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Social capital and social justice

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the issue of implementing the justice in a society with democratic rules, taking into account the social capital structure. To this end, a typology of the social capital is proposed and examined, getting to a qualitative typology of the social in six species which are then grouped into three pairs based on the relationship between individuation and socialization phenomena. In this context, social justice principles and criteria are evaluated and correlated with the social capital typology, extracting conclusions about how a practicable social justice may be both the source and the destination of the social capital dynamics. Finally, the paper proposes some notable distinctions between social justice and social rightness, based also on the proposed typology of the social capital.

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1. Structure of the social capital

If we imagine our planet (which is limited from any point of view) as a circle, then a model of its sustainability may be seen as an equilateral triangle inscribed in that circle (figure 1):

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1.1. Types of capital and the societal paradigm

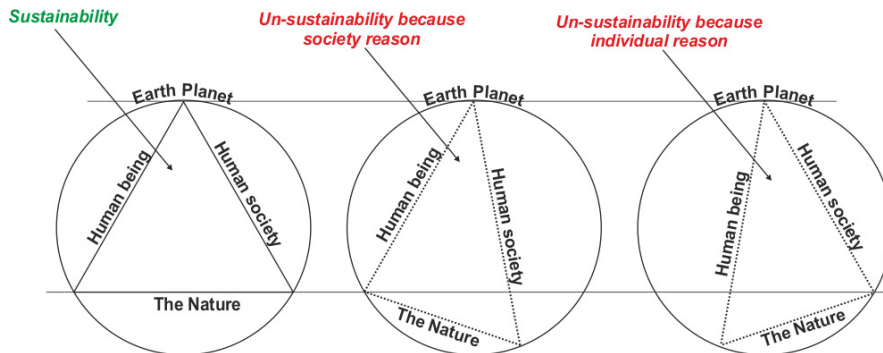


Fig. 1. Paradigm of planet Earth sustainability

It is obvious that making any side of the triangle shorter by extending the others is a deviation from sustainability. The paradigm of sustainability is an artefact; it has not been invented by nature. Although this statement may be strongly polemical, in our opinion, nature invented only the survival, which is not the same thing as the sustainability. The difference between survival and sustainability consists in the teleological character of sustainability (therefore, about sustainability we may speak only accepting the presence of the cultural beings).

Actually, the history of the human society is the very history of the domination of one form or another of capital. Each category of dominant capital imposed its own logic principle of movement, constructed its own actional paradigm and generated its own social formation (table1):

Table 1. General picture of the association of the type of capital with the societal paradigm

	Type of capital (Fundamental or crucial resource)					
	Natural	Physical		Cultural (Artefactual)		
		Substantial (tangible)	Financial (intangible)	Biological	Non-physical Individual Intellectual Moral	Social
The logic principle	Methodological collectivism	Methodological individualism		Methodological holism		
The actional paradigm	Stationarity		Optimality		Sustainability	
The societal establishment	Naturalism		Capitalism		?	

Therefore, the necessity (under the sanction of extinction), for the human society, to access the paradigm of sustainability by replacing the paradigm of optimality seems to have no other alternative

1.2. What is the social capital?

In general, we will name capital any entity (either substantial or informational) which brings an advantage of any kind to the holder of that entity. It is of no importance if that advantage is current or future. According to Figure 1 above, there may be six distinct (fundamental) type of capital: a) natural capital (for instance, a river); b) substantial capital (for instance, a house); c) financial capital (for instance, amonetaryincome); d) biologic capital (for instance, the health state of an individual); e) intellectual capital (for instance, the educational level of a person); f) social capital (for instance, human rights institutionalization). These types of capital are correlated causally with the three basic forms of the individual welfare (figure 2):

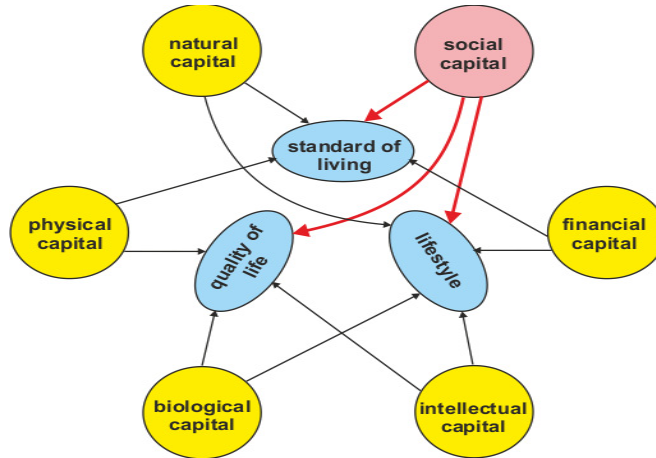


Fig. 2. Relations of causality between the types of capital and the components of the individual welfare

The social capital originates (primary roots) in the social networks of any kind. These networks can be formal (such as the set of formal institutions), or informal (such as the cultural traditions or the moral principles). In order to formulate a definition of the social capital we need to identify and systematize the predicates of sufficiency of the concept of social capital. We think that these predicates are the following:

- (PS1): *internal pro-cyclicity*: the social capital generates a permanent positive feed-back regarding its utilization (stating this predicate is equivalent with stating a “law” of the increasing outputs);
- (PS2): *horizontal non-rivalry*: the social capital can be used by any contemporary without reducing, by this utilization, the amount of social capital available for the other contemporaries;
- (PS3): *vertical non-rivalry*: the social capital can be used by any non-contemporary without reducing, by this utilization, the amount of social capital available for the other non-contemporaries;
- (PS4): *formal institutionality*: the social capital is generated and used only in a formal (encoded)manner.

Once an existing entity (having thus objective or subjective ontological status) verifies, simultaneously the four predicates of sufficiency, that entity becomes a species of social capital. Once an existing entity becomes social capital, it generates a new predicate of necessity[†]:

- (PN1): *axiological assignation*: the social capital generates necessarily a list of values which form its reason.

Figure 3 shows the general design by which the predicates of sufficiency and the new predicate of necessity of thesocial capital are correlated with the types of capital mentioned earlier:

	PS1	PS2	PS3	PS4	PN1
Natural capital(CN)					
Physiccapital(CF)					
Biologiccapital(CB)					
Intellectualcapital(CI)					
Moral capital(CM)					
Social capital(CS)					

[†]The predicates of sufficiency are, logically, predicates of necessity too, but not any predicate of necessity is a predicate of sufficiency too.

Fig. 3. Association of the predicates of sufficiency and necessity with the generic types of capital

1.3. What types of social capital exist?

In order to identify the typology of the social capital we need, of course, a criterion (or a set of criteria) of classification. In our opinion, we must use two categories of criteria:

- (a) (IS): *criterion of socialisation*: by socialization we understand the process of insertion of the individual within the society (i.e. establishment of the society through the individual people);
- (b) (SI): *criterion of individualization*: by individualization we understand the process of autonomization of the individual person in relation with the society (i.e. establishment of the individual person by the society).

Each of the two categories generates a distinct classification of the social capital:

- (a) On the basis of the criterion of socialization (IS) we have:
 - *Communication (C)*: extent and quality to which the people can communicate, live and act with and in relation with other people; this type of social capital is „accountable” particularly for the process of communitization (establishment of social communities such as: family, team, club, nation, region, social networks etc.);
 - *Participation (P)*: extent and quality to which the people have the possibility to take part in the public decision-making; is type of social capital is „accountable” particularly for the establishment of the political structure of the society;
 - *Mutualization (M)*: extent and quality to which common purposes and common means can be established by inter-individual harmonization (either cooperation, or competition); is type of social capital is „accountable” for the contractual association of the people (within the nations or states, too).
- (b) On the basis of the criterion of individualization (SI) we have:
 - *Liberty (L)*: extent to which the people can use their own free-will;
 - *Trust (I)*: extent to which each individual person is free to delegate own rights or interests toward another individual person (towards the state or a supra-state, included);
 - *Symmetry (S)*: extent to which each individual person has the same access as any other individual person to the societal, public or private, anthropic or natural (education, justice, neighbourhood, opportunity).

The types of social capital socialization relate to the nature of the process, while the types of social capital individualization relate to the nature of the phenomenon. This observation might lead us to an interesting conclusion: the individualization of the social capital is the result of the social capital socialization. Therefore, we need to accept a form of apriorism of the social capital socialization in relation with its individualization. In other words, we may consider the individualization of the social capital as a specification (in the Kantian meaning of the concept of specification) of its socialization.

We consider that the proposals of the dedicated literature regarding the typology of the social capital can be included in the six classes mentioned above. We will now form three pairs of social capital classes, the first component of the pair belonging to the category of socialization, while the second component belonging to the category of individualization:

- *Communication-liberty (C-L)*: we will name this pair as the „axiological binomial” of the social capital;
- *Participation-trust (P-I)*: we will name this pair as the „political binomial” of the social capital;
- *Mutualization-symmetry (M-S)*: we will name this pair as the „praxeological binomial” of the social capital.

The reason for the formation of these three pairs resides in the relation of causality between the components of each pair, so that the arrow of causality originates in the socialization component of the pair and ends in the individualization component of the particular pair (figure 4).

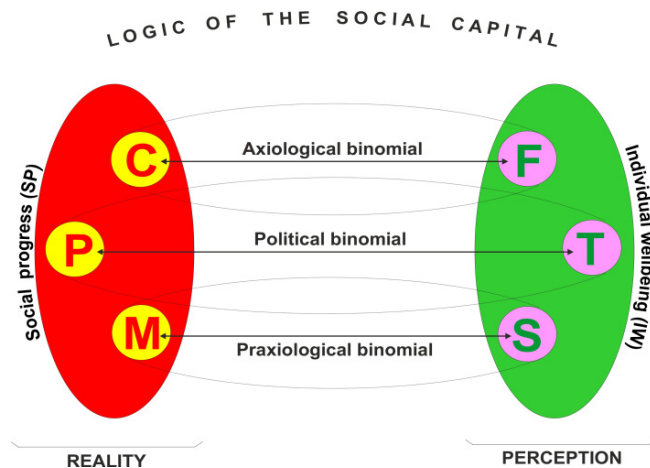


Fig. 4. Pairing of sufficiency and of necessity predicates of the social capital to the generic types of capital

2. Concept of social justice

2.1. Social justice – mission of the society (state)

Society – understood as objectivities of the social contract between the state and the citizens – has four fundamental missions to accomplish:

- Ensure the efficient utilization of the resources of any kind, of the human resources mainly (we notice here, therefore, the labour force employment); this implies an asymptomatic movement towards the Pareto-optimal welfare – as it is known, because of the existence of public goods, the Pareto-optimum can be achieved (or approximated) only by the state (government);
- Achieve social justice: the final distribution of the social results of any kind (positive or negative) on the basis of fairness; fairness means: a) achieve the primary distribution according to the merit; b) achieve redistribution according to the non-imputable non-merit;
- Achieve the individual welfare: institutional implementation of a grid of principles which produce and reproduce the social capital (of six types, as mentioned earlier); this mission is transversal (synchronic), functioning intra-generationally;
- Achieve the sustainability of the societal dynamics: all societal inputs must be „recovered” by societal outputs, sooner or later, in the necessary amount, quality, structure and dynamics; this is a longitudinal (diachronic) mission, functioning inter-generationally.

Therefore, all these four missions of the society are linked, directly or indirectly, either to the capital as such, or to the social capital, explicitly. We will now show the causal relation between the second mission of the society (achievement of social justice) and the social capital.

2.2. Merit and non-merit in the human society

Merit (*M*) is an integrator concept used for the primary distribution of the results of the society's activity between the individual people (primary components of the society). We were saying in the beginning that the merit is assigned exclusively to the people, not to the groups or classes of individuals, irrespective of the criterion of aggregation. By merit we will understand an intrinsic distributional signaller of a right for the three distinct entities: objects (for instance, actual properties), symbols (for instance, currency of financial bonds) and prerogatives (for instance, roles). The category of merit is indivisible, although its level or form of manifestation can be different. Following are some considerations necessary for the subsequent reasoning.

- (1) Merit doesn't exist as such, meaning that it cannot be claimed/assumed or proved/rejected in itself; it exists only if and to the extent to which it manifests, objectivities within an action recorded by the social environment; by action we understand any exteriorization (perceived by the social environment) of an intentionality, irrespective of the form taken by this exteriorization;
- (2) Only the objectivation of the merit associates to it positive or negative significances for the society at the moment when it objectivates (we can notice here a historic character of the merit): if the significance of objectivizing the merit by action is positive (appreciated positively by the society), then the merit signals a level of compulsory primary distribution from the society (social reward), while if that significance is negative, it signals an inverse, compulsory distribution, from the individual towards the society (social sanction).

Non-merit (\bar{M}) must not be confused with the negative evaluation of merit objectivation. Non-merit, simply the lack of merit. Because, as we have shown previously, merit doesn't exist by itself, only by its objectivation, non-merit also doesn't exist in itself, only by the absence of its objectivation. Non-merit is of two types:

- (1) Imputable non-merit ($\bar{M}I$): is the case when the individual refuses to prove the existence of the merit (this proof comes, of course, exclusively by the objectivation of the potential merit through an action with social significance); as claimed by Kant, failing to make use of a merit (for instance, a talent) is immoral the reason why the objectivation of the merit doesn't occur, is irrelevant;
- (2) Non-imputable non-merit ($\bar{M}\bar{I}$): is the case when the individual is in a situation of incapacity to objectivate his/her merit (for instance, the people with various disabilities); we presume that society has adequate criteria and procedures by which it distinguishes non-equivocally between the refusal to objectivate a merit and faking this refusal by mimicking the incapacity to objectivate this merit.

2.3. *Distributional principles and criteria*

The distributional principle is a principle which establishes the distribution of the societal result. In our opinion, the distribution of the societal result has two components: a) a distributive component (D1); b) a redistributive component (D2). Consequently, we need two distributional principles: a) a primary distributional principle (PD1); b) a secondary distributional principle (PD2). The primary distributional principle refers to the direct distribution (the distributive component), while the secondary distributional principle refers to the indirect distribution (the redistributive component). Both the direct distribution and the indirect distribution also require distributional criteria.

We consider that the distributional criterion for the direct distribution must be the merit, while the distributional criterion for the indirect distribution must be the non-imputable non-merit. We have here two difficult problems which we will approach briefly: it is about the two distributions which we may name, a) distribution according to the transferred merit; b) distribution according to the presumed merit. Both for the transferred merit, and for the presumed merit, we give up the issue of merit objectivation. The transferred merit works as distributional criterion, such as merit succession. Merit successions can be legal (stipulated as norms, encoded or informal – such as the real inheritances), or can be voluntary (decided by the individual person). Merit successions can be inter-generational (for instance, a legacy) or intra-generational (for instance, a donation, gift, sponsorship). Merit successions refer to all three categories of merit: regarding objects, regarding symbols and regarding roles. The presumed merit works as a merit generation-type distributional criterion. This is the case of assigning positions, roles, etc. to people who didn't yet prove, by objectivation, their merit, but who are expected to objectivate their merit by the distribution according to the presumed merit[‡].

The non-imputable non-merit refers to demonstrable impossibilities to objectivate a merit. These impossibilities can be of two categories: a) endogenous impossibilities (such as a physic or mental disability); b) exogenous impossibilities (such as an obstacle which is out of the control of the particular person – force majeure, for instance). Of course, nobody can claim having non-imputable non-merit if a legal norm prevents the action which would have

[‡]For instance, we must include here the concept of efficient wage from the economic theory of the labour market.

objectivate the presumptive merit.

2.4. Conditions for the accomplishment of social justice

The accomplishment of social justice implies the accomplishment of the distributional objective. As shown above, the distribution of the societal result is done in two steps: 1) direct distribution (primary distribution); 2) indirect distribution (secondary distribution, or redistribution). Question is, does the accomplishment of the social justice imply the accomplishment of the distributional result (primary distribution according to the merit, or the secondary distribution according to the non-imputable non-merit), or does it imply just ensuring the procedural conditions for the accomplishment of the distributional result? We consider that the accomplishment of the social justice implies just the provision of the means to accomplish the distributional result. This means that the normative grid of the society regarding the distribution of the societal result must include all the conditions of sufficiency so that the distribution (according to the two forms) is guaranteed according to the mentioned distributional criteria.

3. Correlation between the procedural distribution and the social capital

The objectivation of the procedural distribution, the achievement of the normative (encoded) conditions of sufficiency of the primary and secondary distribution according to the associated distributional criteria, will lead to the causal, structural and functional correlation between the social capital and the distribution of the societal outcome. The following theses can be supported in this matter:

- a. Social justice is objectivated within the primary (direct) distribution, within the conditions in which the distribution of the societal output (NB: not just the economic societal output, but any output generated by the society) is done according to the merit. In this case, the type of social capital „served” by primary distribution belongs to class IS, i.e.: *mutualisation*.
- b. Social rightness is objectivated within the secondary (indirect), within the conditions in which the distribution of the societal output is done according to the non-imputable non-merit. In this case, the type of social capital „served” by primary distribution belongs to class SI i.e.: *symmetry*.
- c. While the social justice distributes the *due and non-merit-based* societal output, social rightness distributes the *non-due and merit-based* societal output.
- d. While social justice relies on the human condition, social rightness relies on the human nature.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the four theses mentioned above.

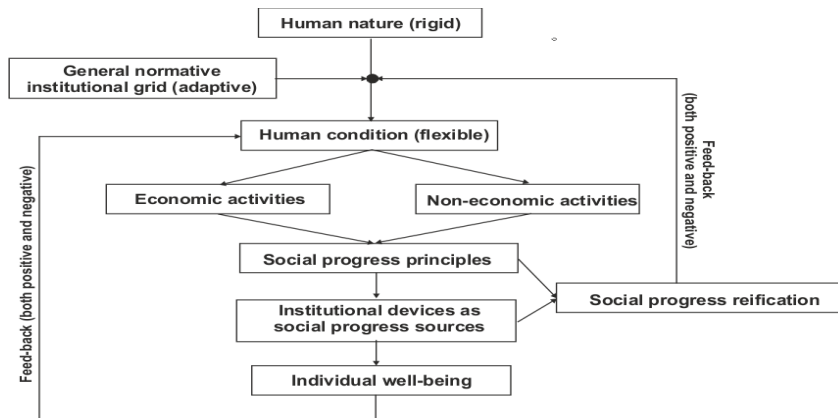


Fig. 5. Human nature – human condition in relation connection with the relation social progress-individual welfare

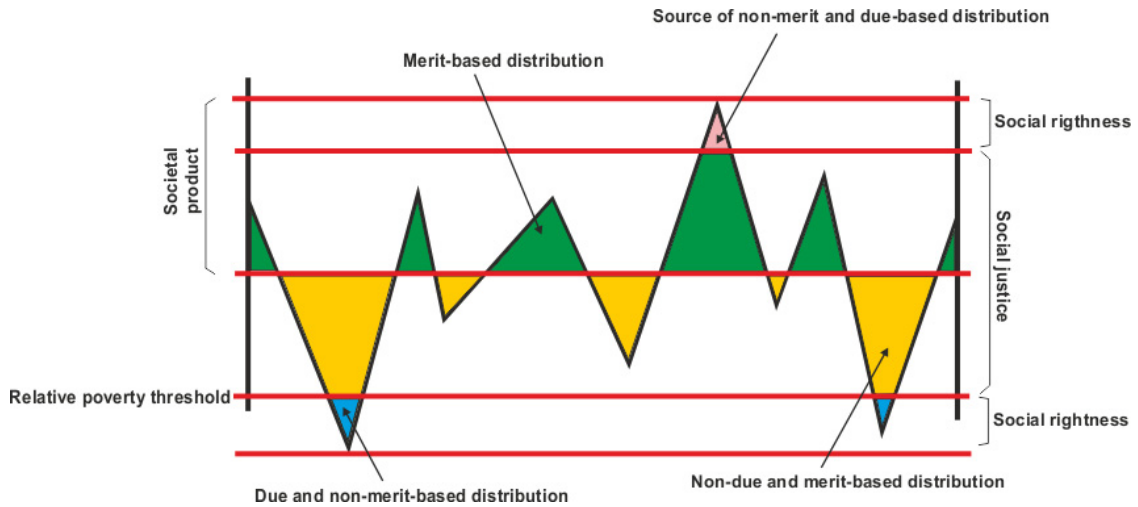


Fig. 6. Distribution and redistribution of the societal output: social justice and social rightness

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