

SOCIAL CAPITAL – SOCIALCOSTS

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Abstract :Social capital is one of the critically discussed topics in social sciences in the last couple of decades. The acceleration in the volume of articles or books on the concept of social capital in recent years point to the fact that many social scientists are relating it to their particular fields, and are reorienting their approach by converging their respective areas with social capital. Social capital is considered as a factor that could help both individuals and society at large. Robert Putnam's analysis in his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, points to the theory that promoting social capital helps in bridging the communities, and subsequently helps the communities in creating inclusive and participatory culture that could help them achieve their socio-economic and political needs. The concept of social capital has been embraced by its believers in the hope that its promotion could be a way to solve some of the socio-economic and political problems that the society is facing. But the concept of social capital is not free from pitfalls. In fact, the concept itself seems to be constructed in a way to give legitimate advantage to those who are in affluent positions in the society. While most of the research so far concentrated on the benefits that it brings to the individuals or groups, this paper is an attempt to look at how some ones social capital acts as a hindrance to others fair opportunities, and it tries to look at how social capital is used as a stealth weapon by few individuals or sections when it comes to gaining access to socio-economic and political opportunities that otherwise may not be possible without it.

Keywords:Civic Culture, Individual Social Capital, Merit, Sectional Capital, Social Capital, Social Cost.

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Introduction

Social capital is considered by its promoters as a useful tools or approach to the socio-economic and political issues of the society. According to its supporters, social capital can help bridge different sections of the society to act inclusively to achieve the goals that they might fail to achieve individually. Hence, supporters of the concept of social capital strongly support the idea that social capital of the communities or groups should be promoted so as to engage them in the developmental process to address different socio-economic and political issues. But the concept of social capital is not free from troubles with some critics dismissing the concept altogether. Critics of social capital argue that the concept itself is a myth prone to vanish in thin air, and that it cannot be counted as capital at all. The apparent question these critics raise is ‘how can you call something as capital without it having qualities like a chance to invest it, a chance to create income or wealth through it’? These critiques, especially the ones who try to compare social capital with standard capital in economics, raise different questions like; is social capital transferable? Can we invest social capital as a capital on something like the way we do with land or labor? Can social capital be transferred to friends or children like the way we transfer assets? Can we earn interest on social capital by investing it in a bank or lending it to someone? The answers to these questions are an apparent no. Then, what is social capital? Irrelevant to its capacity to withstand as being an equivalent to the standard capital in economics, social capital seems to play a major role in generating socio-economic and political opportunities – both for the individuals and for the groups or societies who acquire it. The flooding of literature and research on social capital in the last couple of decades point to the fact that irrelevant to its characteristics of being considered as capital, as defined in economics, or not, it influences the outcome and helps the individuals and groups who have it – at least in gaining access to socio-economic and political opportunities – and subsequently all the benefits that these opportunities create, help in creating a better living, or in creating capital sometimes.

What is Social Capital?

Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as a “*sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: P-119). Bourdieu describes social capital as something that provides support in the form of

honorability, respect, identity etc. which play a wider role in works like attracting customers, drawing support for a cause or for your view point etc. which could be used by the individuals or groups who possess it to generate socio-economic and political opportunities (Field, 2005). But Bourdieu agrees with the fact that it is economic capital that acts as the foundation of all types of capital, including social capital, and the range of the social capital of a person, group, or society is decided, on most occasions, by the economic foundations on which these individuals or groups are standing on. Robert Putnam comprehends social capital by including five aspects which are; community networks, civic identity, civic engagement, reciprocity and community norms, and trust in community (Putnam, 2000). As apparent from the definition itself, Putnam is looking at social capital from society or community's point of view i.e., social capital of a group or community of individuals that they have acquired over a period, which unites, and gives them advantage in their pursuance of different requirements. The actual meaning, and intension of the concept of 'social capital' is that it is supposed to be the capital of the society or groups rather than individuals. But, when watered down to the individual level, the concept gives altogether a different meaning and stealthy advantage to the ones who acquire it (Haynes, 2009). This stealthy advantage, as is reflective from the adjective that is attributed to it, gives undue advantage to some over others, thus making the socio-economic and political opportunities to bypass all the fair and equal opportunities principles while taking the flight into the hands of those who have 'social' capital. This makes us wonder whether it is social capital or social cost i.e., costs that have to be borne by the larger society for the advantages of few individuals. Once we start interrogating the concept of social capital in this particular orientation, we end up wondering what it actually is; how it works, and what are the advantages or disadvantages of promoting social capital, and whether it should be promoted or not. Before drawing an inference, a look at how social capital works may help us to understand whether its promotion is recommendable or not.

How Social Capital Works?

Social capital is a network of relationships that work in a reciprocal manner. You are giving something, especially favors, to others, in return for the received or expected favors from them. Reciprocity is the central capital, or exchangeable value in social capital (Gush, et al, 2015). Hence, social capital can be said to be the range of influence an individual, group, community or

society can exert in order to get what they want. The inherent reciprocal nature of social capital makes it compulsory that those who want the benefits of the social capital must also be in a situation to produce some social capital that can be used to help others i.e., those who help you. How social is this social capital will be discussed in the later sections of this article. Now, to understand how social capital works, it acts as an influence in many aspects, especially when other person's or group's help or involvement is necessary in getting something done. Communities or individuals with high social orientation tend to be successful in getting mutual benefits, whether it is from the government or any organization (Rasmussen, et al, 2011). Their individual or collective bargaining power increases significantly if they are rich in social capital i.e., having sufficient contacts or societal weight in getting help from others, and in helping others. On the other hand, communities or individuals with weak social bonding suffer in getting mutual benefits due to lack of cohesion, trust, mutual pursuance of goals. The means to achieve the ends stand to be minimal among these groups. These groups do not come together to achieve their ends, and as a result lose their potential advantage to those who possess social capital. Positive, and capable environment leads to creation of a positive social capital which in turn plays a huge role in shaping the capabilities and social connections of the individuals and groups. People and groups with strong ties share knowledge transparently, and benefit mutually, which enhances their individual and group capabilities to increase their access to socio-economic and political benefits or favors (Thum&Beblavy, 2014). These benefits or favors, in turn, create social capital for the individuals or the groups thus enhancing their exchanging power further. The magnitude or quantum of social capital takes the path of continuum in a spiraling manner with the individual or group's progression in gaining reciprocal capacities. Hence, it can be said that friends, peers, community and other social surroundings play an important role in shaping the goals, ideas, securities or insecurities of an individual or group, and whether an individual or group is gaining social capital or accumulating social liability completely depends on this environment.

The individual or group need to be socially active – positively, in order to gain social advantage, and eventually, the resultant social capital. This way of understanding of social capital is basically community centered and can also be called as communitarian social capital. Communitarian social capital is based on features like social organizations, norms, civic

networks which makes the individuals and the groups feel healthier, safer, and richer and stable (Hyypa, 2010). The benefits of this social capital is available to all the members of that particular community or network, for example, by being part of a particular community a person receives different types of help. The membership in the community, indifferent to the level of personal contribution or reciprocal capacity of the individual, brings the individual and the group, certain benefits, advantages, or bargaining power that otherwise would not have resulted. There is something similar, yet different to communitarian social capital, called functional social capital. Functional social capital is the social capital that is based on different functional aspects of the society like corporate actors or institutional structures (Hyypa, 2010). The outcome of this social capital is relatively high when compared to other forms of social capital. But it is difficult to assess whether functional social capital is social capital or not, because, this type of functional relations are prevalent among those who are engaged in the work environment or job related network, and the outcome is nothing short of an exchange, based on rational choice. If we were to consider this type of exchange or indivisibly engaged relations at work place as social capital, then every societal engagement can be a process of creating or destroying social capital. This confusion forces us to be more precise of how to define social capital in a tight proof manner. Social capital is not egalitarian in nature. Not everyone who is involved in the functional process of a company or work place gets the same reciprocal capacities or resultant benefits. In these functional structures also the social capital of an individual differs based on the interpersonal skills, position and overall personality of the individual. These 'tiny' particulars makes us wonder whether there is such a thing called social capital at all, or whether what we have been discussing about is individual centered social capital. The answer to this question is yes in both the cases. Yes, social capital is individual centered, as it is the individuals who engage themselves in the process of its creation, and who spend it to reap the benefits. Similarly, social capital is community, group, class, profession or section centered as the individuals who create or spend social capital broadly falls into a particular type of group, and these individuals altogether constitute a class that commands a particular range of social capital. The social capital of the individual diminishes as soon as she is out of that group; for example, a bureaucrat may enjoy all the privileges that her position intrinsically throws at her, but may miss them once she decides to get out of the bureaucratic network. Similarly, an employee enjoys the support of the employees union in all aspects as long as she is part of the union, and loses the support and the

resultant social capital as soon as she comes out of the union. Here, the social capital of the individual is tied to her profession and profession centered activities. Social capital can also be created individually by a person for herself based on various surrounding circumstances of the actor in question.

The social capital of an individual depends on various circumstances in which the individual is living or born into. Different aspects of a an individual like race, color, gender, region, language, culture, class, parental occupation, educational background etc. play a major role in the social capital an individual can possibly acquire (Field, 2005). Apart from the surrounding factors, individual attributes like intercommunicative skills, ideas of a person, capacity to connect with the particular and unique positions of the individuals in the society, professional skills, ‘beauty’ or physical appearance, and tastes and preferences etc. influence the social capital of a person immensely. An individual with ‘peculiar’ or ‘unconventional’ ideas, in a traditional or conventional environment is bound to end up with lesser ranges of social capital whereas a person with similar attributes in a scientific environment is bound to gain high ranges of social capital because of her ‘unconventional’ ideas. Similarly, a person with good physical appearance is bound to gain the trust of others, or being treated favorably because of her good physical appearance (McNamee & Miller Jr, 2014). Social capital is useful for an individual in enhancing ones socio-economic and political opportunities, and helps in improving interpersonal and leadership skills of the individual (Rasmussen, et al, 2011). If an individual is socially active then the chances for her to gain social capital is more. An individual’s social capital is decided by her reciprocity i.e., her capacity to return the favors in one form or other (Thum&Beblavy, 2014). Hence, it can be said that the social capital of an individual depends on the networks she manages to maintain. An individual can use different sources of capital like economic capital, human capital, physical capital etc. to generate social capital (Gauntlett, 2011). Sometimes social capital comes to an individual not by individual means, but by social means, for example, living in a particular street, or by being part of a particular educational institution etc. On occasions like these, there can be free riders also. Behavioral patterns, personal attributes, or value orientations of an individual can also decide the quantum of the social capital that she can acquire (Schuller, et al, 2004). Individual attributes like altruism, can help in generating social capital for an individual. Altruism is considered by many as a method to gain social capital as it is bound to

pay back the individual in a broader sense, and in a multiplied manner (Gauntlett, 2011). For example, if an individual continuously donates something to, or spends time and resources in improving the community related services, and subsequently decides to run for a political position in that locality then the chances for that individual to win the elections obviously stands stronger vis-à-vis to other competitors who have never done anything to the community. Here, the individual can be said to be in negotiation with the societal surroundings to generate social capital for her. Both the individual and the society are engaging with each other in a reciprocal process; the society may elect the individual in the hope that her election may boost her to contribute more to the society, or it may consider electing her as a payback method for her past contributions; similarly, the individual has done something to the society by expecting the society to stand with her in times of necessity.

Different face giving events like attending someone's birthday, marriage, or attending to someone in trouble in your street or neighborhood is considered as a custom or value in some societies like in India or China (Yang, et al, 2013). In such environments these activities become compulsory for an individual to take part. Skipping these activities may damage the reputation or rapport that the individual can possibly maintain with the society, and may result in lesser ranges of social capital. Good will, sympathy, fellowship, social intercourse etc. play a major role in deciding the social capital of an individual. The range of relationships that an individual maintains differs from person to person. Someone might be maintaining high relationships whereas others may maintain less relations in a relative sense, nonetheless, everyone maintains relations which define their social capabilities, social position or a combination of different socio-economic, political, and other types of capabilities, which altogether constitute social capital. Individual's learning takes place in a wider social context that includes places or social setups like schools, restaurants, streets, work places, beaches or bars. This learning process go on repeating and constitute social capital or social liability based on how a person interacts with these surroundings. Social capital of an individual, apparently, contributes to her personal wellbeing. Research suggests that social capital reduces the suicide tendencies among the individuals (Khosravi, et al, 2014). Social capital promotes self-esteem of the individuals, it enhances employment opportunities (Njagi, 2012). Social capital seems to do a lot of good things

to the individuals at individual level, but what has it got to do with the society at large? Is it really the social capital of the society or is it the social side capital of the individuals?

Social Capital – Sectional Capital

Supporters of the concept of social capital believe that its promotion helps in establishing social relations that are important for the socio-economic and political wellbeing of the communities. Hence, social capital is being promoted rigorously by using different approaches. But there seems to be some serious problems in promoting social capital as it is not apparent how the social relations of few individuals or communities is going to benefit the entire society. Critics argue that social capital is nothing but establishing favorable networks to help ourselves in the competition – by hook or crook i.e., by using all influence and all possible methods. The concept of social capital of the society, as analyzed by Robert Putnam, where he uses the concept to strengthen the social networking of the society is totally different from social capital of individuals and groups (Putnam, 2000). If looked in a normative way, the observations made by Putnam may sound true that enhancing social capital of the society makes the society to think and progress in a communitarian way, but a critical look at the concept makes us land in suspicion, because, a careful observation of the concept, and how it is practiced reveal that there is no such thing called social capital of the society. If such a capital were to be there it will coincide with the concept of civic culture significantly or totally (Field, 2005). Civic or political culture of the community or society, apparently promotes the good of everyone. Though we can see absence of person to person contact or specific group contacts in civic culture, it is the absence of such contacts that make the citizens to think about the general good of the society instead of looking at the sectional or group interests just like in the case of social capital. The difference between civic culture and social capital is very important in the sense that the difference points out to opposite directions that these concepts lead their believers to believe in. Civic culture is inclusive in the sense that a strong civic sense creates an environment where an individual gets benefitted socially, economically and politically. All the issues are discussed and solved in keeping the long term benefits of the society in general. This creates an atmosphere where every individual may feel safe, secure, and comfortable.

On the contrary, the concept of social capital is altogether different in the sense that though it promotes personal relations, these relations are based on reciprocal power that an individual gets because of her position in the society. An individual without this reciprocal power goes unrecognized in the society. It is the individual or group that is placed in a particular socio-economic and political situation that matters when it comes to the concept of social capital. A network of bureaucrats is stronger than a network of agriculture laborers. Similarly, a network of Oxford or Harvard university graduates enjoy a stronger social capital when compared to the network that is there among the graduate students of universities from Uganda or Peru. Hence, social capital sounds like more of a sectional capital or capital that few people can acquire because of their well-placed positions in the society, and these groups or sections use this social contacts to get socio-economic and political favors that would not come, or, becomes difficult to get without the presence of social capital. This makes us wonder how social capital is going to do good to the society in general. It may be helpful to individuals or groups, we may recommend people to be in touch with their neighbors or community so as to place themselves in a beneficial position that could help them in difficulties, but it is not apparent how it can be promoted in a way that can make it useful to the overall society. Promoting civil culture could be more useful instead of promoting social capital. Yes, social capital can be promoted for social purposes, but it should not be used as a tool to decide the socio-economic and political favors as this may lead to throwing all the opportunities into the laps of the well placed individuals or groups. A look at few skewed methods that are followed based on the concept of social capital may help us decode how damaging is it to look for solutions to socio-economic and political problems from the perspective of social capital.

Social capital is used as a mechanism or shortcut tool to reduce the costs involved in the economic transactions. It is nothing short of marketing kind of technique where the marketing persons approach the known ones first. Social capital in its functional form – which is also called as functional social capital by some – is the network of contacts that are established among the individuals in work place or different official positions (Hyypä, 2010). A functional social capital can be network of bureaucrats, politicians, business people, media people, trade or employees unions, students of a particular types of institutes like the students of Indian Institute of Technology, employees of a particular company like Microsoft, or Coca Cola etc. These

functional networks makes those who are part of it to form into one type of function based social capital by default. The functional social capital of this type functions as a fast bonding tape among the individuals who otherwise have nothing in common except their functional backgrounds. Employees from a particular company may automatically become 'friends' in their first meeting itself in a bar or restaurant, and may even share a taxi after the party. Trust, and reciprocal advantages in this type of functional capital, by default, becomes default, and helps the individuals who have this type of capital to gain advantage over others when it comes to the things that the individuals of this type of social capital are capable of doing. A bureaucrat working in one district or state may find a bureaucrat in another state to be normally receiving and friendly to her. Nothing wrong with this, in normal circumstances. But, this type of identification with each other based on their functional backgrounds, usually extends further – to help each other by throwing their support behind their fellow comrades – especially to influence the outcome of socio-economic and political benefits. This support apparently tilts the opportunities in their favor thus causing severe damage to the ones who are trying out their chances in a fair manner. And, promotion of this type of network apparently means encouraging sectionalism, eventually resulting in sectional capital. The social capital that is supposed to be social in its character is actually lightening the burden of being capital to everyone, and instead, is becoming social capital of few i.e., sectional capital.

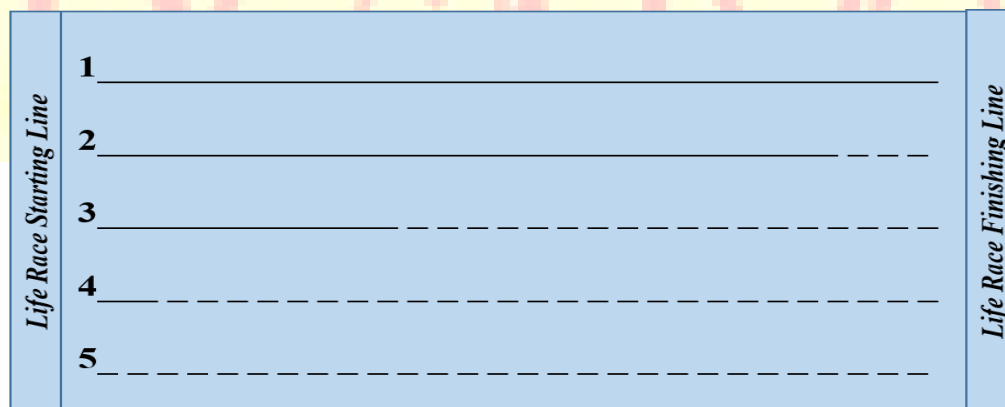
The functional explanation of social capital works in many ways, out of which, network based recruitment, reference system, management quota, meritocracy etc. are few, but important things to be critically looked at to understand the dark side of social capital (Lin, 2001). Network based recruitment is a recruitment procedure that is based on the functional social network of an organization or institute. The theoretical assumption of network based recruitment points to the fact that the recruiters can recruit personnel based on their orientations to a particular job, field or profession. For example, a person working as an intern in a particular field is considered as having an orientation and interest to work in that particular field. Sounds true, and following this logic in the recruitment process obviously helps the recruiters to identify an appropriate person with a particular orientation that the organization is looking for. But in functional terms, the internship itself is, sometimes, a result of sectional social capital. People find it easy to find an internship vacancy to put their candidates in, and this opportunity generates further opportunities.

The intern trains herself very well with all the organizational needs and becomes 'automatically' a perfect choice to the vacancy that is about to come in that particular organization. The opportunity to work as an intern itself is a big opportunity in this competitive world, especially in countries like India and China where the employment opportunities are way less than the number of students getting education.

Another form of social capital based recruitment or selection method is reference system. Reference or recommendation system is used in many fields like in academics, granting fellowships, selection of candidates for a job etc. The candidates competing for these opportunities are usually expected to get a few references from the field that they have been practicing. The apparent idea of this system is to judge the candidates credentials based on the 'relied' references from the field. This sounds well on a theoretical sense. But the facts seems to work altogether in a different direction as the ones who have good contacts get good references. Assume for a moment that two person, X and Y, are applying for a prestigious fellowship in a prestigious university like Oxford, and are asked to get a couple of references from the academics. X from an urban university with their parents working as academics in one of the urban centric universities and, Y hailing from country side with their parents being farm workers. Both X and Y may be equal in their capabilities or their performance levels so far in the academics, but X has better chance of getting a good reference. Even if Y is superior in merit vis-à-vis X, X will certainly find a way to be equal to Y through references. And, if Y is inferior to X in terms of merit – sheneed not wait for the outcome. Y stands in a disadvantageous position in all the three possibilities. Similarly, there are management quotas in the educational institutes in India. A management quota is a number of seats that the management is allowed to sell, or give them to, according to their wish, without giving consideration to the merit of the candidate. Usually, a few seats are given to each private educational institute, and the management of that institute is free to use its discretion to allot these seats according to their discretion. The management usually sells, or gives these rich and prosperous engineering or medical opportunities to the ones born with a silver spoon. In other words, the rich or powerful buy these 'merit' based educational opportunities in the market.

Another factor that the social capital influences heavily is the merit based approach to socio-economic and political opportunities. As the social capital of an individual is an outcome of many factors like culture, religion, language, caste, class, race, parental positions, and the affluence of her family and relatives, the outcome of her performance also gets grossly influenced by these factors (McNamee & Miller Jr, 2014). The cognitive skills of an individual heavily depends on the educational and emotional attainments of her parents and the care they have taken from prenatal stage or from even earlier stages (Khosravi, et al, 2014). An individual who has experienced severe poverty in the childhood may be a victim of various types of psychological and social suppressions that may hinder her from competing with other individuals who have been born in a well off family. The competition between two individual is seen or considered as just according to all market standards. But the fact is, the race for these two individuals start from different starting points, and the individuals who are ahead in terms of language, cultural orientation, access to resources, and affluent background are bound to win the race – or they may have finished the race before the start of the competition itself (McNamee & Miller Jr, 2014). The results of this race are taken as a result of ‘fair’ opportunities given to the individuals. This type of social capital, especially human capital, is already tilted in favor of the non-first generation participants, and the first generation participants are supposed to receive this institutionalized or legitimized violence with grace. Picture 1 illustrates how the life race works in a real life among individuals of different ranges of social capital/liability.

Picture 1: Real life competition among individuals with different ranges of social, economic and human capital



Source: McNamee & Miller Jr, 2014: P-50.

Notes: -Numbers represent competing individuals or groups.

- Full lines represent different types of social, economic and human capital the individuals or groups inherit, and the end of the full line represents the starting point of the competition for that particular individual or group.

- Broken line represents the length of the race that the individual or group has to cover in order to win the race.

As illustrated in picture 1, the competition for socio-economic and political resources or positions start in an imbalanced manner because of the differences in the social, economic and human capital of the individuals or groups participating in the real life race. Theoretically, in a competition, all the participants start at a particular point and finish at a particular point. The competition of this sort is perfectly just in terms of equality and the resultant merit based outcome. But, the competition in real life starts with staggered positions i.e., individual's or group's capabilities or aspects that enhance the capacities of individuals or groups are decided by various factors like inheritance, race, cultural 'superiority' of the birth, country's position, economic class, profession of parents etc. In real life, the competition starts from different starting points for different individuals or groups. Some are already at the finish line and some cannot cross the finish line at all in their whole life – and, some others simply vanish in the competition. There is no guarantee that equivalent merit leads to equivalent amounts of achievement. An individual at the bottom position and an individual at the top position may be equivalent in their merits and may be spending same amount of merit, say, one unit of merit spent by each individual over something, but the results will automatically be skewed in favor of the person who is at the top or at the finish line as the person at the start or bottom position moves just one place out of poverty but the person near the finish line may finish the race successfully or may have already won the race. Promoting social capital of the individuals or groups according to their capabilities or pre-occupied positions is nothing but legitimizing the difference or inequality. Organized elite are usually the ones with social capital, and the unorganized masses lack all forms of capital, especially social capital. Bourdieu's way of research, which only concentrates on how social or cultural capital works itself is an indication of how social capital works, because he did not take the 'lower' class in his research on cultural capital, and limited his research to middle class and elites only (Gauntlett, 2011). Similarly,

Putnam's rise to fame itself can be attributed to the social capital he enjoys. Putnam's works became famous because of his rapport with the media persons. The media persons introduced Putnam to Bill Clinton, and later Clinton released Putnam's 'Bowling Alone', which drew the attention of the media that gave an effective publicity to his book (Gauntlett, 2011). Social capital creates good exchange value – one favor can be exchanged for another favor, just like the elite nexus. Trust plays an important role in favor exchanges while using social capital, as it is used, at least occasionally, to gain undue favors, which may not be possible in open terms. It depends on the 'soundness' of the individuals involved in the process and how efficient they are in implementing political realism (Njagi, 2012). Social capital works, most of the times, based on the informal communication among the actors. Since informal communication heavily relies on gossips and grapevine, severe bias and discrimination can be there in these communication modes, and people with good social capital tend to take advantage of these kinds of communication (Njagi, 2012). Social capital, basically focusses attention on differential access to opportunities through social connections. It is not apparent how promotion of social capital is going to help every individual or group in a similar manner, or how social capital of different individuals or groups can be equalized so as to give them equal advantage.

'Social' Capital – Social Costs

According to Ben Fine, social capital is a *“degradation of scholarship, independent of its popularization and potential self-help, win-win, reactionary overtones, isolated occurrences aside, it can only be rejected, not appropriately transformed”* (Fine, 2001: P-191). He further says that the term social capital is reductionist in terms of its applicability as it centers around individual's capacity to maximize benefits (by hook or crook) at the cost of others or society in general. It can be called as individual or sectional capacities to get some advantages at the cost of others. Social capital, unlike capital in economics, lacks the basic aspects like *“extension in time; an intended sacrifice for deferred benefits and; alienability”* (Haynes, 2009: P-4). The concept of social capital do not seem to have any of the above said qualities of capital. On the contrary, social capital depends on the strength of personal or societal networks that could collapse at any time, and may not become recoverable or spendable like capital in economics. Besides, social capital of an individual or groups seems to increase with the frequency of its usage, especially if used in an illegitimate way. Critics like Samuel Bowles argue that the concept of social capital

relies heavily on relationships rather than having any real capital(Haynes, 2009). Real capital, indifferent to the person's relations with others, commands certain value in economics, both in terms of usage and exchange, whereas social capital simply depends on the relationships of the person who 'has' such capital. Hence, it can be called as a network of relationships, and these relationships depend on personal attributes, position and capacities of an individual that is accepted by others. Critics like Robert Solow argue that the returns on the social capital are not calculable, and are unexpected; the returns of social capital can be simply called as different types of favors they can get from others – sometimes in a way that cannot be considered as moral(Haynes, 2009). Social capital does not seem to have answers to some of the questions like say; can someone borrow social capital from others, can we lend social capital, or at least can it be transferred to the closest friends or relatives? Does not sound so. Then how can it be called as a capital? The concept seems to cloak different forms of existing dominant positions in a particular way, especially to legitimize certain practices of the elite.

Capital is dynamic in the sense that it can contract or expand on multiple occasions without adding any stains to it whereas the strength of social capital increases or decreases in continuous manner, and does not seem to be dynamic like capital in terms of mobility, exchange, preservation, and does not seem to sustain when detached from the particular person or group that has it. Social capital is indeed anti-social in nature, or simply asocial in terms of benefits, as it shores all the benefits to a particular individual, set or group of individuals, and the most asocial aspect of social capital is the results are achieved at the cost of society. Capital depletes with utilization whereas social capital increases with its usage as the reciprocal benefits of the persons involved in exchanging of favors creates more and more social capital.Social capital has a dark side that is actually bigger than its brighter side, and it is nothing but encouraging social costs. According to Fukuyama, “*self-interested lobbyists, hate groups, or inbred bureaucrats benefit from access to reserves of social capital than anyone else*”(Field, 2003: P-73). If more people tend to concentrate on social capital in a continuous manner then the output quality of these persons may go on decreasing, usually leading to a plunge in the quality of the work as everyone would be concentrating on the social skills and contacts for identity instead of gaining it through their output. Emphasis on social capital also can make the people to concentrate more on informal methods which can damage the equality principles and government laws. There is a

severe negative side to social capital that actually perpetuates corrupt practices at every stage. Though beneficial to the persons involved in the exchange, it harms the general interests of the public and acts as an antidote to all the egalitarian principles that the governments try to practice (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006). Just like the way capital creates inequality, social capital also creates significant inequalities, as it is related to a person's orientation towards others, mostly biased or based on personal opinions like opposition to a particular caste, or liking towards a particular language or ideology etc., this inequality leads to all forms of tangible inequalities like access to economic sources, employment and educational opportunities etc., which further widens the cleavage among those who have social capital and those who do not have social capital (Lin, 2001).

Summary

The concept of social capital is misleading. Instead of calling it social capital, different existing alternative like membership in a club, alumni of a college or university, being part of a particular profession, work place friendship or comradeship, or a close part of a community etc. concepts explains the so called social capital better. While Putnam talked about the social capital in a societal sense, it turned out to be an individual capital or group or sectional capital to protect personal interest, ... no one knows how it is going to be made applicable to a nation or society, or how we can base it on some moral grounds. Hence, social capital, in a sense, can be called as capabilities of a small section to misuse the system and to get away with it. Of course, there are different types of social capital that act positively like the people of an apartment or village coming forward to carry out or care about their necessities or needs, nonetheless, these examples sound like rare instances, and social capital seem to work or is seemed to be used in negative instances most of the time. The concept of social capital generally overlaps with many concepts like civic participation, trusting others, community or group membership, volunteering etc., and all these memberships or activities eventually lead to higher development of the society. The so called social capital is nothing but sectional capital or promotion of sectional interests in a legitimate way. Different concepts that support the social capital like merit, network based recruitment, reference system, internship, putting a positive word etc. are ways to defend or get access to socio-economic and political benefits in a stealthy and opaque manner. Hence, social capital can be called as subtle attempt to reinforce class structures in a legitimate manner. Social

capital can be useful to build informal relations with our surroundings, or to establish social relations in sociological terms, and apparently, these relations are bound to give an individual or group a certain degree of advantage vis-à-vis those who lack it, but, promoting it as a tool for the individuals or groups to get access to socio-economic and political opportunities from the wider society is nothing but giving a license to loot and drap the society – by promoting sectional capital at social costs.

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