weak ties or networks of distant acquaintances that can lead to unexpected benefits or opportunities. Additionally, a component of the curriculum of the continuing education program teaches the importance of community analysis in which the librarians are encouraged to survey their communities to learn about the strengths and the needs and then to design programs to fit the community.

After a tour of the library Neola proposed a walk around the town to meet various people in order to help identify ones who would be appropriate informants for this study. The first stop was the local thrift shop, open only on Fridays, it is informally called "boutique Friday." The shop is located on Main Street in a former store front and is a project of the Methodist Women, although they are assisted by workers from other congregations. Clarene Goodheart was in charge of the store on this day, a person whose name would appear frequently as associated with a variety of volunteer activities in Stockton. The tour continued to the Health Center where the friendly staff told about

some of their services in the community and on to Smith's gift store. The proprietor of Smith's was out of the store, but we looked over the extensive array of items from around the world and made arrangements to return in the afternoon. Continuing down Main Street we stopped at an insurance agency and met the husband of the young couple who own the business. He mentioned that his wife is president of the Nova Theatre restoration project and that they would both be pleased to talk about that or other voluntary activities in town. While at the veterinary clinic, located in the center of town on Main Street, Neola introduced the young couple who had recently moved to Stockton to open it and establish their joint veterinary practice. A banker brought his dog into the clinic for care and stopped to visit. He was immediately interested in the project and was confident that his wife who teaches school in Stockton would be as well. The tour ended with quick trips through the Stockton Pharmacy and Debbie's Gift Store and finally lunch at Gambino's where people were coming and going and greeting each other and were very glad to welcome a visitor to the town.

#### Selection and Description of Persons Interviewed

Chapter four of this study outlines guidelines suggested by Seidman (1998) and Maxwell (1996) for identifying local people familiar with the setting to interview. As a result of the walk-about introduction to the community and the preliminary investigation nine people were selected for interviews.

Neola Breckenridge, Librarian at Stockton Public Library. Neola was the first to agree to an interview and her welcoming introduction to the community initiated the investigation of civic engagement. Neola spent much of her youth in Stockton, graduated

from high school there, and married a young man from the area. After their marriage her husband joined the military and they “were all over the United States” and then moved back to Stockton. Their children grew up in Stockton and Neola has been working in the library for more than twenty years. She thus has a wide range of experience with the town to draw on and a deep knowledge of the community. She is also, however, quite modest and perhaps somewhat unaware of how much she does know about the community because her first reaction when asked a question is to say she does not know much about that, but additional questioning results in good information.

Patrice Heim, Stockton Community Development Director. Patrice has lived in Stockton for only five years. She grew up in Wichita, KS, and lived for a number of years in Liberty, MO, near Kansas City. She came to Stockton because her husband took a position with Wildlife and Parks. They had a choice of several places to move and chose the small-town life of Stockton when they visited and liked what they observed, thinking it would be a good place to rear their three children. Patrice has a background in nonprofit management and journalism. All of these elements about her background provide a perspective on her life in Stockton that is especially useful to this study.

Joan Balderston, Retired Stockton Public School Counselor and Volunteer. Joan is passionate about her involvements in the community. She spent her childhood on a farm south of Stockton and met her future husband in the first grade. While her husband was serving in Vietnam, Joan returned to Stockton to teach. They subsequently lived in many places but kept up their ties in Stockton and decided to return there after retiring nineteen years ago. Joan was school counselor for ten years in Stockton and continues to

direct children's drama. She is actively involved in many civic projects, such as the Arts Council and the Nova Theatre Committee. She also performs in costume depicting various historical characters.

Roma Smith, Proprietor of Smith's Gift Store. The Smith family has been in business in Stockton since 1901. The store is located in a building that was originally a funeral home and furniture store established by Roma's husband's grandfather. Roma moved to Stockton in 1929 when she was a senior in high school. She met and married her husband, reared her family, and later worked with her husband in the gift store. Since the death of her husband she has continued to run the store and acquire merchandise at buyer's shows in various cities. She is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations in town.

Loren Goodheart, Farm Bureau Insurance Manager and Community Activist. When Loren first moved to Stockton twenty-nine years ago he came as principal of the high school. Three years later he switched from education to become a Farm Bureau insurance agent and later manager of the office that serves Stockton and various other towns in the area. He has remained interested in the welfare of young people, assisting his wife Clarene who was the Extension and 4-H agent for many years. They have been involved in a variety of volunteer activities including landscaping the historical museum grounds, helping with the county fair, Chamber of Commerce activities, and the Nova Theatre renovation project.

Elaine Davenport, Manager of Gambino's Pizza. Elaine has lived in Stockton four years. She has become active in the Chamber of Commerce and her restaurant is a

frequent meeting place for groups and organizations. She employs many high school students and works with them so they can participate in school activities as well as earn money in part-time employment.

Linda Hagen, Coordinator for Heartland Share. Linda is a life-long resident of the Stockton area. Volunteer work is both her vocation and her passion. Always an active volunteer, Linda is now an area administrator for the Heartland SHARE program. Her area covers half of Kansas and southern Nebraska. The program promotes community volunteerism and brings healthful, low cost food to the community.

Craig and Jessica Iwanski, Veterinarians. Craig and Jessica are a young couple who have established their own veterinary practice on Main Street in Stockton. Craig grew up in Stockton, but Jessica was reared in Omaha, Nebraska. They are both committed to small-town life and are taking an active role in community projects, organizations, and events in addition to putting in the many hours necessary for starting their own business.

#### Research Question One: Volunteer-supported Organizations and Successful Cooperation

Question one: Is civic engagement demonstrated through participation in volunteer supported organizations, associations, and social networks, both formal and informal, resulting in successful cooperation to work for the welfare of the community?

According to Putnam (2000) the core idea of the theory of social capital is that social networks have value. They provide the connections among individuals that result in norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. This research question was designed to look for the existence of these networks in Stockton and at the resulting cooperative action. The



words of some of the people who live in the community and participate in the social networks are the primary source of information for this question.

The interview questions that elicited the following responses asked what kinds of voluntary groups and organizations there are in Stockton, what kinds of things do they do, and how they make Stockton a better place to live.

Neola Breckenridge, public librarian, first thought of the group of people who are attempting to restore an old theater in town when asked about voluntary groups. After initially saying that she wasn't very good about remembering such things she told about a variety of other groups active in the community including the Solomon Valley Pheasants Forever, the Lions Club, ESA sorority groups, 4-H Clubs, Kansas State University Extension groups, school groups and clubs, the Arts Council, and various church groups. She was aware of the importance of the businesses in the town as exemplified by her willingness to introduce the researcher to as many downtown merchants as possible, saying they were the people who could talk about the importance of volunteer organizations and the need to work together for the benefit of the community. She mentioned the Rooks County Fair as an event that utilizes the volunteer participation of 4-H members and leaders as well as other volunteers, not only from Stockton and Plainville but from throughout the county and from the other five small towns in the county-- Palco, Zurich, Damar, Woodston, and Codell. Neola mentioned the summer picnic as an event that people support, which requires an especially big effort for the merchants who work with the Chamber of Commerce to plan it.

Neola described with pride the Parade of Christmas Trees the library sponsors

each year and holds in the lobby of the old Carnegie Library that is attached to the newer addition. For this annual event various groups and organizations, such as 4-H clubs, school groups, and civic and social organizations, decorate Christmas trees. Each tree has a particular theme, often related to the purpose or interests of the organization. There are usually approximately twenty trees on display during the holiday season and the library staff considers it a gift to the community, not a money raising event. It is not even a contest as such because the trees are not judged but just enjoyed by the people who come in to see them. They did let people vote for their favorite tree last year, but none of the staff could remember which tree had won the most votes. Neola said that the first year they held the Parade of Christmas Trees in 1985, it was organized by a woman who owned a decorator business. She recruited businesses to decorate trees and they were elaborate and beautiful. But the various business people said they could not afford to do this every year and so they started asking school groups to do it. Then other organizations got involved and even some families. They utilize handmade items that are more affordable and distinctive to the organizations.

The library hangs quilt shows in the same area of the building, an activity in which community members display quilts that they have made or old ones they have inherited. When the addition was added to the library in 1984 the old Carnegie Library was remodeled to be used for such displays, meetings, and receptions and it is an elegant and historic setting for such events. They have had artist's showings in the past but have found that while people did come in to see the artwork not enough purchased work to make it worthwhile for the artists. They have also had a popular wedding dress display,

but the woman who organized it has moved away from Stockton. On Wednesdays the library has a travel film series for which participants bring a sack lunch and watch the film.

An important institution in Stockton is the state correctional facility located at the site of a former farm machinery business. The prisoners who are held there are not hardcore criminals and by the time they get to this facility they are nearing the end of their incarceration and part of their program is preparing to reenter society. These inmates are brought to the library twice a week, one of their required visits in the evening. The staff decided that Tuesday evening would be the best one for them to come because Brenda, the staff member who normally worked that evening, usually served only two or three people, not a very busy time. At first some people in the community said they were not going to come if the inmates were there and Neola told them that they could just come any of the other evenings that the library is open. Now, however, they have lots of people on Tuesday nights while the inmates are there; the extra activity seems to draw more people and the inmates' presence is taken for granted. The library benefits in other ways from the involvement of the inmates because the library receives a grant from the State Library to buy additional books and Neola commented that they often have very good suggestions about materials to acquire. In addition, the inmates are available to the city for manual labor. They have been involved on several construction projects for the library, some of them providing necessary and accomplished skills.

Memorials are an important source of funding for the library and these come from the community, usually in honor of someone who has died or is being honored in some

way. Memorial gifts have been used to purchase computers, some of which are available for public use and some for staff use, and for books, especially children's books, and other materials. The most significant gift, however, was the money to build the addition on the library. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Walker received a great deal of money from their oil holdings during the oil boom in the 1970s and 1980s. They had always lived modestly and wanted to use the money to benefit the community. They decided to give the money for an addition to the library. The move from the old Carnegie Library into the new addition took place on December 15, 1984. It was a cold day with blowing snow, but many public-spirited people turned out to help with the move. It took the entire day to move the books and furniture. Neola was only working part time in the library at the time of the scheduled move. Three days before the move, however, the librarian quit because she was not pleased with the many changes that were taking place. The former librarian met the president of the board on the library steps on her way out and said, "I quit." The board president said, "I accept," and Neola suddenly became the one in charge both of the move and the library. She was grateful for the community help during the move and is grateful that they continue to have community support, including the seven member library board (all volunteers). Neola calls the board the ears of the community because they help keep her informed about the library's image in the community. She said she also gets good support from city commission members who are willing to work for the interests of the library.

The library staff cooperates with the schools as well, and have adjusted their hours to provide more convenient times for young people to come to the library. The library

benefitted from this cooperative relationship when Rural Net became available in the area. When Neola went to a meeting in Hays to investigate the possibility of getting Rural Net for the library, the superintendent of schools was at the meeting trying to negotiate a connection for the Stockton school system. He bargained for the public library, requesting that Rural Net hook up the library for free if the school system signed up for the system. Neola said this is very helpful for them and she sees many other small libraries struggling to afford to get connected or keep connected to the Internet.

Churches in Stockton are an important factor in the cooperation in the community, according to Neola. She said they support the library by mentioning any programs they are sponsoring and generally are at the heart of much of the social life in the community, from community dinners and wedding dances to working together to help when someone is having difficulties.

Patrice Hein, the community development director, after hearing a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, immediately indicated that she understood the topic and considered it important by saying that a small town like Stockton simply would not be able to survive without volunteer work. She gave as an example a grant application for housing rehabilitation for the elderly she had just concluded processing that requires either a twenty-five percent match of funds from the city or an equitable amount of volunteer labor. She commented that the funds are simply not available but that she had no trouble whatever recruiting volunteers from the community for two thousand hours of labor for the project. She gave as another example a high school freshman working on her Girl Scout community service award. She is helping Patrice consolidate volunteer

opportunities to publish in a brochure. The two of them worked together on a questionnaire that the Girl Scout then delivered to various organizations such as the library, the Red Cross, the schools, the nursing home, and the historical museum. These are all organizations that need help and they will fill out the questionnaire describing their volunteer needs. Patrice will produce a brochure based on the questionnaire that will be used to match the organizations with people who are willing to help.

In addition to discussing civic engagement from her professional perspective, Patrice related incidents about family life. She said that moving to such a small town was somewhat of a culture shock for the entire family and told of her then two-year-old daughter who would say, "Can't we go to McDonald's, Mom?" Patrice said she finally said, "Sure, when you see one we will pull right in!" So the children are still looking for a McDonald's, but in the meantime they are free to ride their bikes to the pool or any place else in town they want to go. Patrice says she lives a block from her office and only a few blocks from the children's school. She said that the children are comfortable riding bikes or walking around town and that she knows that everyone in the town knows who they are and that if they get in trouble someone will let her know. She has similar comfort about their school experience knowing that her children are safe in the schools. The teachers know all of the children very well and give the children a great deal of personal attention. She admitted that there are some academic limitations because a small school system is not able to offer as broad a curriculum as large city schools, but she believes that parents can find ways to supplement education for the particular needs and talents of their children. The schools are well supported by the community with a little more

emphasis on sports events than other activities. She said that the games are social events for the entire community and that not only parents, grandparents, and other relatives show up but neighbors and friends as well. "You know there is not a whole lot to do so everybody goes to the game." But she also noted, "whenever there's a school music program, it's just amazing. If kids are in it, then the community really comes out." The PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) does a lot of things for the schools, raising money to buy equipment, books, or whatever is needed. Patrice said that the group was originally a PTA but that the group decided they were not pleased to be sending money "some place back east" where it would be used for lobbying and some things that the people here didn't agree with or see any benefits coming back to Stockton. She said she thinks people in her area feel rather isolated from Washington, D.C.

Patrice praised youth organizations such as 4-H whose members and leaders (young people and adults) help with the county fair. The fair is a big undertaking put on mostly by volunteer workers. She said the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) organizes hunters' breakfasts during hunting season that are of great benefit to the community and help the group raise money for trips and other activities.

Some of the adult groups she mentioned as contributing significantly to the community are the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and the Lions Club, which she said, seems to work especially with projects for children and the elderly. She also mentioned PEO and ESA groups that are philanthropic and social organizations for women. Another program that Patrice identified as encouraging people to be involved in their community through volunteering is the Heartland Share program. She provided the

name and phone number of the coordinator, Linda Hagan, saying she would an important contact to talk with about volunteer activities in Stockton.

Patrice gave an example of how various groups work together in the community when she described a project called A Day of Sharing. This day is held twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. It is a day set aside for providing assistance on home repair for those people who for some reason are not able to do it themselves. Volunteers make repairs such as painting, fixing screens or front steps, or weather proofing. Usually this service is provided for the elderly or someone who is limited in some way. Persons needing assistance can apply or someone can nominate them. They fill out a form stating what kind of help they need and whether or not they can provide the materials. A panel of volunteers goes through the applications to attempt to identify which requests can be accomplished or for which ones donated materials can be utilized. On the designated day people show up to work, the various organizations in town each sending four or five volunteers. The project sheets are laid out on a table and the volunteers sign up for the ones they want to help with, or ones for which they have some expertise to contribute. Crew bosses (all volunteers) are selected, sometimes in advance by the panel and sometimes on the spot. "Whoever shows up that day we'll say, 'you look like you know what you're doing, so you're the crew boss!' And so they just get their supplies together and go over and start painting or hammering or whatever it is. And that's how we do our Day of Sharing."

Patrice said sometimes people also work together to try to stop changes that they find objectionable. For example, when the City Commission decided to initiate curb-side



trash collection, they ran into resistance. For years the city trash trucks had traveled through each alley. The workers would retrieve the trash cans, wherever they might be located, dump the trash manually, and put the can back where they found it. Sometimes the trash cans were behind fences or garages or some other out-of-the-way place and the workers had to know where to go to find them. The new system was to be an automatic dumping system with polycarts rather than trash cans. The polycarts are on wheels and easy to manage but the residents would have to roll them out to the curb. "That caused quite a stink." Several people attended the commission to say they thought the polycarts on the curbs would make the town look trashy.

Having lived in several other towns, Patrice appreciates how reasonable the rates for utility services are in Stockton. She was amazed at her first water bill because it was so low. She said that people who have lived in Stockton for many years have also become accustomed to much more personal service from the city than would be expected in a larger community. For example, people will call the city office and report that they forgot to put their trash out and the office staff will radio the trash workers, who will then backtrack on their route to pick it up for them.

Another project that exemplifies collective action at work in Stockton is the "Come on Home" campaign. "We have a captive audience in the alumni." Many high school graduates who now live in other towns or states or countries return to Stockton for class reunions and visits with family members. These are the ones who are being targeted for this campaign. A mailing brochure has been designed and sent out to all the Stockton High School alumni, suggesting that they consider coming back to Stockton, not just to

visit but to live. These people already have ties to Stockton and have an understanding of some of the benefits of the way of life in a small community. The brochure reminds them that it is a wonderful place to rear children or start a small business and that many jobs are not limited in location because of advances in telecommunications. This has been a project initiated by the Development Office and supported by city leaders and volunteers. Their rationale is not to try to sell the town to people who have never heard of Stockton and have no conception of the community, but rather to market the plan to those who might already have an emotional or social impulse to return to the community of their youth. The brochure has pictures of pheasants, football players, and county fair activities to remind the prospective citizens of some of the major events in the community. So far a young couple, both veterinarians, have moved to town and have opened a clinic on Main Street. He is a Stockton native. Another young family who has been living in Kansas City has moved back and bought the Country Club. The committee plans to continue to send out information frequently in order to keep the idea out there for when the time might be right for people to make such a change. The website helps keep the contact current and the possibility visible. There are plans to institute an alumni registry for which someone who wants to register would first encounter the "Come on Home" page showing who has already made a decision to return with information about what the returnees are doing in the community and what brought them back to Stockton to live. "Just to kind of give them the idea that it can work and you can go home again."

The Nova Theatre project is another community action project that Patrice described. Approximately three years ago a series of town meetings resulted in

discussions of significant needs for the town and consideration of what the potential to meet these needs might be. A major concern was the lack of something positive for the young people to do in Stockton besides driving around in cars and drinking beer. Another issue of concern was that the downtown definitely needed revitalization. It was agreed that there was a need for a “catalyst to get downtown going again.” One group concentrated on the old Nova Theatre that was vacant after housing a series of businesses and other tenants, although not serving as a theater for many years. It was built in 1932 with an art deco design and had been renovated for office space. The slanted floor had been leveled with concrete. Since it had become vacant, bats had moved in and it was in general disrepair. From those early meetings a group formed with the theater renovation as their project, resulting in a huge volunteer effort. Patrice said her husband, Tom, who is currently serving on the City Commission, is the president of the Stockton Theater Corporation, a nonprofit entity. There is also a Nova Theatre Committee that serves as the working committee. Patrice is on that committee and renovation is progressing. The funding goal is \$425,000. The theater will become a multipurpose building that will be used for movies, live performances, and for seminars, conferences, and receptions. It is an expensive endeavor. For example because of the multipurpose plan the chairs cannot be fixed to the floor; they have to be designed to gang together in rows or to be taken apart and put around tables. Chairs like that cost around \$200 each; thus, acquiring two hundred of them will cost more than \$40,000. The sound system and projection system are also costly, but it is the hope of the people involved in the project that this will be the catalyst the town needs.

When asked about informal social networks in the community, Patrice said that there is a very strong tradition of taking food to families when there is a death or illness. “As soon as someone dies you start cooking, lots of food whether they want it or not.” She told a story about a related incident that happened soon after she moved to town. A neighbor had an elderly mother who lived with her who had frequently been in and out of the hospital. While at the grocery store Patrice overheard a conversation in which someone was telling another friend that the mother, Millie, had taken a turn for the worse. They were discussing some sort of social event, a party or something, and one of the women said she did not think Millie was going to make it. The other woman interpreted this to mean that she was in the hospital and was going to die. “So the next thing you know I looked out my kitchen window and there were all these little ladies coming over to the neighbor’s with cakes and casseroles — and she wasn’t gone yet!” For happier events such as birthdays and anniversaries or if someone is recovering from an illness, there are card showers. She said that much of this informal support is organized through the churches, which she believes are a vital part of the town.

Joan Balderston, retired school counselor and volunteer activist, reveals enthusiasm for life, but especially for life in Stockton. She is a vital force in a number of activities and institutions, but especially in the Stockton Area Arts Council and the Nova Theatre Committee. She serves on the six-member Arts Council board and works with the other members to try to get as many community people involved as possible throughout the year. Each year the Arts Council sponsors a community theater production and Joan also works with the children each summer, directing a play or organizing a

summer camp related to the arts. The play she most recently directed included twenty-one children, kindergarten through eighth grade, and played to a standing-room crowd. No admission was charged and the Arts Council covered all of the expenses. The Arts Council has been executing a plan to place life-sized steel silhouettes that represent local historical vignettes at each point of entry into the Stockton. At the east end of town, a covered wagon pulled by an ox team with people walking behind the wagon has been erected. Other silhouettes will include an Indian theme, a cavalry theme, and a stage coach theme. The Arts Council always decorates a tree for the Parade of Christmas Trees at the library and in May Joan had already developed a theme for the tree and was getting other members involved in making bird houses out of logs with tin roofs. She was promoting an angel theme for the tree to be decorated by another group she belongs to, the PEO. The PEO is not as volunteer oriented in the community, being more of a social organization, but they provide scholarships for local students and the national organization is the primary sponsor for a women's college in Missouri.

The Nova Theatre Committee also benefits from Joan's artistic talent and enthusiasm for upgrading the aesthetic and social life of the community. Many other people are also involved in both organizations. A problem for the Arts Council was a lack of a venue for their plays, both for the community theater and the children's dramatic programs. They have been held in the City Hall, a long tube of a room with an inadequate stage. This need for a performance space is part of the motivation for the establishment of the Nova Theatre Corporation and the money-raising activities for renovation that have followed. When asked if most people in town support the theater renovation project Joan

replied, "You always have a few nay-sayers, but we planned on that." She organized a survey right off the bat to see how many people would support the idea, distributing it to every house in town. She recruited high school students and one seventh grader. They made up the surveys and placed a box to collect them at Webster's grocery store. She and the seven students delivered the surveys door-to-door in one day from nine in the morning until one in the afternoon. They went to the door of each home and handed out the surveys and talked to the people about the Nova Theatre. The return was over fifty per cent. Some people said they would rather have a Walmart and other negative remarks. "But we did have a lot of people who were willing not only to support it after it was finished, but they were willing to give money." Stockton National Bank, with a tax credit, gave \$100,000 and other businesses and individuals have given money and benefitted from the tax credit.

After an enthusiastic beginning there seemed to be a slowdown in the progress and people in town were curious to see what had been accomplished, so the committee planned a celebrity auction. The committee members wrote to various celebrities and explained the project and asked them to send something to be auctioned. But as the time for the auction approached, they had not received as many donations as they had hoped for so they asked townspeople to donate whatever they might have in their garages and basements. The auction was held in the theater and people had an opportunity to see the progress and hear about plans for the future. They raised over \$7,000. The next event that was open to the public was the children's play that Joan directed. Eventually they hope to have traveling groups booked into the theater, but Joan wanted the first performers in the

newly renovated theater to be the children of Stockton. When it seemed necessary to encourage more support and visibility for the project and to lessen the burden on the original committee, who were showing signs of burnout, another approach for support was instigated. The committee invited a group of people to come to a meeting where they were given a tour of the building and told what had been accomplished and what was still needed. Tables were set up with tent signs on each one listing the different projects for which volunteers were wanted. The recruits were told they would receive a free Nova Theatre mug if they signed up at one of the tables. They were also told that if they signed it was as if in blood and the committee would be counting on them. Thirty people attended and almost every one of them signed up for something. The original committee had consisted of nine, but had dwindled to five so now it increased to twelve because the new people were asked if they would be willing to volunteer for the main committee as well as the other projects, such as finding chairs to purchase that would meet the multipurpose design for the building.

Although the Arts Council and the Nova Theatre Committee require a great deal of Joan's volunteer time she also finds time for many other activities. She volunteers at the Solomon Valley Manor nursing home and says that many other people she knows volunteer there as well, providing bingo games every Thursday, musical entertainment, Bible study, and other activities. Joan tells stories for school classes, conducts a weekly Bible study at the jail (her husband says the reason she likes it is because it's a captive audience). The jail is a local jail, but because the Sedgwick County Jail is so crowded six to eight prisoners are sent to Stockton for a fee. She volunteers at her church and believes

that the churches play an important role in supporting the community, but that, "In the list of things of importance, of organizations, I would put the school the most important and the churches come next. I don't agree with that order, but that's the way it is." She thinks the school support is a little too much weighted toward the sports events, but says that Wednesday evenings are reserved for church activities even though every other evening seems to have some sports event scheduled. The Methodist Church sponsors the Friday Boutique (thrift shop) and that requires volunteer effort. The churches are very cohesive and work together on that and on other projects such as the Community Prayer Room. Joan attends the Congregational Church but she has had help on activities from Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, and other denominations. She said that if she, or anyone, needs help on something people from other churches will fit in where needed, such as with crafts or kitchen help. They work together. Brenda Schnuerle, a library assistant, who was listening to Joan talk about the cooperation among the churches in Stockton, contributed an example from her own experience. When Brenda's daughter was going into her junior year at college at Kansas Wesleyan in Salina, she needed some additional money to pay her fees. She had grown up and been active in the Christian Church in Stockton, but the college is supported by the Methodist Church. The young woman called her pastor at the Christian Church and told him of her need and he called the Methodist minister to see if there might be a chance of helping her apply for a grant that she knew was available. The response from the Methodist pastor was, "Well, of course I know that girl; she's helped out up here dozens of times with the youth group. I'll see what I can do." The next day



she was awarded the \$500 grant. Joan, Neola, and Brenda all agree that this was typical of the way the churches interact and support the citizens of Stockton.

Informal social networks also come into play when there is a death or tragedy in families. Sometimes support is organized through the churches, but most often through friends and neighbors. The way in which these informal networks of assistance work, seemingly without overt leadership or direction, sometimes surprises non-residents. Joan remembers a neighbor whose husband died suddenly, telling about how amazed her out-of-town relatives were to see the number of Stockton residents who came in to bring food and check on her welfare. "It's almost like when you find out something, everybody knows. That's a disadvantage of a small town if it's a bad thing, but it's a good thing here," Joan said. Joan thinks the possible loss of privacy is insignificant compared to the strength of community caring. But for the most part it is just neighbors, friends, and acquaintances who spread the word when something needs to be done. Happy events are also shared. Everyone oohs and ahs over new babies, turns out to celebrate marriages, and generally helps others during important lifetime events. In passing Joan mentioned that she still finds time to do some substitute teaching ("although I never let it interfere with my social life"), had recently traveled to Italy to study art, works on a fabric loom, and performs programs in which she impersonates women of the Civil War era, for which she does extensive historical research.

Roma Smith, Stockton merchant and long-time resident, was born in 1912 and spent her early years moving with her family from place to place in Kansas and Colorado,

where her father operated grain elevators. Her father's profession was dependent on the price of wheat and the inconsistent Kansas weather, thus he was constantly listening to the radio and worrying about the status of the future's market. It seemed to Roma that the wheat crop was lost about three times each season and the family welfare was at risk. She hated the uncertainty of being dependent on things that could not be controlled and swore she would never marry a man who had anything to do with wheat. She eventually realized, however, that "if you are going to live in Kansas in a little town you're not going to get away from wheat." When her father moved the family to Stockton during her senior year in high school Roma put down roots and has never lived in another town. After high school and college she married John Smith, who became the third generation of Smiths in the funeral home business in Stockton. His grandfather had started in business in 1901 with a hardware store in the building that continues to house Smith's gift store. The business evolved from hardware and furniture to a funeral home and furniture store to the elegant gift store of the present time.

Roma is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce, a commitment she shared with her husband until his death, along with many other civic contributions. Mr. Smith was very involved in the community, serving on many boards and committees that accomplished such projects as establishing the health center in Stockton and various industrial development projects. He was knowledgeable about family and community history and wrote an autobiography relating some of this information. Recently the many contributions that the Smiths have made in Stockton were recognized when the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing gave a Kansas Business Appreciation Award to

Smith's of Stockton, noting that they have been in business for ninety-nine years and have continuously supported many community causes throughout the years.

The Chamber of Commerce remains an important element in the community according to Roma, who favors the various promotional activities such as the alumni project, the Christmas promotion and celebration, the support of subsidized housing, and the summer picnic. Other volunteer supported organizations in town that are important and functioning successfully are the public library, the historical museum, the Nova Theatre renovation committee, the fire department, and the EMT program. The community is especially proud of the public library and Roma tells of the generosity of a local couple who made a great deal of money from oil holdings and because they had no children of their own decided to give the money for an extensive library addition to benefit the entire community. The historical museum also benefitted from the generosity of the Walkers, and Roma says it provides an excellent repository of local history and interesting programs, all generated by volunteer work. The health center, while not staffed by volunteers, does have a volunteer board of directors that John Smith helped establish. The health center has been an important addition to the community, but Roma regrets that there is no longer a doctor living in Stockton. Stockton has no hospital; the nearest one is in Plainville, and the doctors find it necessary to live near the hospital. Some people from Stockton go to Hays for medical care, and Phillipsburg has a medical clinic as well.

Roma belongs to the P.E.O. Sisterhood, a national philanthropic and social organization that supports Cotty College in Missouri, and the Century Club. The Century Club is local and Roma helped organize it in her living room in 1934 or 1935. She was

the first president and there were approximately eight other founding members. The group has continued to meet and currently has approximately twenty members of various ages. They meet once a month and have dinner and an educational program. The members volunteer at the Solomon Valley Manor nursing home, helping with bingo and other activities.

Churches are a strong influence in the community and Roma believes they work together effectively. The ministers have an ecumenical organization where they meet and discuss community issues, such as providing for people who are passing through the community and are in need of food, shelter, or other assistance. The Congregational Church has a group of young people, high school age, who meet once or twice a month for scripture study and Roma thinks that might be an unusual occurrence in many communities in these times. The Prayer Room on Main Street is an excellent example for Roma of the churches working together to enhance the spiritual life of the community. The building for the Prayer Room was donated but the organizational work is coordinated by volunteers from the various churches.

Roma believes that Stockton has good schools and they are well supported by the community. She is pleased to note that the new superintendent has been attending the Chamber of Commerce meetings and has bought a house in town. Attending the Chamber meetings seems to be an indication of his commitment to the community as a whole. She hopes that when the Nova Theatre is finished the new venue for school programs will make it easier to hear the performances.

When asked about informal social networks, Roma had stories that spanned her

seventy-plus years living in the community. At the time that Roma and John Smith were married (the early 1930s), the country was dealing with the depression when times were so hard and no one had money to buy things like furniture. She said that during the dust storms they would simply put sheets over the furniture and close the store. She said it was a hard time to get married but that being young she and her husband seemed to leave the worry to the older people and enjoyed their social life with other young couples. No one had very much money so it did not seem so difficult. Young couples would get together and play cards and if someone could manage a new dress that was really something. When they had been married a few years, John Smith became the state president of the funeral directors' association. When the young couple was going to have their expenses paid by the association to a national meeting in New York City "the whole town dressed me for it!" Roma borrowed long gloves from one friend and a fur jacket from another and her sister-in-law made her a floor-length, creme-colored, slipper-satin dress from a Vogue pattern. The young couple traveled from Kansas to Norfolk and then went by ship into New York harbor. She remembers going to the Roosevelt Hotel to have her hair done and that the woman who fixed it for her was from Sweden. The two of them could not understand one another in words, but communicated through gestures and the results were beautiful. The banquet where Roma wore her new dress was held at the Waldorf Astoria where Oscar of Waldorf stood right behind their table, which was lavishly set with silver. The other people at their table were all from New York City, wearing diamonds and fur. Roma had her first orchid in addition to being dressed by the town. "I had an orchid in my hair and I really thought I was something, you know." When

the dinner table conversation turned to the next year's convention that was to be held in Oklahoma City, some of the people at the table expressed concern about whether or not they would be safe from Indians. "Boy, did I let them have it. I told them they didn't know anything about our part of the country and we know a lot more about theirs." The Smiths did much more traveling in their later years, to Europe and Asia and other places, but they were never much farther from life in Stockton than on that first trip to New York City.

Roma says that the spirit of support and caring for friends and neighbors still exists in Stockton. The churches organize to help their members or nonmembers during times of difficulty or celebration. Friends and neighbors come to sit with the sick, bring food when it is needed, and to visit when spirits need to be lifted or good times shared.

Loren Goodheart, Farm Bureau Insurance manager and active volunteer, demonstrates a strong commitment to the community where he has lived since 1970. His roles in the community have included school principal, parent, businessman, and community volunteer. When asked about his participation in volunteer projects or organizations, he chuckled and said it would be a pretty long list. Both he and his wife have backgrounds that have influenced their commitment to volunteering in their community. Loren told about growing up in the 40s and 50s in a farming community near Russell, Kansas, where neighbors supported each other. "We did a lot of helping neighbors. You know, if we got through cutting wheat early we'd take our combines or tractors or whatever and you'd go to the neighbors and help. And if they did they'd come and help you. So you started helping each other and working together in those

communities as a kid. I mean I was just brought up that way. That's the way you did things." Loren said he carried that neighborly ethic into high school, where he was involved in various organizations that contributed to the community. When he entered the teaching field and moved to a new community he was always urged to get involved with various volunteer groups such as the Lions Club and Rotary. He said that when you are new to a community, particularly as a teacher, it was important to meet people and get acquainted. "Otherwise you weren't going to have a very good teaching experience if you just felt like you were there by yourself."

Now that he has lived in Stockton for more than twenty-nine years, he has become deeply involved in many aspects of the town and the surrounding area. His wife, Clarene, was the County Extension and 4-H Agent for many years. That position involved the couple with many different people and lots of organizations, and especially the 4-H work was largely dependent on volunteer help. Since Clarene's official retirement she hates to say no to anyone because she spent so much of her working life asking people to volunteer. They both still help with the county fair and other 4-H events. Loren supports the fair through his business by advertising, buying livestock at the 4-H sale, and helping to pay for the 4-H journal, making sure that every 4-Her in the county receives the journal without charge. The 4-H program is strong in the community, having a large 4-H enrollment in relation to the small county population. "There are a lot of towns in the area and around that have several thousand more people and yet their 4-H clubs are smaller than ours." When Clarene was working as the extension and 4-H agent Loren said they practically lived at the fair grounds for the seven days that it lasted. Their involvement

has slowed down somewhat in recent years, but it is still a big event for them and many others in the county. Some people who are sixty, seventy, or eighty years old still enter items at the fair, such as baked food, or crops, or garden produce.

The Goodhearts' volunteer work is county-wide in more ways than just helping with the county fair. They were very involved with a restoration project for one of the largest barns in Kansas, which was located in Rooks County. Disappointingly, after years of fund raising and hours of volunteer labor, the barn was struck by lightning when it was nearly restored to its original status and burned to the ground. A pedestal picturing a replica of the barn and forming a base for a statue of a giant work horse has been erected outside of the Rooks County historical museum as a tribute and a reminder of the barn and the project that so many people worked to preserve. The museum has benefitted in other ways from their support. Clarene is on the museum board and also works at the museum as a volunteer. The two of them designed a plan for landscaping the museum grounds and carried out the plans with prisoner labor from the local state facility. The minimum security prisoners are given work with the idea that if they do well they will soon be released. Most them, therefore, are motivated to do well and many have useful skills that have benefitted the community, such as assisting with landscaping, shoveling snow for churches, and making construction repairs at the library or other city property. Clarene is also on the Tree Board. In this capacity she advises the city on planting trees and tearing out dead ones, also utilizing prisoner labor for those projects.

The Goodhearts participate in the Chamber of Commerce, working with activities and promotions that have as a goal the attempt to keep an active and busy Main Street.



Members are looking for ways to support the established businesses and to attract and promote new ones. Many local citizens are advocates for the Chamber of Commerce, even if they do not have downtown businesses, and have been supporters for many years. Events such as the Stockton Christmas promotion are managed by Chamber members and the local business people. There is an opening day when Santa Claus arrives, horse-drawn wagon rides are available, a lighting ceremony is held, followed by other activities such as drawings and the giving out of Christmas dollars. This celebration draws people from Stockton and from neighboring communities and requires a great deal of volunteer effort to arrange.

A summertime event is supported by the Chamber of Commerce but for the most part involves a different group of volunteers, the Antique Engine Show. The Goodhearts, as most of the others involved in this show, have some antique cars of their own. The show has been held in Stockton for the last eighteen or twenty years or more. It was formerly held in September, but in recent years the date has been changed to a weekend in July. The entire event is managed by volunteers with no one getting paid for their contributions. The members of the board all serve as volunteers for the show and are present for the entire weekend of the show. Exhibitors bring in their engines, cars, and tractors. Until two years ago the show was held at the fairgrounds, but now it is located at the west end of the park where there is more shade. The exhibitors come from several different states and camp in the park, spending time visiting and having a good time. Visitors come to see the exhibits from Hays, Plainville, and the surrounding area. Some of the local volunteers run the steam tractor even if they do not have engines of their own.

Most of the people on the Antique Engine Committee are not members of the Chamber of Commerce, only four or five, including the Goodhearts, are involved in both organizations.

Another project that the Goodhearts enthusiastically support is the Nova Theatre renovation project and they plan to continue to give their time and effort to seeing the project to completion. Loren sees this project as an important means for keeping Main Street alive and viable. He also hopes that it will keep young people connected to the community and encourage them to stay in Stockton or to move back after they have had experience in other places and come to realize the high quality of life that can exist in a small town. He thinks that the Nova Theatre renovation will in this way contribute to the Come-on-Home campaign initiated by the Development Office in which people who have graduated from Stockton High School and moved away are being encouraged to consider moving back to Stockton to live, whether with young families or as retirees.

Another area of service for Loren is an appointment to the Plainville Hospital Board that he has held for approximately eight years. The hospital district was expanded about eight years ago to cover more townships within the county, including Stockton. There was an attempt to make it more of a rural hospital and they sought representation on the board that would be evenly distributed throughout the county. He has remained on the board to make sure that Stockton is represented. There is a clinic in Stockton where physicians come to meet with patients several times a week, but none of the doctors live in Stockton. Because the hospital is in Plainville, they live there in order to be nearby while on call. Loren has supported providing clinic hours in Stockton because he thinks it

is important in a rural community with many older citizens to have medical care close to home. Driving an hour or two for medical care is impossible for some and difficult for many.

The Goodhearts attend the Methodist Church and Loren observes that in this small community many people are committed to one of the various churches. The Community Prayer Room that recently opened on Main Street is a project that has all of the churches working together. He thinks this would be more likely to happen in a small community because none of the churches are large enough on their own to accomplish such a large project. "But the Catholic Church and the Christian Church and the Methodist Church and the Congregational Church and Assembly Church — all of them have come together and worked on this." The Community Prayer Room had a grand opening that was well attended and it has been something that the community has been working on for a while. Last year a meeting was held at the school, with invited speakers, to discuss community and prayer. Some of the volunteer organizers had gone to Abilene to hear a person who has written a book about what this kind of activity does for a community as far as building relationships and letting people know that there are others in the community who care about them. All of the organization and planning was conducted by volunteers with support from the clergy.

Because his first role in Stockton was high school principal, Loren has continued his interest and involvement with young people in the town, particularly as his own children grew and attended the schools and through his connection with the 4-H clubs. He thinks that the young people in Stockton have many opportunities to become productive

citizens, whether they stay in Stockton or move to other towns or cities. There are many active organizations in the schools such as FHA, FFA, Kays, and Kayettes that work on community projects. Students serve on boards for these organizations, hold state offices, and learn about working with groups to accomplish goals. He says that 90 to 95 per cent of the students who graduate from Stockton High School go on for more education. Most try to go to college, while some go to vocational-technical schools. In addition to gaining leadership ability and organization skills, the young people develop a work ethic that makes them valuable employees. Because in this small school they can be involved in a large number of different kinds of activities, they learn how to plan and budget their time. They learn about putting in a full day of work both at school or a part-time job. They also learn about the importance of loyalty to employers and dependability, and they have no trouble finding jobs and then advancing in the professions they choose after graduating. Even though the schools might not be as competitive as far as teaching technology, most employers are willing to hire those people who have an understanding of the importance of work and are capable of learning, growing, and getting along with other people and let them learn the technical skills on the job. In a school the size of Stockton High, students can be involved in just about any activity that interests them, perhaps three or four different ones. In a big school they may only be invited to be in one activity or perhaps none. Loren strongly believes that it is this early learning about one's responsibility to the community that influenced his own desire to volunteer and that young people in Stockton are still learning this. The benefits of this learned responsibility perhaps will be realized in other communities because so many young people do have to move away to find work,

but he hopes that new technologies and a realization that life can be good in a small town will make a difference in this trend.

When local young people are ready for college they have some choices. A local attorney who was graduated from Washburn University in Topeka left a large endowment so that any student who graduates from a Rooks County High School can go to Washburn and have room and board and tuition paid. The only requirement is to maintain grades, so it is virtually a free education and many students have taken advantage of it. The attorney was Duffy Heinman who practiced in Stockton for many years. The Hanson Foundation from Logan also provides many scholarships for local students and many receiving those scholarships choose to go to Ft. Hays because it is very near. Quite a few go to Kansas State University because of the connection through the 4-H program or for the veterinary program. Some go to Kansas University because of the medical school. A lot go to two-year schools, in Colby, Beloit, or Goodland Vo-Tech.

A major reason that young people in Stockton tend to take their school activities seriously is because the entire community supports the schools. The success of the athletic teams is the biggest source of pride for most people in the community. There have been state championship teams in football, basketball, and wrestling and there have been outstanding track and field athletes. Loren commented that they will often have a larger attendance at ball games than some big city schools. The games are a community social event. "On Friday night that's where people go. If you go up there on a Friday night and look, it won't just be the parents of the kids that are playing. You'll have lots of people that are seventy, seventy-five, eighty years old that are still in the stands if they're

able, watching football on Friday nights. So you'll have from the very young children to the older population.”

Loren says these are some of the aspects of their community that they are trying to relate in the Come-on-Home campaign, either to people who have grown up in Stockton or to people who may be looking to enhance the quality of their lives. He talked about some of the other projects or institutions that have inspired the people of Stockton to work together. The public library has been an important institution in the town, especially in the last twenty years since the new addition was built. When the project to renovate the old Carnegie building was being discussed and then executed, people in town became excited about it. The major donation came from one family, but it took a great deal of community effort and interest for it to be completed. The museum has also inspired similar enthusiasm. Again the Walker family gave generously to the museum, but many others have contributed volunteer efforts. Now a mostly different group of people is working on the Nova Theatre. This project has generated the same kind of excitement as did the museum and the library. When the renovation is completed, it will not be just a theater, but is being designed for multipurpose use, for receptions, banquets, school performances, and other school or community events. It will be a community center or gathering place. People in the community “really get behind these projects and do a good job of trying to get things completed.” Projects like the Nova Theatre renovation and the Community Prayer Room draw together people from “all walks of life and from all areas of businesses and from all the churches. You know it’s just one more way of showing that what you can’t accomplish by yourself, if everybody in the community gets behind it and

works toward it, and they really do, you can accomplish a lot of things.” Another example of how the community exhibits collective action to accomplish mutual goals is the community sharing day where volunteers help, mainly the elderly, with home maintenance tasks that they cannot do on their own because of physical or financial limitations. The volunteers in this project have painted, repaired, and helped winterize homes. The day was initiated through the Heartland Share program and also involves high school students.

Stockton is not the limit for Loren’s volunteer service, as he is a member of a state-wide insurance organization for which he is on a national board and travels to Washington, D.C. about twice a year to influence legislation connected with the insurance business. This is also a volunteer endeavor that takes him away from his own job, but that he believes contributes to the general welfare.

Loren sees that informal social networks are equally important within this community. He is aware of this partly because he and Clarene have traveled widely and have visited other communities and cultures. They took a group of 4-H members to Europe for six weeks one summer and for more than ten years they participated in a program for high school juniors and seniors and college students where they traveled with the young people in Europe for which the students earned college credit. They have traveled in the United States as well, but have never seriously considered moving to another town permanently, having always preferred a small community “where everybody knows you and you know everybody else.” He appreciates knowing that in times of difficulty or tragedy people are always there to help. The church members especially tend

to gather around closely when someone needs help, but people in the community at large are also generous and concerned. A recent example was when the secretary in his office had an accident on her farm and was badly burned. She was out of the office, not able to work, for several weeks. When she returned to the office she said she could not believe how many people came to her home to offer assistance. She said that some of them were close friends, but others were people she would not have expected to come, people that they did business with or knew casually. They brought food for her family to eat while she was injured and offered other help.

Loren also told about another family's recent difficulty and the community's reaction. A Stockton woman became seriously ill with cancer and members from various churches rallied around to organize people to go to the house and spend time with the woman for four or five hours a day so her husband could go to work and her children could participate in some of their activities. He told about volunteers who are retired from their work and will drive people to take chemo therapy treatments or to appointments with doctors in Hays or other area towns. The churches help to coordinate this, but no one has to belong to a particular church to take advantage of the service. The local thrift shop is primarily a Methodist Church project, but most of the other churches provide workers. Loren said these are things most people take for granted or maybe don't even notice until they have benefitted from the system sometime or have had an opportunity to help someone else and felt the satisfaction of making a contribution to the community.

Elaine Davenport, manager of Gambino's Pizza, considers herself to be a



newcomer to the town. Most of her time is spent running the restaurant, but she has become an active member of the Chamber of Commerce. She has served on the board, as president, and on the Christmas and Summer Picnic committees. In a town of this size she sees many of the same people active in a variety of organizations and civic projects. The memberships overlap and people help each other whether they are members of a particular group or not. Most of Elaine's employees are high school students. She has become aware of the various organizations in the high school that require or encourage community service activities that she believes encourage students to see themselves as part of the community. She notes that school events are well-supported by the community. She usually works on game nights so her student employees are free to attend the ball games, but business is light during games, anyway, whether at home or away. When asked about what people are most proud of in the community, she thought it would be the schools and the activities of the young people.

Elaine says that the seasonal Chamber of Commerce promotional events require a great deal of volunteer effort. The Summer Picnic seems to involve nearly everyone in town. It is held on Main Street where it starts with a parade and then everyone comes together for the picnic that is usually held in the evening. At the beginning of the Christmas Season, starting the Friday after Thanksgiving, Santa Madness begins. The merchants provide prizes and people come to town to shop and watch the lights turned on for the first time in the season. Other seasonal events include a big craft sale sponsored by one of the ESA groups, a Gun and Knife Show, and a city-wide garage sale.

Elaine said she probably would not have located in Stockton if it hadn't been for

the encouragement and assistance from the Community Development Director at the time they were looking. Her son decided to open a Gambino's franchise and asked her to manage it. They looked at a variety of towns in the area before deciding on Stockton. The Stockton Development Director provided information about available buildings and worked with them to communicate with bankers and get financial advising. She informed them about credits and incentives that were available for someone starting a business in Stockton. Elaine said that this attitude contrasted with the reception they received in some of the other towns they visited where the people were much less helpful and even seemed reluctant to bring in competition. Elaine now serves on the Community Development Board, a voluntary group that works with the Community Development Director to look for ways to help businesses that are already in town or to find ways to bring new ones to the community. Five members serve on this board with the Community Development Director, including the funeral director, the grocery store owner, an insurance agent, and other community leaders in addition to Elaine.

Since living in Stockton, Elaine has observed that the people in the town take pride in the way their town looks and are particular about making sure it is clean and well-kept. There are people who voluntarily walk about town and pick up trash and litter and the regulations about clearing junk and accumulated trash from yards and porches are enforced. She also noted the Nova Theatre project as an example of the pride that the citizens take in their town. This project has gotten many people excited about the possibilities for what it will add to the life of the community and has received widespread support. The local churches also contribute to this community support and pride. All of

the churches have their own community projects and have worked together to establish the Community Prayer Room on Main Street.

Informal networks function to support the people of the town, often led by the churches. If someone is sick and needs to have assistance, people in the community will arrange to take turns going in to sit with the sick person, prepare food, or do whatever is necessary. When there is a death in the family, neighbors bring food and sympathy. After Elaine moved to town she was surprised to learn that many people in town own police scanners that they monitor. If there is an emergency of any kind the people listening spread the word if something needs to be done to help someone in trouble. For example, if there is a report of a fire at someone's house or some other casualty, people will respond with appropriate assistance.

Generally Elaine has found the experience of moving to Stockton and starting a new business to be positive and supportive. She did not expect the close-knit, family relationship that she found in Stockton, but she has enjoyed it. The restaurant is located in the center of town and is used as a meeting place for a variety of groups. She tries not to get involved with issues that might be considered controversial because she serves everyone in town in her business. She spends most of her time working and says she does not have time for much actual social life. Elaine can not help but be in the heart of a great deal of the community life in Stockton, however, as she interacts with her high school employees and hears about their activities and opinions and as she hosts the various civic and social groups that use her restaurant as a gathering place.

Linda Hagan, area site director for Heartland Share, is responsible for introducing

an extrinsic volunteer program to the community. Heartland Share originated in San Diego, California, and is built on community volunteering. For every two hours of volunteer service in the community a person or family can earn a food share. Fifteen dollars buys a share worth forty or forty-five dollars worth of groceries. This is a privately sponsored program involving no government guidelines with no income qualifications. Any sort of community volunteering qualifies the participants for the program, but in Stockton group volunteer projects are organized as well. Linda works with the Chamber of Commerce for a Day of Sharing twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. On this day volunteers meet and work on painting or repairing homes for people in the community who are unable or can not afford to do it themselves. The Chamber also recognizes a Volunteer of the Month in conjunction with Heartland Share.

Each month the food is delivered by truck to the Senior Center in Stockton and volunteers help unload the truck and distribute the boxes of food. The boxes include several packages of frozen meat or fish, fresh fruits and vegetables, and other items. Approximately one hundred households in Stockton participate in the program with another forty-four families in nearby Woodston. An extra fifty cents is added for each share beyond the cost from the program so that money can be given back to the community for special projects. The local grocery store cooperates with the program. For anyone who buys a share, the store will match fifteen dollars worth of groceries that they buy in the store when they pick up their Heartland Share box. Linda began her association with the program as a participant and volunteer and it has since become a full time job. Because the work requires more than the forty hours a week for which she is paid, she

continues to give significant volunteer time to the project. She is the coordinator for an area that runs from Manhattan, Kansas, to the Colorado border and also covers two-thirds of Nebraska. She has coordinated community projects in other towns in her area, such as getting a group to remodel a grocery store in Long Island, Kansas, a small north-central town a few miles south of the Nebraska border.

Before the food trucks deliver to the various communities, they must be filled and this is also performed with volunteer labor in Topeka. Each month Linda takes a group of volunteers to help load the trucks in Topeka. She tries to take people from a different site each month so they all see how difficult the task is and understand how easy it is to miss a head of lettuce or two when loading twenty-six semi-trucks. After this hands-on participation they appreciate the service much more. In Stockton the participants are bankers, business people, farmers, and those from a variety of other backgrounds. Linda encourages people with varied ethnic backgrounds and also some who have some kind of handicap to participate in the monthly distribution so the entire community is represented. Some of the volunteers for the distribution day are not participants in the Heartland Share Program but want to see it succeed and enjoy the social time. If Linda has a regret about this program that she so whole heartedly supports it is that it does not seem to be attracting enough low income families. The program does accept food stamps and that is an incentive, but she believes that it does not provide the type of food that many people are accustomed to buying. For example, while she was involved in a WICK training program in Salina she told the group about the Heartland Share Program. After her presentation a woman came to her to say that she would like to be in the program but

could not imagine what she would ever do with something like five pounds of potatoes. She described the kind of groceries she wanted, that her children were accustomed to eating, and it was mostly prepared food. Linda believes that many people, not just those with low incomes, have become accustomed to using frozen french fries and pizza and do not know how to prepare a head of cauliflower or broccoli. She is conducting more sessions where she teaches life-skill training where she takes food from a typical Share box and prepares it with the participants, if they wish.

Linda talked about other volunteer groups in Stockton such as the 4-H Clubs, the Lions and Rotary Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, EHU groups, and the FFA. She considers their contributions to the community to be necessary for a town like Stockton to survive. She said that the high school has a program in which seniors are required to have a community project to meet requirements for graduation. She personally mentors two or three each year. She takes them volunteering in a program in which they participate in every nonprofit organization in the county, including the volunteer fire department and the rescue squad. For example, two of her seniors worked with Lions Club members delivering food baskets and poinsettias to the elderly or needy during the holiday season. They serve as crossing guards at schools and as candy strippers at the hospital in Plainville. They have the opportunity to participate in a diving practice with the rescue squad and put on fire department gear to go through a smoke-filled house. In addition to working with the various nonprofit organizations, each student chooses an individual project. Two of the students Linda has been a mentor for completed a shoe recycling program in which they collected old shoes and sent them to Nike where they were directed to be used for the

construction of intercity basketball courts. Another student collected the pop-tops from beverage cans for a Ronald McDonald House. At the end of their mentoring time Linda takes them to Topeka for three days where they help feed homeless people and observe literacy and child care programs that are associated with the Let's Help Program. One of her Stockton students won a national award for his work through Heartland Share for which he received a trip to San Diego and two hundred dollars. Linda is convinced that it is important to get young people involved in volunteering early; this ethic of caring about others will carry through their lives. She says that the churches contribute to the activism in the community. She said that most of them have their own active programs and that most of them are also sponsors for the Share Program. The Ministerial Alliance established a prayer station, with volunteer help, at the last Day of Sharing. She thinks Stockton is typical of other small towns in that if someone is in need of help, there will be someone there to provide. For example, spaghetti feeds or soup suppers are often held to raise money for medical expenses for someone who needs such help. Emotional support is also offered during difficult times when neighbors pour out sympathy, love and food.

Drs. Craig and Jessica Iwanski, a young husband and wife veterinarian team, opened Central Veterinary Services, September 23, 1998. For Craig it was a return to his hometown. His family moved to Stockton when he was one and he lived there until his graduation from high school, when he began attending Kansas State University where he eventually received his degree in veterinary medicine. Jessica grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, where her father has a large veterinary practice. Craig and Jessica met while in vet school. After graduating, Jessica worked in her father's practice in Omaha and Craig

practiced in Iowa and Nebraska. After they married and lived for a while commuting to different cities, they began looking for a place to establish their own joint practice. They chose Stockton because of Craig's family connections and because of their assessment of the potential for the practice and because living in a small community appealed to them both.

Craig and Jessica relied on family and their own hard work in getting their practice established on Main Street in Stockton. They left their positions working with other veterinarians, bought the building next to the pharmacy, and completely remodeled the space. They tore out almost everything in the building and then hired a carpenter to install the basic forms. With Craig's parents helping, they did the rest of the construction themselves, completing the project in approximately two weeks. They came to town with the intention of buying into the practice of the local veterinarians, but decided it would be a better business decision to start their own. By the time that decision was made, they had already bought the building and needed to move ahead on funding. They had encouragement from the Stockton Development Director who told them about economic grants that were available. The paperwork was fairly extensive, however, and they learned that even if they qualified for the grants, the money would probably not come through for six months. They had to act sooner than that because they had already quit their jobs and moved to Stockton. They were fortunate that Jessica's parents were willing and able to provide the financial backing they needed. They established their practice and designed the space as economically as possible and they are pleased with what they have accomplished. The facility has proven to be workable and efficient. The city did allow



them a reduced rate for water and electricity for six months as a way of supporting the new business. They also received verbal support and encouragement from city officials and from Stockton residents and business people. Many responded positively to their starting their own practice, indicating that there was a need for another veterinarian in the area. They still have some regrets that buying into the existing practice did not work out. Craig had worked for the father and daughter who share the practice when he was in school and received a memorial scholarship that was established by the family. He still respects their work and believes the two practices can complement each other.

So far their business has exceeded their expectations and they have exciting plans for expanding their practice. While they were being interviewed on a sunny fall afternoon, the clinic was humming with the coming and going of many pet owners bringing in their pets for a city-sponsored vaccination clinic. This success has not come without some worries, however. Craig says they more-or-less take turns worrying about paying the bills and finding capital to buy the equipment they need in order to expand, but they work things out together and support each other. Craig handles most of the large animal practice and Jessica works with smaller animals and manages the office. Their cell phone is an essential tool for keeping in touch with each other and their clients. Craig is out on calls most of the day. After about a year they were able to hire some local high school students to come in after school and clean the clinic. That was a big change from the first year when they would both have been working all day, Craig would return from a call at four-thirty or five, and they then would clean until six or six-thirty, sweeping and mopping after the clinic was closed. They also hired a woman who formerly had a

grooming business in Hays to help Jessica with holding animals while they are being treated. This employee now works part-time as receptionist, animal handler, and groomer.

In the midst of renovating their clinic space and establishing their veterinary practice the Iwaniskis have found time to get involved in volunteer activities in the town. As Jessica says, "You would be surprised what we get roped into." They named a few of the volunteer organizations they participate in, including Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, PEO, Main Street Association, the Nova Theater renovation project, and church activities. They are both on the committee for the Nova Theatre; Craig is on the executive board and Jessica is the corporate member. They agreed to join the Nova committee because they thought it would be a good activity to do together outside of their business, because they believe it is an important project for enlivening the community, and because they hope to have children one day and want it to be a place for children and young people to go. When they joined the committee, it was a time when everyone else seemed to be burning out and some new enthusiasm was needed. The committee was stalled on finding the right kind of chairs, ones that could be set up individually around tables or that could be fastened together for theater seating. Craig and Jessica searched the Internet and found just the right kind of chairs in a short time and they and the other committee members felt that this was a significant contribution to the progress of the theater.

Jessica attends the Chamber of Commerce meetings and likes knowing that in a small community she can participate fully in the decisions and activities of the town. In Omaha, where she grew up, she believes that she would never have had this opportunity to participate so extensively. At the Chamber of Commerce meetings she listens to the

members and guests discussing various topics that are of importance in the community and becomes engaged herself. "I get on my soap box and kind of vent some things out and then the next thing I know someone says because you were so upset about this we are just going to make you head of it. And I'm thinking, okay, I've got to be a little careful now because we have a pretty full plate, already." She did, however, agree to take on the leadership for the Main Street Program that is being initiated in Stockton. She knows it will require even more of her time, but she actually has no problem taking on this additional responsibility because she wants to have an influence in making some changes. Jessica has a very distinct vision of what a small town should be and she theorizes that this might be because she grew up in an entirely different atmosphere. She is determined to work toward making that vision into a reality. For example, one of the things she wants to see happen is to have trees planted on Main Street. "Small towns are so cool because you can do so little and you can impact— you can totally impact a town with such a small thing like doing the Nova Theatre thing." When she lived in Omaha, she was much less involved. Even in her church there were so many people it was hard to break into groups and she would never have even thought about teaching Sunday School as she does now in Stockton. But in Stockton it is expected that if you want to live here and see things accomplished you need to get involved. Other members of the community have encouraged the Iwanskis from the beginning to participate, telling them that there is a need for the impact of someone new who sees things from a different perspective. Jessica says that she thinks she sees Stockton with fresh eyes because she has not lived here her entire life and if someone tells her that something cannot be done because it has always

been done a certain way she says, "Well, it's not like that anymore. As far as I'm concerned if it's like that and it's not working, then we need to change it."

Some of the older residents have some resistance to change, however. There is an attitude by some that things have always been done this way and if it was good enough in the past it is good enough now. One of Jessica's concerns has to do with the deterioration of store fronts on Main Street and some of the older buildings throughout town. The owners refuse to sell or lease them, but they also refuse to update them and seem to be planning to hold on to them until they die. The east end of Main Street is owned by people who use the space simply as storage and that type of usage drags down the buildings around them. Another concern is that if someone does want to start a new business and manages to find space to buy or lease, the buildings are so run-down that they require a great deal of capital for renovation. Many buildings require the installation of a new roof and new flooring as well as many other improvements. This makes it very difficult economically for anyone trying to start a business. Some of the established residents are supportive of change, however. They are often people who are in business themselves and who are motivated by economics and a desire to see Stockton thrive.

A few other young couples are as involved as the Iwanskis in promoting both their own businesses and the community as a whole. One couple owns the pharmacy that is next door to the clinic and another couple bought the insurance company down the street and have now expanded their offices to another town. Those businesses have contributed to a thriving block in the center of town with lots of daily activity. The businesses feed off of each other in a positive way and having them nearby encourages walk-in traffic for all

of them. This is the kind of atmosphere they are hoping to promote up and down Main Street in Stockton.

While Jessica wants to see change she admits that she also wants to maintain the aspects of small-town life that attracted her there in the first place. She thinks the people in Stockton are well-grounded in their ethics and attitudes with no one who is “too far out.” She appreciates knowing that she can leave her car and her front door unlocked. When she has children she wants them to be able to walk to school without worry. She wants Stockton to remain a safe place to rear a family. Jessica thinks she has always been a small town girl at heart. “Omaha is not a big city at all by most standards, but it is too big for me. It’s just too many people, too big. Around here I like the openness, not only the people and things like that, but I like how when you step outside you can see stars here at night. Omaha, you couldn’t see stars.” The pace in Omaha was more hectic. The clinic where she worked was open from seven in the morning until eight at night with seven veterinarians working there. The work and pressure were continuous with never a let up. In Stockton they are just as busy, working harder and more hours, but the pace is more relaxed and they have a better sense of knowing and working with their clients. For example, Jessica now has time to follow up with clients in addition to treating their immediate needs. Recently she called a woman to check on the welfare of her cat that she had treated a few days earlier. The client could hardly believe that Jessica was calling just to see how things were going and Jessica said that she would never have had time for such friendly follow-up in her Omaha practice.

### Research Question Two: Newspaper Readership

Question two: Is civic engagement demonstrated through newspaper readership and does the newspaper reflect and report on those aspects of social capital described in question one?

In this section of the narrative civic engagement is revealed as it relates to the fund of social capital in Stockton based on an analysis of the *Stockton Sentinel*. As did Tocqueville before him, Putnam (1993a) connects civic engagement and civic vitality with networks of associations and with local newspaper readership. Putnam (2000) found that people who read newspapers regularly belong to and participate more fully in a greater number of organizations and civic associations, are more likely to vote, volunteer more frequently for community projects, visit friends more frequently, and build stronger trusting relationships with their neighbors. For this part of the study, first the people interviewed in Stockton were asked about the role of the newspaper in the town. Next, the *Stockton Sentinel* was analyzed for a period of approximately seven months to examine what it reveals about civic engagement in the community.

This analysis demonstrated that the *Stockton Sentinel* plays an important role in promoting and enhancing social capital in the community. The weekly newspaper has a long history in the community. A Stockton newspaper has been published since the earliest settlement days of the town. It was started as the *Rooks County Record* in the late 1800s. The Hamilton family bought the *Rooks County Record* in 1928, but a disagreement in the family resulted in the division of the paper. The son began

publishing the *Stockton Sentinel* in a new location while his father continued with the *Rooks County Record* in the original newspaper building. Public preference for the *Stockton Sentinel* allowed it to prevail and the *Rooks County Record* went out of business. The *Stockton Sentinel* is still a family business, published by Bob Hamilton with assistance from his daughter Susan Snider.

Interviews. When asked about the local newspaper, all of the people interviewed were definite in stating that not only did they read the paper faithfully themselves, but that they were confident that the paper is widely read by almost everyone in the community. Neola Breckenridge, librarian, said many people subscribe to the *Stockton Sentinel*, but that it can also be purchased in several places in town. She does not subscribe but picks one up on the day it is published, Wednesday. If you are a subscriber, you must wait another day for it to be delivered in the mail and most people are eager to read it immediately. According to Neola, it was an unsettling time for the town when the newspaper was divided, but that it did not lose its important role as a means of communication within the community.

Patrice Hein, community development director, laughingly commented that for a citizen of Stockton one's entire life can be documented in the local newspaper. She thinks that almost everyone reads the paper and one of the ways that citizens learn about important events in other people's lives, such as birthdays, anniversaries, illnesses, trips, weddings, and births, is through reading the newspaper. They respond to this information by arranging card showers, visiting the sick or bereaved, taking in food, or doing whatever else might be appropriate for the occasion. Patrice also remarked that the

newspaper can be received in the mail or one can do as many others do and go directly to the newspaper office on Wednesday after it is published to pick up a copy. She said that when you get there, you will see a pile of quarters on the counter where people have come in to get a paper and left fifty cents. You can make your own change on the honor system, but some people like to joke around by jingling the change to make the staff working in the office think someone might be stealing it so they will come out to check and learn that it was just a joke. Patrice indicated that this was part of the charm of living in a small town, but that it could also be somewhat disconcerting for newcomers because everyone expects everyone else to know such local traditions, but no one actually explains how it works.

Joan Balderston, community volunteer, agrees that almost everyone gets the *Stockton Sentinel*, but that knowing the number of subscribers would not indicate how many people read it. If people want the news right away, they go get a copy on Wednesday when it is published.

Roma Smith, gift store proprietor, regrets the family split that caused the establishment of the *Stockton Sentinel*. The *Rooks County Record* was published for more than one hundred years. The Hamilton family had published it since 1928. The father and son were working together when the father partially retired. The son thought he was working toward a partnership in the business and when that proved not to be accurate he pulled away to start the *Stockton Sentinel*, which won public support and continues to be published. The *Rooks County Record* subsequently went out of business. When the papers split, the *Rooks County Record* retained the old newspaper building. After the paper



folded, the building was vacant until it was recently purchased by a man from Tampa, Florida, who has plans for establishing some kind of businesses in the historic space. The *Stockton Sentinel* is now located on Main Street in a former store front building.

Elaine Davenport, manager of Gambino's Pizza, indicated that some people in the community read the Plainville, Hays, or Salina newspapers, in addition to the Stockton Sentinel. She knows there are many who subscribe to the Salina paper because the son of a friend of hers throws that paper and he has a busy route.

Loren Goodheart, Farm Bureau Insurance manager, believes that the local newspaper contributes to the community's understanding about its own strengths. As an example, he noted a recent article in the *Sentinel* that featured all of the people from the community who have earned advanced degrees after graduating from Stockton High School. Some have earned medical degrees, doctorate degrees, and other professional accomplishments. Forty or fifty of them were featured in the article. Articles such as this one, in his opinion, encourage people in the community to value such achievements and the contribution the community makes in their lives. This is especially true because everyone in the community reads the local newspaper thoroughly. In addition, he observes that many people subscribe to either a Hays paper or the Salina paper, or both.

Linda Hagan, director of Heartland SHARE, agrees that the local newspaper is widely read and that most people, "Can't wait until Wednesday to pick it up." She concurs that looking at subscription rates would not indicate how many people read the paper because most do not wait until Thursday to have it delivered when they can pick up a copy on Wednesday, the day it is published.

Analysis of a single issue of the *Stockton Sentinel*. A close reading of one typical issue of the *Stockton Sentinel* clearly reveals its role in reflecting and reporting on civic engagement within the community. The September 2, 1999, issue provides a snapshot view of the issues that interest and concern the community. Front page stories include a detailed report of the most recent county commission meeting, mainly concerned with road repair, an article on declining enrollment in the Stockton schools, and a report on the health status of a young Stockton girl who is being treated for leukemia in Kansas City. In addition to relating her medical progress, the news article states that the community has supported her and her family during her illness and treatment. "The community has helped the family in many ways with donations, prayers, cards and letters, which all the Beoughers appreciate very much" (*Stockton Sentinel*, Thurs., September 2, 1999, p. 1). Also on the front page are stories about a change in regulations at nearby Webster Reservoir, the winner of the grand champion ribbon for quilts at the Rooks County Free Fair, an article on fall sports at the high school and junior high, and a notice about a postponement of a trial.

Inside, the paper has an editorial on the excitement of the opening of the high school football season and more articles relating to school sports and activities, including the schedule of games for the junior high volleyball and football teams, the rosters for the Lady Tigers volleyball team and the junior high football team, a photograph of a winning FFA booth, and an article explaining that the local chapter of Future Homemakers of America (FHA) has changed its name to Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). "Driven by the real world needs and the changing reality of male and

female roles in society, FHA's programs now include areas such as financial management, career planning, the art of balancing family and career, leadership development, and community service" (*Stockton Sentinel*, Thurs., September 2, 1999, p. 10). On the last page is a calendar of school events, primarily sports, listing thirty-eight local sponsors.

Photos with captions show four different class reunions from 1994, 1989, 1979, and 1984, three young girls at the swimming pool, and the cast of a children's play at their dress rehearsal. There are two columns on earlier times in Stockton, one fourteen years ago and one ninety-eight years ago, and reports from the historical museum director. There are more than fifteen short social notes telling about various family activities, guests, or trips. In a card-of-thanks section a family expresses gratitude to the Stockton Fire Department for responding to a fire call and another family thanks those who had extended sympathy, cards, flowers, food and other acts of kindness at the time of the death of a brother. There is a story and photograph of a Stockton High School girl who competed in a beauty pageant in Oklahoma City and includes a list of the families and businesses who had sponsored her appearance or helped her "achieve her dream of becoming a more poised and beautiful person (inside)." In a Readers Write section a former Stockton resident expresses appreciation for a earlier issue of the *Sentinel* and in a letter to the editor a family who recently moved from Stockton thanks the people in the community, praising the schools, churches, and medical care.

Health-related announcements include the schedule for the Rooks County Health Department, an article by the FASC Extension Agent discussing young athletes' need for

avoiding dehydration and including a recipe for a homemade sports drink, the Plainville and Phillips County Hospital reports, the announcement that an oncologist had recently joined the staff at the Hays Cancer Center, and the week's menus for the Senior Center and the schools. Official reports include four public notices from the District Court of Rooks County, District Court fines and filings, a Municipal Court report on a \$41.50 fine for a dog running at large, judgments, and a Sheriff's Department report of a minor traffic accident involving two Plainville girls. Other items include three obituaries, a report from the library director telling of memorial books, a photo and invitation for a birthday celebration for a woman who is 100 years old, a photo and a story about a visitor from Japan who had been an exchange student in Stockton ten years ago, a review of the weather of the past week, a photo and request for a shower and a poem for a couple celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary, a report on a fun night at the Cedar Links Country Club by a group called the Sunflowerettes, a column by Griz Bear asking readers to guess his/her identity, a column of Kansas Klips, a photograph and an article about a name change for the Federal Land Bank of Hays and Phillipsburg with an outpost office in Stockton, and an announcement that an area man was named president of Kansas Farm Bureau. There is also a section of news from Woodston, a nearby community. Several public announcements appear, including one from the Knights of Columbus telling about the Stockton Gun, Knife, and Coin Show coming September 25-26. There is also a detailed Stockton Consumer Confidence Report, August 13, 1999, on water quality. The report indicated that the Stockton water passes minimum regulations but that they are getting a new water treatment plant in the spring of 2000. There is a request for volunteer

Spanish-speaking tutors at the grade school, an announcement of preschool screenings by the North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative, and an announcement of a county-wide waste tire collection by Rooks County and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The classified ads include twenty-four help wanted ads, but only one for a position in Stockton. In addition there are many advertisements, most from Stockton merchants, including the Majestic Theatre, which was showing *Runaway Bride*, *Bowfinger*, and the *Thomas Crown Affair*.

Analysis of the *Stockton Sentinel* from March 23, 2000 through November 9, 2000. A careful analysis of the content of the *Stockton Sentinel* over a period of time provided a deeper look at how the newspaper reflects and enhances civic engagement and influences the development of social capital within the town of Stockton, especially when cross-referenced with the interview transcripts and analysis. This careful reading of the weekly events as reflected in the newspaper provided significant insight into the Stockton community, especially documenting the issues and events that are important to the residents. Some events are reported each time they occur, such as the reports on the city and county commission meetings and school board agendas and meetings. Nearly all of the organizations and issues that were identified by the people who were interviewed for the study appear in some form in the newspaper, whether in news articles, county or city commission reports, school board meeting reports, social quips, or even advertisements.

Interviews. A close reading of the *Stockton Sentinel* each week for more than seven months validates that the people selected for the interviews for the study were

representative of the community. All of the residents interviewed appeared in the newspaper analysis advocating or working on or in the voluntary organizations and projects that they had described as important in their interviews. For example, Neola Breckenridge, library director, has a weekly column called "Library Doodles" in which she not only tells of new acquisitions to the collection, but invites the community to participate in programs, tells of their people-first policies, and frequently thanks the volunteers that the library staff depends on for assistance in conducting activities. In the event of special programs and speakers the paper has photographs, often showing groups of children taking part in library events. Although Neola is a paid employee rather than a volunteer, she encourages and utilizes volunteers, works with volunteer groups (including the library board), and shows up as providing community service in serving on a county-wide mental health board.

Patrice Hein as development director is also a paid employee who is dependent on volunteer help in order to carry out her responsibilities. She appears frequently in the *Sentinel* while attending all of the Chamber of Commerce meetings, some of the city and county commission meetings, and other promotional events. Her attendance is related to her paid position with the city, but her involvement and responsibility is in recruiting and working with the volunteers that carry out the projects her office promotes. In addition to the activities she described in her interview, there were references in the newspaper to her involvement with a Stockton Technology Task Force and a Stockton Tourism Task Force, both of which are in the process of being formed. She also participates in a recently formed group called the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Association, a group from

nearby towns that is working on capitalizing on their assets of land, history, people, and nature to attract tourism to the area.

Joan Balderston, community volunteer, appeared as directing or assisting with two children's plays sponsored by the Arts Council and as contact person for other Arts Council activities. The children's group that she directed gave four different performances, at the Nova Theatre, at the Solomon Valley Manor, and for two school groups. The article, accompanied by photographs, featured the children and commented on the wonderful performance they had given. In addition to the Arts Council activities, Joan was featured in a report from the Solomon Valley Manor on August 3 telling about her performance at a birthday party for the residents in which she sang songs written in the years of their birthdays. In May she performed a one-woman show for the community, sponsored by the Rooks County Historical Society and held at the Frank Walker Museum, in which she portrayed a woman from the Civil War era. The show was called "Meet Sally Meyers from Gettysburg."

Roma Smith had the most noted recognition in the *Sentinel* during the seven-month period of analysis. Issues published June 8 and July 13, 2000, told of the award that her store, Smith's of Stockton, was given on June 20 in Scott City, Kansas, during the Western Regional Ceremony for the Kansas Business Appreciation Award Program sponsored by the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. A front-page photograph showed Roma being given the award by Deputy Secretary Fred Schwien Jr. of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. The award recognized Smith's store and the family for ninety-nine years of business and community service. Roma and her

husband were noted for their support of many community causes during their years in business in Stockton. Advertisements for the store also appeared occasionally in the paper.

Elaine Davenport, manager of Gambino's, was listed as attending nearly all of the monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings and they were always held at her restaurant. In one meeting she was quoted in the paper explaining that the Chamber provides free memberships for six months after the ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new business that the Chamber conducts. Other groups that met at Gambino's were the Rotary Club and the Rooks County Communities that Care Committee.

Loren Goodheart, Farm Bureau Insurance, also appeared as attending all of the Chamber of Commerce meetings as an active participant. In June he reported that the Nova Theatre Committee was having a clean-up day and that the Arts Council was sponsoring an annual art show in City Hall. In July he said that he had called on two new businesses to invite them to join the Chamber of Commerce and also reported on the success of a musical concert that the Stockton churches had sponsored. Loren's wife, Clarene Goodheart, attended the Chamber meetings, reporting on the progress of the Tree Board and concerns about the declining budget for the Historical Society.

Linda Hagan, coordinator of the Heartland SHARE volunteer program, supplied information for a monthly notice in the newspaper listing the contents of the SHARE grocery package, giving the deadline for ordering, noting who won or would have won the monthly drawing, and sometimes providing other information about the program. The August 3, 2000, issue had a news article informing the community that Linda and an



assistant had been invited to San Diego, California, where they trained new SHARE coordinators from Southern California.

Drs. Craig and Jessica Iwanski, Stockton veterinarians, figured prominently in the Chamber of Commerce reports. Craig served as vice president and conducted several meetings in the absence of the president. For several issues he wrote a column for the paper called "Ask the Vet." Jessica organized the Swing into Summer festival for the Chamber of Commerce. She reported on plans for the festival, solicited help from the other members, and reported on the successful outcome that had more than seventy-seven children and many adults as well participating in special events

Organizations. Most of the organizations mentioned or described by the people interviewed for the study appeared in some form during the seven-month newspaper analysis. The Chamber of Commerce was visible in the paper throughout the period. The monthly meetings of the Chamber were reported in great detail and special events such as the Swing into Summer festival were covered extensively. Plans for future events, such as the Old Time Christmas celebration to be held the day after Thanksgiving, were reported on starting in October. The Stockton Area Arts Council was prominent in the reporting on a variety of events and programs, including two children's programs, "Musical Moments" and "We Are the Kids of America." There were stories about the metal silhouette depicting a covered wagon representing the history of the area that Arts Council members constructed and erected at the south entrance to the town. It was reported that other similar silhouettes depicting other historic scenes are planned for the future as the Arts Council members are able to raise the money to build them. Each silhouette costs

approximately eight hundred dollars to build and “tons of volunteer help.” Additional events sponsored by the Arts Council and noted in the newspaper included a quilt show, an annual art show, and a display in the library by fourth, fifth, and sixth graders called “Summer Memories.” The Arts Council, for the second year, will be coordinating the Parade of Trees at the library during the holiday season.

Two new developments concerning the Nova Theatre project were documented in the *Sentinel* in the seven-month analysis period. The most significant was a story that told that the project had received a twenty-five thousand dollar historic theater restoration grant from the Travel and Tourism Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. This is part of their Attraction Development Matching Grant program. The grant was announced in the *Sentinel*, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The Nova project also appeared in the city commission reports several times concerning the committee’s request to use the interest on a loan that Frank Walker had made as a start-up loan when the program was getting started. According to the Nova Committee representatives as reported in the *Sentinel*, the loan was made with the understanding that the principal would be paid back to the city and then be used for the Stockton Senior Center. The Senior Center staff objected to the request insisting that the interest should be used for the senior center in addition to the principal. The City Commission did not find an easy solution to resolving this conflict between two important community groups and was continuing to study the situation and consult legal advice.

Churches. Nearly all of the community churches were evident in some context. Several of them bought advertising space in which they invited the entire community to

join their congregation for regular services or special events. The newspaper also reported on first communions, religious education classes, and vacation Bible school for different congregations. The Ministerial Alliance supported a concert of Christian music that was attended by more than five hundred people. Reports on Solomon Valley Manor activities revealed that the pastors from the various churches also take turns providing church services or Bible classes for the residents each week. On September 21, 2000, a front-page story celebrated the first anniversary of the opening of the Community Prayer Room on Main Street in Stockton. This prayer room is a voluntary community project sponsored by six Stockton churches.

Schools. By far the most consistent reporting in the *Stockton Sentinel* concerns the schools in the community and any other activities that young people are involved in or that relate to their welfare. The monthly meetings of the school board are reported in the *Sentinel* on the front page of the paper. The report is detailed, covering each item on the agenda, including recognition of various student activities, budget, personnel, and facilities issues, and school district policies. Groups of students and their teachers attended some of the school board meetings to make presentations on class projects. At the beginning of the school year all of the teachers are profiled in the paper with photographs. In addition to this more-or-less routine reporting, every issue contains articles and photographs concerning school events. The athletic events are always covered, from grade school through high school. Activities such as school plays are reported on both before and after the production, first urging people to attend and later reporting on the success of the performance. Almost every issue contains photographs of

students, highlighting various awards and accomplishments. For homecoming, prom, and graduation the newspaper publishes individual and group photographs, and for each of those events a two-page photo-collage of all who attended and the elaborate decorations is published.

County fair. The Rooks County Fair also gets a great deal of coverage in the newspaper, before, during, and following the event. Again much of the emphasis is on the achievements of the young people involved through 4-H Clubs and FFA. Articles and editorials, in addition to informing people about events, also urge them to attend, reminding them that this event is an important one in the community having been held for more than one hundred years. A two-page photo-collage of people and activities at the fair was published, and for weeks following the fair a listing of all prize winners is published, along with photographs of young people with their prize-winning livestock, produce, crafts projects, and so forth. Often the photographs would also include the community person or business representative who had sponsored the award for the event. The 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale was reported as being a success even though it had been a poor year for livestock sales in general. Local people turned out to bid on the livestock so the young people could earn a premium for their efforts. John Forshee, the Rooks County Extension agent, was quoted in the newspaper following the livestock sale. "It takes many people working together to make the livestock sale the big success it is every year. We appreciate the efforts of the fair board, the local newspapers, the parents, and the many volunteers that work the barn, the pens, and accounting before, during, and after the sale" (*Stockton Sentinel*, Aug. 24, 2000, pp. 1,10).

**Local government.** The city and county commission meetings are covered fully in the *Sentinel*. The people who serve as commissioners are elected officials (volunteers) who are responsible for overseeing the management of paid employees, complicated budgets, and many quality-of-life issues in the community. The city has its own electric utility company and has recently constructed a new water plant. The commissioners are responsible for the city parks and have plans to construct a new tennis court, basket ball court, skating area, and a shelter house at the location of the old water plant. Several civic organizations will be involved in these projects. The local swimming pool is maintained by the city as well. The county commission meets in Stockton because Stockton is the county seat. Many of their meetings are concerned with road and bridge building and maintenance within the county. Misunderstandings and animosities occasionally surface in the newspaper reports on both city and county commission meetings. Most notable during the period of this study was conflict between the county attorney and the sheriff. Both of the incumbents were voted out of office in the fall 2000 primary election. Reading the monthly, detailed reports on these meetings reveals that these elected commissioners must take time from their own businesses and occupations to serve in public office and must also function as efficient administrators while remaining responsive to their friends and neighbors who make up their constituency.

**Informal networks.** Evidence of informal networks is plentiful in the *Stockton Sentinel*. As would be expected, announcements, celebrations of births, deaths, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, baby and wedding showers, and family and school reunions are reported, often with photographs. These announcements contain many

details describing the event and listing the names of the people attending and sometimes their relationship to one another. In addition to these more formal stories of features on social events, there are short social notes scattered throughout each issue. One of the most frequent types of these notes is thank you notes from families or individuals expressing gratitude for food, cards, flowers, phone calls, visits, and assistance during times of illness or a death or other difficult events in a family. Some of these notes also thank people in the community for participation in celebrating a birthday or anniversary and others are in appreciation of the Stockton Fire Department and/or the Stockton Ambulance Crew for responding to calls. These thank you notices are paid for by the people who send them in, but they do not appear in the want ads, but throughout the paper among other articles and stories. Another type of notice tells about visitors that Stockton residents have had from out of town and of trips Stockton residents have made, whether to neighboring towns for shopping and dinner or to other cities, states, or countries. There are requests for card showers in which family or friends send an announcement about a birthday or anniversary or perhaps tell about someone who is recovering from an illness and ask all who know them to send a card to wish them well. There are paid notices about someone who is having a milestone birthday and invitations to birthday celebrations, usually for someone over eighty, inviting the entire community to attend. Over the seventh-month period of analysis for this study a great deal could be learned about some of the Stockton residents. For example, for one of the persons interviewed for the study it was possible to ascertain her birthday and wedding anniversary dates, the names, locations, and the occupations of her grown children, also their spouse's names as well as

the names, ages, and birthdays of the grandchildren. There was information about boards on which she serves and organizations she belongs to as well as who her out-of-town visitors were and trips she had taken.

The letters-to-the-editor section was another source of information about informal networks in the community. These letters covered a wide range of topics, including political issues, praise or criticism for something happening in the community, and letters from former Stocktonites, now living in places such as California, Texas, or Minnesota, renewing their subscription to the *Sentinel* and commenting on what they had been reading about Stockton affairs. All of the items about the events in peoples' lives, from the social (the Browns met friends in Hays for dinner at Applebees), the tragic (the Greens want to thank the community for all of the support through cards, visits, and flowers as their son recovered from a near fatal accident), the exciting (the Blacks traveled throughout Cuba and will be sharing their experiences at a meeting to which everyone is invited), or the celebratory (the Whites held a reception, in a Topeka restaurant, to celebrate the marriage of their son and daughter-in-law who were recently married in Hawaii), provide the details of small town life that keep the community connected.

Another area of community life that is documented in the *Stockton Sentinel* is of particular interest to this study. An early inspiration for Putnam's work on social capital was his discovery that the number of bowling leagues in United States communities has declined while the number of individual bowlers has stayed the same or increased, a discovery that led him to surmise that this decline in league play indicates a decline in

community involvement and interaction. In Stockton bowling leagues are still alive and well. The bowling season starts in September and ends in May. There are five leagues with twenty-seven teams in town with a population of some 1,400 people and the “Bowling News” is reported each week in the *Stockton Sentinel*. On August 24, 2000, there was an article announcing the Stockton Women’s Bowling Association meeting and on August 31 a front-page story telling the populace that the Bowling Alley is now open for the season and ready to sign players up for league play. The story, in an editorializing tone, encourages people to sign up saying “without bowlers, there won’t be a bowling alley,” with the implication that the community would lose something if it had no bowling alley.

The *Stockton Sentinel* consists almost entirely of Stockton area news. Occasional exceptions are state news stories or issues that might concern Stockton citizens or a state or national story that involves former or present-day Stockton residents. For example on March 23, 2000, the paper ran a front page story on a new Texas law making it a capital offense to knowingly kill a law enforcement officer who is discharging his duties whether or not he is on duty or in uniform. This story was important to the Stockton community because a former Stockton man was a Houston police officer who was killed when out of uniform. His killer was sentenced to death because of the passing of this law. The mother of the police officer still lives in Stockton and the scoreboard at the Stockton High School football field was given as a memorial after the young man’s death. (*Stockton Sentinel*, March 23, 2000, p.13).



### Research Question Three: Inherited Social Capital

Question three: Is civic engagement demonstrated through an inherited stock of social capital?

From his work in Italy, where he studied community networks and associations that have existed for hundreds of years, Putnam concluded that trust and a tradition of cooperation can be inherited (Putnam, 1993a, p. 167). Evidence for this kind of inherited social capital in Stockton was investigated by looking for it in the words of the people who were interviewed for the study and by looking at community records such as the historical column published in each issue of the newspaper and other historical information found in the museum and library.

Interviews. The people who were interviewed for the study expressed knowledge of the history of their community and indicated that they considered it important to preserve and build on the traditions of the past. Neola Breckenridge, the librarian, noted that when the railroad came into Stockton in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it ended there rather than building on west. She said that this prevented the town from growing and developing and the town still feels that loss. She noted that Stockton did win in the struggle with Plainville for the county seat and the county business remains a vital element in the community. She noted that the rivalry that developed during this struggle is still somewhat evident in the relations between the two towns with Stockton still proudly holding on to the courthouse and all of the related county business, including the Rooks County Fair, even though Plainville has a larger population. Neola's strongest revelation about historical social capital concerns her role as community librarian. She

spoke gratefully about the generosity of the Mr. and Mrs. Frank Walker for donating the funds for the addition to the library as well as for the renovation of the old Carnegie Library. In 1984, when the new addition was completed she saw additional community spirit in action as local citizens came out in a snow storm to move and arrange the new library. Neola also noted the importance of the museum to the community.

Joan Balderston called attention to the calendar published each year by one of the local banks that features historical photographs from the community. She also said that the historical museum remains an important institution in the community and pointed out that though the building funds were donated by an individual, all of the work at the museum is done by volunteers, from cataloging materials, to staffing during open hours, to landscaping. The only exception is an occasional work crew from the local prison.

Roma Smith had a more historical perspective of the community because of her longtime residence and the even longer history of her and her late husband's families in Stockton. She told about the college that was established in Stockton from 1887 to 1920, stating that the school brought in educated people, professors and their families and other people who were attracted by the existence of a college in the town. Roma believes that the heritage of valuing education still exists in the community although most of the contemporary citizens probably have little or no knowledge of that aspect of their history. She said the community is, however, proud of the historical museum and she thinks it contributes to the pride and historical grounding of the community.

Roma acknowledged the contributions of outstanding leaders in the history of the town who were instrumental in leading the community in positive directions. She

discussed the high caliber of people who have lived in Stockton since early days. She mentioned H.C. Sweet, W.F. Hughes, O.O. Osborn, and her own husband, John Smith, as people who had been effective leaders in the community. She said there were also women who had contributed significantly to the community. She told about Mrs. McNulty who during the war years went to hospitals providing therapy to veterans through conversation and teaching knitting and who was also helpful in the local community. A story about Mrs. McNulty was of great importance in Roma's own early life. Mrs. McNulty was active in the Business and Professional Club in Stockton and according to Roma quite an inspiring person. "In fact, I wouldn't have had my second year of college if it hadn't been for Clara McNulty." Roma's father ran the grain elevator in Stockton and one of his clients who sold him all of her grain each year was Mrs. Mattie J. Griffin. Mrs. Griffin had lots of money and her few relatives lived in Oregon or California. Roma had finished a year of college in Manhattan and was hoping to go to the college in Hays to get teaching certification the following year. Her father told her that he just did not have the money to send her. He suggested that Roma go to Mrs. Griffin and ask her for a loan, offering to pay whatever interest she would want. "Well, it took me a month to get up my courage to go knock on her door. She came to the door and I told her that I was wanting to borrow some money to go to college to get my teaching certificate. She looked at me; she just slammed the door in my face. And she never sold my father another load of grain. She just wasn't going to give that money away. I don't know how she thought she was going to take it with her." Clara McNulty heard about the incident some way and came to visit Roma. She said that she understood that Roma wanted to go to college. When Roma told

her this was true, Mrs. McNulty handed Roma a form and told her to fill it out, saying that she would see that Roma had enough money to get started, at least. When it was time to leave for college, the money from the organization had not come through yet so Mrs. McNulty wrote out a check. Roma says she still has the letter in her safe telling her she would get the money and "I paid them back immediately, believe me."

Loren Goodheart stated that in his opinion the most important element of inherited social capital comes through the development of a substantial work ethic and from the value of neighbors helping one another and working together to accomplish goal and resolve problems. He believes that these values were something he learned in his own youth and that they continue to flourish in this small community. He believes that encouraging young people to be involved in school and community organizations with an emphasis on helping in the community are vital to building responsible citizens. Because of this belief he and his wife Clarene have in the past and continue to spend a great deal of time volunteering in youth-related and community-building activities and are convinced that such things as the historical museum are an important element in the fabric of the community.

Linda Hagan, Craig and Jessica Iwanski, and Elaine Davenport all agreed that the museum is an important community component. Linda commended Babe Butler, the volunteer museum director, as someone who knows the community and the history of the community well.

Stockton Sentinel. The *Stockton Sentinel*, originally the *Rooks County Record*, has played a leading role in promoting social capital in the community for more than one

hundred years. A complete analysis of the paper for the past century would elicit more data than could be utilized for this study. Each week, however, the paper contains a column entitled "What Stocktonites Were Doing 98 Years Ago" that provides many examples of inherited stock of social capital. In these brief glimpses from 1902, published from March 23, 2000 through November 7, 2000, in the contemporary *Stockton Sentinel*, one sees evidence of many of the same social and civic events that unite or cause tension in the community at the present time. For example, the leading story in the November 9, 2000, edition states that liquor by the drink was passed locally by a fairly narrow margin, with a vote of 1,441 to 1,232. The ninety-eight-year-ago news indicates the issue was also under consideration at that period in history. "The parties who were intending to start the liquor club in Stockton, got discouraged by the experience of the Utopians from Plainville, now languishing in durance vile at Sheriff Hilger's hostelry, and by the firm stand taken by County Attorney Miller, and left for Nebraska several days ago. Utopian schemes for getting liquor by other than the jug route will not be tolerated in Rooks County. Jugs are the hardest propositions for the temperance people to manage" ("What Stocktonites Were Doing 98 Years Ago," *Stockton Sentinel*, March 23, 2000, p. 5).

Births, deaths, and marriages were reported on in 1902, as well as accidents and illnesses. Social activities included ice cream socials, church suppers, birthday parties, ladies aid meetings, and town ball games. Economic news was prominent. The area was still being settled and businesses were being established. Community building was of great importance to the people who were instrumental in promoting the growth of the community. There were frequent stories about buying and selling property, grain, and

livestock. The first automobile was seen in the county in 1902, but there were many stories telling of buying or selling horses and mules, as well as about many accidents involving horses and horse-drawn vehicles. Political contests were reported and church and school news. The opera house seemed to be a center for social activity with reports of social dances, masked balls, and a production of Faust, described as the finest dramatic work ever given in Stockton. A Harvest Jubilee was held on July 24, 1902. Citizens met to plan for it and the paper made the following recommendation. "It would be an excellent thing for our citizens to cut the weeds around their premises and slick up a little before the Great Harvest Jubilee on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Lots of strangers will be here at that time and we want to make a good impression" ("What Stocktonites Were Doing 98 Years Ago," *Stockton Sentinel*, July 13, 2000, p. 10). The paper later reported that 6,000 people attended the Harvest Jubilee. It was also noted that 140 tickets for the lecture club had been sold, indicating that people had enjoyed the series the year before and that this indicated that "the people of this community are capable of appreciating something better than the common opera or cheap shows" ("What Stocktonites Were Doing 98 Years Ago," *Stockton Sentinel*, September, 28, 2000).

The fair association was meeting in 1902 and it was decided to extend the grandstand and add more stalls for exhibiting horses and cattle. The Stockton public schools had an enrollment of two hundred and fifty students (in 2000 it was three hundred and one, after consolidation in the county). This was a small increase over the previous year. Rooks County had gained five hundred and fifty seven in population, according to the assessors's returns, pointing out one of the more significant differences to the year

2000. The population of Rooks County in 1902 was 3,295, while in 2000 it was 5,753, but in 2000 the county lost fifty-one people.

The following column from ninety-eight years ago published March 30, 2000, seems typical in content and tone for the period. The language is more florid than that found in the present-day paper, but the concerns are similar as is the editorial tone found in many of the news articles.

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Congregational Church will meet at Mrs.

Rurchfield's on Friday afternoon, April 4<sup>th</sup>. A full attendance desired.

W. A. Hill came down on his wheel Wednesday from Hill City and spent the night with his parents. He made the trip in about three hours, which is pretty good for a 35-mile bike ride.

A.B. Fulkerson and Miss Grace Minor were married Monday at Hill City, returning to Stockton Monday evening. They will go to housekeeping as soon as they can get a house.

The busiest place in Stockton is the steam laundry, occupying the entire McKnight block. Hildebrandt & Rarick have installed a very expensive outfit, operated by a steam engine and boilers in the basement. Those who have not visited the place within a week past can have no idea of the size of this plant and its importance to the community. We inspected on Wednesday some of the laundry work done here, and unhesitatingly pronounce it equal if not superior to any work turned out by the city laundries. We have never seen anything better.

A fine brick walk with stone curbing is being constructed around the State Bank

building, and a stone crossing over the street to the corner east.

A valuable drilling machine has been purchased and set up in Taylor's machine shop. Geo. has the most complete private equipment of up-to-date machinery in western Kansas and is able to do every class of work.

Born on Sunday morning to Mr. and Mrs. Bert Turner of Greenfield Township, a girl baby; Dr. Callener attended.

On Saturday Drs. Jeffery and Hill removed a bullet from the arm of little Mary Miller, who was shot by Ernest Billings on March 6<sup>th</sup>. At the time of the shooting the bullet could not be located, but last week she complained of great pain and a lump could be felt on the under side of the arm. It was extracted without difficulty.

Frank Montgomery's bird dog, Nell, a general favorite on the street, gave birth Sunday to a litter of 18 pups, 15 of which are living. Nell has something of a job on her hands to raise that much offspring.

Miss Emma Pickens is selling dry goods over the counters of the Cash Bargain Store. Miss Emma is a very popular saleslady.

Born March 20 to Mr. and Mrs. Evan Hebrew of Bow Creek, a daughter; Dr. Callender attended.

The Dunbar Bell Ringers gave a remarkably fine performance in Stockton last Thursday evening, to a fair-sized highly appreciative audience. The attendance would have been quadrupled if a longer notice could have been given through the papers. The four young men composing the organization are gifted musicians and



singers, and furnished an evening of unalloyed pleasure. They were anxious to please and cheerfully accommodated themselves to every whim of the audience. The quartette responded to six encores on one number, without flinching. Their manipulation of the bells was skillful and delighted everybody. Should the Dunbars come to Stockton again, they will be greeted with a packed house.

*Stockton Sentinel*, March 3, 2000, p. 12)

Each week Babe Butler, the volunteer director for the Frank Walker Museum, writes a column of museum news for the *Stockton Sentinel*. In this column she tells about her activities at the museum, new acquisitions, and visitors. Sometimes she includes some historical information. For example, in one column she reminded readers that the Rooks County Historical Society was established in 1974 and the museum was built in 1984 from funds provided by Frank and Marvel Walker, who also gave the money for the library addition and renovation. She noted that there was not a newspaper before the 1870s in Rooks County and that the early papers primarily printed news from back east. The Stockton Academy was in existence from 1887 through 1920 and after it closed the building was used for the city high school and junior high before being demolished in 1922. The Nova Theatre opened June 16, 1932 and closed in 1972. In her August 24, 2000, column she reported that a friendship quilt top dating from 1932 had been given to the Museum. It had been given to Mary Reddick when she moved from the Twin Mound Community in Rooks County in 1932 or 1933. One of the quilt blocks was the outline of the one-year-old hand-print of Joan Maddy, now Balderston.

Although it was not reported in the "Museum News," the county commission

report of September 16, 2000, indicated funding problems for the museum. Clarene Goodheart and Lara Belle Sander of the Rooks County Historical Society, met with the Rooks County Commission to report that their organization will need additional funding before the end of the year. The expected money from a CD Frank Walker had earmarked for the Museum before his death will not be received because the CD was cashed in July, 1999. This makes the museum funds short by approximately \$4,800.00 for the year (*Stockton Sentinel*, September 14, 2000, p. 16).

Diaries of Elam Bartholomew, 1852-1934. Diaries, kept by Elam Bartholomew, who lived in the Stockton community from 1871 to 1934 and recently edited by his grandson David M. Bartholomew (1998) provide another record of community traditions that built upon social capital. Elam Bartholomew moved to the Stockton area as a young man to homestead in 1874. He married and settled in Rooks County in 1876. He was a teacher, a horticulturalist, and a farmer and he became well known for fungi research. More importantly for this study, he was an active and committed member of his community and was involved in Republican politics, local government, the United Presbyterian church, the Sunday-school movement, school issues, literary societies and various farm organizations. His journals describe the difficulties of homesteading but they also point out how eager the new citizens were for social and community engagement. The settlers brought customs from various communities and ethnic backgrounds from the east coast of the United States and from Europe and melded them into a uniquely high plains culture. From their first days in Rooks County Elam and his wife, Rachel, were involved in the social life of their neighborhood. Neighbors worked

together and helped one another. In their first year on the prairie as a newlywed couple Elam was teaching school for a salary of seventy dollars for the three-month term and they were also building their farm. The school room where Elam taught was actually part of another settler's residence and was a dugout in the side of a hill, built up in front and part of the sides with sod. The roof was covered with poles and willow brush with sod and dirt on top. He had Christmas day as vacation and he and Rachel went to a neighbor's house for Christmas dinner, stayed until evening, and they went with "some other young folks in the wagon ... to attend a social party and oyster supper which continued until long after midnight and we did not reach home until four o'clock" (Bartholomew, 1998, p. 107).

In 1879, after the birth of two sons, Elam and Rachel gave a party for their neighbors to show their appreciation for the support they had received as they were getting established. Invitations were sent for dinner to begin at half past two o'clock p.m. Dinner lasted until half past four, followed by singing and visiting. There were thirty-five guests and eight children. Elam's journals also tell of weddings and birthday parties they attended and more sadly funerals. In 1886 Elam and Rachel had been married ten years and had six children, five sons and a daughter. The next year their youngest baby died. Friends and relatives came in to help care for the sick baby and to eventually help with the arrangements for the funeral and the burial and to share in the sorrow. In 1914 Elam tells of the entire family and other relatives going to Stockton to camp for an eight-day Chautauqua program.

In addition to these social activities and connections Elam records his civic and

community involvement. Even before his marriage he was taking part in the political scene. He attended a Republican convention in Stockton and acted as clerk on the election board. Later he was elected to the office of trustee for Bow Creek township. One of his duties for this office was to be overseer for the poor. On March 20, 1877, as township trustee, "he went to the home of Jacob Shell and Mrs. Mary Messinger to make arrangements for their maintenance by the county as they had applied to me for such aid" (Bartholomew, 1998, p. 196). Elam served as Justice of the Peace and was consistently concerned with political issues and working for various causes, such as organizing a new church and founding literary societies.

#### Research Question Four: Voter Turn-out

Question four. Is civic engagement demonstrated through voter turn-out and other evidence of political participation?

Putnam (2000) says that people who vote have more interest in politics in general and are more likely to make civic contributions such as donating to charity, volunteering, attending school board meetings, and in other ways working with their fellow citizens. Looking at the voting record for Stockton as reported by the county clerk's office and the *Stockton Sentinel*, revealed that Stockton citizens vote considerably above the national average. The newspaper also reports on city and county government and local elections are carefully covered.

Voting record. Voter participation in Stockton usually compares favorably with the rest of the nation. Ruth Muir in the county clerk's office (phone conversation, January 24, 2000) reported that Stockton has two voting precincts with 921 registered voters. In

the 1996 general election, a presidential year, 79% of the registered voters turned out to vote. In spring, 1997, 38% of those registered voted in a city and school tax election. In the 1998 general election, not a presidential year, 59% voted. There were 921 registered voters for that election and 495 voted.

*Stockton Sentinel*. The seven-month analysis of the *Stockton Sentinel* conducted for this study revealed that the 2000 election was extensively promoted and reported on in the pages of the *Stockton Sentinel* and that the newspaper plays an active role in informing the citizens about voting and other political issues. The *Sentinel* printed information about the upcoming elections, including profiles of the people running for local offices and articles urging citizens to become informed and vote. There were also letters to the editor and advertisements paid for by the candidates or their supporters. Beginning with the March 23, 2000, issue the *Sentinel* was in the midst of reporting on an ongoing political controversy. In this issue there was a story on the possibility of a recall election for the seated county attorney. At the time of this article 902 valid signatures had been collected, enough to initiate a recall election. The petition as filed charged that the county attorney had hindered criminal investigations, refused to file charges, and used his office for personal vendettas. The article indicated that the county attorney had released a statement in response to the petition denying the allegations. The same issue of the *Sentinel* had a notice stating that the Grand Jury dispositions that had been filed with the district court were open to the public to read. The Grand Jury had been convened in order to investigate alleged wrong-doing in the Rooks County sheriff's department, according to the *Sentinel* article. Both of these stories were important issues

for the upcoming elections. The news articles were not sufficient to explain to an observer outside of the community the full nature and history of the controversies; they were sufficient, however, to reveal that there were significant problems in both the county attorney's office and the sheriff's office and that many citizens were concerned and attempting to mandate a change. A subsequent article (April 16) reported that the recall election for the county attorney had been stayed, pending the outcome of a hearing in the civil case filed by the county attorney in response to the recall petition. Later it was reported that both the county attorney and the recall committee had filed briefs. But on May 18 the paper reported that while the district judge had ruled the petition was sufficient he was granting a second stay because the people would have an opportunity to vote for the office of county attorney before the matter could be concluded in the courts. In that same issue (May 18) the county attorney bought a full page of space in the newspaper in which he wrote a letter to the citizens of Stockton explaining his position.

The *Sentinel*, in addition to reporting on this conflict in the community continued to keep the citizens informed about the upcoming election and urged its readers to register and to vote. The paper ran a three-part series on March 30, April 20, and May 25, providing information about the process involved in running for state representative or state senator and about the duties of the district judge. The *Sentinel* continued to announce all filings for offices as they occurred and on July 6 ran an article reminding its readers that July 17 would be the last day to register to vote prior to the August 1 primary election. In that article were listed all of the offices that would be voted on in the 2000 elections from the national presidential election through state and local contests. It was

noted that in the county elections there would be no contested races for the Democratic ticket, therefore, those registered as Democrats would not be voting in the primary election unless they change their party affiliation before July 17. This information was significant because the fate of the controversial incumbents for both county attorney and sheriff were to be decided in the primary election as all of the challengers and the incumbents were Republicans.

The July 20 issue of the newspaper included a notice that next week's *Sentinel* would have a special section on candidate profiles. There was also an article concerning a request made to the Rooks County Commission to put the question of liquor-by-the-drink on the ballot for the upcoming general election. The county attorney, who attends the commission meetings, informed the commission members that the question could be put on the ballot one of two ways, either by a resolution of the commissioners or by collecting names on a petition. The commissioners decided to leave the matter up to the interested parties to acquire the 190 signatures needed by August 8 to decide if the issue was to be included on the November ballot.

On July 27 the headline on the lead story about the special supplement on the candidates for local offices read "Exercise Your Right and Vote This Tuesday." The special supplement that was inserted in the middle of the paper contained profiles of the Republican candidates for Rooks County sheriff and county attorney and for the district magistrate judge. There were five candidates for sheriff and two for each of the other offices. The candidates had been asked to fill out questionnaires concerning pertinent

issues within the community. Their answers and photographs of the candidates were printed in the supplement.

The August 3 *Sentinel* reported that a better-than-average voter turn-out of 51% of the registered voters had spoken for change and had voted the incumbent county attorney and sheriff out of office in the primary election. Because it was not likely that there would be a serious challenge for either office in the general election, the winners of the primary were assumed to be the new office holders. The incumbent district magistrate judge did win in the primary and was expected to retain his office in the general election.

Another reminder to register to vote appeared in the October 12 issue and on October 19 there was an article stating that the liquor-by-the-drink question would be placed on the ballot for the November election since a petition drive had resulted in enough signatures to do so. The *Sentinel* explained as follows what putting the question on the ballot would mean in the community and urged voters to become informed about the issue before voting on November 7. "Passage of the proposition would allow establishments that derive at least 30% of their gross receipts from the sale of food for consumption to serve an alcoholic drink." It would not allow a bar that does not serve food to sell drinks. As background information, the story reported that most of the counties around Rooks County now have liquor laws that are similar to the proposed change and that the question had been voted on fifteen years ago in the county and lost by a narrow margin. The *Stockton Sentinel* did not take a position in regard to endorsing or objecting to the liquor-by-the drink issue, just as it did not endorse particular candidates, but seemed to be attempting to provide coverage and information on all of the candidates



and from a variety of points of view. In addition to the news articles the *Sentinel* ran paid political advertisements from various candidates and there were a few letters to the editor on political issues or endorsing candidates that were published.

On November 9, after the general election, the lead headline in the *Sentinel* reveals the priorities of the citizens of Stockton by placing the results of the local issues above the national presidential outcome. The headline reads, "Liquor by the Drink Passed; Lambert & LeRock Ousted; Bush Sweeps Rooks County." The newspaper reported that voter turn-out for the county was high at 69%.

#### Research Question Five: Status of Social Capital

Question five: Are these aspects of social capital in this town static or evolving?

In order to consider this question the words of the residents of Stockton who were interviewed for the study were analyzed searching for indications of change in the status of social capital. The final chapter of the study that looks at implications and conclusions of the study also responds in part to this question.

Interviews. Neola Breckenridge, the city librarian, has an extended history in the community of Stockton but she is more inclined to look at the future than the past. She perceives that there are new people moving into the area, working at Wilkens Manufacturing and other businesses. The prison has brought in some people to live in Stockton, but overall population is declining. In 1971 there were 2,000 people in Stockton, now there are 1,406. Some of the other changes she sees are that there are many more older people in the town and they no longer are as able to participate in civic activities. One of the long-time clubs disbanded because of this problem and turned over

the remaining funds in their treasury to the library. She says things are different than they used to be. "Younger people don't have time and the older people are not able to do a lot." She wonders what the function of the library will be in the future, in Stockton or any town, and if books will even be in the picture. Neola has seen a decline in children coming to the library, partly because many of them are now in day care facilities around town. Mothers are no longer home with their children to bring them to the library. In past years they would have thirty-five three to five-year-old children for story hour and the mothers would be visiting so enthusiastically they would have to ask them to quiet down so the children could hear the stories. Those same mothers asked for information on parenting so Neola developed a parenting collection and put it where the mothers gathered during story hour. It was enthusiastically used for a while, but now it is hardly touched and in fact most of the materials have become out-of-date and been weeded out of the collection and not replaced. The collection is now practically non-existent with no call to update it. Last year two mothers brought their children regularly to story hour. Some of the day-care providers make arrangements to come to the library but it is difficult to bring groups of children on a regular basis. The summer reading program continues to be active with an enrollment of one hundred and twenty children last summer.

A significant change for the community and possibly the biggest problem is the dissolution of local businesses. But after expressing concern about this problem, Neola optimistically proceeded to tell about the local businesses that have survived and seem to be doing well, such as the two gift stores (although one of them has recently been

advertised for sale because the husband of the proprietor has taken a job as county extension agent in another town), a drug store, an antique store, a grocery store, two hotels, and two or three restaurants. She showed a clipping from the *Sentinel* about a man from Florida who has purchased the old *Rooks County Record* building and plans to renovate it for some kind of commercial enterprise. The drop in oil production in the area has had an effect on the community. The funds that were given to build the library addition and remodel the Carnegie building and that were given to build the historical museum originated from profits from the oil industry. But that kind of money is no longer available. Many people in the town had some extra income from oil wells but few of the wells are producing any more. Losing that extra income makes it more difficult for citizens to support local projects and institutions.

Patrice Hein, development director, also talked about the decline of the oil industry and the effect it has had on the town. Many people identified with the success of the oil heritage and the loss has caused consternation. The tourist business, related to hunting and fishing, is actually more important to the economy now but many people have been slow to see its importance and seem to hold on to an earlier image of the town. She finds that people from all over the country have come to recognize Stockton, Kansas, as a "pheasant hunting Mecca," but most of the people living here are hardly aware of it. Patrice knows there is a need for more tourist amenities to accommodate those who come to the area for the hunting and fishing. She envisions the success of a series of bed and breakfast establishments located around town that might only operate seasonally. Wheat

harvesters also travel through the area in large numbers at certain times of the year and would provide additional customers for the bed and breakfasts.

Keeping downtown businesses is a major concern for Patrice's office and one that most people in town share. But she also said that some people have a "chicken little" attitude and think the sky is falling in if one business closes. Some people still regret the demise of a women's clothing store that closed after being in business in Stockton for a hundred years or more. Patrice commented that, in her opinion, the store existed in a different era when the primary clientele consisted of older women who could spend a day in a fancy dress shop buying dresses with their friends. People shop differently now and have different demands on their time. The choice of places to purchase things is also much more diverse, including mail order catalogs, the Internet, and the Walmart in a nearby town.

In discussing the various projects that are current in Stockton such as the invitation to former residents and high school alumni to consider coming back to Stockton to live or the Nova Theatre renovation, Patrice said she sees a renewed optimism in town and hope for the future. She believes that by working together to attract people into town for a performance at the Nova Theatre, once it is completed, or to stay comfortably while on a hunting venture they might convince them to decide to stay for an extra day or return for another visit.

Joan Balderston, community activist, knows how important it is to have people involved in the community but she laments that "the problem with our town is we're running out of volunteers." This is especially true for a project as big and complicated as

the Nova Theatre. Everyone just runs out of energy. Joan and her husband traveled while he was in the military and continue to do so. There are quite a few others in Stockton who also like to travel and this brings in new experiences and perspectives to the town. People, however, who are at a stage in life where they have the freedom to travel, are reluctant to commit to an inflexible schedule of volunteer work or to commit to an activity they will not be able to follow through to completion. Joan has had some success in getting young people involved and she believes that the ones in Stockton are more respectful than most and that they grow up to be responsible adults. But then she adds, "and of course most of them move away." The ones who do get into trouble are usually not held accountable in their behavior by their parents. This is a change from the past. Contemporary parents are so busy with both of them working that they fail to keep in touch with their young adults in the way that parents did in the past.

Roma Smith's gift store is a Stockton tradition with extensive family history. Even though her husband was the third generation of funeral directors in Stockton, their son was not interested in the funeral business and became a lawyer. He lives in the northwest and Roma's daughter lives in Atlanta. Thus Roma has no relatives left living in Stockton, a fact that is true for many of the old families that were involved in the town's history. The children choose to move away to pursue vocational opportunities in more populated areas. Because of this trend many of the houses in town are now occupied by only one person and many more are vacant as people die and have no family members who are interested in the homes. When Roma and her husband married during the depression they had very little money but there were other young couples to visit and

have card games. Most also had a least one set of grandparents living in town who participated in the daily lives of their children.

Loren Goodheart, insurance agent, has seen many changes since moving to Stockton more than twenty-nine years ago. In 1970 the population was fairly stable while recently it has been declining. When he arrived as principal of the high school most of the children in school had parents who had grown up and attended school in Stockton. Now even though the population has decreased in the town there are more families with school-age children that have moved into the town. This means that more students do not have as many family ties in the community. Few of the young people stay in Stockton after leaving high school even if they do have family in town. Most leave because of the job market. Even though three fairly large manufacturing companies have brought jobs to Stockton, there is still a lack of opportunities. Some learn to appreciate some of the values of small town life only after they have left it behind and some decide to move back. Whether they go or stay Loren believes that the young people of Stockton receive an excellent education and develop a strong work ethic from growing up in the community.

Because of his long involvement with 4-H Loren has been able to observe some changes. An example is attendance at the county fair. When his wife, Clarene, was 4-H agent they were so intensely involved that they spent nearly the entire week attending fair activities. Many other families did as well. Some families set aside a certain amount of money each year for the fair. The children would enter their projects and participate in livestock showing and then head to the rides at the carnival. The entire family might eat

their meals at the hamburger stand during the week. For many this is where they spent their annual vacation, at the county fair. This pattern has changed. The fair is still well attended and the 4-H participation is quite strong, but people are more mobile and the fair is just one of many activities.

Loren agrees with some of the other people who were interviewed in thinking that the decline of the oil business has had a negative impact on the town. The last big boom was in the 1980s and since then the pumps are still in place, but the price of oil has gone down so much that the pumps have been shut down and the wells plugged. They were not pumping enough oil to pay to keep them operating. Local businesses have had hard times as well. It has always been true that people would retire and go out of business but replacing those businesses has become a problem for the people who are trying to take over old businesses or start new ones. People who have been running a business for a long time were able to continue to make a living. Perhaps their children were grown and their living expenses were reduced or they owned the business and the building and had accumulated an inventory and thus did not have so many business expenses. When someone new attempts to take over one of these businesses they have to get a loan and begin paying interest in order to buy the building and inventory. They have great difficulty in making the business profitable enough to cover all of their business expenses and make a living. "You can make enough to either live on or you can make enough to pay the bills for the store. But to do both in a small community is tough." The customers have changed as well. Stockton residents travel easily to Hays to buy groceries and other necessities as well as taking in entertainment and participating in other activities. In 1970

there were three grocery stores, two car dealers, two pharmacies, two dress shops and a department store, and three farm machinery dealers. There have been a few new businesses that employ workers such as Wilkens Trailer Manufacturing. A Hays lumberyard opened a branch in Stockton that seems to have an active business. The minimum security prison employees approximately one hundred workers and Shult Mobile Home in Plainville is a fairly big employer in Stockton with many people commuting to work there. Even with these new businesses Loren says that the biggest concern for the community is maintaining and adding to these businesses in order to provide enough jobs to keep people in the community. According to Loren, Stockton has this problem in common with many other small towns. Population decline is a major concern for all of Western Kansas. The small farmer has had some difficult years because of low prices and more small farmers have been pushed out of business. As large commercial farming enterprises become even larger and acquire the land of the small farms the population declines even more because fewer people are farming more acres and the farm youth have to look for jobs in other areas.

Another issue that concerns Loren is that railroads are closing and the railroad lines are being torn out or destroyed. Stockton is fortunate for the time being because a railroad line still comes into town. But in Plainville, just twelve miles south, all of the track has been torn out and the railroad line terminated. These problems exist throughout the Midwest, through Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and up into Canada. Loren does not see an easy solution to any of these problems, but he also thinks they make trying new ideas and working together in the community to foster volunteer cooperation even more



important than if they did not exist. The traditional ways of doing this, however, are changing. In the past this was done by people who had grown up in Stockton and lived all of their lives here and that has changed. More people are passing through for a short period, moving in and out of town and changing jobs and this influences their involvement in the community. He still believes Stockton remains a town with people who have concern for others and that this attitude undergirds the entire community. He says he usually takes that sense of concern for granted until someone from outside points it out and he realizes how important it continues to be in forming the strength of the community.

Elaine Davenport, restaurant manager, has been surprised at the turnover of residents in Stockton in the four years she has lived there. At first she felt as if everyone had been in Stockton for a very long time, but she came to realize that many others had been residents for perhaps only five or ten years. She has seen some people move back to town after attending college, some new people move in, and others have moved away. She is uncertain about how long she will live in Stockton. She bought a home, partly because houses are not very expensive or difficult to find, but her children live in Kansas City and she thinks she will probably move to that area eventually.

Linda Hagan, coordinator for Heartland SHARE, believes there has been a change in Stockton in observing that even though most people have lived here for a long time there are beginning to be more people moving in from larger towns. She says this is "scary" sometimes because of the influence she sees in her daughter's school. Use of the Internet and email is another change she has experienced and observed. She uses email

consistently in her work and thinks more of her neighbors and friends use it, too. She is certain that the young people are increasing their use of technology at school and home. Farming is changing in the Stockton area and the changes influence the town. Prices for wheat and other crops have gone down so low that the small farmer can hardly make a living. Linda believes that many more of them will have to give up farming in the near future. Large farmers can survive because they have sufficient land and equipment. Even though Stockton has been influenced by the oil business, the decline of which has caused economic problems in the community, the loss of the farm community is even more of a detriment. Farming has always played a major role in the area. Linda believes that farmers have different values from city people and their loss changes the very nature of the community.

Craig Iwanski, veterinarian, observes some changes from when he was growing up in Stockton. One that he notes is that there are many more empty bays on Mainstreet from when he was a boy. He remembers three grocery stores, three clothing stores, a couple of hardware stores, and several gas stations. He thinks that one reason he and his wife Jessica received such a warm welcome to Stockton from the residents was because people were pleased to see activity in the downtown area. Craig and Jessica expect to stay in Stockton but plan to expand their business in a regional way. They also hope to invest in more sophisticated veterinary equipment and procedures. But to do so they need to forge partnerships with some of the big cattle producers. They are in the process of making arrangements to go to Manhattan to the veterinary school for continuing education on these issues. They are investigating the possibility of forming a partnership

with cattle producers to help them improve on their financial and economic arrangements through the use of performance analyses, leading the way to a new role for rural veterinarians. They share a vision for their personal lives in this small town and a vision of how they hope it will be for the family they hope to have in the future.

### Summary

The voices of the people interviewed for the study are the strength of this narrative. Listening to their various points of view about both the elements of their community that make them glad to live there and the elements that concern them about their community produces an evolving description of the social interactions in the community. When similar comments are heard from several participants it reinforces the importance of the issues and reveals that they are making sense of their lives with a common understanding. The events described by the people of the community take on meaning in the narrative report making it possible to uncover the values and assumptions and mutual understanding of the people, or their common narrative.

This chapter began with a description and justification for using narrative research. The main body of the chapter consists of the narrative presentation of the data. The final chapter, that follows, discusses conclusions and implications concerning the research questions and relates the study to the field of library and information studies.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

#### Conclusions

##### Primary Query

The primary query for this study asks what assets of social capital as defined by Robert Putnam are found in Stockton, Kansas. To answer this question it was necessary to learn what volunteer-supported organizations and social networks are operating in the community and to learn whether or not they result in cooperative action that benefits the community. It was also necessary to investigate the role of the local newspaper in the community, to consider the history of social capital in the community, and to investigate the voting record. To obtain this information, people who live in the community were asked to talk about the role of social capital in their town. The data is reported in narrative form in chapter five. Although the decision to report the data in narrative form appears to be a final step in the research process, it actually affected the entire study. Because the researcher was also the narrator, this role was influential in each step. "We construct ourselves as narrators, designing our research and collecting and analyzing our data using this constructed narrator during activities such as observation, description, and interpretation" (Hatch, 1996, p. 369). For this study, the narrative construction required reflexive analysis throughout the process of developing research and interview questions, becoming familiar with the setting, selecting the interview subjects, conducting the interviews, transcribing and coding the interview transcripts, and finally composing the narrative to develop a holistic description of the nature of social capital in this

community. This last chapter draws from the narrative in order to discuss conclusions and implications about the findings.

In answer to the primary research query, Stockton does have identifiable assets of social capital. Civic engagement is demonstrated by a viable number of volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, a widely read local newspaper that is an important community communication tool, an inherited stock of social capital, and above average voter turnout.

#### Organizations, Associations, and Social Networks

Every person interviewed was able to name more than a half dozen organizations that he/she considered to be active and effective in the community, including such groups as the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Association, Rotary and Lions Clubs, Stockton Area Arts Council, PEO and ESA women's groups, Solomon Valley Antique and Machinery Association, Pheasants Unlimited, and Century Club. Youth groups named were 4-H Clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts, and Future Farmers of America (FFA). By adding some of the organizations found in the *Stockton Sentinel* the list lengthens to include the VFW Post 5873 and the Auxiliary, the American Legion and the Auxiliary, Stockton Promotional Club, Cedar Links Sunflowerettes and Sixty Plus, and five bowling leagues. Additional civic groups and events that are supported by volunteers are the Rooks County Fair, the Nova Theatre Renovation Project, Heartland SHARE, Tree Board, Senior Companions, Rooks County Communities that Care, Stockton Food Pantry, United Fund Drive, the Community Prayer Room, the historical museum, and the public library.

### Cooperative Action

This is a substantial, although not comprehensive, list of organizations for a town of approximately fourteen hundred people. Thus, after establishing that Stockton does have a viable number of organizations and social networks, the next element to consider is if these groups work together for the benefit of the community. A prior assumption of this study, based on Putnam's work, is that community organizations and social networks create relationships that build trust and result in improved conditions in the community, increasing the quality of life for the citizens. Putnam's work suggests that the social capital created by interacting social networks and the norms that guide them contribute to both the economic and civic well-being of a community. The citizens of Stockton who were interviewed appear to agree. Although there are forces of history, culture, and economics, such as the decline of the farm and oil industries and the nationwide trend toward urbanization and the resultant waning of rural population, that cause dilemmas of survival for small, rural towns, in Stockton there still exists a strong drive toward the enrichment of civic interaction.

Collective action has been a way of life in Stockton for so long that it seems unremarkable to the residents who were interviewed, simply a means to get things accomplished. By comparing two community projects, one that has been functioning in the community for more than a century and one that originated in 1997, it is possible to understand how cooperative action works in the Stockton community. The Rooks County Fair was first held in the mid to late 1800s and was not an event unique to this community. Most agricultural communities held a harvest festival, a tradition imported

from Europe and the northern and southern states in the eastern United States as people moved west (Ambler, 1996). County fairs provided an opportunity for people to display their skills and it was also an opportunity to gain information and education about the best methods of farming, food production and preservation, and to see the most successful varieties of crops and breeds of livestock. Entertainment and social interaction were important aspects from the beginning, featuring horse racing, community contests such as cornhusking, picnics, and merchant displays. "Not only did fairs create a sense of community, they also reflected the uncertainties of settling the Plains. When times were hard, fairs were either canceled or hampered by poor exhibits. When times were good, exhibits were extensive, and local residents publicized the successful harvest. During the fair, if the growing season had been productive, newspaper accounts extolled the abundance of crops raised in the county and promoted successful farming as an important aspect of county and state economies" (Kansas State Historical Society, A Moment in Time, county fairs in Kansas. 1997. <http://www.kshs.org/features/feat896.htm> )

The Rooks County Fair still provides these types of activities in the community, but it is no longer as central as it was when farming or providing goods or services for farmers was a common factor for most residents. Other forms of entertainment abound and the mobility of the population makes the fair a less important event than it was in the past. But even with these changes the fair remains a significant part of the community. It was mentioned by almost everyone who was interviewed for the study and the fair is described in all of the published information about the county and is reported on extensively in the *Stockton Sentinel*. It is coordinated almost entirely by volunteer efforts.

The county extension agent and 4-H agents participate as part of their professional responsibilities, but according to Loren Goodheart, whose wife served in this capacity for many years, they volunteer additional time as well. It is a volunteer effort that is entrenched in the community. It involves people from the entire county and some people have been accountable for the same responsibilities for many years. The elected fair board serves as the directing body and the county commission also plays a role in the governing of the fair. The fair operates in many ways as a business because of the necessity of working with a variety of vendors, writing contracts for national-level entertainers, dealing with insurance issues, and in general functioning as a commercial venture as well as a community celebration.

A more recent cooperative community initiative arose from a series of town meetings in 1997 in which Stockton residents were discussing needs for the town and opportunities for meeting those needs. Two needs were identified at the town meetings: the need to provide activities for young people and the need to revitalize the downtown. Reviving the old Nova Theatre was suggested as a possible answer for both. The theater opened in 1932 as a commercial venture, but had not been functioning as a theater for many years. From those town meetings a committee of eight formed and began work. They conducted a community survey to determine whether they had sufficient support and then began a five-phase plan for the project. They acquired the building, which had been neglected for several years and was inhabited by a colony of bats, and then proceeded to remove the offices that had been constructed in the main theater space. The plan for the renovation is conceived as a flexible, multipurpose space to be used for



movies, stage productions, conferences, weddings, dances, and other community functions (*ReNOVation: A Newsletter for Friends of Nova*, Spring, 1999, vol. 2, no 1). By spring of 1999 phase two of the renovation plan was in progress and the main theater, stage, and balcony were being rejuvenated. To begin to work toward the funding goal of \$425,000, the committee formed the Friends of the Nova, established a tax credit plan that allows a credit of seventy per cent of a donation on state taxes, and conducted events such as a benefit basketball game and a celebrity auction and garage sale. In July, 2000, the Travel and Tourism Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing announced awards from the Attraction Development Matching Grant program and awarded \$25,000 for the Stockton Theater Committee for the Nova Theatre (*Stockton Sentinel*, Thursday, July 13, 2000).

These community initiatives, the county fair and the renovation of the old art deco theater, are similar in that they both emerged from a perceived public need and they both function primarily from the commitment, creativity, and investment of time and labor of community volunteers. Each initiative is led by citizens who are strongly focused on providing positive activities and recognition for young people in the community. They are also closely tied to the economic health of the community, an aspect that Putnam contends is a by-product of social capital.

There are many other examples of cooperation for mutual benefit in Stockton. The Chamber of Commerce sponsors several events coordinated by volunteers and plays a part in nearly all of the community promotional events. The Day of Sharing is a community effort sponsored mainly by the Chamber and Heartland SHARE. On this day

volunteers from throughout the community work together to assist those who need help in making repairs, either cosmetic or structural, on homes and businesses. In addition to helping those who may not be able to handle their own repairs, this activity serves as a reminder to those who are able but disinclined to improve the appearance of their property, an example of what Putnam refers to as the sanctions or norms of reciprocity.

The Heartland SHARE program is an example of a new type of volunteer-based program that was imported to the area by the efforts of a particular individual and has since become integrated into the community by working within the already existing infrastructure. This is a program that allows citizens to purchase high quality food at a very low cost based on their weekly donation of volunteer time in their own community. Linda Hagan, who is now a regional coordinator, heard of the program, which originated in California, and convinced enough of her friends and neighbors to sign up to bring the program to Stockton. The program is non-profit, is not connected to any government program, and does not have income qualifications. Heartland SHARE is one of twenty-five regions in the United States where the program is operational.

Other volunteer-supported organizations include the Arts Council, which has a mission to bring cultural enrichment and entertainment into the lives of both adults and children in the community by sponsoring such events as arts and crafts workshops, art displays, and adult and children's theater. The Frank Walker Historical Museum was built because of a citizen donation and is managed through volunteer labor. The fire department and the emergency medical technology unit are primarily made up of volunteers. There are many youth groups that function through the work of volunteer

leaders who in turn encourage the young people to engage in community service. Churches in Stockton count on their members to support their activities, but they also supply workers for various community volunteer programs and events such as providing drivers to take people to neighboring towns for medical care. The public library makes use of volunteer assistance, especially in programming for children.

Informal social networks are an active force in the community. The people interviewed were unanimous in pointing out that people in the town respond to need wherever it exists. If a family or individual is coping with a death, illness, injury, or even a financial crisis, friends and neighbors offer cards, visits, food, and, if needed, organize fund-raising events. Good times are supported as well by attendance at social occasions such as wedding and baby showers, birthday and anniversary parties, and card showers.

#### Norms of Reciprocity and Trustworthiness

Returning to Putnam's contention that social capital resides in connections among individuals engendering social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness (Putnam, 2000), it is appropriate to ask if this is the state of affairs in this community. It is not difficult to argue that social networks do exist as revealed in the narrative in chapter five and as briefly summarized above. According to Putnam balanced reciprocity functions when there is an equal exchange of favors of equivalent value, but it is generalized reciprocity that creates the trust that is necessary in a civic community. Generalized reciprocity is in play when individuals perform helpful or compassionate acts for someone without expecting anything specific back but rather confidently expect that the favor will be returned by someone when it is needed (Putnam, 2000). Examples of

generalized reciprocity are evident in Stockton in activities such as the Day of Sharing, the county fair, and the Nova Theatre project. Generalized reciprocity is also found in the informal networks in which people help their neighbors through difficulties. While they hope they will never require such assistance, they are confident that help will be available if they need it. This willingness to act for the good of others or for the good of the community engenders trust and creates a virtuous circle as described by Putnam. Community trust was described by the people who were interviewed when they said they knew people would help one another, when they said they feel their children are safe in the community and the schools, and even when they said they feel safe leaving their cars unlocked on Main Street.

#### Newspaper Readership

There was no hesitation on the part of the people who were interviewed for this project that the *Stockton Sentinel* is consistently read by most people who live in the community. Merritt (1996) in writing about the importance of civic journalism said it is imperative for the newspaper to contribute to the building of community networks and associations by telling the small stories about reciprocity and trust, as well as the civic story of the community. A close reading of one specific issue followed by a weekly analysis of the paper over a seven-month period reveals that the paper reflects the community interests in cooperative action and social networks. The newspaper routinely reports on every aspect of community life: organizations, events and activities, church news, political issues and local government. School activities figure prominently as do all events that feature the youth of the community. Informal networks are also well

represented with weekly announcements of life events, from births to deaths and events in between such as weddings, travel, reunions, holiday celebrations, and even results of the five active bowling leagues made up of twenty-five different teams.

### Inherited Stock of Social Capital

An inherited stock of social capital is the third factor for consideration in looking for assets of social capital in Stockton. Reading the newspaper from nearly a century past as well as looking at other historical documents reveals that social networks have been in existence in Stockton since its earliest history. There was and is to this day a certain amount of boosterism in the kinds of activities that people choose to initiate and report on in the community and that is currently carried on in the newspaper and in the Stockton webpage. In addition to announcements of births, deaths, and celebrations, the success or failure of business ventures or new enterprises has consistently been of interest to the residents of the community. Any sort of activity that showcases the community and encourages others to visit or to immigrate were and are featured. Political issues and elections, entertainment, and church activities figured prominently in the past for Stocktonites, as they do today. Youniss, McLellan, and Yates (1997) find evidence that encouraging young people to participate in civic engagement is the most effective way to insure having adults in the society who are civically engaged. Historically the citizens of Stockton have encouraged young people to participate in many aspects of the community and have praised the accomplishments of the youth of their community. This commitment to fostering and supporting young people is even more prominent today. These historical

and present-day resources reveal that Stockton has a significant store of social capital to provide a foundation for the present and the future.

### Voter Turnout

Voting, according to Putnam, is an important indicator of social capital because it reveals a fundamental commitment to democratic principles, but nationally voter turnout has declined. Nationwide, in 1960 the voter turnout was 62.8 and in 2000 just above 50% (Gorman, 2001). People who vote are more likely to be involved in and participate in all realms of the community (Putnam, 2000). Having citizens who vote and otherwise participate in civic life encourages political institutions to become more focused on solving problems for the community as a whole and encourages them to be more open to new challenges of social and economic change (Berman, 1997). Stockton, therefore, increases in the assessment of social capital because of a higher than average voting record. In the 1996 general election, a presidential election year, 79% of the voting population of Stockton voted. In the 2000 general election, also a presidential election year, the voting rate was reduced to 59%, still higher than the national average. The lower rate for the 2000 general election might be explained by two factors. First Robert Dole who grew up in neighboring Russell county was the Republican presidential candidate in the general election of 1996, and second there were some extremely controversial local issues that were settled in the primary election in 2000. The primary election, therefore, had much more local significance and important ramifications for the people of Stockton than did the general election in that year. Political controversies and all political issues are

closely monitored in the community and full reports of the local governing boards and the elections appear in the widely read *Stockton Sentinel* each week.

#### Static or Evolving Social Capital

Considering the question of whether aspects of social capital are static or evolving in Stockton leads to the conclusion that they are evolving. Contrary to Putnam's findings that social capital is dwindling in the United States, that does not seem to be true in Stockton. There are certainly changes in the type of social capital. As some of the members of organizations age and become less active, those organizations are losing their importance, but other types of organizations and events are filling in the gaps. This study did not attempt to produce the same kind of comparison of numbers of members over time as did Putnam, but rather looks at what is being accomplished in the community. Some of the new types of organizations are perhaps more suited to the contemporary lifestyle and preferences of the people in the community. The Nova Theatre project and Heartland SHARE are examples of the changing nature of organizations. As with the Nova project there may be other initiatives that arise, solve a problem or reach a goal, and then allow those volunteers to take a rest or move to another project that has been identified. Although the 4-H program in this community remains unusually strong, in the future there might be a stronger role for other kinds of organizations such as DARE or Rooks County Communities that Care, both of which are organizations that are more directed to helping young people cope with problems found in modern society. Or young people may find their own ways of working together to make a contribution to their community, such as the class of fifth-grade students in Stockton who read about an

eleven-year-old girl in Dallas, Texas, who helped secure food for a homeless shelter and then felt inspired to organize a drive for donations for the local food pantry (*Stockton Sentinel*, Thurs., Nov. 2, 2000).

### Implications for Change

While a level of social capital is in place in Stockton, it is not sufficient to counteract all of the serious problems for the community, especially economic distress and population decline. The people who were interviewed expressed concern about these problems. Even with a few new industries in the area there are not enough jobs to keep or build the population, to maintain local businesses, or to keep the young people who are so carefully nurtured as they grow up in the community. There are also not enough people to supply the volunteer hours necessary to perform the needed civic responsibilities.

Does this mean that the future of towns like Stockton is hopeless? Why is it worthwhile to consider the value of social capital in such a community? Is there any point in trying to add to or build the supply of social capital? Cornelia Butler Flora, a sociologist and director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, suggests thinking about rural areas in a different way. "The confusion between quality of life and standard of living is not surprising. Many believe that those living in urban areas experience a higher quality of life, primarily due to their ability to purchase more goods and services. As a result, rural development efforts are often oriented toward making rural areas more like urban areas, particularly through industrial recruitment, usually followed in the United States by the placement of box stores" (Flora, 1998-99, pp. 1-2). Flora cautions that the goal of community development should be to improve the factors that



contribute to an increase in the quality of life not just to increase income. With this in mind it might be more desirable to search for new trends in community development and to concentrate on what contributes to a higher quality of life such as improving interpersonal relationships, being involved in productive work, and having choices about where and how to live rather than looking back at what was desirable in a community in the past. Putnam says that successful outcomes (e.g., better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government) are more likely in civically engaged communities (Putnam, 1995a). Even though he lists faster economic development as one of the factors he is essentially talking about quality of life issues.

A 1999 study (Wall) that relates to civic engagement and quality of life in small towns investigates communities that are thriving while combating many of the same problems facing Stockton. This study came about because of a concern about the farm crisis of the mid-1980s that was causing experts to predict the demise of small towns in the rural United States. As the result of a series of meetings sponsored by the state government of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska, a decision was made to study rural communities that were doing well despite the economic problems of their region (Wall, 1999). They eventually identified towns with a population range from 300 to 37,000 in California, Colorado, the Dakotas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas that were maintaining a fairly stable population base compared to other towns in the region and also seemed to be holding their own economically. Over a period of several years eighteen small towns were studied by teams of interviewers who gathered data about the towns and then interviewed community

leaders and citizens. In these interviews the informants were asked questions about quality-of-life issues, community strengths and weaknesses, economic transition, future planning, social change, leadership, and citizen participation. From this study a profile listing twenty characteristics shared by thriving rural communities emerged. The researchers advocate using these characteristics or “clues” to evaluate the potential of other communities with similar challenges. The twenty characteristics that were found to be common among the communities investigated are: (1) evidence of community pride, (2) emphasis on quality in business and community life, (3) willingness to invest in the future, (4) participatory approach to community decision-making, (5) cooperative community spirit, (6) realistic appraisal of future opportunities, (7) awareness of competitive positioning, (8) knowledge of the physical environment, (9) active economic development, (10) deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders, (11) acceptance of women in leadership roles, (12) strong belief in and support for education, (13) problem-solving approach to providing health care, (14) strong multi-generational family orientation, (15) strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life, (16) attention to sound and well-maintained infrastructure, (17) careful use of fiscal resources, (18) sophisticated use of information resources, (19) willingness to seek help from the outside, (20) conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself (Wall, 1999, p.125).

Overall, the findings indicated that the critical factors in rural community success and survival are strong leadership, locally driven community initiatives, and economic strategies, all forces that already exist in Stockton. The study also determined that the

negative factors or problems that lay outside of the control of the community and that instigated the study, do not have as much influence as would have been expected. It is a truism that you get more of what you measure. Thus, the people of Stockton could use the list of twenty characteristics to evaluate their community and then create a plan for making changes in the areas that need improvement, while celebrating and intensifying the strengths that already exist. As Tom Isern, historian and scholar of the Great Plains, observes in response to the Wall study, “people in communities up and down the plains are laying aside old assumptions that they live in a land of disadvantage, that their kids are supposed to leave the county and their towns fade away. They are taking matters into their own hands” ( Isern, 1999).

As stated in chapter one of this study, there is a need for research projects such as the one described above and the current study to investigate what is working or not working in the community life of small towns. Benefits of such projects include allowing for extrapolation and sharing of information. For example, a proposed topic for further study for this project is to produce guidelines and perhaps a survey by which other comparable communities can assess their own level of social capital based on civic engagement as a tool in community building.

Such an assessment will assist rural communities in the process of building knowledge about sustainability in terms of social capital, economic viability, environmental conditions, and quality of life. In the beginning of this dissertation in the description of the setting and the need for the study, Kraenzel (1955) was quoted as noting that the unique problems and needs of the Great Plains region have not been

sufficiently understood. Communities in the region could use such an assessment to better understand their unique facets and to improve on their ability to respond to proposals such as that of the Poppers (1987) for having the government buy land in the Plains region for the purpose of deprivatizing and depopulating the area. Studying the status quo and considering plans for the future could help to prevent either unconsidered rejection of a proposed plan that affects their well-being, parts of which might have some beneficial components, or having decisions for the region made by forces outside of the community.

Environmental and cultural uncertainties such as living in a semiarid region with related issues of soil erosion, water depletion, changes in farming and ranching practices, and depopulation will not cease because of the existence of a supply of social capital in a community. Putnam's findings, however, indicate that social capital will contribute to the likelihood of citizens working together to alleviate the problems. In 1955 Kraenzel was concerned about declining social interaction and the weakness of group life and community functions because of the sparsity and high mobility of the population. Solutions for obstacles of geography, nature, and cultural forces will be more likely to be found if communities mobilize to learn what makes their town or region different from other communities and look for ways to build on sustainability rather than relying on traditional economic development tactics.

Kraenzel (1955) said that one of the strongest cultural forces in the United States that has contributed to inappropriate actions, especially in the Great Plains, has been "the expectation or assumption that what is true of one part of the nation must necessarily be true of another" (p. 194). The result has been to attempt to replicate the same farming

practices and economic and social institutions as in other regions, or as Flora noted above, to assume that bringing in large stores to allow residents to purchase more goods and services will make rural life more like urban life. Towns such as Stockton can use their social organizations, associations, and networks to build social capital and consider new ways of looking at and developing a community that fits their particular environment.

Although most of the authors in the literature review in chapter three agree that Putnam has stimulated dialogue about civic life and that most successfully functioning communities are rich in social capital, and some even call social capital the glue that holds a community together (Lappe and Du Bois, 1997; Potachuk, Crocker, and Schechter, 1997), others advise caution in considering that there can be negative elements of associational life. Berman (1997) says that organizations and associations can fragment or divide elements of society rather than bringing them together. Potachuk, Crocker, and Schechter (1997) and Chang (1997) advise thinking of community building in terms of inclusion and collaboration. A town such as Stockton that has traditionally had very little diversity, whether cultural, racial, or economic, might well benefit from the energy that an infusion of diverse populations and ways of living could bring to the community, rather than holding on to its present homogeneity. Newton (1997) also disagrees with Putnam in minimizing the importance of what Putnam designates as tertiary organizations, such as the Sierra Club or the American Association of Retired Persons, saying that these organizations could be important politically. For residents of rural towns such as Stockton who are somewhat isolated from the central population centers of the nation, these

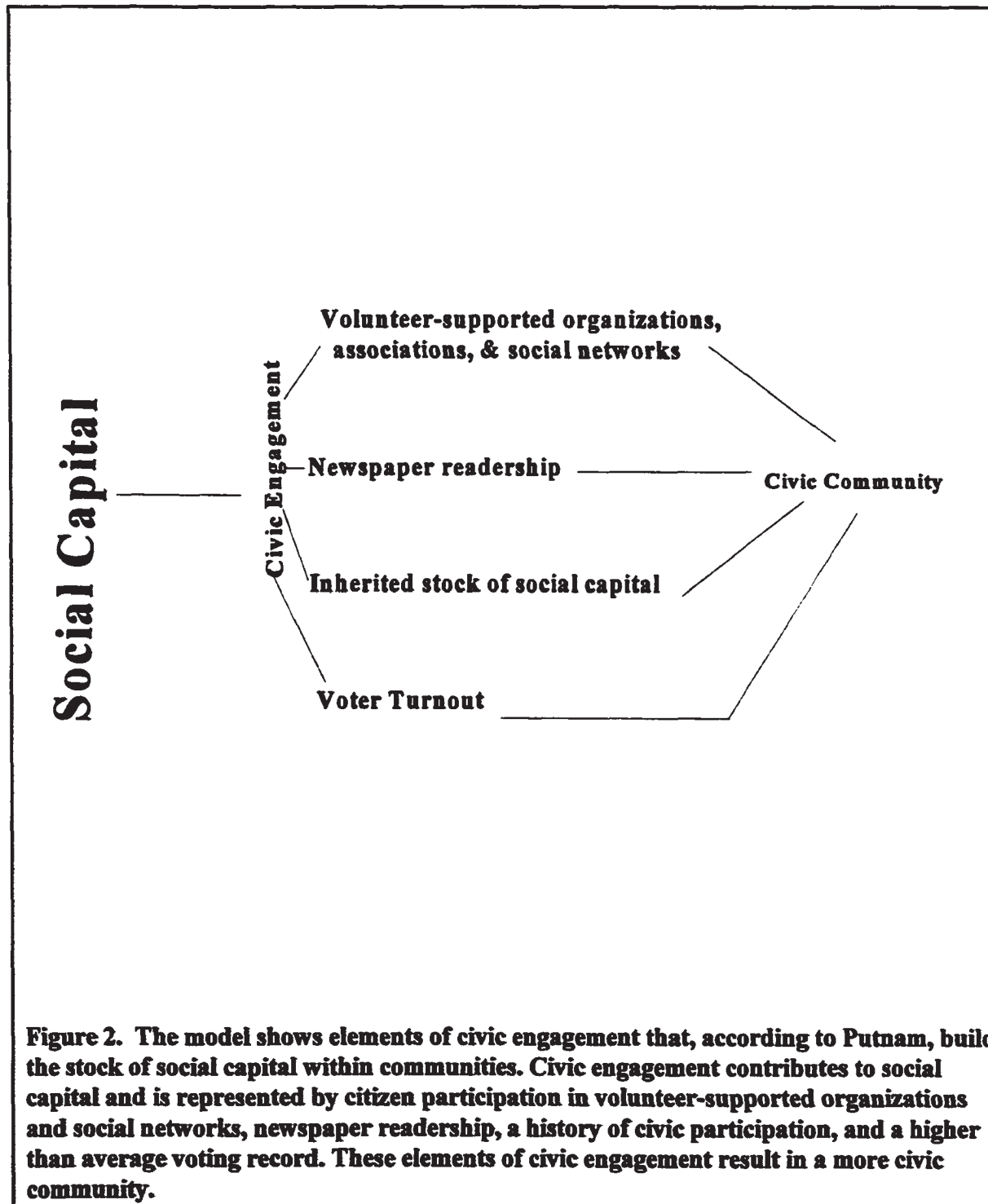
organizations could afford a means of having influence on national issues and for building community on a broader scale as well as garnering support for local initiatives.

### Model for Social Capital

In chapter one a model showing how civic engagement contributes to social capital was developed from selected aspects of Putnam's theory to provide a visual guide for the study. The model shows that civic engagement is represented by the following components of community life: (a) participation in volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, (b) newspaper readership, (c) an inherited stock of social capital, and (d) voter turnout. These elements result in norms of reciprocity and trust that are essential in a successful civic community. The model is repeated in Figure 2 for emphasis and for reconsideration of its relationship to the study and to the community of Stockton.

As made evident in the narrative report in chapter five and as illustrated in Figure 2, there is ample evidence that Stockton can be called a civic community. Stockton has citizens who are active, interested, and participatory. This is revealed by their joining and contributing to volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, both formal and informal. Many citizens consistently read the local newspaper, which has an influential voice in the community. There is also a tradition of civic engagement that has been maintained in the community, providing what Putnam refers to as an inherited stock of social capital. The voting record in Stockton is higher than the national average. These actions create norms of reciprocity and trust resulting in the citizens' willingness to work together to accomplish actions that promote the general welfare of the community, and they appear to be evolving to meet the changing needs of the community.

## MODEL FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL



### Significance of the Study to Library and Information Studies

The beginning of this study refers to a national dialogue about the prevalence of and causes for civic decline. Another more positive, but related, movement is concerned with community building. Documenting the extensive literature about this movement is not part of this study except to make note of it and to discuss how it connects this study to the field of library and information studies. Putnam, in addition to writing and speaking about the erosion of social capital, devotes sections of his most recent work to finding solutions for this erosion. In conjunction with a group of thirty-five leaders and scholars from a variety of backgrounds he has been involved in the establishment of the Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. This group's purpose is "improving the infrastructure of national civic life," and they have been meeting several times a year for two-day sessions where different topics related to community engagement are explored (<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/putnam.html>). In addition, yet another project has developed from the Saguaro Seminar, a website called the "bettertogether" story project (<http://www.bettertogether.org/>). This Internet website, which was developed with the University of Michigan School of Information, contains stories of civic connection that are told with the hope that other communities will be inspired to emulate them by creating their own stories. This group is only one of many such community-building organizations and movements. Some are government sponsored, others originate from private institutions or nonprofit organizations, while others are grassroots organizations originating in communities that are trying to find ways to increase civic involvement and improve the quality of life in their communities.



Traditionally, public libraries, especially in rural areas, have played a significant role in communities by providing information and resources (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, video tapes, and in recent years computer access) and activities for adults and young people (e.g., story hours, discussion groups, tax information and assistance, reference assistance). They have also been important as community meeting places and community information clearing houses. Public libraries, however, are seldom listed as active participants in the descriptions of the community enhancement programs described above (Schechter, 1990; McCook, 2000). This is an oversight that seems poised to change, however. Stephen L. Schechter discusses the importance of libraries in promoting civic literacy saying that “libraries are vital to the development of adequate public knowledge and information systems in the battle against civic illiteracy” (Schechter, 1990, p. 176). Libraries have always been important in supporting an informed citizenry, but that role is becoming vital as the society continues to evolve into a more complex global society connected electronically. Schechter emphasizes that the role of the library is most important for an effective citizenry at the point where citizens are in need of information in order to make decisions to participate in political processes. This role includes providing information for individuals or groups about candidates, issues, policies, or legal questions. He also says that the library has an important role in helping to inform new residents about community services and other necessary information and in helping resident aliens prepare for citizenship (Schechter, 1990).

The 1999-2000 president of the American Library Association, Sarah Ann Long, chose “Libraries Build Community” as the theme for her tenure as president of the

organization (McCook, 2000). This theme was meant to encourage libraries to move from a passive community support role to an active community leadership role, making the library central to the community. She advocates becoming involved in partnerships within the community and beyond as the first step for taking a more visible and integral position. Kathleen de Pena McCook expanded Long's theme into a guide for librarians for becoming players in community building. McCook first discusses and defines community, looking at various community-building initiatives and models. In her search of this literature she was disappointed to observe that although public libraries have a tradition of substantial contributions to community building, in almost all cases libraries are not listed as important agencies in the process (McCook, 2000). She does find evidence, however, that scholars and practitioners in library and information studies are beginning to document such examples and to write about the need for such action. McCook offers concrete and philosophical examples of what librarians can do to connect with community-building at national, state, and local levels. She notes that public librarians have been hard at work in the recent past adapting to the electronic revolution, making the necessary changes, but always remaining committed to the American Library Association goals of providing equity of access, a voice for a diversity of ideas and perspective, and the articulation of all points of view ([wysiwyg://6/http:www.ala.org/alagoal2000/beyond2000.html](http://www.ala.org/alagoal2000/beyond2000.html), accessed 3/25/99). McCook implies that this same commitment and effort must now be focused on becoming viable, visible, and effective partners in planning for civic engagement in the communities they have been commissioned to serve.

A further outcome of the attempt to encourage libraries to become involved in community building is the awarding of a \$300,000 grant from the United States Agency for International Development to the American Library Association, working with Global Learning of New Jersey, for a two-year project “designed to help librarians learn about the many issues that fall under the term ‘sustainability’ and demonstrate how libraries and librarians of all types can be resources for long-term community sustainability and positive development” (Long, 2001, p.10). Training sessions for this program have taken place for selected librarians who will take what they have learned to their own communities and regions.

Thus, the profession is building answers to questions about a direction for the future of libraries, questions such as the ones asked by the librarian at Stockton during her interview for this study: “What are we going to be wanting (from the library)? Are we still going to be wanting books?” From this study and others, answers and opportunities for change and growth will begin to emerge that will help her, and other library staff and library board members, plan for and articulate a role for the public library in the enhancement of social capital in a community. These answers will provide suggested ways for all librarians to engage in the conversation about community-building that seems to be arising from so many local, national, and global venues. What follows are some opportunities for strengthening the library’s role in the community, based on what has been learned from this investigation of the existence of social capital in a particular community.

**First, learn about one’s own community and look for new ways of connecting**

people and information that are better suited to society as it is evolving rather than holding on to old ways simply because they have been effective in the past or because they are familiar. There are helpful guides that can be used to direct this process for learning about the community with suggestions for relating the information to library service and planning (<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/pathway/biblio.html>; <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/ldnd/CAMEO/index.htm>). Identify other people, organizations, or institutions that have similar goals and concerns and begin to form partnerships (Welsch and Heying, 1999). Second, engage by reading widely from many sources, both print and online on issues, that relate to community revitalization for urban and/or rural populations. Supplement this reading by attending seminars and taking advantage of continuing education opportunities in the library field, but also in complementary areas (e.g., city planning, public policy, economic development, education). Third, become knowledgeable about the best way to promote and take advantage of electronic communication and connectivity for the community being served and to help the community become aware of the impact of a global information society. This is an ongoing and somewhat overwhelming task, but it is especially important in geographically remote areas because this kind of connection provides the opportunity for equity with any place else in the world. Fourth, be prepared to play an active role in all aspects of citizenship education. Create partnerships with the schools and other organizations or institutions with an interest in educating children and adults in civic and national issues. Fifth, commit to the goal of promoting and responding to cultural diversity, building cooperation and collaboration for mutual benefit (McCook, 2000, Chang, 1997). Sixth, become an information resource for

local and state government by gathering information for decision-making. Seventh, become involved with the civic entrepreneurs (Henton, Melville, & Walesh, 1997) in the community, letting them see how the library can be full partner in civic and economic development, or better yet become known as a civic entrepreneur. Eighth, share what you have learned from taking advantage of these opportunities with organizations and institutions in your own community and with other libraries and communities.

Perhaps by expanding awareness of change and by constantly examining and reexamining the civic needs of the community, the library staff will be able to construct a stronger, more effective plan for service that will make the library an indispensable contributor to the community supply of social capital.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

*The interview questions are designed to relate to and answer the following proposed research questions:*

*What assets of social capital, as defined by Putnam, does this community exhibit?*

- 1. Is civic engagement demonstrated through participation in volunteer-supported organizations, associations, and social networks, both formal and informal, resulting in successful cooperation of work for the welfare of the community?*
- 2. Is civic engagement demonstrated through local newspaper readership and does the newspaper reflect and report on those aspects of social capital described in question one?*
- 3. Is civic engagement demonstrated through an inherited stock of social capital?*
- 4. Is civic engagement demonstrated through voter-turn-out and other evidence of political participation?*
- 5. Are these aspects of social capital found in this town static or evolving?*

**Statement of purpose of study to read or paraphrase for participants:**

Robert Putnam, a professor at Harvard University, has been involved in community studies and has developed some theories about the importance of local, voluntary organizations and social networks in the enhancement of civic participation and engagement. Based on this work, I am interested in discovering what kinds of voluntary associations, organizations, activities, and social networks exist in this community. By interviewing community members I hope to learn about the organizations, the role they play in the community, their effectiveness, and how they are regarded by those involved in them. After transcribing the interviews I will write a narrative report that I hope will provide insight about the importance of these organizations and networks that will be useful to this community and or other communities that are struggling with similar challenges.

**Questions**

What is your name?

Do I have your permission to tape this interview?

How long have you lived in this community? Where did you live before moving here?

Have most people grown up here?

Do you know of people who grew up here, lived some place else, and then moved back?

Why did they move back to this community?

What kinds of voluntary groups and organizations are there in this community?

What do they do?



**How do they make this a better place to live?**

**Which organizations are most active and effective? And what makes them so?**

**Who are the leaders in these organizations?**

**Do these groups work together on some activities? How?**

**Are there major civic events that involve many people? What are they?**

**Are the schools and school events well supported? Even by those who don't have children in school? (If not already answered in talking about other organizations.)**

**What role do the churches play in the community? (If not already answered in talking about other organizations.)**

**What are people in this community most proud of? Why?**

**What would most people say is the biggest problem in this community? Why?**

**Have there been community issues that have concerned many citizens? What action has been taken?**

**How is this town different from other towns nearby?**

**What has changed in the last 10 years? 20 years? 100 years?**

**How has the history of this community influenced how it is today? (Sign: Our Past Reflects Our Future --- what does that mean to people?)**

**How do people in this community support each other when important or tragic events occur? death, tragedy, illness, marriage, birth, etc.**

**Does that support occur within families, churches, neighborhoods?**

**Do people turn out to vote in elections? How are candidates chosen to run for local public office?**

**What newspapers are most important? Radio stations? TV stations? Are many people connected to the Internet?**

**What sports teams do people support?**

**What is the role of agriculture in this community? Has it changed? What about the oil industry?**

**Hunting and fishing? Other industries or businesses?**

**Who knows this community best? Who else should I interview?**

**What have I missed?**

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

For this study volunteers will be interviewed about the importance of voluntary organizations and activities in their communities. The interviews will last approximately one hour with the possibility of a shorter follow-up interview. The interviews will be taped and the volunteers will be given a copy of the transcript of the interview to review for accuracy, to add additional information, or to request that certain information not be used in the report that will be written at the conclusion of the study. Actual names will not be used in the narrative report without written permission.

Benefits of this study will include experience for the researcher in learning about how to conduct a research project such as this one and information about community life. It is also to be hoped that the project will add to the knowledge about what makes a community succeed or fail.

*"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach."*

---

Subject

---

Date

---

Parent or Guardian (if subject is a minor)

---

Date

I, Catherine Thompson Hoy, hereby submit this dissertation to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying that involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.

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Date

An Exploration of the Contribution of Civic  
Engagement to Social Capital in a Small  
Kansas Town on the High Plains

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Title of Dissertation

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Signature of Graduate Office Staff member

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Date Received