

Social Capital and Area: Territoriality of Social Networks and Groups

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Annotation. The paper discusses the constitution of social capital within social groups and networks and conceptualizes relations between social networks and territory. The main attention is devoted to territoriality of social networks and to horizontal and vertical relations between social networks at various scales, reflecting the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital.

Key words: social capital, social networks, territory.

1 Introduction

The importance of social capital for local and regional development has been widely acknowledged during last decades. Localities, regions, nations and communities are more likely to achieve higher levels of development and to mitigate negative external influences if they have higher level of embedded social capital. Social capital is one of several factors influencing regional development. However, its role is growing due to increasing importance of mutual interactions in society and the impact of international division of labour on lives of people and communities (Castells 1996).

In this paper, we first discuss the concept of social capital, concentrating on its main characteristics and ways of its constitution. First we outline the origin of social capital within social networks and groups (structural part of social capital) and its reflection in the level of mutual trust in these groups and networks (cognitive part of social capital). In the following part we focus on territoriality of social groups and social networks and on the importance of horizontal and vertical relations between these networks on various geographical scales. We discuss types of social capital (bonding, bridging, linking) and their relation to spatial structures and territoriality of social relations acknowledging both differences and complementarities of particular types of social capital.

2 Social Capital

Social capital is a specific added value originating in quantity and quality of social interactions. These interactions are based on mutually agreed norms of social relations, trust in these norms and in institutions which guarantee them, as well as in other actors in one's social group, network or society in general. Social capital is formed, maintained and developed through (formal as well as informal) social interactions within social networks, groups, communities or whole societies. These interactions mean transfer and sharing of resources, information or knowledge between individuals in these social networks or groups. Social capital is one of the qualities of social structure and includes such features as relations, interactions and contacts, generally shared values, institutions, norms, sanctions, rules, procedural mechanisms, attitudes and trust in other citizens, institutions, social groups or society in general, which facilitate mutual coordination of social activities and thus increase the effectiveness of social organisation (Putnam et al. 1993). Social capital is formed through social linkages which support cooperation and coordination among people. This ensures lower transactional costs and enables to achieve common goals more effectively.

Social capital is primarily utilized by individuals. However, it also brings benefits to social groups and society in general. For this reason, both individual actors as well as whole social groups are interested in sustaining and developing social capital. Individual actor is as a member of social group (network) able to employ and use social capital for his/her individual benefit (Lin 2001). However, such individual benefit must be in harmony (or must not contradict) with common interests of social group. Individuals are interested to use the group resources available due to social relations within particular social group (network). The social group interest is to benefit from individual successes of group members, who also used social capital of the group for their individual achievements. Social capital is individual as well as collective resource which helps to fulfil personal as well as collective goals. However, some individuals can benefit from social capital more than the others. They have access to better resources and maintain such internal disparities. Social inequalities are thus reflected in an uneven access to social capital (Edwards, Foley 1998).

Social capital is based on relationships between actors which together form the social system. Social system is not a simple sum of components it consists of (social aggregate). The ties and linkages between the components are an important quality of social system as well. Social bonds connect economic, cultural and human capital of actors in social system in an integrated whole. Social capital is a relational entity integrating particular actors into larger social units enabling them to cooperate and use resources („capitals“) available

to other actors in the social group or network. We distinguish between social groups based on similar social and demographical characteristics, similar interests and shared values, and social networks, which we see as contact systems of actors connected by mutual interactions. Relations within social group can be indirect, mediated by shared norms, values and trust. Social networks are formed by direct interactions. Social networks can be formed by actors from the same social group as well as by actors from different social groups. Social capital is formed and encouraged by shared values reproduced in social groups as well as by direct interaction between actors in social networks.

3 Types of Social Capital

Social capital understood and investigated from two distinctive points of view: structural and cognitive. Structural social capital refers to variety of linkages within social networks and between them. The basic types of structural social capital are intra-group („bonding“), inter-group („bridging“) and hierarchical („linking“). The reflection of social capital in the level of mutual trust within and between social groups stands for cognitive social capital. Trust can be seen as particularized and generalized. Particularized trust exists between members of particular social group. Generalized trust refers to the level of trust in the whole society, regardless of the individual membership in particular social group. For some authors, generalized trust is the most important symptom of the existence and the level of social capital (Putnam 1993).

Social capital is a characteristic of internally highly structured society which consists of various social groups, networks, communities, etc. Ties represent relationships between individual members of social groups or networks as well as relations between networks within more complex societal networks. Ties and interactions can be reciprocal as well as hierarchical, horizontal linkages at the same level of social structure as well as vertical ties between different hierarchical levels of social structure. From this point of view, basic types of social capital are distinguished, including intra-group (bonding), inter-group (bridging) and hierarchical that links social groups and communities at lower hierarchical levels to more powerful actors and their networks in superior social systems (linking) (Putnam 2000, Halpern 2005).

Intra-group (bonding) social capital is based on high internal loyalty and high level of particularized trust within relatively homogenous social group. It is usually formed on the micro-level of social groups such as family, tribe or neighbourhood community. It can, however, also exist within nations and states. Bonding social capital enables internal organisation within social group, helps to protect the interest of the members of the social group against other

groups and helps the members of social group to overcome difficulties. Beside positive effects (e.g. family or friend helping somebody to find a job, local patriotism supporting entrepreneurship) negative consequences can appear as well (e.g. privileging members of a family or fraternity and destroying competitive environment). Strong bonding social capital can go hand in hand with antagonisms to other social groups and thus undermine the role of bridging social capital in wider society.

Inter-group (bridging) social capital connects particular social groups or networks. It enables exchange of information and services and supports the ability of social groups to cooperate and achieve commonly agreed goals. This type of social capital is seen as positive for social cohesion and development. However, it is based on weak and often unstable linkages. They, nevertheless, connect people of different social background, gender, nationality, political opinions and interests thus helping to develop and strengthen mutual trust in wider society and form more tolerant and inclusive societies. Provided some groups are excluded from bridging ties, high level of bridging social capital tends to maintain and deepen existing disparities between „involved“ and „excluded“ actors from different social groups.

Hierarchical (linking) social capital connects actors and social groups in lower social positions to key actors in hierarchically superior levels of social structure. Linking social capital enables some actors to draw benefits thanks to connections with actors with more power and resources. Actors on lower levels can also utilise linking social capital to influence decision-making (e.g. political) on higher levels.

Mutual trust between members of social networks and groups, together with trust to institutions and society in general is an important part of social capital. Trust is primary “present“ within social networks and groups. Higher intensity of certain kinds of social contacts generally increases shared experience and strengthens mutual trust. Higher density of contacts is more probable between individuals with similar social positions (Lin 2001). On the other hand side, interactions with different individuals (in terms of social, economical or cultural background) can bring mutual benefits, if based on equal, mutually beneficial relationship. Society is formed by social groups and networks which interact and overlap with each other („the network of networks“). Quality of these interactions impacts on the level of generalized and institutional trust. Trust should be therefore understood as being formed from particular trust to members of the same social group up to generalized trust in society and its institutions.

Trust reflects expected behaviour of the others. It is formed by personal as well as collective experience. It exists on all levels of social structure, starting from interpersonal trust between two individuals, going to trust towards own social group up to generalized trust which refers to “average“ level of trust to overall

society and its basic institutions. The level of generalized trust is furthermore influenced by other factors such as satisfaction with quality of life, feeling of control over one's life and optimism (Uslaner 2003) or participation in various civic groups and organizations (Putnam 1993).

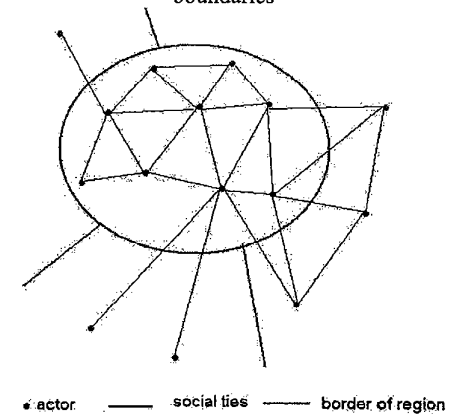
4 Social Capital, Territory and Geographical Organisation of Society

The formation and structuration of social capital is influenced by geographical organization of society (Hampl 2005). Geographical organization of society reflects and influences social relations in particular localities and regions. We can conceptualize the relation between social networks and territory from two different but complementary views. First looks on reality through localities or regions in which social actors and networks are present. Research of social networks which exist in particular locality or region contributes to accurate knowledge of complex organization in such territory. Second perspective looks at geographical organization of actors and their networks in all places to which their activities extend. In this case, the territory is delimited by geographical spread of social network. These perspectives reflect the conceptualization of the relation between firms and territory by Dicken and Malmberg (2001). On one hand side, territory can be approached as an "arena" which contains many firms, often without direct linkages. On the other hand side, territory is seen as a contact system for particular firm: it contains external contacts of the firm, e.g. locations of its trade partners or homes of its employers.

Geographical organization of social networks does not necessarily correspond to complex regional geographical organization (see figure 1). Particular territory can fully contain some social networks. However, other networks are formed in larger space of more territories and/or in a region on higher scale. We should distinguish different scales on which particular networks are formed, including hierarchical linkages between actors within these networks and their embeddedness on particular scale of geographical organization. When studying the relationship between social networks and territory, it is important to ask in which territories a network trenches as well as which networks influence the character of a locality or region. Social networks tend to connect actors with similar position in social structure and similar way of life (Lin 2001). And people of different social strata tend to have different spatial pattern of housing, work etc. We expect social networks to correspond most often with socio-spatial differentiation. Networks of people with different social status can then interconnect different localities. When looking at a given territory (neighbourhoods, municipality, city, region) as an "arena" we want to determine in which networks are local actors integrated but as well as which

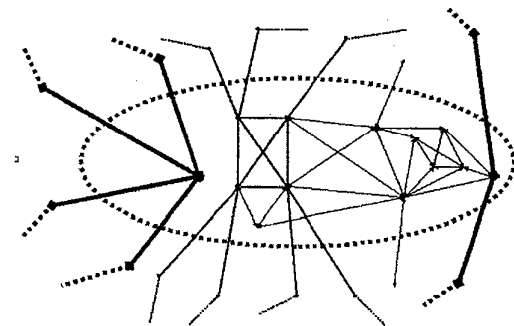
internal or external resources are available to them and how this together influences their activity in particular fields and how they influence the territory and territorial geographical organization by their activities (see figure 2).

Figure 1. Example of territorial scope of social network extending across regional boundaries



Source: authors

Figure 2. Territory as an arena of social networks



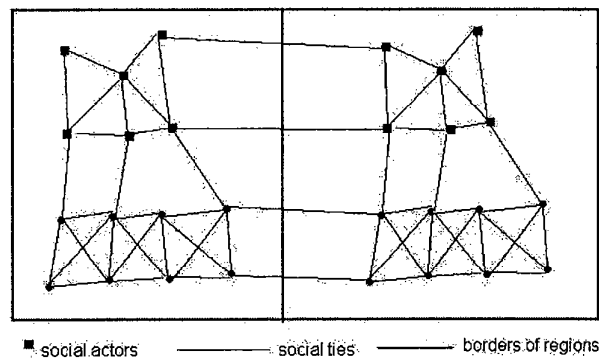
Note: The width of the tie represents its potential (in terms of available resources).

Source: authors

Different types of social capital have different spatial configurations. Their influence on geographical organization varies as well. Intra-group (bonding)

social capital integrates social group or network. This group needn't be geographically limited to particular territory. We can according to territoriality distinguish intra-regional and inter-regional intra-group (bonding) social capital. Intra-regional bonding social capital reflects and enables cooperation of the group within particular territory and probably also strengthens their relation to this territory (see Paasi 1986, Chromý 2003). Interactions of members from one social group or network can cross regional boundaries (see figure 3). Character and intensity of interaction between members of the same group who are located in different regions is influenced by spatial organization of everyday life. The territoriality of everyday life is formed by relations between places of housing, jobs, services, etc. We expect intra-regional direct contacts to be more intensive than inter-regional contacts and social capital respectively.

Figure 3. Intra-group (bonding) and inter-group (bridging) intra-regional and intra-group (bonding) and inter-group (bridging) inter-regional linkages



Source: authors

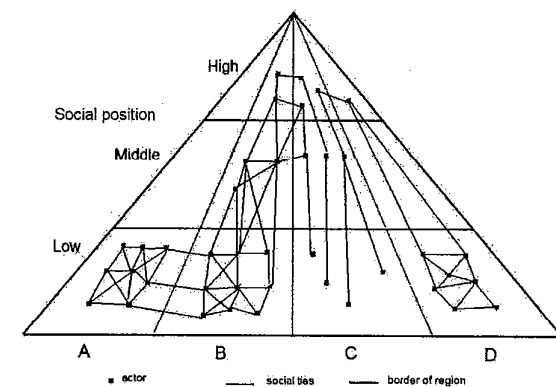
Inter-group (bridging) social capital stands for social linkages between different social groups. It enables and strengthens cooperation between them. Life in the same territory and regular, repeating social interactions (like meeting each other on public places) help to increase cooperation within the territory and form and strengthen bridging social capital.

Hierarchical (linking) social capital refers to relations between actors and their networks on different levels of social hierarchy. Higher social status is usually connected with higher scalar scope of activities one is involved in. Therefore there is scalar difference between connected social groups. Linking social capital stands for connections of actors with predominantly local ties (e.g. small entrepreneur with local trade partners or local mayor) to actors

working on higher geographical scales (e.g. consultants of multinational corporations or members of parliament).

Social groups and networks on different levels of social hierarchy and acting in various regions differ in geographical patterns of their activities. Some possible relations between social hierarchy and territorial structures are outlined in figure 4. Territories A, B, C, D are examples of possible situations. Only actors with low social position are present in territory A. Social network between these actors represents intra-regional intra-group (bonding) social capital. Some actors are connected to other actors of similar social position in territory B (inter-regional intra-group bonding social capital). Only few external resources are available to actors in territory A. Actors in territory B are highly connected with each other. We can identify dense networks with probable high levels of intra-regional and inter-regional bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Territory B is likely to develop high level of both particularized and generalized trust. In territory C, the share of actors with different social statuses is similar to region B. However, the character of social ties is different. Predominantly vertical networks (linking social capital) are not supplemented with networks that would represent bridging or bonding social capital. Possible competition and cleavages between different networks can undermine generalized trust in such kind of region. Territory D is similarly to territory A highly integrated by inter-group bonding social capital. However, a hierarchical linkage to an actor with high social status gives this territory an advantage compared to territory A.

Figure 4: Territoriality of social networks and corresponding types of social capital



Source: authors

5 Conclusions

In this paper, we attempted to connect the concept of social capital with the concept of geographical organisation of society. We especially utilised the structural view on social capital, distinguishing bonding, bridging and linking ties with respect to their territorial constitution. The main aim of the paper was to present and develop conceptual thinking about territoriality of social networks and groups in the context of social capital formation. Different social networks and types of social capital blend together in particular territories. Territorial scope and multiplicity of inter-connected (or not interconnected) social networks in concrete locality and region should be taken into account in research of social capital and its impact on local and regional development.

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Afforestation and Biodiversity Conservation in the Czech Rural Development

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Annotation. Afforestation of agricultural land was subsidized in the rural development program. The process was not running smoothly. The goal of afforested area was not met. Also, the environmental goals were not reached. The main problem remains the conflict of interest in afforestation and in conservation of biodiversity-rich grasslands.

Key words: rural development program, forestry subsidies, agricultural subsidies, biodiversity conservation.

1 Introduction

A policy research study has been carried out in order to evaluate five public expense programs related to nature conservation. The subsidy title *Afforestation of Agriculture Land* in the Horizontal Rural Development Plan for the Czech Republic (2004-2006) was among the evaluated programs. The objective of the work was to analyze the selected subsidies and to suggest ways of improvement in procedure and impact. The research was largely of academic interest, however its results are usable by policy decision makers.

The analytical part of the qualitative research consisted of series of 34 evaluative questions to which answers were sought for each of the programs.³ This analysis allowed for a comparison of conditions and results of implemented economic instruments. The so called "logic of intervention" was researched. In this approach, we inspect the problem that the given instrument is supposed to solve, together with the stated goal of the instrument. We

³This qualitative research method was modified from Jilkova, J. *Methodics for detailed analysis of instruments of public policy*. In: Jilkova, J., Pavel, J. (eds.) *Evaluation of effectiveness of environmental public expense programs* (in Czech). IREAS, Prague, 2006, p. 134-140.