



COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

The Significance of Social Capital

Samantha Jones

Northumbria University, UK

Abstract: This paper applies the concept of social capital to generate an understanding of the processes of social change leading to, and resulting from, the development of a community-based ecotourism venture in the Gambia. Results from the study indicate that while a high level of social capital may have been instrumental in the formation of this ecocamp, it could be in danger of being eroded, and environmental improvements jeopardized, because of the way in which the camp is being managed. The findings give empirical weight to the assertion that social capital is a “slippery concept”, not least because the assumed mutually constitutive relationship between cognitive and structural social capital does not hold. **Keywords:** social capital, ecotourism, the Gambia, Tumani Tenda. © 2005 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Résumé: Le tourisme basé sur la communauté: la signification du capital social. Cet article applique le concept du capital social au développement d'une entreprise d'écotourisme basée sur une communauté en Gambie afin de générer une compréhension des processus de changement qui ont mené à ce développement et qui en sont les résultats. L'étude indique que, si un haut niveau de capital social a pu être utile dans la formation de cet éco-camp, il pourrait être en danger d'être érodé, et les améliorations environnementales pourraient être mises en péril à cause de la façon dont on est en train de gérer le camp. Les résultats donnent du poids empirique à l'assertion que le capital social est un «concept savonneux», en particulier parce que la relation entre le capital social structurel et le capital social cognitif, que l'on suppose être mutuellement constitutifs, ne tient pas. **Mots-clés:** capital social, écotourisme, la Gambie, Tumani Teuda. © 2005 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of one of the world's largest industries—tourism (Amaro 1999, cited by Weinberg, Bellows and Ekster 2002; Panos 1997, cited by Scheyvens 1999). Compared with mass or “old” tourism, ecotourism is touted as providing better sectoral linkages, reducing leakage of benefits out of the country, creating local employment, and fostering sustainable development (Belsky 1999; Khan 1997). Thus, it has been popularly promoted as a means of reconciling wildlife conservation with economic development, particularly in developing countries (Campbell 2002).

Samantha Jones is Senior Lecturer in sustainable development at Northumbria University (Division of Geography and Environmental Management, Lipman Building, Newcastle upon Tyne NE30 8ST, United Kingdom. Email <samantha.jones@unn.ac.uk>). Her research interests are in development and natural resource management, and social theory and the environment. She has published in a range of journals including *Global Environmental Change*, *World Development*, and *Third World Planning Review*.

A number of authors, however, have questioned whether local communities receive maximum benefits from the ecotourism industry (Campbell 1999; Colvin 1996; Loon and Polakow 2001). Schevyns (1999) argues that ecotourism ventures should only be considered “successful” if local communities have some measure of control and share equitably in the benefits. Schevyns also suggests that the term “community-based ecotourism” should be reserved for those ventures based on a high degree of community control (and hence where communities command a large proportion of the benefits) rather than those almost wholly controlled by outside operators. It is rare in the literature to find examples of community-based initiatives that are not managed, comanaged, or initiated by “outsiders” (Belsky 1999; Wearring and McDonald 2002). Thus, the venture at Tumani Tenda in the Gambia, explored in this study, is relatively unique in that it is a community-initiated and community-managed ecotourism camp (but see Colvin (1996) and Wesche (1996) for exceptions for examples of indigenous ecotourism development in Ecuador). As a high level of community control is desirable to maximize benefits to the community, this research aims to examine the conditions (particularly the characteristics of the community) under which this community-based initiative developed endogenously.

This research utilizes the concept of “social capital” to explore the dynamics of social and environmental change associated with the ecocamp. Despite the assertion that social capital is a “slippery concept” (Johnston and Percy-Smith 2003), it has gained much attention in the sociological and development literature recently, popularized by the work of Robert Putnam. It refers to the “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995:67, cited by Krishna 2001). It may be hypothesized that high levels of social cohesion, cooperation and coordination were instrumental to this endogenous development at Tumani Tenda. Exploring this hypothesis is the main focus of this research but following the suggestion that conflict in communities may escalate as a consequence of ecotourism, community-based or sustainable tourism initiatives (e.g. Belsky 1999; Taylor 1995; Wyllie 1998), the research also reflects tentatively on the processes which may lead to the dissolution (or conversely strengthening) of social capital at the case study site. As sustainability is not an inevitable outcome of ecotourism, despite its being a key feature distinguishing it from mass tourism (see Stem, Lassoie, Lee, Deshler and Schelhas 2003 and Foucat 2002 for example), this research also explores the implications of social capital for environmental sustainability.

ECOTOURISM AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Fennel reviews definitions of ecotourism and notes that one of the most widely embraced definitions of ecotourism is one developed by Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983. This suggests that it involves;

Traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas (cited by Fennell 2001:404).

Focusing solely on the motives of the tourist (that is demand-side variables), Fennell suggests that this definition is limited. Other authors have noted the importance of including supply-side variables in the definition, such as the impacts of tourism on the cultural and ecological environment and/or principles of ecotourism (Buckley 1994; Pedersen 1991; Wallace and Pierce 1996, all cited by Fennell 2001).

In view of this, it comes as no surprise that the ecotourism literature broadly falls into two camps. First is the literature focusing on the demand-side: the characteristics and motives of ecotourists for example (for excellent critiques refer to Munt 1994 and Wheeler 1993). Of more relevance to this research is the literature focused on the supply-side: much of which aims to evaluate these ventures against sets of principles, objectives, or economic criteria (Doan 2000; Lindberg, Enriquez and Sproule 1996; Loon and Polakow 2001; Ross and Wall 1999; Wallace and Pierce 1996).

Wearing and McDonald, however, with respect to “supply-side” ecotourism studies, advocate not “looking at the direct or actual effects of tourism on the natural and cultural environment” but taking “a broader and more abstract approach in understanding community-based approaches to ecotourism” (2002:191); this should be adopted to facilitate a deeper understanding of the context in which ecotourism takes place. They apply a Foucauldian framework, centered on governmentality and power, to explore the role of intermediaries in the establishment of a community-based ecotourism venture (other studies of power, inequality, and exclusion can be located in the ecotourism literature, for example, Belsky 1999; Campbell 2002 and Reed 1997). This research similarly shifts away from measuring direct effects of ecotourism, and reflects on power, inequality, and exclusion, particularly through attention to ethnicity and education—two key axes of differentiation in the case study area. In addition, however, as noted above, by applying the concept of social capital, which has not infiltrated into the tourism literature to any significant degree, it makes an original contribution to the literature by exploring the conditions that contributed to the establishment of the camp. It does so with a view to making suggestions towards improving the replicability and sustainability of such initiatives.

The Concept of Social Capital

Social capital has been proposed as the “missing link” in development and has become a focus for policy, practice, and research in recent years. While contested definitions exist (Harriss and De Renzio

1997; Molyneux 2002), methodologies for measuring it are in their infancy (see Krishna 2001 and Harpham, Grant and Thomas 2002 for their emphasis on methodology) and criticisms of the applications of the concept in development policy are abundant (Harriss and De Renzio 1997; Molyneux 2002; Murphy 2002), many regard it as central to democracy (Paxton 2002), economic growth, development, poverty reduction (Narayan and Pritchett 1999), and environmental sustainability (Anderson, Locker and Nugent 2002; Pretty and Ward 2001).

The core idea of social capital is that social networks have value, as interaction and connections develop shared norms, trust, and reciprocity that in turn foster cooperation to achieve common ends (Ecclestone and Field 2003). Social capital refers to the degree of connectedness and the quality and quantity of social relations in a given population (Harpham et al 2002) or the social relations that lead to constructive outcomes for a group (Bankston and Zhou 2002). Harpham et al. make a valuable distinction between structural and cognitive components of social capital. The structural component includes networks, roles, rules, precedents (Krishna and Shrader 2000), and the intensity of associational links or activity, and it relates to what people 'do' (Harpham et al 2002). The cognitive component covers norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs (Krishna and Shrader 2000) or perceptions of support, reciprocity, sharing, and trust. Therefore, it relates to what people "feel" (Harpham et al). While cognitive elements predispose people towards mutually beneficial collective action, structural elements facilitate such action (Krishna and Shrader 2000). However, the assumed mutually constitutive relationship between cognitive and structural social capital has been a cause for concern among some researchers. Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2001) explain that the existence of community associations (structural) does not necessarily testify to strong personal connections (cognitive) among their members. This issue is explored in more depth in this research.

Other concerns have been voiced. Murphy (2002) and Harriss and De Renzio (1997) have noted that social inequalities are rarely confronted in either social capital theory or policy, and there is an implicit tendency to idealize communities, which are treated as existing without structured power relations and conflict. Anderson et al (2002), though, following the work of Coleman (1993 and citing Grootaert 1998) conceive social capital as networks of horizontal (positive social networks that contribute to the overall productivity of a community) and vertical linkages (characterized by unequal power distribution among members and able to produce negative as well as positive associations). Thus, this criticism that social capital insufficiently addresses power, inequality, and exclusion may indicate not an inherent weakness in the concept, so much as over-emphasis in studies upon horizontal linkages and "positive" social capital, with less attention given to vertical linkages and "negative" social capital.

Other authors have noted that there has been an over-emphasis on the role of social capital in development. Krishna (2001) believes that it needs to coexist with "capable agency" for high development performance, and Molyneux argues that "the building, sustaining and under-

mining of social capital are critically dependent upon wider policies that help determine the resources available to people” (2002:180). Narayan (1999, cited by Harpham et al 2002) makes a distinction between “bonding” and “bridging”. Bonding implies *within* community relations and bridging implies *extra* (outside) community relations. This “bonding and bridging” construct is important here as it highlights the role of government and external parties and how their “capable agency” may help bring resources to people, thus supporting social capital.

In operationalizing the concept of social capital, the direction of causality needs to be ascertained (Krishna and Shrader 2000) as it can both influence (as an input/independent variable) and be influenced by (as an output/dependent variable) project outcomes. While it may be difficult to ascertain the direction of causality, critiques of the concept have highlighted the tendency to ignore reverse causality—or the idea that wealth can create more group activity (or development can create social capital) (Mansuri and Rao 2004, citing Portes 1998 and Durlauf 2001). Furthermore, if, as Johnston and Percy-Smith (2003) note, its existence can be inferred from the outcomes of social organization, what is the value in trying to measure social capital? As this research suggests, it may be inaccurate to infer from the existence of mutually beneficial collective action that all facets of social capital (such as trust, reciprocity, participation in institutions) exist in equal measure.

The review of the literature thus far suggests that adopting the concept of social capital would not necessarily involve a romanticized notion of community, as the concept can broadly encompass attention to negative social capital and vertical linkages. As Mansuri and Rao (2004) note, a nuanced understanding sees social capital as part of the power relations within a system and embedded within its cultural and political context. Yet questions remain about ascertaining the direction of causality; the relative significance of various components of social capital in generating beneficial collective action and outcomes; and the importance of bridging social capital in generating positive outcomes (these questions are revisited and reflected upon in the discussion and conclusions).

In terms of its application to the environment, Pretty and Ward (2001) argue that social capital, embedded in participatory groups in rural communities, has been central to equitable and sustainable solutions to local development problems. As it relates to the qualities that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, it is particularly relevant to nonprivately owned natural resources, managed as common property institutions. It can improve a community’s ability to sustainably manage natural resources through generating appropriate norms and rules and enhancing trust and reciprocity. Trust and reciprocity lubricate cooperation through reducing transactions costs, as people no longer have to invest in monitoring the behavior of others, thus building confidence to invest in collective or group activities. The assumption is, then, that higher social capital affords better environmental protection.

Introduction to Case Study Areas

Tumani Tenda is a relatively recently established village. According to the *Alkalo* (village head), it is 39 years old. It is located in Western Division, south of the river, about 7 km from Brikama and lies approximately 20 minutes walk from the main Banjul–Basse highway. There are five extended families in the village, four of which are of the *Jola* ethnic group. The largest is the Sanyang family, who were the founders of the village and have seven houses (split between two compounds) at the center of the village. The second largest family is the Sonko, who originated from the same area as the Sanyang, and the founding elders were family friends. Two other *Jola* families, originating from a different part of the country, joined the village: the Manga (with one house) and the Jarjou (with four). The *Manjako* (Mende family) are the only other ethnic group in the village (Christian rather than Muslim) and have two houses in the village. The total population is thought to be only around 300, of which a significant proportion are children.

A considerable variety of agricultural activities are undertaken in the village. The village has a seasonal rice growing area, a vegetable garden, fruit tree orchards, and rainfed areas for millet. Fishing is an important activity, both at an individual level (in boats) and at village level, by periodically cordoning off a tidal lagoon area. Compared with other Gambian villages (Carney 1993; Dey 1981; Schroeder 1997), there is a less clear gender division of labor. For example, men prepare fields for rice and engage in vegetable cultivation (roles elsewhere allocated to women). Most production takes place at either the family level or the village level at Tumani Tenda. The only fully individualized production is in vegetable cultivation and even then it takes place on land that is owned by the community and allocated to individuals each year. Ten percent of the profits have to be given to the village garden fund and individuals allocated garden land are required to work on the community garden.

The camp is located a few minutes walk from the village, on the edge of the *bolong*, or mangrove-edged tributary of the river Gambia. As noted above, it is fairly unique in ecotourism terms, as it is a community-initiated and -managed project. While outside assistance has aided the establishment of the camp, decisionmaking and control lies firmly in the hands of the villagers. About 15 volunteers from the village run the camp, the roles of which include cooks and room attendants, a bar-keeper, a receptionist, bird guides, and waiters.

The camp was opened in 1999 and consists of 13 rooms (each sleeping two or three) in six round thatched roof huts, three grass huts; a toilet and shower block, a bar and restaurant area. The camp offers an experience of “the African way of life” and natural environment. Its various attractions include boat trips through the mangrove creeks for bird-watching, fishing and oyster catching; batik-making; African cultural dancing and marriage ceremony shows; salt-making; and guided walks through the vegetable gardens, village, and forest. The area boasts some 170 species of bird (according to Abuko Wildlife Office) and 75 ha of indigenous and planted forest, inhabited by ante-

lope, monkeys, and bush babies. In 2001 around 200 tourists came to the camp, but this number fell in 2002 due to renovations.

To act as a “control” to the study, some interviewing also took place in Kafuta village. Kafuta is best reached from Tumani Tenda by pirogue, which takes approximately 15 minutes. As the main Baujul–Basse highway dissects Kafuta and it has telephones and a regular public transport service, communication links are stronger than at Tumani Tenda and the population is significantly greater at around 450 households. The ethnic mix is also more pronounced, although the *Mandinka* are the largest group. A site for the development of ecotourism has been identified at Kafuta but intra-family conflict over who would manage the camp has reputedly stalled its development, suggesting that social capital may not be as strong at Kafuta. Thus, despite its differences, Kafuta provides an interesting comparison to Tumani Tenda.

Study Methodology

Putnam and others following his work (Paxton 2002) have used a measure of the density of membership in formal organizations as a proxy for social capital. This uses a limited range of data and indicates only structural social capital; as Krishna points out, “it is not obvious that social capital will manifest in other cultures in a similar fashion” (2001:930). In his own methodology, employed in India, he uses a range of questions on trust, solidarity, reciprocity, dealing with “disaster”, and membership in labor saving groups as a measure of (primarily cognitive) social capital. Many studies devise a score based on the amalgamation of a limited number of different indicators derived through questioning the survey population (Diaz, Drumm, Ramirez-Johnson and Oidjarv 2002; Sharp and Smith 2003). In this research, a selection of questions developed by Krishna and Shrader (2000) as part of a significant World Bank research initiative on social capital are adapted to measure it in Tumani Tenda. The questionnaire contained structured questions (Table 1) to capture structural and cognitive social capital, and included Likert-scale attitudinal questions. Responses were coded and given a score from -1 (high negative social capital) through 0 (no social capital) to 1 (high positive social capital). As these scores essentially are only subjective and relative (nominal) values, a comparative survey of selected key indicators was undertaken in an adjacent village (Kafuta). The average scores and the percentage of interviewees giving each response are provided in Table 1. Unlike many other studies, the results were analyzed in a disaggregated way to give scores for the different components of social capital, which generated some interesting findings. Mann–Whitney U tests were conducted on these scores to test whether the difference between scores at Kafuta and Tumani Tenda were significant (also included in Table 1).

Along with the structured Likert-scale questions, the interviews undertaken at Tumani Tenda also included open-ended questions to explore perceived changes in key social capital variables and the

Table 1. Survey Responses to Each Question and Social Capital Scores

Social capital indicators	Answer	Kafuta ^a (%)	T.T. (%)	Scoring system ^b	Kafuta Score ^c	T.T. Score	Stat Signif. Diff. ^d
Background information							
Average Age					35.3	34.2	
Proportion M/F					13/22	17/18	
Number of different surnames					20	8	
Mutually beneficial collective action							
In the last month, how many days have you joined together with other villagers for community work?	Never	40	3	0			
	Once	11	0	0.33			
	2-4 days	28	6	0.67			
	More than 4 days	20	89	1	0.35	0.92	Y U= 164
Structural indicators							
<i>Vibrancy of Associational Life</i>							
Average membership in organisation	Number of organisations			1 each	2.0	4.7	Y U= 103
Norms and rules							
The rules and regulations in this village are adhered to	Very well	51	100	1			
	Well	20	0	0.33			
	A little	17	0	-0.33			
	Not very well	8	0	-1	0.44	1.0	Y U= 315
Cognitive indicators							
<i>Reciprocity and Sharing</i>							
Would you prefer to own one field by yourself, or two fields jointly with one other person?	Individually	50	6	0			
	Jointly	50	94	1	0.5	0.94	Y U= 332
People are only interested in their own welfare	Agree	11	3	-1			
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	0	0			
	Disagree	86	89	1	0.74	0.94	N U= 543
If I have a problem, there is always someone who will help	Agree	91	97	1			
	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	0			
	Disagree	9	3	-1	0.58	0.7	N U= 577
Conflict and cohesion							
Compared with other villages, is there more or less conflict in this village?	More	14	0	0			
	Same	23	0	0.5			
	Less	28	89	1	0.6	1.0	Y U= 150
	Agree	11	0	-1			
	Neither agree nor disagree	6	0	0			
	Disagree	74	100	1	0.71	1.0	N U= 507
Trust							
Most people in this village are honest and can be trusted	Agree	89	100	1			
	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	0			
	Disagree	11	0	-1	0.77	1.0	N U= 542
Power, exclusion, equity and decisionmaking							
How much influence do you have in decisionmaking?	A lot	34	71	1			
	Some	28	17	0.67			
	A little	20	0	0.33			
	None	14	3	0	0.6	0.88	Y U= 283
I am an equal member of this village	Agree	74	100	1			
	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	0			
	Disagree	17	0	-1	0.68	1.0	N U= 507

^a These figures refer to the percentage number of respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents not answering the question.

^b This is the subjective score allocated to each answer, based on the methodology and scoring system developed by Krishna and Shrader (2001).

^c This is the calculated score for each answer, demonstrating relative differences between Kafuta and Tumani Tenda.

^d Critical *U* at 95% significance is 471. All significant values are less than this.

reasons for these (which may suffer from “recall bias”), the types of activities carried out collectively and the implications of changes in social capital for natural resource management—especially with regard to domestic water management, forestry, irrigation, horticultural production, wetlands and wildlife management for ecotourists. It also contained questions relating to membership on committees, group composition, and decisionmaking to attain a deeper understanding of exclusion and inequalities within the village.

Primary data collection took place in July 2002 with the assistance of a Jola-speaking interpreter. Thirty-five interviews consisting of the structured and semi-structured components noted above were conducted in Tumani Tenda (representing an average of nearly two members per household and approximately a third of the adult population of the village). A stratified sampling method was employed in an attempt to attain a sample that was representative of the familial composition of the village. In Kafuta a shorter structured questionnaire was used to survey the same number of people (hence a smaller proportion of the population) by means of a random village walk (Lyon 2000). In addition, a focus group discussion with an institutional mapping exercise was undertaken with a sample of the more formally educated population of Tumani Tenda (more specifically those working at the camp). It would have been preferable to use a representative sample of the village population; but those who had not been formally educated tended not to remember the names of organizations from which they received assistance—only the nature of the work that was undertaken. The group consisted of four males and three females. The objective of this was to ascertain the relative importance of different groups (such as committees, associations and organizations) in Tumani Tenda and relations between them. The intention was that the map developed would serve as a basis for discussion around the “vibrancy of associational life”, vertical and horizontal linkages, and relations of power and social exclusion, to provide some triangulation with the questionnaires. Finally, key informant interviews were held with key figures in the community, such as the *Alkalo* (village head), the president of the Village Development Committee, the chairperson of the garden committee, and the manager and assistant manager of the camp.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 summarizes the results from the structured component of the interviews and the statistical analysis. The following discussion parallels the structure of the tabulated results and adds, where relevant, additional information from the semistructured component of the interviews.

Mutually Beneficial Collective Action. The camp is a direct outcome of mutually beneficial collective action: people in the village literally worked collectively to build it. The discussion that follows critically considers whether this was an outcome of a high level of social capital and

if so, whether both structural and cognitive aspects were apparent. (It is conceivable that collective action may be achieved by heavy social pressures and expectations. These could be considered “norms”—a central facet of social capital—but cannot be regarded as such a positive basis for collective action as other characteristics such as trust and reciprocity).

The *Alkalo* in Tumani Tenda explained that working together was something that the founder of the village (his father) had aspired to and consequently the first settlers worked together with a strong sense of solidarity. When other families wanted to settle in the village, he made it a condition upon their staying there that they must join this collective spirit and participate equally in the village work. Thus, the *Alkalo* stressed, collective action was a founding principle of the village. Interestingly, substantial variations in social capital over a relatively narrow geographic area have been attributed to factors such as influential village leaders (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2001).

Fujudguff (unpaid, community labor), which is a direct measure of mutually beneficial collective action, is widely reported to have grown over the last few years in Tumani Tenda, and from Table 1, it can be seen that contributions are significantly higher than in Kafuta. Most villagers in Tumani Tenda explained that they undertake four or more days of collective work (which most often takes place two weekends a month). About five years ago, most people recalled that they would, in an average month, undertake between two to four days' labor for the village.

Mutually beneficial collective action has increased directly as a consequence of the camp. During the period of field research, for example, men had joined together for a weekend to build a hut for poultry to enable them to provide chicken and eggs to the camp and sell any surplus. Currently they buy most supplies from Brikama. They were utilizing the assistance of the Department of Agriculture's Livestock Services (bridging social capital) and had been selected among 39 other villages nationally for the project, on the basis of evidence of their unity and hard work. They are hoping to develop a “poultry committee”, further adding to the “vibrancy of associational life”. This provides a preliminary indication that structural social capital as a dependent variable (outcome) has increased following a comparatively high level of village unity (social capital as an independent variable).

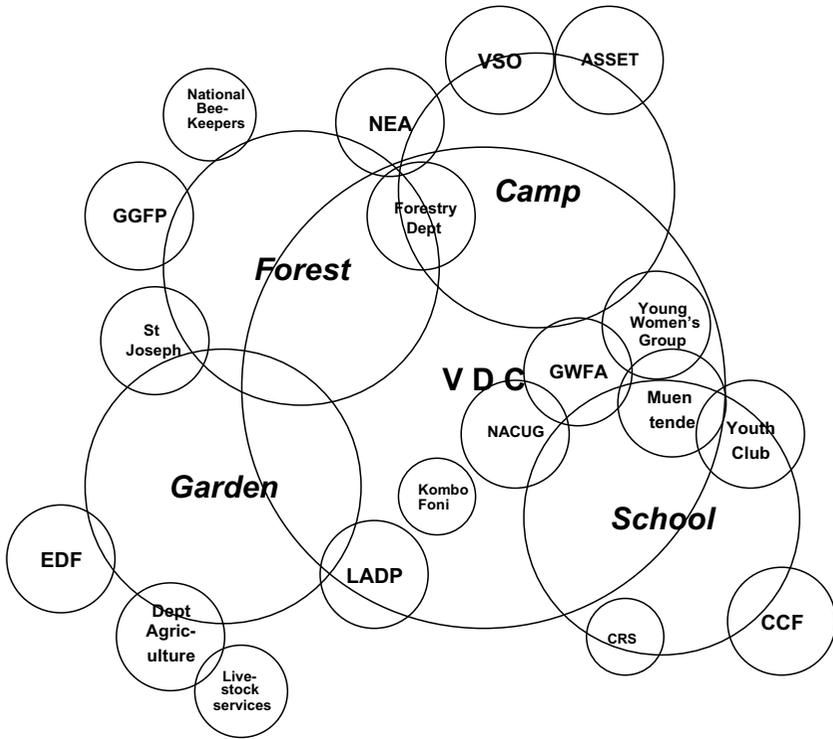
Interviews with villagers supported the idea that a high level of social capital preceded the camp as they claim that the level of collective action 10 or so years ago was already higher than in other villages. They cite the example of their collective efforts to control bush fires and protect valuable species in the forest, which other villages made little attempt to do. Whenever anyone noticed a fire approaching the forest, the whole village would be called upon. Women would bring water and men cutlasses to create a vegetation break to stop the fire reaching the forest. Appointed watchmen also ensured that members of other villagers did not try to fell trees in their forest, as residents of Tumani Tenda were only allowed to collect dead wood. It was for this reason

that they were the first village in the Gambia to be approached Forestry Department with respect to developing a community forest program. It was also for the performance, achieved by collective action, of the village garden and the community forest that the village won the National Environmental Agency's competition for the best environmental initiative in the country. This award was instrumental to the development of the camp as it provided its initial funds, thus signaling a direct link between social capital and the ecocamp development.

Structural Social Capital. Tumani Tenda displayed a significantly higher "vibrancy of associational life" than Kafuta (Table 1), with an average individual membership of organizations of 4.7 compared with 2.0. This is largely due to the fact that most citizens consider themselves members of the village, garden, camp, forest, and to a lesser extent school groups. The garden group has been established for about 15 years and the forest for about 17 years. The other groups emerged from these. When the Forestry Department approached Tumani Tenda about setting up a community forest, the groups were named *Kachorkorr* (meaning "to take care of") and this name was also given to the camp group which was established in 1999. The school group has been established only in the last year, initiated by the Christian Children's Fund as they were impressed by the commitment of the community. Thus, a significant increase in organizational membership (structural social capital) over the last 10 years can be seen at Tumani Tenda.

In Tumani Tenda a total of 12 operating village level institutions were named by the 35 people interviewed. At Kafuta the total number of groups mentioned by the same sample size was 19. Given the difference in the size of the two villages, this represents a significantly higher density of village level institutions at Tumani Tenda compared with Kafuta (at approximately 0.67 per household and 0.04 per household respectively). In Kafuta there was also a distinct lack of organizations or groups of which a large proportion of villagers considered themselves members. While the relative size of Kafuta may account for this, it is perhaps also indicative of a less coherent village structure leading to a fragmentation of similarly functioning groups. One clear limitation of using organizational membership as a proxy for social capital is that it takes no regard of the commitment, functions, size, and proportion of villagers who are members, which must be key social capital components.

The relative importance of external organizations in Tumani Tenda and the relationship between them can be seen on Figure 1, which is the result of the institutional mapping process undertaken by the focus group. It clearly shows the importance attributed to village level groups (which could be viewed as bonding social capital). In terms of whether the ecotourism camp has brought an increase in bridging social capital, no clear trend emerges. Links with networks such as Association for Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism in the last couple of years, and the recent involvement of Livestock Services (noted above), represents the development of a strong bridging relationship resulting from



Size of circle represents the importance of an organization, distance from the center represents the centrality of the organization to village activities (or level of external assistance) and overlap between circles represents strong bridging or inter-linkages between organizations.
 ASSET- Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism; VSO- Voluntary Service Overseas; NEA- National Environment Agency; GGFP- Gambian-German Forestry Project; GWFA- Gambian Women's Finance Association; NACUG- National Association of Credit Union for the Gambia; EDF- European Development Fund; LADP- Lowland Agricultural Development Project; CRS- Catholic Relief Service; CCF- Christian Children's Fund

Figure 1. Results of Institutional Mapping

the camp, but relationships with other external organizations such as Education for Culture and Community through Organization have dissipated, reputedly because of the inability of the camp to be more transparent in its finances. Most relationships amount to the provision of short-term assistance for specific projects and these links have facilitated the provision of material resources (such as Voluntary Service Overseas, National Environment Agency, Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism, Catholic Children's Fund, Forestry Department, Livestock Services). Without the bridging social capital connecting communities to local government or groups with resources, and social networks, norms and trust may not actually help in improving the well-being of the villagers. This lends weight to Krishna's (2001) assertion that social capital needs to coexist with "capable agency" to achieve development, but clearly the provision of material resources

does not necessarily develop into sustained bridging or linkages with external groups.

In terms of adhering to village *norms and rules*, another important element of what people “do” or structural social capital (the example of only being allowed to collect dead wood from the forest was used in Tumani Tenda), it was unanimously agreed at Tumani Tenda that other people adhered to the rules very well (Table 1). With the example of firewood, a number of respondents explained that it would be impossible for someone to break the regulations without being noticed in such a tight-knit community and that, in itself, was a sufficient deterrent to prevent defection. The Kafuta score was significantly lower.

Where norms and rules dictate that certain levels of collective work should be undertaken, it is appropriate to examine measures to prevent absenteeism, as adherence to such norms are central to their continued functioning or reproduction. In terms of absenteeism from collective work commitments in Tumani Tenda, there appeared a considerable degree of leniency (being ill or caring for someone who is ill, having other commitments in town or doing only half a day if individuals had other pressing work to be done, etc.). For unacceptable absenteeism, the *Alkalo* or village leaders would speak to the offender and explain the importance of the work. This, it was explained, would be sufficient to ensure future participation. This could be related to a social stigma of being labeled as lazy, the threat of other villagers refusing to help them in the future, or threats to be ostracized from the village. This could be seen as a less positive aspect of social capital than its being founded on cognitive social capital such as reciprocity and sharing. Conformity and restrictions on personal autonomy and freedom are one of the negative consequences of social capital highlighted by Johnston and Percy-Smith (2003, citing Portes 1998) and may be directly associated with community norms and rules.

Cognitive Social Capital. A number of questions aimed to ascertain levels and forms of reciprocity and sharing, the first element of cognitive social capital considered here. One of the areas in which Kafuta and Tumani Tenda displayed a statistically significant difference regarded the question of whether people would prefer to own one field of their own or join with another person to own two and a half fields—something which would require a great deal of trust and sharing. While this would suggest that cognitive social capital is higher at Tumani Tenda, the other two questions asked to indicating reciprocity and sharing did not yield statistically significant results (although both were higher for Tumani Tenda). This suggests some weaknesses in the methodology if scores indicative of a similar variable can show both significant and nonsignificant differences. The subjective valuation given to the scoring system may be part of this problem (awarding zero rather than negative values, for instance, may affect the statistical significance of the results).

A high level of conflict or lack of cohesion, the second element of cognitive social capital considered, among villagers would clearly

mitigate against trust and reciprocal relations deemed central to social capital. Every single respondent at Tumani Tenda answering the question, said that there was less conflict in theirs compared with other villages (11% in Tumani Tenda and 34% in Kafuta said that they did not know what happened in other villages), translating to a social capital score of 1 (Table 1), while the score was significantly lower for Kafuta. A related question asked about the level of solidarity in Kafuta (translated to “unity” in *Jola*). While the scores showed a similar pattern to the question on conflict, they were not significant.

In terms of honesty and trust, the final elements of cognitive social capital considered here, while at Tumani Tenda every person agreed that most villagers were honest and could be trusted, in Kafuta 11% said that most people were not honest and could not be trusted, although the difference in the overall score was not significant. Furthermore at Tumani Tenda, 81% said that they trusted each other more now than in the past, with the remaining 19% suggesting that there had been no change as they had always had a high level of trust for each other.

Various reasons were cited to explain the higher levels of trust among villagers than in the past. First, they were meeting more regularly through *fujudguff* commitments and thus they knew more of other peoples’ situations (reducing transaction costs). Second, higher levels of education meant that villagers could keep better records of lending and borrowing and they could serve as more reliable witnesses of transactions. Third, children were being brought up, through better schooling, to be more trustworthy. As they grow older, they become honorable members of the community and have a positive influence upon other villagers. Again, this would indicate that cognitive social capital as a dependent variable has been increasing. However, one informant presented a rather different story, suggesting that a high level of external schooling can erode the values aspired to by the community of equality, solidarity, and fairness.

Power, Exclusion, Equity and Decisionmaking. One hundred percent of people at Tumani Tenda considered themselves to be equal members of the village (compared with 74% at Kafuta) and 71% regarded themselves to have “a lot” of influence in decisionmaking (compared with 34% in Kafuta). However, in *Jola*, “influence” was translated to mean something more akin to “participation”. Thus, people may have answered so positively to this because they attend meetings rather than really feel as though their voice has been heard. A more detailed examination of the composition of group committees reveals considerable asymmetries of power and a high degree of exclusion in decision-making.

During interviewing, an attempt was made to ascertain the committee members of the various village level institutions to consider levels of inclusion. Upon initial examination of the names of committee members, it appears women and the whole range of village family groups are reasonably well represented. However, because women re-

tain their surnames upon marriage, upon closer examination of the data, it was found that the vast proportion of women on the committees had actually married into the Sanyang family. In terms of the Village Development Committee, 25% of the committee were from the Jarjou family, 62.5% from the Sanyang family, and 12.5% from the Sonko family (though this one person was the president of the Committee). In terms of the camp committee, 57% were from the Sanyang family and 43% from the Sonko family (including the camp manager). The president and cashiers of the forest group were also Sonko males. Thus, the Mende and the Manga families were not represented on the Sanyang Committee and the Mende, Manga, and Jarjou families were not represented on the camp committee. Furthermore, the Alkalo's son was assistant manager of the camp (Sanyang family) and the Sanyang Committee President's son was manager of the camp (Sonko family).

The Assistant President of the VDC explained, when asked how the present committee had come into being, that it had only existed for a year and previously it had been *Muentende* (group of village elders). *Muentende* had been composed of the descendants of the founders of the village (the Sanyang and Sonko families). The committee was selected by this group (rather than being elected by villagers) on the basis of their capability, and the members of *Muentende* had become advisors to the committee. Clearly they have favored their own sons for key posts on the camp committee. They may be justified in choosing the best educated younger members of the village for these positions, but this itself is a product of favoritism in schooling (the camp manager, for example, had been supported by the village throughout his university education in Dakar). This indicates that vertical hierarchies are much stronger than they had initially appeared from responses to cognitive capital questions, the data from which had presented a picture of very strong horizontal social capital and a high degree of social equality.

One interviewee, however, did present a rather different story and was not afraid to speak out about what was "really happening" in the village. They argued that there was a significant degree of social differentiation (between ethnic groups, between the *Jola* settling in the village at different times, between certain members of one family and certain members of another and within families—particularly among sons with the same father but different mother). Apparently much skepticism (mistrust) is present among villagers regarding the use of camp funds. While other committees appeared to have cashiers and assistant cashiers, the manager of the camp said that no accounts were kept. Younger, educated employees would feel unable to challenge the camp manager as he was older, and more educated—factors which combine to command respect and authority. (During the institutionally mapping exercise, while all participants were involved with the exercise, it was observed that no one challenged the manager about his relative placing of the various organizations, which would have amounted to a challenge to his authority). The same interviewee estimated that around 80% of the villagers were unhappy about the way

Table 2. Interviewees Recalled Benefits from the Camp

Benefit	Mentioned by % of interviewees
<i>Separate income stream</i>	
Dancing tips	34
Contributions from tourists	17
Selling crafts	6
<i>Benefits to families involved in the camp</i>	
Employment and training	12
<i>Benefits to whole village</i>	
Fencing of vegetable garden	6
Payment of school fees	26
Sponsoring students	3
Supports the VDC	8
Paid tax for the whole village one year	17
<i>Potential benefits</i>	
Money would be available if a problem affected the whole village	8
Potential for borrowing from camp	3
<i>No benefits</i>	
No idea/no personal benefits	15

in which the camp was being managed. Indeed when people were asked to recall how they had personally benefited from the camp (Table 2), these hardly seem to match the increases in *fujudguff*. The most significant benefit was tips to women for dancing. This is an additional and separate income stream from camp revenue. Interestingly, however, this was not manifesting as conflict, for villagers had a strong aspiration to the idea of a harmonious community, which they felt had existed much more in the past. Instead, people would focus on their own livelihoods and involve themselves minimally with the camp. There was also a strong sense that they would prefer to be accepting of others rather than confrontational, even if it may not seem wholly fair, in order to maintain peace and harmonious relations (possibly a wider cultural norm in Gambian society).

Implications for Environmental Sustainability

In terms of renewable natural resource management, *fujudguff* commitments—an outcome of social capital—have been central to the development of the *kachorkorr* concept (to take care of), which in turn appears instrumental in securing the future sustainability of the area. High levels of trust and interaction ensure that no villagers break rules regarding extraction of live wood from the forest. Forest protection (of species and the prevention of bush fires) is highly dependent on collective action and cooperation. The management of the vegetable gar-

dens is also guided by this concept, which could ensure sustainable soil and water management. The promotion of the site as an ecocamp may be having further environmental benefits. For example, it is unlikely that there would be further mangrove conversion to agricultural land; for this would jeopardize birdlife in the area, and a significant proportion of ecotourists in the country are likely to be birdwatchers because of the ornithological significance of the River Gambia. Furthermore, recognizing that ecotourists also like to see a range of fauna, emphasis is being placed on the attraction of wildlife to the area and a proportion of the forest is managed to this end. This range of positive environmental management activities could be jeopardized by the erosion of social capital. With a more individualistic and self-interested behavior, the forest might be exploited, bushfires left to burn, and mangrove conversion to agricultural land might go unabated.

Every effort is being made to minimize environmental impacts of the camp. Fuelwood is taken from the forest, which is being replanted and has an area for fast-growing species to be used solely for the provision of building materials and fuelwood. Bottles are recycled and energy-saving lightbulbs are used. The camp manager, Sulayman Sonko, made an interesting point however, which epitomizes the trade-off that so often exists between environment and development. He noted that it was difficult to defend the concept of “eco” in the context of a developing country, as it would make some developments impossible. Tumani Tenda faces a further challenge in terms of the extent to which relative luxury is provided to attract tourists, which comes with a higher environmental cost. By way of illustration of these two trade-offs, National Environment Agency money had been used recently to purchase a fridge, which would make it possible to provide butter, cheese, and cold drinks to the camp tourists (relative “luxury” goods). However, there were insufficient funds to purchase solar panels to provide electricity to power the fridge and thus a less sustainable option (a generator) has been purchased. Similarly there are plans to buy a car for the camp to make easier the purchase of soft drinks in particular which currently are transported by wheelbarrow, representing another trade-off between providing tourist goods, labor costs, and the protection of the environment. In many other respects, the camp has a very low environmental impact, in the same sense that many African villages have, with their low levels of consumption and enterprising approach to recycling. Most materials are purchased, cultivated, or made locally (for example, pirogue trips are made to Kafuta to buy bread for breakfast when tourists stay at the camp). In sum, higher social capital does afford better environmental protection in terms of renewable natural resource management, but in facilitating development it comes with Western-style environmental costs.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence to support the hypothesis that a high level of social capital, manifesting particularly in people’s commitment to collective

action in village projects, was instrumental in the development of the ecotourism camp at Tumani Tenda, not least as '*fujudguff*' commitments to forest protection attracted funds from the National Environment Agency, which facilitated the camp's development. Further support has been provided by Livestock Services in recognition of village unity. Compared with Kafuta, all components of social capital fare positively. Moreover, structural social capital at least appears to be increasing as a consequence of the camp, as more projects are being initiated which require labor contributions and the number of organizations simultaneously increases. Thus, while some have expressed concerns about the difficulty in ascertaining the direction of causality (as noted earlier), it seems possible from this case study to map out manifestations of social capital as both an outcome and a factor in causing development.

Taking a more detailed look at cognitive social capital presents a complex and rather conflicting story. People reported wholeheartedly trusting one another and experiencing a strong sense of solidarity and equality. Yet this appears in the context of a country that is certainly not immune from corruption. A considerable lack of transparency in accounts is apparent with respect to the camp. It is clear that people have an interest in presenting a particularly harmonious image of their community, as it is something that they aspire to and have benefited from. Villagers would tend not to challenge those with more power who may be misusing theirs, in order to sustain this image. But there is a question of how long this will be maintained. There appears considerable scope, as seen by a Western observer, for a substantial dissolution of social capital to occur in Tumani Tenda, if problems of accountability are not addressed. This is already evident from the withdrawal of support for the camp by Education for Culture and Community through Organization. In sum, social capital appears to have developed from the seeds sown through the commitment and vision of the village founders. But, by elders passing on some of this power to family members who may not share the same vision of village solidarity and collective action, the risk that social capital may be rapidly destroyed is high.

In terms of links with external organizations (bridging), it is really the resources that these links have yielded for the village, including knowledge, that have been so important to development—rather than the vibrancy of associational life itself. Resource provision is not an inevitable outcome of bridging social capital, but evidence of community solidarity and cooperative work appear to have been criteria for allocation of support from these external agencies. In terms of bonding, it has been noted elsewhere (Harriss and De Renzio 1997, citing Putnam 1993; Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2001) that strong bonding (horizontal or interpersonal ties such as kinship and intimate friendship) can be highly exclusionary and are much less important than weak ties (acquaintanceship and shared association membership) in sustaining collective action. While dense but segregated horizontal networks (such as extended families in Tumani Tenda, especially the Sanyang family) sustain cooperation within each group, networks that cut

across social cleavages nourish wider cooperation (Harriss and De Renzio 1997, citing Putnam 1993). Bridging social capital can assist in transcending these dense segregated networks. There is scope for deepening the bridging with organizations such as the Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism, which, may be able to encourage transparency in accounts and stronger representation in decisionmaking, and also weaken horizontal bonding, to maintain a high level of social capital at Tumani Tenda.

In terms of social capital theory, this research lends some weight to Grootaert and van Bastelaer's comment that "a concept that encompasses too much is at risk of explaining nothing" (2001:8). Too much may be encompassed by the concept due to the inclusion of both structural and cognitive element and the assumption that they are both necessary for collective action. The data here suggest the importance of questioning the extent to which mutually beneficial collective action requires *both* structural and cognitive social capital. Trust, equality and social cohesion may not be as important in facilitating mutually beneficial collective action as social norms and pressures. Furthermore, through the disaggregated analysis of social capital indicators presented in this study, it is demonstrated that some indicators can reveal significant differences between the case study sites while others do not, casting doubts on the methodological integrity of the use of such subjective indicators. Yet, use of a range of structural and cognitive indicators paradoxically must be preferable to limited focus on quantitative structural variables, such as group membership.

Despite the concerns about the validity of the data in this study and some of the assumptions behind social capital theory, using it as an analytical framework does appear to facilitate a more dynamic, explanatory, and detailed analysis of ecotourism ventures compared with the evaluative frameworks that have tended to dominate the literature in this field. The concept *can* be used in such a way as to avoid making assumptions about communities as homogeneous and static entities and can address power relations, inequalities, and social exclusion, through attention to vertical and negative social capital. Furthermore, the concept captures an important facet of social life that is increasingly viewed as being instrumental in fostering positive development outcomes.▲

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