

Recent Publications by ASA Members

Is social capital a resource and a capital for development in poor countries? Which social capital are we speaking about? These are the two main questions the author tries to answer.

Without a clear definition of social capital, the problem of inferring causation between social capital and development has no solution. A reason for the missing common meaning of social capital is to be found in the 'rationality' that hides within the two main methodological approaches on which the theories of social capital are based. These are the individualistic rational choice of the neoclassic theories and the a-rationality of the communitarian approach.

A survey of the main theories shows how both approaches are not appropriated in representing a good part of the real society. Social capital can be based on a rational but not individualistic and not instrumental behaviour. And this is just the result of an empirical research brought forward by the author throughout six districts of Manila (Philippines). The research illustrates

Simona Di Ciaccio,

*Il fattore 'relazioni interpersonali' –
fondamento e risorsa per lo sviluppo
economico,*

Città Nuova, Roma, 2004.

ISBN 88-311-2431-5 Euro 18,00

the function of the organisations in producing 'local civic capital'. Such a social capital shows it self as a capital and a resource for improvement of local well-being and, at the same time, as an aspect itself of the same human development in terms of Amartya Sen's capability approach .

The cooperation dilemma is marked by an underlying paradox. When it is impossible to exclude anyone from the benefits of a collective action, the most rational strategy for every single actor seems to be defection, in the hope that other will carry the burden of cooperation. The result is that cooperation is doomed to fail in advance and the common good will not be pursued. Nonetheless, despite this theoretical conclusion, empirical analysis shows that even in poorly regulated contexts the clash between individual rationality and social efficiency can be solved.

Luigi Curini,

Il dilemma della cooperazione.

*Capitale sociale, sviluppo,
frammentazione,*

Vita&Pensiero, Milano, 2004.

ISBN: 88-343-1117-5 Euro 20,00

How to explain this outcome? Starting from the concept of social capital, and focusing on a peculiar development policy – microcredit – Luigi Curini shows how cooperation translates into practice as a set of possibilities, rather than necessities. His conclusions, therefore, are quite optimistic. A given kind of social capital can make the difference and foster a widespread, bottom-up, development-oriented cooperation. This does not rule out a space for politics, that simply becomes less remarkable. In order to promote collective action and

cooperation more effectively, the best way seems therefore to indirectly promote self-organization.

The volume edited by Simona Beretta, Vittorio E. Parsi, and Roberto Zoboli includes essays written by ASA members

Alessandra Amato, Elena Angeleri, Alessia Casetta, Susanna Paleari, and Manuela Prina. The purpose of the book is to present a “non traditional” perspective on the process of integration in the European-Mediterranean region. The main focus is on the future of the partnership between Europe and

Mediterranean states, through the lens of specific channels of integration. In particular, knowledge and information networks, academic exchanges, technological and scientific partnerships are analysed. Among the many merits of this volume, a careful investigation of the multifaceted institutional framework stands out. The remarkable amount of evidence and empirical data, furthermore, provides a solid ground for the conclusion of the work: in their approach to the region, European states in general, and Italy in particular, show only a few points of strength, but several weaknesses.

**Simona Beretta, Vittorio E. Parsi,
Roberto Zoboli (eds.),**

*Il Mediterraneo e la prospettiva
europea. Reti istituzionali, di
conoscenza e di formazione,*

Egea, Milano, 2004.

ISBN: 88-238-5029-0 Euro 25,00