

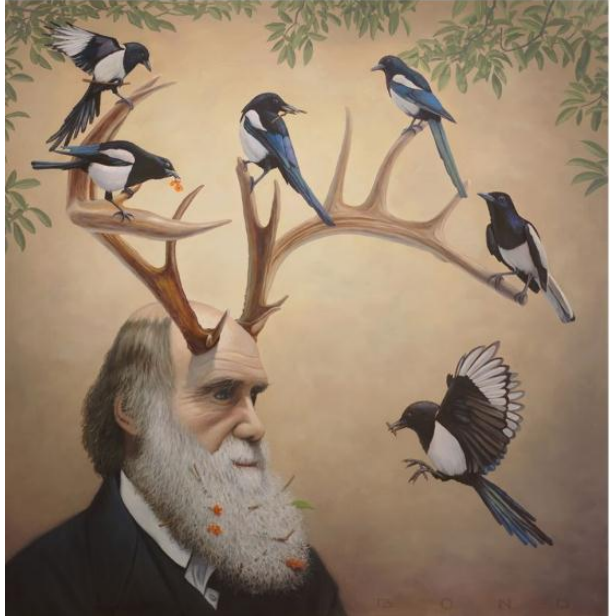
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The role of social capital in the formation of a sustainable community

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Abstract

The purpose of our research is to identify the problems in the field of social capital based on a survey of students and suggest possible solutions to them. To achieve this goal, we conducted an empirical study, in which the main method of obtaining information was a survey that involved undergraduate students of Russian state universities. As a result, students may not fully understand the definition of social capital, but they realize that it affects community development. In conclusion, the higher the level of social capital and social networks, the better and more stable this development will be.

Keywords: Social, Capital, Community, Development, Communities.

El papel del capital social en la formación de una comunidad sostenible

Resumen

El propósito de nuestra investigación es identificar los problemas en el campo del capital social a partir de una encuesta de estudiantes y sugerirles posibles soluciones. Para lograr este objetivo, realizamos un estudio empírico, en el que el método principal para obtener información fue una encuesta que involucró a estudiantes universitarios de las universidades estatales rusas. Como resultado, es posible que los estudiantes no entiendan completamente la definición de capital social, pero se dan cuenta de que afecta el desarrollo de la comunidad. En conclusión, cuanto más alto sea el nivel de capital social y las redes sociales, mejor y más estable será este desarrollo.

Palabras clave: Social, Capital, Comunidad, Desarrollo, Comunidades.

1. INTRODUCTION

Individual maturation takes place in the social context which largely determines what equally competent people can achieve. This means that absolutely equal opportunities, when a person's chance of success depends only on their innate abilities, cannot be achieved. The social origin of a person has an obvious and important influence on the number of resources that are invested in his or her development. Thus, it may be useful to apply the concept of social capital to represent the consequences of social status to facilitate the acquisition of standard characteristics of human capital.

Social capital is determined by its function. This is not a single entity. This is a variety of different entities that have two common

elements: they all consist of some aspect of social structures and facilitate certain actions of the actors within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive. This fact makes it possible to achieve certain goals that would be impossible without it. Like physical and human capital, social capital is not completely interchangeable, but it may be specific to certain types of activities.

Considerable changes in the world of professions, the intensity of production and consumption of new knowledge, strengthening of a communicative component of professional activity are characteristic features of post-industrial society. Workers who have such professional and psychological qualities as self-control, psychological self-control and ability to operate own emotions and emotions of people around are more in demand in labour market, so carry a large share of social capital (BELOBORODOV & SYMANIUK, 2018).

In the context of fundamental changes which have occurred in the last decades in the world of professions and transition from monoprofessionalism to poly-professionalism, a modern man needs to have an ability to freely navigate the modern labour market, to quickly diversify contents and quality of the professional activity, and, if thought appropriate, to change an occupation without difficulty. Nowadays, the requirements for the teachers of vocational training are designed in a completely different way to provide high-quality lifelong learning.

To enhance the effectiveness of this process, a person who is going to enter adulthood needs assistance not only in the choice of profession, but also in search of resources for development and implementation of own educational and professional scenario which is adequate to modern realities and challenges, as well as training in independent use of these resources. The need to achieve transparency of qualifications, recognition of learning outcomes in view of achieving qualifications, accumulation, comparison and transfer of learning outcomes becomes more apparent and urgent (JACKSON, CARDEN & COMPTON, 2015).

Therefore, social capital does not necessarily play a positive role. Appropriate communication and multilateral relations are required to produce positive results and mitigate the harmful forms of social capital, which is more common in societies with isolated groups (HOGENESCH, 2011). Although there is a lack of agreement, social capital usually consists of the following concepts: social networks, norms, trust and civic participation. These concepts are based on personal relationships within and between families, schools, local organizations, communities and external organizations in both formal and informal environments. The Australian Bureau of Statistics identified a number of general topics that help to formulate what social capital consists of. They claim that it includes:

- Social networks and support structures;

- Extended opportunities and community participation;

- Civic and political participation (CLARKE, CHANDRA, & MACHADO, 2016).

The above-mentioned theses suggest that social capital significantly influences the development of communities according to different criteria. This makes it possible to highlight the importance of social capital and to confirm that its normal development and support are necessary.

2. METHOD

Based on the goals of the research, it was decided to conduct an empirical study in the student environment using a survey method in order to collect information. We used a quantitative research methodology to collect and analyze the interpretations and values of the survey. Based on the goals of the research, an empirical study in the form of a survey involving bachelor students of Russian state universities was conducted. In total, 700 students aged 18 to 21 took part in the survey. All students were intramural students. The purposive sampling was the most appropriate sampling method. In order to extend the scope of the study in the existing limitations of the questionnaire, the survey was conducted among the students from the first to the fourth year of study. A questionnaire was compiled for the survey.

The survey involved students from five universities:

1. Lomonosov Moscow State University
2. Bauman Moscow State Technical University
3. MGIMO University
4. Higher School of Economics
5. Moscow Power Engineering Institute (National Research University).

The survey involved 150 students from Moscow State University, 140 students from Moscow State Technical University, 143 students from MGIMO University and 137 students from the Higher School of Economics. The last university that participated in the survey was the Moscow Power Engineering Institute. There were 130 participants. To expand the scope of the study and to provide a more diversified consideration of social capital, the students were selected not only from various years of study but also specialties. The study involved the representatives of humanitarian and technical specialties.

The survey was conducted among the students from the first to the fourth year of study in various specialties. The criterion for this selection is due to the fact that representatives of different spheres of activity, age and gender can have different views and understanding of social capital and how it affects the development of communities. The survey conducted among the students was aimed at finding out their

attitude to social capital and how it affects the development of communities. Question 1. Are you familiar with the concept of social capital? This question is the most common in the survey and leads students to the topic of the questionnaire. It also helps to clarify whether the respondents are familiar with the concept of social capital.

Question 2. Do you think that normal development and functioning of society is impossible without the proper level of social capital? This question allows students to trace the relationship between the level of social capital and the development of communities. The results of the answers to this question will help to conclude whether the respondents understand this relationship.

Question 3. Do you think the high level of social capital in certain groups positively affects the community as a whole? This question was added to the questionnaire because one of the problems of a high level of social capital in closed communities is the lack of its contribution to the larger ones. The purpose of this question was to find out whether the respondents understand this. Question 4. Do you think it is possible to form social capital from school age? It is important to understand that the formation of social capital begins at an early age. Schooling is one of the stages of human life that forms a person. The students were asked to assess whether it is possible to talk about the development of social capital from school age.

Question 5. Do you think social capital is formed at the family level? Before the child enters various educational institutions, the

formation of his or her social capital takes place in the family that promotes life attitudes and character formation. The students were asked to agree or disagree with this idea. Question 6. Do you think that a high level of social capital helps to reduce crime? One of the indicators of a high level of social capital is the reduction of crime, achieved through community development. Here the students were asked to evaluate how true this statement is. Question 7. Do you think that a high level of social capital means that people trust their government? In this question, the students were asked to express their opinion on whether a high level of social capital has an impact on the level of trust of citizens in their government.

Question 8. Do you think that the development of countries with a high level of social capital will be more stable? This question was added to the questionnaire since a high level of social capital contributes to a more harmonious development of the community. Here the students were asked to express their opinion on whether this is true. Question 9. Do you think that the formation of friendly and business relationship is important for increasing the level of social capital? As it has already been considered, the achievement of a high level of social capital is impossible without the formation of social networks. The purpose of this question was to find out whether the respondents understand this.

Question 10. Do you think there is a decent level of social capital in your country? In the last question, the students were asked to express their subjective opinion about the level of social well-being in

their country. This will help to assess whether the respondents understand the level of community development. In the second part of the survey, the students were given a table providing some characteristics that helped them to judge the level of social capital. Each student could choose several statements with which they agreed or could apply to themselves. The student was asked to fill in the appropriate field with yes, no or not sure. Based on this part of the survey, it will be possible to conclude how developed social capital is in a single group of students from the first to the fourth year of study.

Table 1: Social capital criteria

Statement	Ans wer
You can trust most people	
Most people are honest and fair	
I trust my colleagues	
I trust my neighbors	
I trust people of other nationalities	
I trust national authorities	
I trust regional authorities	
I trust my local authorities	

The table mainly suggests the points related to trust as it is one of the main criteria for social well-being. The survey looked at the interpersonal trust, trust in other ethnic groups, as well as in different levels of public authorities. The study involved only university

students. In addition, the survey did not involve working people of different ages and professions, as well as unemployed adults and schoolchildren.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Having collected the necessary information, we carried out an analysis of survey data in the statistic system. This software, developed on the basis of Microsoft Windows, allows visualization of data in statistical analysis. The data on the first question was quite low. Only 43% of the respondents were familiar with the concept of social capital. This may be due to the fact that this concept is not so common in everyday life and may be unfamiliar to students that do not study humanities. Despite the relatively low awareness of the concept itself, 74% of the students agreed that normal development and functioning of society is impossible without an adequate level of social capital. This suggests that despite the lack of knowledge of terminology, the respondents may intuitively understand the importance of this phenomenon.

Also, a large percentage (70%) agreed that the formation of friendly and business relationship is important for increasing the level of social capital. This means that students realize that the formation of capital is impossible without the establishment of social networks promoting the interaction of people. The results obtained on the last question were unexpectedly low. Only 34% indicated that there is a

high level of social capital in their country. The data on the following question was presented both in the textual and graphical form. Most respondents are suspicious of the people around them: only 24% agreed that most people can be trusted.

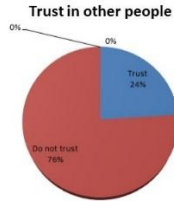


Figure 1: Level of trust in other people

As for fairness and honesty of other people, there is a similar situation: 50% of the respondents do not believe in their honesty, 28% expressed an ambiguous position, and only 22% believe that other people are fair and honest.

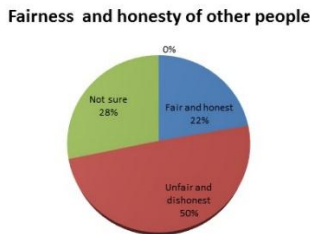


Figure 2: Evaluation of the fairness and honesty of other people

Thus, in general, we can see a low level of general trust. The situation with social trust is more positive: 71% of the respondents trust their colleagues to some extent, 80% trust their neighbors, and 54% of the respondents trust people of other nationalities. Twenty-nine per cent do not trust their colleagues, 20% - their neighbors, and 46% - people of other nationalities.

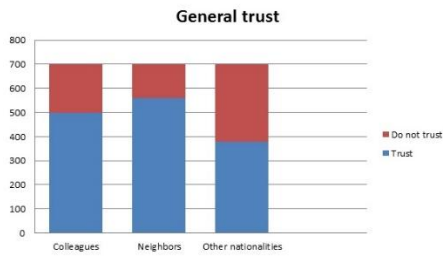


Figure 3: Level of general trust

Negative assessments prevail in relation to institutional trust. Most people do not tend to trust public authorities at various levels. Forty-four per cent of the respondents do not trust national authorities and 45% do not trust regional authorities.

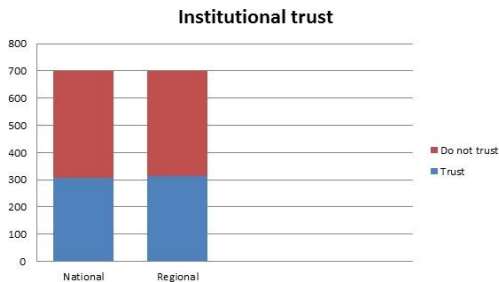


Figure 4: Level of institutional trust

According to the results of the study, social trust is the highest. The situation with institutional and general trust is much worse. This may be due to the fact that social trust is more specific than other types of trust. That is, when people speak about social trust, they assess their attitude not to an abstract image, but to specific people. In general, such data may indicate an insufficient level of social capital. The awareness of the concept of social capital is necessary in order to form its sufficient level. With specific reference to students, introduction courses can be organized to familiarize students with the concept of social capital. In addition, the importance of this phenomenon, the ways of its formation and how it affects the development of communities can be explained to them.

4. DISCUSSION

The topic of social capital is quite popular, as it is closely connected with the development of countries. That is why there are various studies related to this phenomenon. One of these studies took place in the USA in 2013. It dealt with the employment of African immigrants in the United States and was held in Ohio and Virginia (HIGHTOWER, NIEWOLNY & BRENNAN, 2013). This study was guided by the research question Is social capital development in immigrant farmer program associated with program outcome? To address this question, the researchers developed a mixed study that consisted of a national survey and case studies from programs in Ohio and Virginia. Immigrant farmer's programs served as the unit of

analysis in this study. The experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of people associated with immigrant farmers' programs were studied to determine how social capital was developed in the programs and the program outcomes.

The survey population included immigrant farmers in the continental United States of America and Hawaii. One hundred and twenty-five immigrant farmer programs were identified. A total of 257 people were identified as agricultural educators working with these programs and included in the population. Agricultural educators were people who held one or more of the following roles: teacher, training manager, program coordinator, program director, or translator. The Ohio program included participants from Liberia, and the Virginia program involved participants from Burundi. In Ohio, the program consists of classroom instruction and field trips to neighboring farms and university-sponsored research centers. The program provides access to six acres of farmland located in the urban area. The program was attended by immigrant farmers from Liberia, Congo, Bhutan, and Burma (HERMAN, 2010).

The Virginia immigrant farmer program is funded by the local Burundian community. The program coordinator is a regional leader of the United Burundian-American Public Association. He has collaborated with local church members and farm market managers to provide Burundian farmers with technical training in agricultural production and market development. Members of the local church gave farmers access to two acres of farmland. The program began with four

Burundian families in 2008 and expanded to 10 Burundian families in 2012. Data were obtained from 112 agricultural educators from 87 immigrant farmer programs across the United States. The programs were usually located in the western and eastern regions of the USA. The majority of the immigrant participants were between 35 and 49 years old. The programs typically included an even number of female and male participants. The immigrant participants were usually refugees, and mostly from Asia and Africa. The majority of the programs included program participants from different countries.

This study examined the relationship between the program outcomes and the development of social capital in immigrant farmer programs as perceived by agricultural instructors. The guiding research question was Is social capital development in immigrant farmer program associated with program outcome? Social capital development was measured in terms of the development of social networks, agency, trust, and reciprocity. The analysis showed that the development of social capital was associated with the outcomes of the program. Further analysis showed that the program outcomes fell into two categories: economic and social (HIGHTOWER & GRIFFIN, 2012).

One of the main questions of this study was whether social capital results in more from nature or education in formal and informal sports communities. It was also necessary to figure out whether social capital was accumulated mainly through formal channels, such as associations, or through informal social connections. The study also

examined the ways in which different types of sports activities in the community, namely formal and informal organizations stimulate social capital in relation to the demographic characteristics of participants, including gender, age, and duration of residence.

Self-administered questionnaires in Saitama Prefecture in Japan were used to collect data. Fifty respondents participated in morning gymnastics classes and 80 were members of a golf club. The analysis was based on fifty completed questionnaires from the informal sports environment of the free calisthenics community and 58 completed questionnaires in the official sports environment of the golf community. The study used t-tests to compare both the type of sports in the community in relation to social capital and the type of sports in the community and social capital in relation to gender. The relationship between the duration of residence in the community and social capital, as well as between the age of participants and social capital was also considered.

The results of this study showed that the relationship between the two types of community sport settings (informal or formal) and the accumulation of social capital does not differ significantly. It was confirmed that informal social networks can be found in all sports settings, where each meeting is a tiny investment in social capital. "It was noted that athletes are usually more socially integrated than people who do not do sports" (BAILEY AND FERNANDO, 2012: 18). Thus, it can be argued that participation in sports, whether it is coaching or volunteering, is an important means of strengthening the relationship

between communities and creating social capital. According to the results, members of a sports club in the community reported a higher score in the community moral spirit, commitment to the community and community integration.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded that social capital plays an important role in the formation and development of communities. The higher the level of social capital and social networks, the better and more stable this development will be. Based on the goals of the research, an empirical study in the form of a survey involving bachelor students of Russian state universities was conducted. In total, 700 students aged 18 to 21 took part in the survey. In order to extend the scope of the study in the existing limitations of the questionnaire, the survey was conducted among the students from the first to the fourth year of study. A questionnaire consisting of two parts was compiled for the survey. The study showed that students may not fully understand the very definition of social capital, but they realize that it influences the development of the community. Also, according to the second part of the study, it was found that the respondents think that the level of social capital in Russia may be insufficient.

This will help to use the opportunities of social capital more fully, as social networks will facilitate the exchange of experience, the adoption of other social groups, etc. The formation of the necessary

environment can take place both at the state and organization levels. For example, in schools, universities, families, and organizations. The latter possible solution was related to the consideration of state policy and the conduct of a population-based survey to determine the level of social capital. After analyzing it, it will be possible to draw conclusions and develop future development paths. Further research can be more extended. The survey can be conducted among master students, workers in different areas, high school students, as well as the residents of other cities. Similar research can also be carried out among the citizens of other countries.

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