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Theory for the Public Good? Social Capital Theory in Social Work Education

MaryAnn Overcamp-Martini

Abstract

As a concept, social capital is both relatively recent and highly controversial. This analysis overviews the history of social capital theory and the three main theoretical frameworks related to the concept. The components of social capital are discussed, as well as the controversy over its conceptualization. A review of recent studies is provided, particularly in the relationship between social capital and mental health. The article concludes with a discussion regarding the heuristic usefulness of social capital theory in the human behavior and social environment sequence in social work education, opening discourse in civic engagement and participation, collectivity, and the value of social networking.

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TO CONTACT OUR MAIN CAMPUS:
Indiana University School of Social Work
902 West New York Street
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, 46202
Voice: 317.274.6705
FAX: 317.274.8630
TDD/TTY: 317.278-2050

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Comments: iussw@iupui.edu

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