STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND POLITICAL CULTURE. AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN COUNTRIES WITH RECENT REGIME CHANGE

Henry RAMMELT*

Abstract: *This article attempts to analyze the connection between civic engagement and social capital, within the domain of social movements. Often left behind by the majority of key theoreticians of social movements, the notion of social capital brings to light the essential influence of the past, when talking about patterns of social engagement. Taking a certain distance of Diani's (1997) indication that social capital is an outcome of movement activity, this paper argues that different levels of civic engagement in similar societies can be explained by an analysis of the existing stock of social capital in these societies. In order to demonstrate the relationship between social capital, political culture and the activity of social movements, an integrative approach is proposed: by synthesizing these concepts a comprehensive scheme for social movement research will be developed, better adjusted to the environment of movements in countries with recent transition background. Three major aspects of the concept of social capital (networks, norms, generalized trust) appear to be facilitating factors for social mobilization and subsequently for movement activities. Even though cultural aspects are partially included in social movements research – cultural features within the opportunity-structures as well as in the framing school – its influence appears to be slightly underestimated. In the first two parts of the article crucial aspects of conceptions of social movements and social capital are reviewed. They are meant to prepare the path for the third part, in which our integrative approach is developed.*

Key words: *social movements, social capital, political culture*

* TRIANGLE Lyon, E-mail: henry.rammelt@sciencespo-lyon.fr

I. Classical theoretical approaches of Social Movements ▬▬

One of the most quoted definitions of *social movements* describes them as informal networks, based on solidarity and a shared collective identity, that mobilize along social cleavages and that often make use of protest (cf. Della Porta/ Diani 1999: 20ff.). Social movements shouldn't be seen as organizations, but rather as "mobilized network (s) of networks" ["mobilisierte Netzwerke von Netzwerken"] (Neidhardt 1985: 193). As an opening point of our discussion, in this section, we will try to familiarize the reader with three basic concepts in the study of social movements – *opportunity structures, framing* and *resource mobilization* – and emphasize their interrelation.

To underline the importance of the first concept – *the opportunity structures* –, we find it useful to recall Giddens' 'duality of structures', who depicts structures not just as limiting action, but also as enabling it (Giddens 1984: 25ff.). The core idea behind the opportunity structures model is that movements are always acting within the societal environment, setting the general framework of action and influencing possibilities for collective action in a positive or negative manner. Originally, opportunity structures were understood, by the scientific community, in a purely political manner. These 'Political Opportunity Structures' (POS) defined the degree to which groups were able to gain access to power and to influence political decision making (cf. McAdam 1996: 23). Nowadays, a cultural dimension was added to the opportunity structures concept. Therefore we distinguish between the POS relating to the political system, and the 'cultural opportunity structures' (COS) focusing of on the cultural climate. Considering that the major dimensions of the POS are access to political institutions, elite alignments and the capacity and the will of authorities to use repression (tightening/ easing of repression), the COS focuses on the aggravation of a value-practice contradiction, suddenly imposed grievances and the dramatization of a system's vulnerability or illegitimacy (cf. McAdam 1996: 27).

Whereas opportunity structures mainly describe the environment of movements, playing an essential role in the appearance of movements, the second concept – *framing* – focuses on symbolic dimensions of action. Frames, in the sense of Goffman (Goffman 1974), define schemes of perception, localization and interpretation. The process of *framing* underlines the importance of the attribution of meaning as a basis for social action. Seeking to mobilize individuals, social movements construct frames – usually transmitted by (mass) media – therefore it has to be taken into account that the constructed frames are in coherence with the target group. Furthermore, cultural backgrounds provide the tools for the construction of frames. Movements need resources in order to be capable of strategic actions and it is the task of their entrepreneurs to obtain such resources.

The *resource mobilization* approach underlines the rational components of social

movements and, therefore, the importance of movement entrepreneurs and organizational structures. The most important resources possessed by movements are participants, their time, followed by technology, money, access to information, as well as reputation or authority. Such resources are acquired via *mobilization structures* – collective means through which people are mobilized and participate in collective action (cf. McAdam/ McCarthy/ Zald 1996: 3ff.). In order to attract participants, movements offer collective incentives – the estimation that one's participation contributes to achieve a common goal –, as well as selective incentives, useful for the concerned participant (Klandermans 1997: 77). However, one should take into consideration that, as Pierru notes, everything can be converted into resources, and therefore necessary resources can also be produced during the course of action (Pierru 2010: 36ff.).

Opportunity structures, frames and resource mobilization – interconnectivity and dynamics

If, until now, we presented these three concepts as isolated parts, we will now focus on their interrelation. The distinction between POS and COS appears to be a mere analytical one. While the first one underlines material aspects, the latter one focuses on symbolic features. In our understanding, movements are not acting on the basis of 'objective' opportunity structures, but on the basis of motivational correlates: the couple 'Easening/Tightening of Repression' describes the *estimated* costs of collective action, whereas the couple 'Reform/Threat' describes the *expected* movement-external development without any intervention of the movement itself. However, it is highly plausible that the chances of success are already included in these two calculations (cf. Kriesi/ Koopmans/ Duyvendak/ Giugni 1997: 52). The POS determine the framing efforts, whereas the COS determine the framing possibilities of the movement. They both have to be framed themselves, in order to create a proper environment for their use (cf. Gamson/ Meyer 1996: 283), processes taking place via prognostic frames for the POS and via diagnostic frames for the COS. Additionally, mobilizing structures depend heavily on framing, especially on the identity frame, since they can only mobilize actors who were already informed and in favour of the movement's ends. On the other hand, the framing capacity depends on the resources available and its success on the mobilizing structures. Resource mobilization is influenced by the COS, since they facilitate or hamper the access to external mobilizing channels (cf. McCarthy 1996: 150). Mobilizing structures affect the perception of the COS. At this stage, the POS also impact on intra-movement channels, whereas the latter effects the POS by demands for responsiveness.

A. Interdependence of the SMT's Main Concepts
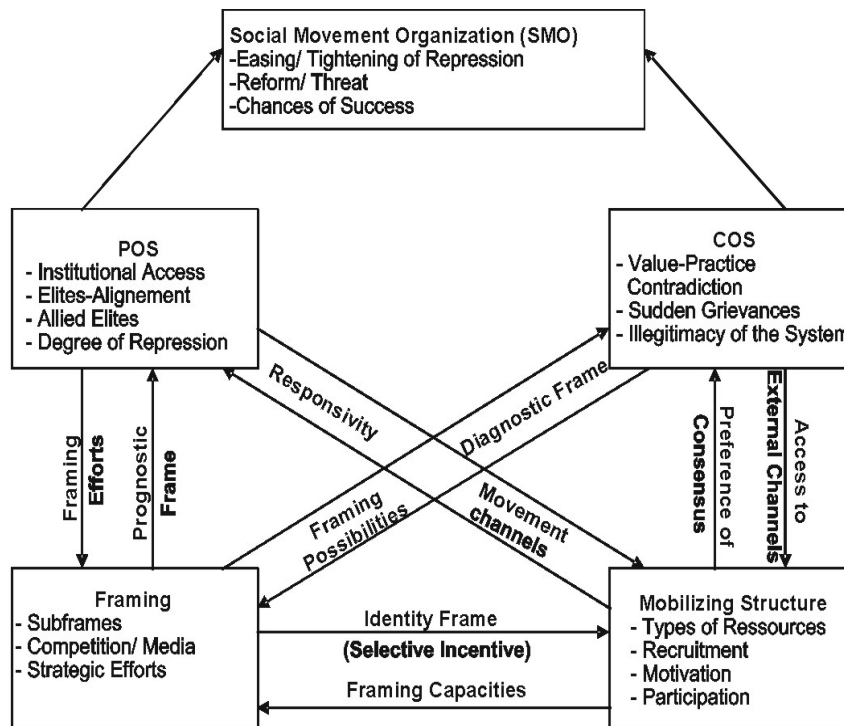
II. Networks, Norms and Trust – pillars of the Social Capital approach

With the notion *social capital* we refer to political, as well as non-political nexus within the society, subsequent to Putnam's conception. It is important to underline the distinction to *civil society* – which refers to an element of the political system (informal political actors) – because of a widespread tendency to use the two concepts indiscriminately, undermining their analytic potential (cf. Howard, 2003, 41f.). Following Putnam, we understand by *social capital* "features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared goals" (Putnam, 1993, p. 664). Contrary to *civil society*, focussing mainly on organizations, *social capital* concerns participation in general, and, as he

points out, "makes us smarter, healthier, richer and better able to govern a just and stable democracy" (Putnam, 2000, p. 290). Using the core ideas of Putnam's conception seems to offer us the arguments we need to prove the interrelation between mobilization and social capital.

According to Putnam, *Networks*, *Norms* and *Trust* are the three pillars of social capital. By *networks* he comprehends a variety of joint associations – ranging from neighbourhood associations to sports clubs, etc. – which appear to be the essential form of social capital: „The denser such networks in a community, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 173). They raise the costs of non-cooperation, cultivate norms of social reciprocity, facilitate communication and, subsequently, rectify the trustworthiness of individuals and furnish models for future joint action. *Norms*, and especially norms of reciprocity, diminish transaction costs and facilitate cooperation. *Trust,* an emergent feature of social systems as well as a personal attribute, enables agents to achieve aims that would not be reached in the case of its absence. Seen as necessary for a functional democracy, trust is produced in the course of collective action. While social trust, in Putnam's understanding, is a result of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, it is also a cause for more joint activities and compliance to norms (Ibid, p. 171). If social capital helps to create a "vibrant and virtuous community where people know their neighbours, join together in voluntary associations, give of themselves, and omit themselves to moral codes", as Uslaner emphasizes (Uslaner, 1999, p. 121), the existing stock of social capital should be seen as well, in our understanding, as a result of these activities.

Concurring factors in the manifestation of social capital

These three factors are strongly interrelated and self-reinforcing: „Stocks of social capital such as trust, norms and networks tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Virtuous circles result in social equilibria with high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and collective well-being" (Putnam, 1993, p. 171). All these forms of social capital are multiplied by its use and diminished by its non-use. In its logical conception, Putnam combines structural and cultural components, the first one represented by networks, the latter one by trust and norms (Kunz, 2006: 335).

The high relevance of social capital as a prerequisite for a functioning democracy is underscored by numerous scholars. This notion is substantiated by publications on social capital and recent regime changes. Studies show that countries with a recent transition from authoritarian rule have lower indicators of social capital than longer established, stable and prosperous democracies. Paldam/ Svendsen's statement,

that dictatorships destroys social capital, has become a dictum in the discipline (Paldam/ Svendsen, 2001). In order to explain the significance of social capital for social movements we will direct our interest to two major lines of argumentation in this field of study. The first one points to the effects of the economy of scarcity, leading to black market and grey networks. Those networks will stay functional after regime change and operate according to methods they were familiar with. The effect of these networks is often called 'negative social capital' (Rose, 1999). Another negative effect of the pre-democratic system on the existence of social capital in the post-autocratic period is the lack of time of individuals busy with the humdrum of everyday life, as a consequence of the economic situation (di Palma, 1991). The second argumentation is mainly focussed towards a general mistrust to voluntary association after the experience with communist mass-organizations (Howard, 2003, 105ff.). Of course, this is a mere analytical distinction and the above-mentioned aspects are more or less included in all studies to the topic. The general tendency is to ascribe a lack of generalized trust to post-authoritarian regimes, mainly because networks under authoritarian rule produced a strong *Binnenmoral* and hampered the emergence of an *Aussenmoral,* in the sense of Weber.

III. Social Capital, Political Culture and Social Movements – an integrative model

Although the three major schools on social movements, mentioned above, are well established and hold a significant share of current research, the field is strongly accessible to new ideas and methodological approaches (Klandermans/ Staggenborg, 2002). We argue that social capital impacts particularly strong on aspects summed up under the topic resource mobilization, and it appears to be reasonable to include its variables in an analysis of social movements, especially in countries with recent transition background. The two approaches – social movement theory and social capital – have different temporal localizations: whereas the first one analyzes the actual situation, the latter one takes into account historical developments. In countries with recent transition background the latter one should not be ignored. Social capital appears to have a strong impact on internal organization. Taking into consideration the primary effects of social capital – the facilitation of cooperation for mutual benefits – the next logical step would be to assume that social movements, as mobilized "networks of networks", function more easily as a bigger stock of social capital is existent. Social capital scholars argue that trust is produced in horizontal associations, which is, although we will find movement entrepreneurs and leaders, a basic structural principle of social movements.

B. An integrative approache to social Movements
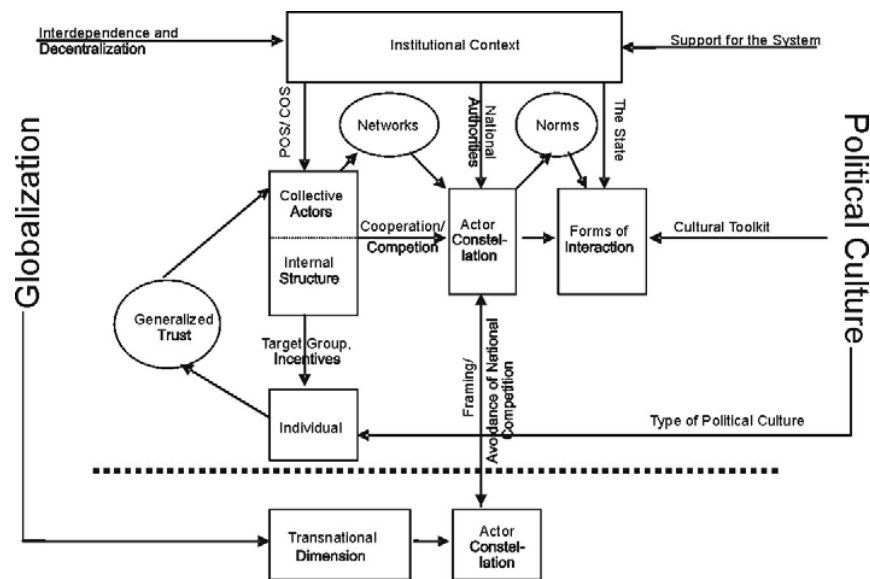
Furthermore, social capital diminishes the transaction costs and facilitates communication not only within the movement, but with its environment as well. The access to movement-external mobilization channels is eased. In times of growing intersection of social circles in the sense of Simmel, individuals oftentimes participate in more than one movement, usually similar ones, sometimes even movements with a different agenda. This does not only produce trust, as we know from the social capital conception, but it also requires trust, to enter new environments. It is less likely to participate in social mobilization, *a fortiori* as the mobilization aims at a common good, if either *little generalized trust* or a strong *binnenmoral* stemming from negative social capital is existent. If we agree that social capital can be a means to overcome the *problem of collective action* in the sense of Olson (cf. Peters 2001: 164), it strongly facilitates internal resource mobilization, and it might reduce the free-rider problem. Norms of reciprocity appear to ease resource mobilization as well, not just within the movement itself but, once more, also in regard to the movement's environment. They also impact on the framing process – since frames must be in coherence with the targeted group – and, finally, on the forms of interaction. Hence, social capital has a strong influence on resource mobilization, especially in easing the access to prospect participants and movement-external channels.

The institutional context, captured best by the opportunity school, shall not be understood as a structuring structure determining practices and manifestations of the concerned actors, but more as an external condition, setting the general framework of action via external conditioning of self-control in the sense of Luhmann. As pointed out earlier, movements are not acting on the basis of existing *objective structures* but rather on *perceptions* and results of *social interaction*. Structures are not rigid but subject to change; they react to demands for responsiveness, whereas powerholders, involved in the alignment process of structures, follow the "rule of anticipated reaction" (Friedrich, 1963: 203ff.). In recent history the national institutional context was deeply influenced by the growing mutual interpenetration of societies and, hence, their interdependence (Keohane/ Nye 1992), reshaping the very forms of the state itself (cf. Castells, 2004: 303ff.). Moreover, the environment in which social movements act is restructured accordingly.

Political culture, as the link between micro- and macro-political structures, has also an influence on the institutional context. The relationship between the political community and the political regime via inputs and outputs and subsequently the emitted support (Easton 1965/ 1975) shape the scope of action of political powerholders as well as the room for manoeuvre of social movements. People's attitudes towards the political system influence social mobilization. So does their assessment of the political systems in terms of efficiency and legitimacy (Lipset, 1959). For mobilization purposes, movement entrepreneurs have to choose symbols and strategies in accordance to their cultural environment (cf. Tarrow, 1998: 109). Consequently, political culture impacts on the framing process as well. On the other hand, long practised forms of contention, types of conflict resolution used in the past, narrow or enrich entrepreneurs repertoire of action and influence the manner in which movements act in their environment, thus the forms of interaction. The psychological orientations of individuals towards the political system in the sense of Almond/ Verba determine individuals' propensity of getting involved in social mobilization.

Hence, political culture has a significant effect on opportunity structures – especially by shaping the institutional context –, on resource mobilization – by influencing citizens' disposition to become participants – and on framing, mainly by shaping the forms of interaction (interactions between movements and their opponents, interactions among movements, and interaction within the movement itself).

IV. Conclusion

This article demonstrated that norms of reciprocity, networks, and generalized trust have an impact on the activities of social movements, which shouldn't be left aside in the scientific work in this field. They are not just creating prosperous societies or just

"making democracy work", as advocates of social capital postulate. Generalized trust influences individual's decision to join associations as well as to participate in social mobilization; networks, especially cross-cutting horizontal ones, strongly influence resource mobilization and movements positioning within the movement field; and norms shape the forms of interaction. We suggested that political culture impacts on the institutional context, *ergo* on movements' opportunity structures; that it influences the propensity of individuals to participate; and that it structures the way conflicts or actions are carried out. As empirical research on political culture has a long history, introducing the analytical dimensions proposed above could be helpful for developing a research scheme that provides us a more comprehensive view on social movements. The newer conceptions of social capital pose bigger problems in regard to its implementation into the proposed integrative approach. By limiting the inquiry to the aforementioned aspects, this model, conceived as a multidimensional research design, could be useful to enrich the scientific discussion on the topic.

References

Almond, Gabriel; Verba, Sidney (1963), The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes in Five Nation, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Castells, Manuel (2004), The Power of Identity, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. II., 2nd edition, Oxford, Blackwell.

Della Porta, Donatella/ Diani, Mario (1999), Social Movements: An Introduction. Oxford: Blackwell.

Di Palma, Giuseppe, 1991: Legitimation from the Top to Civil Society: Politico-Cultural Change in Eastern Europe. World Politics 44, no. 1, 9-80.

Diani, Mario, 1997: Social movements and social capital: A network perspective on movement outcomes. Mobilization, 2(2), 129-148.

Easton, David, 1975: A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support. in: Brithish Journal of Political Science 5, 435-457.

Easton, David: 1965, A Systems Analysis of Political Life, New York: Wiley.

Friedrich, Carl Joachim, 1963: Man and His Government: An Empirical Theory of Politics. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gamson, William A./ Meyer, David S., 1996: Framing political opportunity, in: McAdam, Doug/ McCarthy, John D./ Zald, Mayer N. (eds.), 1996: Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Op-portunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 275-290.

Giddens, Anthony, 1984: The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Goffman, Erving 1974. Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience.

London: Harper and Row.

Howard, Marc Morje, 2003: The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keohane, Robert O./ Nye, Jospeh S., 1992: Power and Interdependence. 2nd Edition, New York: Harper Collins.

Klandermanns, Bert, 1997: The social Psychology of Protest. Oxford: Blackwell.

Klandermanns, Bert/ Staggenborg, Suzanne, 2002: Introduction. in: Klandermanns, Bert/ Staggenborg, Suzanne, 2002: Methods of Social Movement Research. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, ix-xx.

Kriesi, Hanspeter/ Koopmans, Ruud/ Duyvendak, Jan W./ Giugni, Marco G., 1997: New Social Movements and Political Opportunities in Western Europe, in: McAdam, Doug/ Snow, David E. (eds.), 1997: Social Movements: Readings on their Emergence, Mobilization, and Dynamics. Los Angeles: Roxbury, 52-65.

Kunz, Volker, 2006: Vergleichende Sozialkapitalforschung. in: Lauth, Hans-Joachim (ed.), 2006: Vergleichende Regierungslehre. Eine Einführung. zweite durchgesehene Auflage, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 332-352.

Lipset, Seymor Martin, 1959: Some Social Requisites of Democracy, Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. in: American Political Science Review 53, 69-105.

Luhmann, Niklas, 1998: Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft. zweiter Teilband, Frankfurt/ Main: Suhrkamp.

McAdam, Doug, 1996: Conceptual origins, current problems, future directions, in: McAdam, Doug/ McCarthy, John D./ Zald, Mayer N. (eds.), 1996: Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Op-portunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 23-40.

McAdam, Doug/ McCarty, John D./ Zald, Mayer N., 1996: Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements, in: McAdam, Doug/ McCarthy, John D./ Zald, Mayer N. (eds.), 1996: Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-20.

McCarthy, John D., 1996: Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing, in: McAdam, Doug/ McCarthy, John D./ Zald, Mayer N. (eds.), 1996: Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Op-portunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 141-151.

Neidhardt, Friedhelm, 1985: Einige Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Theorie sozialer

Bewegungen. in: Hradil, Stefan (ed.): Sozialstruktur im Umbruch. Karl Martin Bolte zum 60. Geburtstag. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 193-204.

Paldam, Martin/ Svendsen, Gert Tinggaard (2001): Missing Social Capital and the Transition in Eastern Europe., in: Journal for Institutional Innovation, Development and Transition, Vol 5., p. 21-34.

Peters, Guy (2002): Comparative Politics: Theory and Method. Basingtonstoke: Palgrade.

Pierru, Emmanuel, 2010: Organisations et ressources., in: Fillieule, Olivier/ Agrikoliansky, Eric/ Sommier, Isabelle, 2010: Penser les mouvements sociaux. Conflits sociaux et contestations dans les societes contemporaines. Paris: Editions La Decouverte, 19-38

Putnam, Robert, 1993: Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, Princeton University Press.

Putnam, Robert, 2000: Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Rose, Richard, 1999: Getting thing done in an Antimodern Society: Social Capital Networks in Russia. Worldbank: Social Capital Initiative Working Paper No. 6.

Simmel, Georg, 1890: Über soziale Differenzierung. Soziologische und psychologische Untersuchungen. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.

Tarrow, Sidney, 1998: Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Uslaner, Eric M.,1999: Democracy and social capital. in: Warren, Mark E. (ed.), 1999: Democracy and Trust. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 121-150.

Weber, Max, 1972: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie. Studienausgabe besorgt von Johannes Winckelmann, 5. revidierte, Auflage, Tübingen: Mohr.