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Typology of Approaches to Studing Social Capital

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The article summarizes and explains the most popular approaches to the study of social capital. It presents a new definition of social capital and establishes the correlation of between social capital with human, cultural, and intellectual capital. The article examines social categories which directly related to social capital and contains specific examples of research into these categories in Krasnoyarsk Krai and in Russia. The theories of social capital are systematized in the article.

Keywords: social capital, trust, social networks, intellectual capital, human capital, cultural capital, structural and institutional systematization, three-level systematization, subject-functional type of systematization.

1. Introduction

At present, the concept of social capital is one of the most popular concepts in the scientific community. New theoretical and empirical methods for research of social capital of the society as a whole and its individual groups are being developed. As a result, the number of publications devoted to the study of social capital is increasing. This can be exemplified by to the directory of the publishing house Springer, referred to in the article of S.A.Sysoev. The directory contains 1,769 books and articles published from 2001-2005, in the text of which the term social capital is used, and 6463 articles and books published between 2006-2010. (Sysoev S. A.)

Social capital was first mentioned in the works of Lida D. Henifen in the late 60's of the 20th century. (Hanifan L.J.) At the present time, the problems, connected with the definition and

development of the concept of social capital, are widely considered and studied in the scientific literature both in Russia and abroad. The ideas of the following authors are developed and described in their works: Pierre Bourdieu, P. Busse, W. Gass, R. Rose, J. Coleman, F. Fukuyama, and also of the sociologist Jane Jacobs and economist Glenn Lowry. A great contribution to the development of this concept in Russia was made by the following scientists: V.V. Radaev, I.E. Diskin, L.V. Strelnikova, T.S. Popova, Yu.I. Zolotareva.

Despite the complexity of the study, the concept of social capital is becoming more and more popular. Nevertheless, social capital should not be viewed as "the only possible solution to the most important social problems." (Putnam R.D., Somers M., Wyn J.). Of course, there are many books devoted to the description of how the "civilized society" can solve all the

problems of the society. However, the concept of social capital as a “panacea” does not illustrate the potential of social capital – the possibility of using it to make changes in the society. In the conception of “healing” everything with the help of social capital it is stated that it is not a new solution to old problems, and that the popularity of social capital has increased as a result of reducing of social well-being in the society and decentralization of government support. (Billet P.) Despite this, scientists have proved the incredible benefits of social capital for development of different gender groups, and especially for construction and description of the social structure of the society, which is “socially stratified class structure of the contemporary Russian society.” (Nemirovskiy V.G., 2012.)

2. Conceptual basis for the research

The category of “social capital” can be considered from the point of view of different approaches. First of all, the existing definitions of the phenomenon of “social capital” can be analyzed. The studies of social capital are interdisciplinary. They are carried out within the framework of sociology, economic theory, political science and cultural studies, allowing the development of a number of new directions in economic sociology, political science and cultural analysis of the phenomena and processes in various spheres of public life. At the same time, the term is used in its unconventional meaning by the representatives of various other sciences, each of whom interprets the concept of social capital in their own way.

Secondly, through the interconnection and definition of the concepts of human, cultural and intellectual capital. This kind of analysis gives the most truthful representation of the essence and significance of this category for the social and economic spheres of life.

Thirdly, it is currently relevant to consider this important concept through social categories. In this issue we adhere to the points of view of John Coleman and Francis Fukuyama. Therefore, social categories, which are definitely attributable to social capital, are few (social networks, trust). In addition, they exist in such different economic, political and cultural conditions that their comparability is surprising rather than natural. (Coleman J., 2001)

Scientists often try deal with the situation by limiting their study to specific social categories. This tendency is now prevalent, rather than the search for universal approaches to the study of social capital. So, it is useful to consider different points of view to the study of this category. All this makes the systematization of the theories of social capital relevant. And this is the fourth approach to the study of this concept.

In the present work all four approaches to the study of social capital are examined and analyzed, because they are in this or that way connected with each other.

3. Statement of the problem

Despite the fact that the number of studies of social capital is increasing every year, scientists have not arrived to a common view. Therefore, systematizing the theories of the phenomenon of “social capital” is not an easy task.

This is also explained by the fact that, on the one hand, not having a single conventional definition, a researcher studies the processes taking place in the society basing on their own empirical experience and the experience of other scholars, which allows integration of the concept of social capital into the scheme of many socio-economic and political processes. However, there is a flip side of this process. Besides the absence of a common definition, there are many conflicting concepts of social capital. The conceptions have been developed in different theoretical directions

and do not have a unified approach. The researcher can either summarize all the theories and create his/her own one, or stick to one of the existing theories. Neither the first nor the second option seems to be objective. The first – because of diversity of theoretical directions (sociology, economics, the study of civil society, cultural studies), the second option cannot be objective, since none of the existing theories is recognized to be the only one which is right.

As a rule, the researchers of social capital adhere in their works to the existing definitions and theories of this concept. The analysis of the approaches is made in most of the works, but often, even purely theoretical research is a complicated text, which is hard to remember. This problem arises from the fact that many theories intersect with each other and are interconnected in various ways. That is why there is a need for clear and understandable systematization of the approaches to the study of social capital.

4. Methodology

In this paper, the method of construction and justification of sociological knowledge is used – theoretical typology. This method of scientific cognition allows the construction of propositions about stable characteristics of social objects, as well as making a “typological grouping”. The result of such typological grouping is a well-grounded typology, which can be regarded as “preceding creation of a theory in any area of knowledge”. Therefore, this method is most relevant to our study.

5. Discussion

In order to systematize the approaches to the study of the concept of social capital, we have examined various definitions of the studied category.

Based on the etymology of the words “social” and “capital”, a purely philological definition

of social capital have been derived. This is a dynamically developing resource, reorganizing social and work relations between people, which can bring income in the sphere of production of goods and services.

However, this approach to defining the concept of social capital does not sufficiently contribute to proper understanding of the essence of the studied category, its methods of research, and does not make it possible to apply the term to the analysis of the most actualized social processes taking place in today's society.

In the domestic literature, the term social capital appeared relatively recently. Therefore, we have examined five most commonly used foreign definitions, referred to in the article of a doctoral student of the Institute of Economy and Foreign Economic Relations of the Southern Federal University, V.V. Gassi. (Gassi V.V.)

For example, we will give two of the most interesting, in our view, definitions:

1. It is such a characteristic of social relations, which corresponds to the ability of the society to work together and achieve goals.
2. It is spatial relationships, interactions and networks that exist between groups of people, as well as the level of trust (the result of commitments and norms, related to the social structure) within a group or community. Thus, the concept of social capital is necessary for studying, for example, social mobility, economic growth and vitality of the community.

However, only the combination of all definitions gives the clearest understanding of the category of “social capital.” So, it can be assumed that the lack of a common definition of the term is indicative of many-sidedness of this phenomenon and its constant mutability. It is also quite possible that there is no single definition due to the fact that social capital is closely related to other forms of capital, and has similar, to some extent, characteristics. This thesis can be proved

or disproved by studying social capital through its relations with human, cultural and intellectual capital.

In the mid-20th century, the economists G. Becker, H. J. Johnson and T. W. Schultz justified the need to include the term “human capital” into the category apparatus of the economic theory. (Konkov A.T.). Schultz, who won the Nobel Prize in 1979, proposed to interpret human capital as “acquired valuable human qualities that can be enhanced by appropriate investment.” (Gassi V.V.). However, suchlike economic approaches do not consider such aspects of human life as attitude to work, spiritual health and creative potential. Therefore, human capital is represented as a combination of effective labor, knowledge, health, intelligence, and standard of living. Such capital is accumulated by every person in the course of their life with simultaneous development of intellectual and cultural capital.

The concept of “cultural capital” was introduced in the work of P. Bourdieu “The outline of the theory of practical action” in 1972. These are the benefits that are passed down by the elites to their children, and extend the possibilities of their social mobility. Cultural capital is the knowledge that enables its possessor to understand and evaluate different types of cultural relations and cultural products. P. Bourdieu believed that cultural capital is “bound by many ties to a man in his biological uniqueness and is inherited.” (Bourdieu P.)

That is, human and cultural capital are concepts that need to be considered in connection with each other. Especially, in view of the fact that a separate category – cultural human capital – was specified by sociologists. It is a linguistic and cultural competence of a person, wealth in the form of knowledge or ideas that legitimize the status and power, support the established social order and the existing hierarchy. (Bourdieu P., Passeron J.). One of the

characteristics of cultural capital is intellectual culture or intellectual capital. (Bondarenko G.I.) Intellectual capital is inseparably linked with education, is formed in the process of formal and informal learning, and is a combination of innate and developed intellectual wealth of a person in the form of his/her intellectual culture. The accumulation of cultural, intellectual capitals by an individual leads to increase in their social and professional mobility, change in his/her social status and development of socio-cultural capital. One of the most important indicators of socio-cultural capital is self-identification. “The modern Russian society is a rather poorly integrated identification space, providing the individual with different ways of social and cultural self-identification.” (Nemirovskiy V.G., 2012) People with all of the above- mentioned types of capital are fully capable of not only performing professional work of varying degree of complexity, but also being highly productive. Having different levels of educational, intellectual, biological potential, such people also have different levels of innate abilities and professional skills, moral and physical qualities, efficiency, level of social relations, social mobility, ability for building social relationships and trust, that is, they possess various types of social capital.

Thus, it can be said that social capital is the differentiation of various types of capital in terms of social processes, and at the same time it is inseparably linked with them, as all types of capital do have similar characteristics. The social processes taking place in today's society can be most accurately determined with the help of the categories and components used in the study of social capital.

By studying the processes occurring in social networks, trust to the people around us and the state, and one can define and understand social capital as “ means of access of the individual

to different resources.” (Nemirovskiy V.G., Nemirovskaya A.V.)

Trust is an essential component of social capital. (Fukuyama F.) Trust in connection with social capital was studied by R. Putnam, E. Lesser, Francis Fukuyama and others. It is trust that is a precondition for progress, and success of the society depends on the level of trust that exists in it. Such studies are relevant for Russia nowadays because of the gradual transition to a “normal” civil society. According to the results of a nationwide survey carried out as part of the project “Comparative studies of trust in various countries in the age of globalization” in 2009, the modern Russian society is built on the principles of *Gemeinschaft*, that is, a society based on kinship. (Sasaki M., Davydenko V.A., Latov J.V., Romashkin G.S.). However, the level of trust to friends is fairly high among the Russians, it is even slightly higher than the trust to brothers and sisters. That is we are readily including non-relatives into our “inside” circle, too. As part of the study of issues of trust, scientists are also considering the level of mistrust and disbelief. In such studies the opinions of different groups of the population are examined, and an honest and professional approach to the description of the results can be really effective for changing of the current situation.

For example, the survey conducted in Krasnoyarsk Krai (Nemirovskiy V.G., Nemirovskaya A.V.), revealed a high level of interpersonal trust to the immediate environment, and institutional and interpersonal (in relation to “outsiders”), distrust. Institutional trust in general is low. The level of interpersonal and institutional distrust is rather high. “Thus, the regional society seems to be divided into a number of specific “clans”, consisting, first of all, of family members and close relatives, and, secondly, of personal friends and some colleagues. These “clans” (or clusters), together with the system and the

hierarchy of relations between them form the basis of the social structure of the region. The existence of such a social structure often bespeaks of pre-feudal, pseudo-kinship trends in social relations. It is belonging to one of these clusters which acts as a kind of social lift, moreover, according to many researchers, vertical social movement of individuals inside such clans is characteristic of Russia. This results in a range of social deviations, such as nepotism, corruption, and inefficient functioning of the social system as a whole. “(Nemirovskiy V.G., Nemirovskaya A.V.)

Thus, we can speak of a low level of trust both in Russia as a whole and in its regions. Increase of the level of trust of the individual to the authorities, next door neighbors, and people on the bus is an important task of both public policy and every individual. Developing of formal and informal relations of an individual, that is, social networks, and healthy functioning of the society as a whole is impossible without trust.

In his conception, J. Coleman, defines social capital as a resource, moving from the donor to the recipient. Social capital is equaled to the sum of the actor’s connections with other actors, and is a mediator for the mobilization of the resources of others. (Coleman J., 1990) This definition clearly shows that social networks and relations are an integral part of formation of social capital. In view of the fact that social networks are social connections, they “concentrate conscious and unconscious, necessary and accidental, stable and spontaneous interpersonal contacts of people caused by their activity.” (Bochkareva I.) Thus, two types of social relations—formal and informal, can be distinguished. Informal relations are kinship, friendship, i.e. all the communication of fellowship of individuals with each other, which does not seek material gain. Formal connections are characterized by business relations, they are rather business connections and business

networks. A person with an extensive network of formal and informal connections accumulates social capital faster and more efficiently.

At the present time, it can be said that the Russians have a developed social resource. That is, they actively use informal networks of mutual aid and the system of interpersonal and inter-family contacts. Research shows that the extensiveness of the system of social networks and relationships is characterized by belonging of a person to a particular social class. So, social inequality affects the ability to create and expand social networks, and as a result, to accumulate social capital. This is manifested in the lack of trust to the authorities, the habit of relying only on oneself, and one's own resources, lack of confidence in objectivity and fairness, fear of the future. Of course, social inequality has always existed, and is unlikely to ever disappear. Therefore, rural families will have their own structure of social connections, adolescents who are brought up in an orphanage – another one, and the young man who graduated from Harvard – quite a different one. But this does not mean that some network is worse, it is just of a lower order. Social position and status have a huge impact on social relations, but personal development of an individual is important too. Spiritual values, seeking education, developing of one's potential can become an invisible lever for raising the level of a person's relations.

The above mentioned components of social capital are fundamental to the theory of social capital.

Based on the analysis of different approaches to the study of social capital, the main types of systematization of the theories of social capital can be grouped into three types: a three-level systematization, a structural and institutional systematization and a subject-functional one.

Modern theories of social capital are mainly based on the intersection of two aspects related

to the two components of social capital: the structural and institutional.

The structural aspect is revealed through the concept of social networks. They are formal and informal social connections that have been discussed above.

Inside the network system there are stratification differences due to unequal access to social networks. This is a precondition for relations between informal social networks and formal organizations. From the point of view of the structural framework, social capital is measured by the degree of inclusion in the network, their size, density, and also power and intensity of networking.

The basis of the institutional approach is the issue of trust. The basis of trust is reciprocity – the belief in the efficacy and reciprocity of relations. From the point of view of the institutional approach social capital is measured by the number of accumulated commitments.

The basis of the structural and institutional approach is the system-forming categories that allow a detailed representation of the studied category. That is, from the point of view of the structural approach, social capital is the totality of network contacts, but from the perspective of the institutional approach – social capital is the accumulated trust. This approach to understanding the nature of social capital somewhat simplifies application of this concept to the study of life and functioning of modern society. At the present time it is proved by the diversity of research conducted with the help of the phenomenon of “social capital”.

The next interpretation of social capital is a three-level one. At the macro level the fundamental issues and problems, associated with production, reproduction, regulation and coordination of needs, are solved. In other words, the problems are solved at the level of social institutions. R. Putnam, M. Peldem, M. Schiff

and others argued that social capital arises from relations of different groups in the society. When humans interact with each other there appear a uniqueness of the society, norms, trust.

Meso-level is represented by corporate and social cells.

Finally, at the micro-level, social capital is formed as personal relationships in corporate and social cells. Great contribution to the conceptualization of the micro-level interpretation of social capital was made by Bourdieu, who defined social capital as the totality of actual or potential resources which are associated with existence of strong network relations and relations of mutual recognition and acknowledgement, which are institutionalized to this or that degree. (Radaev V.V.)

On the positive side of this three-level theory is the fact that each level reveals a specific pattern of formation of social capital. It also shows that social capital is manifested at all levels of interaction between individuals and functioning of the society. However, social reality cannot be distinctively demarcated, so it is impossible to analyze one level without taking into account the other two.

The third approach derived by researchers – is the subject-functional. Social capital is viewed from the point of view of socio-anthropological, sociological, economic, institutional and political approaches. The core of the first of these approaches is the natural human desire for unity. From the point of view of the sociological approach, social capital is interpreted as norms, networks and organizations by which individuals benefit. This approach is most clearly reflected in the works of R. Rose. (Rose R.) The political science approach focuses on the role of institutions and social norms in shaping human behavior.

Thus, the subject-function type includes four approaches to the study of social capital.

All the three of the analyzed approaches are closely related to each other. And the theory of one and the same author can be attributed to different types. But all of these approaches have a definite advantage – not only do they explain the essence of the concept of social capital, but also allow modern scholars to create new theories based on their agreement or disagreement with the existing ones.

6. Conclusion

In our opinion, not only does such a gradation of approaches to the study of social capital show the diversity, complexity of the studied concept, it also proves the relevance of this concept to any socio-economic phenomena, as well as the modernization processes of human society. Social capital – is a socio-cultural phenomenon and its development is hampered by socio-cultural barriers. “The success of modernization is possible on condition of taking into account the specifics of socio-cultural barriers. Serious efforts and nontrivial approaches of the federal authorities are necessary for continuation of modernization processes and overcoming the obstacles in their way.” (Nemirovskiy V.G., Nemirovskaya A.V., Khamidullina K.P.).

Social capital is a category that is interesting to study both in the dynamics and in statics. Of course, there are more categories attributed to social capital than those that have been described in this work. However, two fundamental approaches are enough to reveal the essence of the approaches. The typology of approaches to the study of social capital not only allows researchers to understand the studied phenomenon most accurately, but also to propose their own theory as part of their research. Generalization of theoretical information, testing it in practice in the course of one's research – is an opportunity to create a researcher's own theory of social

capital. Perhaps it is at the present time, that young scientists will contribute a new, interesting theory to the literature on studying social capital, which will become fundamental for the majority of scientific research of the world's scientific community.

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Типология подходов к изучению социального капитала

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В статье обобщены и разъяснены наиболее популярные подходы к изучению социального капитала. Предложено авторское определение социального капитала. Определена взаимосвязь социального и человеческого капитала, культурного и интеллектуального. Рассмотрены некоторые социальные категории, однозначно относимые к социальному капиталу. Приведены примеры их исследований в Красноярском крае и в России. Систематизированы теории социального капитала.

Ключевые слова: социальный капитал, доверие, социальные сети, интеллектуальный капитал, человеческий капитал, культурный капитал, структурно-институциональный тип систематизации, трехуровневый тип систематизации, предметно-функциональный тип систематизации.
