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ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO DEFINITION AND FORMATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Zaikovskaya Anastasia Stanislavovna

undergraduate

Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk

author@apriori-journal.ru

Abstract. The phenomenon of social capital in a large number of sociological studies in Russia and abroad. The article examines and analyzes different approaches to the formation social capital. Designated typology of social capital and heterogeneity in theory concepts in this area.

Key words: social capital; human capital; social relations.

АНАЛИЗ ПОДХОДОВ К ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЮ ПОНЯТИЯ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО КАПИТАЛА

Зайковская Анастасия Станиславовна

магистрант

Томский политехнический университет, Томск

Аннотация. Феномену социального капитала посвящено большое число социологических исследований как в России, так и за рубежом. В статье рассмотрены и проанализированы различные подходы к формированию социального капитала, обозначена типология социального капитала и разнородность теоритических концепций в данной области.

Ключевые слова: социальный капитал; человеческий капитал; социальные отношения.

The term *social capital* was introduced into the modern science not so long ago and is still a subject of discussion among many economists and sociologists. It became a subject of a large number of sociological studies both in Russia and abroad, written by scientists holding different views. At a first approximation the social capital may be defined as existence of social links between individuals (Fig. 1).

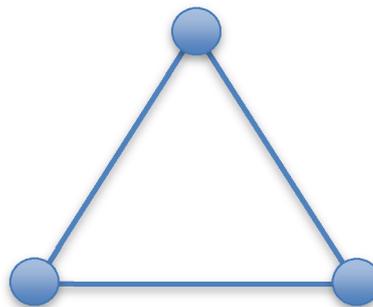


Fig. 1. A structure consisting of three individuals: human capital is in the nodes, social capital is in the links

The term was introduced by Lyda Judson Hanifan in 1916, when he connected social capital with such human qualities in society as goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse. However, it is usually held that it was Pierre Bourdieu who explained the term in his article «Forms of Capital» in 1983. He described social capital as a set of real and potential resources linked to participation in a group. Bourdieu comes to a conclusion that domination of an individual in the social space is determined by its abilities which influence the size of its social capital, serving as a means to provide access to different resources [1].

«In 1990 Harry Baker defined this concept as «a resource that the actors obtain through special social structures and later use for their own purposes; it is produced by changes in attitudes between the actors». M. Schiff defines this term in an extended sense as “arrangement of social structure elements that acts upon relations between individuals and stimulates actions and/or using helpful functions». Ronald Burt views social capital as «personal, job-

related and other contacts through which you get the possibility to apply your financial and human capital» [2].

James Coleman, a well-known sociologist, considered social capital as a result of its three constituents: social capital's owner, its sources and its resources [3]. This approach was analyzed by G.A. Tsvetkova, who notices that «social capital is comprised of resources of social relations and networks, facilitating individual's actions due to formation of mutual trust, definition of mutual responsibilities and expectations, association, etc.» [4].

Robert Putnam provides his own definition of social capital. He considered social capital as those features of social organization (principles, norms, structures), which can stabilize efficiency of coordinated social actions [5]. R. Putnam highlights two important features distinguishing social capital from other types of capital. First, he assumes, that social capital is public domain and has no relation to private property of individuals who use it: nobody can deprive another person of access to social capital or become sole proprietor of social capital. Second, R. Putnam distinguishes another important feature of social capital. It is not depleted in result of its use, rather it grows, while failure to use this resource leads to its depletion. We believe that trust is the most important component of social capital. Trust becomes a basis for any cooperation which is inevitable in any sphere of life.

Other researchers define trust as a structural component of social capital as well. For example, A.K. Semyonova distinguishes three forms of social capital: trust, norms and rules, and networking. It is commonly assumed that «group reputation grown from trust has a multiplying effect: more and more associations based upon similar foundations are drawn into its orbit» [6].

Pretty and Ward [7] also hold similar point of view towards the structure of social capital, which in their opinion includes confidence, because it lowers transaction costs; exchange of values, with similar significance; common rules, norms and sanctions; and social networks.

Analysis of the issues mentioned above shows that many researchers view in-group trust as a foundation of social capital. Confidence in group raises the wish to become a part of that group. In its turn, this becomes a factor that influences the processes in the group. However, trust can arise where similar values and norms are shared by all the members of the group.

In this article we will consider the most general approach that characterizes social capital as a set of resources that an individual has at one's disposal to implement one's social interests. Alejandro Portes assumed that the main functions of social capital are in its possibility to be the source of:

- a) social control;
- b) in-group (family) support;
- c) benefits through the networks spreading outside the limits of an informal group (family) [8].

Among the different economic functions of social capital researchers mark its ability to increase the volume of benefits or resources available to individuals, lower the transaction costs of participants of economic exchange, provide coordination of economic actors, and lower uncertainty.

Russian researcher L.I. Polischuk voices an opinion that social capital has significant influence over the quality of social services (education, health care, etc.), mental and physical health of population, public safety, quality of life and last, but not the least, quality of institutions and state control, but it can influence economic results as well [9]. The author reveals two channels by which social capital may act upon social processes. Horizontal channel means that social capital allows saving on transaction costs in private sector and in daily personal communications. Besides that, social capital is a prerequisite for self-organization of individuals for resolving social problems without participation of the government. The nature of the vertical channel is that social capital allows reaching necessary accountability of authorities and by that increasing the quality of state management. It is the most important

function of social capital and its importance is clearly demonstrated in studies performed by V.G. Nemirovskiy and A.V. Nemirovskaya [10].

Typology of social capital should not be overlooked as well. Most commonly the question lies in distinction between the so-called bridging social capital and the bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is a prerequisite for creation of broad social coalition [11]. For it to arise there should be trust and confidence not only in relatives and family members, close friends and good acquaintances, but in society, people as a whole. It is widely considered that in such cases the level of trust is high. Besides that, the same norms and values should be widely shared in the society, the same universal moral should be used, when one's attitude towards close and distant people depends on the same or very similar criteria. Things that are bad or good for one's relatives and friends shall be considered in the same way as those for other, more distant people. Such social capital facilitates the emergence of broad social coalitions, which are sometimes called Putnam groups. In contrast, bonding social capital rests upon limited morals [12]. It means, that you shall have different moral criteria for close and distant people. The radius of trust in this case is small and can support the emergence of narrow interest groups, which are sometimes called Olson groups. Researchers also distinguish a separate kind of social capital, usually called civic culture, which represents the feeling of involvement in social activities and personal responsibility for the state of the society.

On the other hand, it is hard to dismiss the opinion of Judith L. Twigg, that «operationalization and measurement of social capital is a challenging task in any context. Serious contradictions and disagreement may be found even among the researchers who try to apply the concept of social capital to the West, where this concept was born and reached maximum significance. The very applicability of the concept of social capital as it is now defined in western scientific literature to a non-western society is far from being obvious» [13]. The concept of useful social capital proceeds from the premise that

availability of an attitude that facilitates trust and cooperation between individuals, groups and associations may facilitate physical and mental health of the society, its political and economic prosperity. It is reasonable to assume that this premise may be true for Russia to the same degree as for any other country.

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