POLITICAL CULTURE AND ITS ROLE
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to highlight aspects relating to the relationship between a company's political culture and social capital. Thus, a high level of political culture leads to the development of the social capital and the whole social body in general. At the same time, the relationship between the two concepts is directly influenced by other elements such as the level of education or the standard of living of an individual.

Keywords: political culture, social capital, poverty, education, society

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the existence, preservation and proper functioning of democracy depends on a set of political and civic attitudes of the members of the society in question. On the other hand, social capital is based on relations between individuals and relations between citizens and institutions in a society, and it is based on citizens' trust in the authorities.

Trust is the ultimate form of share capital, therefore no company can function without trust between its members or confidence in the authorities. This paper is based on the idea that a high level of political culture in a democratic society has an important influence on the development of social capital, and collective civic action helps to ensure the smooth functioning of the entire democratic system. But the decision to trust someone or something results from a rational analysis based on information and judgment that explores arguments and risks. It depends on the amount of information held and the ability to manage the degree of certainty (i.e. uncertainty) of a particular situation. Therefore, in building trust (as an important part of social capital), the basis of information, knowledge, values and behavior that shape the political culture is very important (Dănuţ Jemna, 2020, p.12).

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I. TEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL CULTURE

The intention to define the concept also shows how *political culture* (Georges Ballandier, 1955, p. 94) has existed and evolved in contemporary societies alongside *institutional culture* which also contributes to shaping the idea of social capital. *Political culture* is a concept describing how individuals and groups perceive political realities and engage in political relations at different levels through behaviors, opinions, ideas and values in the fields of administration and public space. On the other hand, it is a subsystem of culture in general, which encompasses all the information, beliefs and values with which an individual can understand how a democratic political system works and, through civic involvement, help it function properly. According to Gabriel Almond, political culture is a pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among members of a society (Almond and Powell, 1966, p. 4). This definition leads us to ask whether we can link political culture to two ways: a first, general sense, in which a society's culture meets political situations, revealing its values and a second, narrow meaning, in which political culture represents the entirety of political ideas, theories and nominal values, the whole range of attitudes toward the political system, the place and the role of the system. In conclusion, we could define the field of political culture as the set of socially learned and transmitted patterns of behavior that characterize the politics of a society. Political culture is the product of the historical experience of society as well as of personal experiences that help motivate each individual.

More specifically, we can say that it is preferable for a society to develop a participatory political culture, because this type of culture is specific to democratic societies and represents the aims of social education, but also the accumulation of important administrative and governance experience in that society. The participation of society in the act of government contributes effectively to the building and strengthening of social capital as it allows for a high level of culture, social organization, efficiency and training of citizens. The optimal functioning of a democratic society, i.e. its stability and efficiency, depends on the existence and active affirmation of a certain political culture, which is conducive to the optimal functioning of social mechanisms through the participatory contribution of citizens. A low level of political culture fosters political manipulation and challenges, and,as a result, the society as a whole suffers (Cornea Sergiu, 2008, p. 194).

II. TEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The second concept, *social capital* refers to the degree of involvement of citizens in the public affairs of the Community. By quoting Robert Putnam, social capital represents those characteristics of social life: networks, rules, trust, which allow participants to act more effectively together to achieve common objectives (Robert Putnam, 1995, p. 121). Social capital is also an argument but also a pressure factor for the performance of social and government institutions (Luminița Popescu in Transylvanian Journal of Administrative Sciences, nr. 2(29)/2011). Both the trust of citizens in each other and the trust of citizens given to the institutions, the

willingness to live according to the rules of the Community of which you belong and to sanction those who do not comply with the laws of the Community, all these elements are essential for the proper functioning of society and, by extension, democracy, contributing to the development of social capital (Diana Preda în INCE „Costin C. Kirițescu", Seria „Studii și Cercetari Economice", Vol. 4/2003). The main components of social capital are institutions, social networks and social values, but also sanctions (the latter are the processes that ensure compliance by network members) (Diana Preda în INCE „Costin C. Kirițescu", Series „Economic Studies and Research", Vol. 4/2003). The social capital can also be defined, according to Dietlind Stolle, as "*a societal resource that links citizens to each other and enables them to pursue their common objectives more effectively*" (Dragoș Dragoman, 2020).

III. POLITICAL CULTURE AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

For sociology, the social capital represents a complex that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and other skills acquired by individuals as members of a community/society. From a social point of view, the social capital refers to the political culture as a narrow dimension of society, as a component element of it. In our analysis, we tried to present the relationship between the social and political areas, based on political kinship relations in parallel with belonging to a certain political culture in relation to the type of sociality specific to certain stages of development. Walker Connor believes that self-conscious ethnicity (Community) can be a nation: "*an ethnic group can easily be distinguished by an outside observer, but until its members become aware of the uniqueness of the group, it is only an ethnic group and not a nation*" (Dominique Schnapper, 2001, p. 35). On the other hand, it is Benedict Anderson's vision that considers nations to exist as a psychological construction of belonging to a political culture. The nation became possible only after three cultural concepts lost power over the human minds, Benedict Anderson said, "*the belief that the language is of divine origin and has privileged access to the truth, followed by the idea that monarchs are different from the rest and rule on the basis of divine power, and last but not least the belief that death, poverty and disease are unavoidable aspects of life*" (Benedict Anderson, 1991, p. 54).

It should be remembered that what we call *social capital* involves social phenomena occurring in the process of the constitution of the modern state and state-related societies and that the evolution of the concept takes place in relation to the evolution of institutions within a political and social process. This type of approach to the concept is necessary because the individual is related to the areas of interest of the state which he uses as a socio-political support in his development process. That pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among members of a society, which represents the political culture, is directly influenced by the level of education of an individual, a Community or a society in general. This level of education is also influenced by the socio-economic level, and so we have some elements that have a major influence on each other, because poverty inflates education which has a major impact on political culture, the latter influencing the social capital. At national level, there is a marked inequality in

Romania which has negative effects on what the Romanian rural environment represents. This inequality also has indirect negative effects on the level of political culture or on the social capital. At the level of rural communities, in order to talk about civic engagement, there first needs to be economic development, a civilized standard of living that allows citizens to invest time and resources in engaging in the public space

Robert Putnam states that in developed communities (economically, politically and socially) there is also developed social capital. Access to quality education is much easier in these communities, and access to information is also easier compared to rural societies which many of them still lack electricity or access to the internet. What do we do with these less developed communities? How could these contribute to the development of the social capital? Institutions can promote social capital by creating mechanisms to facilitate citizens' participation in the public policy process. Public institutions have the capacity to influence social norms and values. (Luminița Popescu in Transylvanian Journal of Administrative Sciences, 2(29)/2011, p. 144). A first element could be to inform them about the political processes taking place at local, regional or national level, with an emphasis on civic education of citizens, which should be implemented in schools, in order to form the future responsible and civically involved adult. When a higher level of political culture, of political involvement, of the desire to accumulate information and knowledge is desired, it is very important that these members of society have their basic needs met (a decent living, a job, access to education, a salary package, etc.). When these needs are met, the individuals "moves to the next stage", where they are interested in how things work in the Community in which they live or in the country as a whole, and wishes to be involved in contributing to the development of the social capital.

I was saying about social capital that trust is an important component of it. This social trust has a powerful effect on the functioning of government in the sense that stimulating interest in participating in the public affairs of the community is only possible through the creation of trust-providing institutions both at the organizational level and in the society as a whole Luminița Popescu in Transylvanian Journal of Administrative Sciences, 2(29)/2011, p. 144). But this participation of citizens must be based on an accumulation of knowledge related to politics, administration, etc., so that their involvement, their participation is beneficial to society, leading to the development of the social capital.

At the same time, the individuals, as a subject of public law, develops a political relationship with the institutional system from which they come, generating an indissoluble type of connection. We can therefore say that the development of social capital represents the macro-social dimension of the organization of society and institutions based on the political culture of the individual who has become a citizen within this socio-political structure. In this reporting relationship the individual uses the value of social capital in the perspective that the identity and political value of a state is a source of value for the individual citizen. Basically, the more developed the economy, the more efficient the education system, the higher

the standard of living, the more the individual citizen is involved in the system, feeling represented and governed efficiently.

CONCLUSIONS

Political culture has a major impact on social capital, but in the relationship between the two concepts an extremely important role is played by education and poverty, which prevent individuals from becoming civically involved because their main problems are the unsatisfied primary needs.

In conclusion, we can say that when citizens have an optimal standard of living, have a decent education, are able to understand how a democratic political system works, are politically literate and are civically engaged so as to help it function well, then the level of social capital increases, hence the importance of political culture on the development of the social capital. The involvement of individuals in the society affairs, electoral participation, the political culture they possess, all these elements are of major importance for the proper functioning of a democratic state (Romeo Asiminei, 2013, p. 12).

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