

## Social Capital: Problem Field and Empirical Research\*



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**Abstract.** The article analyzes the concept of social capital as a successful metaphor that covers a whole range of relations that can affect the success or failure of activities of an individual, small groups, organizations, enterprises, society, and finally, interstate associations and unions. We show that the study of social capital is accompanied by relentless disputes about the essence of the concept; there are supporters and opponents of its legitimacy and rationality of use in scientific analysis. Despite the controversy, both proponents and critics of social capital note the productivity of the use of this concept, which is a complex social phenomenon that requires in-depth study. Social capital is considered in relation to the scale of those objects whose part it is and in relation to which it operates at the micro-, meso-, macro- and meta-levels. Social capital gives benefits on any of these levels and is fixed in economic, political, and cultural advantage. A component of social capital, as shown by the Polish sociologist P. Sztompka, is a moral capital that helps build relationships based on trust, loyalty, reciprocity, solidarity, respect, and justice. Embedding moral capital in the culture of society creates a solid foundation for the relations that contribute to the development in one or another area and to the progress of the whole society. Acting according to moral rules can mitigate the existing injustice in the distribution of social capital. A good example of the use of the concept of social capital is provided by a study carried out at Vologda Research Center on the basis of an indicator model. The connection of social capital with the socio-cultural and economic development of the territories is shown, the actual problems of the spread of social capital beyond the small, near circles of interaction are revealed. Addressing these problems is an urgent political

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and social task; it will help increase solidarity in society, overcome the alienation of the population from power, and create and strengthen mutual trust between them.

**Key words:** social capital, its components, moral capital, indicator model, solidarity.

**Introduction.** Issue of the social capital is extremely popular among Russian sociologists in the last decades. There are more than 130 publications in the RSCI database issued from 2010 to 2018 which use the term “social capital” in titles. It is possible to state several reasons of such popularity. The first reason, as it is a shame for domestic civics, is that the development of a new concept and a new sphere starts with analyzing foreign publications on the topic, which also causes a lag from global trends. It is difficult to name concepts, the priority learning and teaching of which is an accomplishment of modern domestic social scientists. But after getting acquainted with foreign sources a massive research of a new sphere begins. The same happened with social capital. The term “social capital”, as the part of intangible capital, was the most successfully defined by Pierre Bourdieu: social capital is the set of real and potential resources connected to durable networks of more or less institutionalized relations of mutual acquaintance and recognition – in other words, group membership. Social capital gives advantages, benefits to group members, it is a part of group solidarity [1, pp. 15–29]. T. Schultz, P. Bourdieu, G. Becker, R. Coleman, R. Putnam, F. Fukuyama, and other western scholars contributed to theoretical justification and empirical study of social capital. It is important that founders of the theory reached far beyond the analysis of its economic effects, they saw social content in this phenomenon. Thus, Bourdieu discusses the impact of three capital forms on human’s existing environment, which is based on global volume of capital

[volume global du capital]. It is understood as the set of resources and power which could be really used: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital. Russian social capital studies, in relation to different spheres of Russian society, started at the beginning of the 2000s: it predefined a large flow of publications on this topic.

Another reason is accumulation of the content, which could give a necessary amount of data for empirical research on the impact of social capital on different spheres of social life and social objects. This is how areas such as connection of social capital to entrepreneurship, organizations’ activities, education, individual career etc. emerged. In this case, data from international surveys, quantitative and qualitative social capital changes in Russia were widely used. Methods of social capital measuring, including index measuring, started to develop, as well as comparative studies – domestic and international. The basis of these methods is usually a three-factor model of social capital, developed by R. Putnam: norms of mutuality, trust and social networks. It allows measuring of social capital with the help of individual indicators typed into generalizing indices. Due to some uncertainty in definition of the term “social capital”, there is no unified method of its measuring. Authors use different methodologies but the acquired results prove that there is a significant connection between social capital and the results of different social spheres functioning.

The third reason is the problem of social capital which is not clearly articulated in domestic sociology or empirically studied, but

it is intuitively felt – it is the connection of social and symbolic capital. As P. Bourdieu stated, social capital always functions as symbolic capital – it is a loan, prepayment, which is given to those who demonstrate it. Symbolic capital is one of the mechanisms which arranges movement of capital to capital [2, p. 235]. Scholars' attention is attracted by one specific type of symbolic capital – political capital which means trust to political actor – person or party, leader or institute. Their symbolic capital is important for conducting elections, implementing changes, even profound reforms, which affect all the society. Symbolic capital of organizations, firms, leaders is less studied but is equally important for economic relations, and the implementation of trust between economic entities in achieving their target results.

Despite active usage of “social capital” construct, the meaning of this term is not fully clarified. There are reasons to think that it is quite an elastic term, which has the umbrella effect, because it includes many research subjects – from relation between individuals to relations between states, interdisciplinary studies (economic, sociological, management, psychological, and other disciplines), monodisciplinary approaches, and often incomparable empirical methodologies of this phenomenon studies. This situation could be explained by “youth” of the term in modern studies and lack of uncertain reputable international experience of its study. Some pro-social capital concept arguments and its criticism will be discussed further.

#### **Social capital: pros and cons**

It is possible to find arguments to defend social capital as the research concept which fits modern definition of capital as the resource contributing to gaining advantages in economic sphere and life success at large. However, it is

also possible to find arguments “against”, which show obscurity of the term “social capital”, its vulnerable interpretations, and polysemy. Let us examine two approaches on the example of two articles – P. Adler and S. Kwon from the U.S. and T. Claridge from New Zealand.

In Adler and Kwon's article, titled “Social capital: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” [3], argumentation in favor of social capital concept and the rationality of its usage for analysis, definition of sources, benefits and risks of social capital for organizations' activity is presented. The authors suggest their own, quite successful definition of social capital: it is the resource for separate and collective entities, created by configuration and network's content of their less stable social relations. Together with another forms of capital, social capital is the resource, which could be sustained by another resources – human, economic, cultural – while creating own network of external individual and collective connections. Unlike other forms of capital, social capital is “situated” not in the subjects, but in their relations with another subjects. This is the most general and fundamental difference.

Individuals can advance their social capital by gaining access to valuable contacts and information; collective actors can strengthen its collective identity and expand its opportunities for efficient management by investing into the development of its internal relations. Sources of social capital are limited to three components: networks, norms, and trust. It is noteworthy that the authors of the examined article insist on conceptual difference between trust and social capital (some scholars identify them, in empirical research too). Trust, according to the authors, is simultaneously a source and a result of social capital. Trust is a psychological state of individuals, while social capital is a peculiarity of social structure,

a characteristic of existing social relations. Additional contribution to social capital, except three named components, is provided by human capital at the expense of common norms and beliefs formation, as well as created formal rules and institutions.

The authors point out advantages, which are provided by social capital in a market economy: enhanced access to information source; power, influence, and control which allow managing staff effectively; solidarity on the basis of unified social norms and beliefs (the most developed in closed social networks), decrease of the need for formal control.

Adler and Kwon's arguments are partially fended by T. Claridge from New Zealand – the social capital and organizational culture specialist. In the article “Criticisms of Social Capital Theory: and Lessons for Improving Practice” [4], he reviews arguments of scientists who do not agree with the social capital concept and point out its shortcomings. The author himself is not an opponent of this concept, but he tries to focus on its shortcomings in order to improve the practice of its usage in projects – research and practical. He also thinks that it is impossible to talk about social capital as a holistic concept. However, he underlines that there is some agreement among scholars and practitioners regarding the definition of social capital, its amounts, measures, and trends of formation. He considers the existing practice of social capital as a strictly theoretical approach to its examination, while the very existence of social capital is not denied. Some scholars, primarily economists, limit social capital by economic rationality. In this case, social capital loses its social features: social elements are belittled and boiled down to characteristics of something else. A good example of social capital sociality is trust which can be measured while choosing adequate indicators focused not

just on the person, but on the impact of social surroundings on human behavior.

The next manifestation of social capital critique is focused on the assumption that social capital is not capital. The author agrees that usage of the term “social capital” is not always appropriate. Especially in the situations when it is necessary to neglect certain non-social aspects.

The authors' conclusions are addressed to the scholars who study social capital and to practitioners: do not lose “social”; do not treat social capital as capital, it is more like glue, lubricant or catalyst; do not use the term “social capital” if there is a more appropriate term; do not simplify and do not connect different elements of social capital; do not ignore the context social capital is used in; differ the levels social capital exists on. Finally, Claridge suggests using existing definitions of social capital, not creating new ones. The author's appeal to take into account the difficulty of the analyzed term, not to simplify interaction of different social capital aspects and its relations with social environment, can be fully supported.

#### **Levels of social capital in non-material resources of the society**

Social capital takes its place in non-material resources of the society together with human (including cultural), economic, symbolic capitals, and their internal structural varieties [5, pp. 36–44]. There is no strict anarchy between these types of capital without the context of qualitative features of the society, but there is the mutual connection and influence of all non-material capital types. Even in the middle of the 19th century, V.I. Dal, while underlying traditional capital forms in Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language, noticed that “capabilities, titles, and work can be called “capital”, as well as health and strength of the worker [6, p.

216]. It is well-known that developed human and cultural capital is preserved in the modern Russian, but obstacles to its usage are created by underdevelopment and social capital features which do not fulfill the needs of democratic society in the process of modernization and transition to a new digital economy. In other, in terms of history and civilization, societies, in developed European countries first of all, social capital positively influences economic development by stimulating collective cooperation in achieving social goods.

If we analyze social capital in relation to scales of those objects, which it belongs to, it is possible to distinguish four levels. *Microlevel* – social capital of an individual, small group, which includes family, friends, its carrier – an individual, small group; *mesolevel* – capital of enterprises, organizations, its carrier could be an individual, director for example, or an institute as an organization; *macrolevel* – social capital of the society, which is characterized by the system of vertical and horizontal connections, availability of close value system and identification of society members, the level of trust and consolidation, the carrier could be an individual, who acts on the behalf of the society, individuals who are organized into communities, cooperating for common development; and, finally, *metalevel* – social capital of a country represented in the norms of international law and cooperation, membership in international organizations, international ecological, human-rights, and other associations, global importance of the country and local international unions. One of the phenomena of globalization is formation of “global social capital”. According to J.E. Diskin, it affects the efficiency of global economy by deepening trust in the system of global institutions, lowering the subjectively

assessed transactional risks, and, respectively, reducing transactional costs. At the same time, global social capital is the battlefield for the usage of its advantages, benefits it provides. Shortening of country’s social capital negatively affects the efficiency of its economy. In these circumstances, it is necessary to reduce the dependence of the Russian economy on the speculative attacks of “global social capital” producers. The solution to this problem is the part of establishing new “rules of the game” in the global economy. Civilized competition is necessary for “global social capital” market [7, pp. 150-159]. The part of this competition is the battle for country’s available social capital – trust in international projects implemented in the country, honesty in relations with other countries, the ability to take into account interests of another party.

Social capital has its benefits, in different amounts and types for its owner, on each level. These benefits are fixed in economic, political, and cultural advantages. The effect of social capital could be measured by the scale of its impact on each level: does it affect the reception of local benefits only for its owner, or does it form opportunities for obtaining benefits for owner and his inner or far circle. In the latter case, a push toward creating new connections, norms of interaction, new cooperative institutes.

There is the transformation of social capital structure according to its types in post-soviet society. The amount of social capital on microlevel was preserved and partly increased. With a high degree of society atomization, the amount of social capital on higher levels has decreased: individualistic values have replaced collective values, identification with the social community, the level of trust and consolidation, especially regarding the authorities which are

opposed to society in people's minds, has decreased. These processes are influenced by a gradual departure from the values of traditional society, which was essentially the Soviet society. Imitation practices of social interaction and participation in political life do not contribute to increase of social capital. Sprouts of social initiative: volunteer movements, public funds to support weak social groups, environmental movements, social networks, etc. – show the growth of trust between the members of these entities, contribute to the accumulation of social capital, which, in turn, contributes to the formation of civil society.

#### **Moral capital as the component of social capital**

An important feature of social capital was highlighted by Piotr Sztompka during his speech at the II Modernization Forum in Beijing. He showed that the important component of social capital is moral capital. It allows building relations based on *trust, loyalty, mutuality, solidarity, respect, and justice* [8]. In accordance with a topic of his speech, Sztompka said that society modernization requires understanding of the specific relations, widespread in the society, what values prevail there, are there any moral bonds which form moral capital. The author consistently reviews components of relations based on moral capital. Thus, *trust* provides a bridge across the sea of uncertainty, which causes existential safety, predictability of other people's reactions, readiness to initiate cooperation, to risk, and to accept changes in all transactions. On the contrary, distrust causes suspicion and anxiety, which paralyze action and cooperation. *Loyalty* initiates interaction, readiness to take risks and accept changes. On the contrary, disloyalty paralyzes actions and interactions, as partners

turn out to be untrustworthy or unreliable. *Mutuality* strengthens previously formed ties by making them stable and loyal. It creates a dense network of relationships, which provides opportunities for cooperation. The opposite of mutuality is unilateral exploitation, which pushes people away from social interaction. *Solidarity* means recognition and commitment to the common good, followed by a willingness to sacrifice some personal interests for the sake of "we", the whole group, community or society. It is an expression of the typical human desire for social identity. And this is another fundamental prerequisite for cooperation. If this aspiration is suppressed by egocentrism, exploitation at the expense of others then, in this case, the atomized society is not ready for any risky innovative undertakings. *Respect* means mutual recognition of partners' achievements, rewarded with praise, fame, prestige, upward mobility, etc. Respect encourages innovative and creative actions, increases self-esteem, which is an important, very valuable advantage for everyone. If recognition and respect do not exist, then the amount of invested effort, energy, and time, necessary for innovations, simply does not pay off. *Justice* means that the received rewards are proportional, on the one hand, to the effort and, on the other hand, to the value of the result. This encourages the pursuit of novelty, because some reward, at least, is guaranteed, even if innovative results are not achieved, and, if there are any results, maximum reward exists. In this regard, the propensity for risky modernization undertakings increases. If, on the other hand, the distribution of rewards is arbitrary and based on specific criteria (such as nepotism), the motivation for innovation breaks up.

The formation of moral capital as the component of social capital and its incorporation into the society culture creates a steady foundation of relations, which “work” for the result of development in one area or another and for the progress of the whole society. This way, moral capital could be reviewed as the integral part, the component of social capital holding it together with invisible, virtual threads that make this “glue” of relations even stronger. Social capital and its moral component are affected of numerous circumstances which change its configuration and opportunity to use them actively. This remark is valid for all levels of social capital – micro-, meso-, macro-, and mega-. With a sudden change in society’s development vectors or in the country’s status on international arena, the content or amount of social capital changes on any of these levels. Social capital is something that could be lost, but also something that can be grown and increased. It interacts with the value system of a given society in its past, present, and future. It depends on the institutional structure of society and the vectors of its evolution. Under the influence of changing values, social capital also changes. When the Soviet society collapsed, change in the relations between people, organizations, regions, as well as change of Russia’s relations with other countries, happened. Social capital went through deep transformations on all levels: some actors grew its resources, its social capital, while others shortened or lost it. If we speak about majority of the population, the “cultural trauma” caused sharp reduce of its social capital while relatively strengthened only family social capital. Even many friendly bonds did not survive people’s relations change after the transformation of individuals’ social status and differences in assessments of events happened.

### **The problem of social justice in social capital distribution**

Social capital, just like all other types of capital (economic, cultural, human, symbolic) is unequally distributed in the society. But if three types of capital have some physical substance, institutionalized in different forms – economic – in the form of property rights, cultural and human – in the form of educational qualifications, titles, and recognitions – social capital has a virtual form, because it is formed in the process of relations between people and instrumentalities, it is formed by “social obligations (ties), and it is converted into economic capital under certain circumstances” [9, p. 60]. It cannot be alienated and transferred to another person, another organization, another region, another country. It is the belonging of the very subject of relations that inherited it or formed it, often over a very long period of time. The size of social capital determines the circles of influence – the near or far distance. Such characteristics of social capital might be used as means of measuring social distances and social inequality in a particular society – in relation to its social structure, in the relations of organizations and enterprises, regions and territories. Enterprises and organizations that have a large social capital – prestige, authority, strong ties with partners and higher organizations or personal friendships with leaders of higher authorities (“entry into executives’ offices”) – provide themselves with a more successful increase in economic capital.

Availability of social capital defines the sustainability of the society, its stability, and certain consolidation within relations which developed here and now. At the same time, stable social structures and stable social capital are obstacles to development, new, more

efficient, alliances emergence, achievement of individual goals, and realization of individual interests in modern dynamic societies. Trends of individualization and social bonds weakening are fixed in current social capital studies, especially in dynamically developed countries with digital economy. As R. Florida notes, more diverse friendships, individualization of activities, and weakening of ties within the community are inherent for new type of society. “Weakened bonds are crucial for creative atmosphere... because they allow faster integration of new people and new ideas, which contributes to creative process” [10, p. 296]. Creative capital also plays a role: it can transform into economic capital with the bigger effect than social capital.

These observations are empirically fixed in relation to social capital on micro- and mesolevel. They contradict the results acquired by Putnam, Coleman, and other scholars. It seems that the reasons of it are the conditions of studies: different years and differently developed societies – industrial and post-industrial – for which social capital has qualitative originality and different role in development.

In Russia, empirical data from the beginning of the 21st century showed the dependence of the amount of social capital on individual’s affiliation to property strata and availability of power resource. The rich, directors in the public sector, and entrepreneurs have the largest amount of social capital in comparison with other groups. They convert one type of capital into another, and it contributes to the accumulation of resources that allow them to occupy a dominant position in society [11, pp. 24-35]. We think that this trend exists in modern Russia too. But are there any signs that creative capital is emerging in the country and it could contribute to a more equitable distribution of

social capital? This problem requires further research.

Justice in the distribution of social capital affects the social space of the country, region, or particular territory, the tension of this space [12, pp. 51-64]. The concentration of social capital in the hands of one family, clan, oligarchic stratum contributes to their interests. In such situation, it does not depend on professional qualities, cultural and educational level, but on other factors – family, ethnic, parochial. It creates a tension of social space, the exit from which does not always occur as a result of negotiations by means of peaceful, legal protests. Sometimes, active non-peaceful events are organized which could lead even to country’s leadership change. But there are other, silent forms of protests in the form of population’s stratum marginalization, immigration to other regions and territories, where immigrants see more opportunities for the development and formation of their social capital, where their business activity is not blocked, and where are open opportunities for increasing social mobility. Unfortunately, in Russia, structures of civil society do not possess large amounts of social capital, but it grows gradually, drawing more people in the spheres of charity, volunteering, and activism.

#### **Experience of the Vologda scientists in studying social capital**

Amidst numerous domestic social capital studies, many of which are not mentioned in this article, works of scientists from the Vologda Oblast, which contribute to the development of theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of this problem, stand out. The first event, which attracted attention, was the conference in Cherepovets State University in 2012 [13]. Many speeches were devoted to conceptual basis of social capital theory,

the history of this theory emergence. And orientation toward studying political aspect of social capital was noticeable. Thus, the role of social capital in political system functioning was pointed out, in particular, in processes of political mobilization and protest behavior, in civil society formation, peculiarities of functioning and the role of social capital in communities with authoritative and imperfect democratic regimes. The question of the state and political institutions' influence on social capital development was raised. The important conclusion was drawn: population's distrust in the authorities can be overcome by involving people in real, rather than imitative, discussion, and decision-making concerning political and social problems of the development of modern Russian society [14, pp. 11-22].

The conference showed the interest of the Vologda scientists in the social capital study in terms of socio-cultural development, the formation of civic initiatives, media activities, modernization, etc. Before this, only some aspects of empirical level of social capital were studied in the Vologda Oblast. For example, with the help of empirical data, reports on trust in the system of regional civil society, protest potential among region's population, region's population protest potential as the form of social capital manifestation, impact of social capital on old man's health, Internet usage in formation of young people's social capital, and other topics were made.

Activation of social capital studies occurred when the group of Vologda scientists received a grant from the Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation "Regional social capital in crisis", which allowed carrying out empirical research and preparation of a collective monograph on this topic [15]. The monograph presents the concept of social capital and its historic

development, reveals opportunities of its usage for studying problems of socio-economic development of the region and localities, shows impact of the crisis on social capital and reverse impact of social capital on crisis development.

The review of the dynamics of the Vologda Oblast population's social mood in time periods of two crises (2008–2009 and 2014–2015), which showed socio-political context where region's social capital forms and functions, preceded the analysis of social capital. Social opinion's data monitoring, conducted by Vologda Research Center of RAS in the course of several years, showed quite low and stable level of protest potential during and between crises. It also showed the preference for peaceful forms of possible statements – meetings, demonstrations. Regular sociological researches of the Center allowed revealing the main factor of hidden protest activity – negative assessment of the work of various structures and institutions of power. The second factor, which showed a close connection to the level of protest potential, is related to the social well-being of the region's population. The third factor, influencing the protest mood, is formed by assessments of the economic situation in the country and in the region, as well as the population's financial situation.

The conclusion, drawn by the authors of the monograph, is important for the study of the Vologda Oblast population's social capital: "The important factor, which affects the development of population's civil participation, is low capability of the Russian system's political representatives to integrate interests of separate groups. Nowadays, such structures of civil society as political parties, trade unions, social groups, which should be the conductors of interests' realization of different social groups [15, p. 65], are not very popular. It is not

surprising that in these conditions population's social capital is badly developed and localized, primarily, in the inner circle of relations – the conducted analysis showed that.

The authors set an ambitious task of measuring region's social capital and its separate territories, to show the connection of social capital to socio-cultural and economic development of territories. The model of measuring social capital was created for this purpose. Despite the great variety of methodologies and social capital's set of indicators in foreign and domestic literature (they are reviewed in the monograph), there is no generally accepted methodology which could "try" existing approaches. By suggesting their model, the authors analyze social capital as the social indicator of integral type which gives the opportunity to assess the state of social relations. "As an indicator, it is a generalizing concept that includes a set of operational concepts which allow connecting its theoretical and empirical components. The operational concepts in the measurement of social capital are trust, networks, values and norms, solidarity, the ability to influence the state of affairs" [15, p. 104]. The main method of acquiring information was population's survey, in which respondents' answers served as indicators of each social capital component. Respondents were divided into groups according to the amount of social capital (critically low, low, medium, above average, high), and interdependence of all groups of components (trust, networks, values, and norms) was shown. The analysis of the data showed the dependence of the amount of the Vologda Oblast population's social capital on the territory of residence. While comparing two biggest cities of the region – Vologda and Cherepovets, it turned out that bigger amount

of social capital is concentrated in the capital of the Oblast. Also, the level of trust is higher here, but the population of the regions is more wary of the inner and far environment than people living in Vologda and Cherepovets. Population of the regions is more trustful than two town's population only toward their neighbors. In general, the study showed that, regardless of the localization, the peculiarity of social capital is the orientation toward a narrow circle of relatives and friends; social capital forms and operates primarily on the microlevel, in local networks, with a low level of institutional trust, and weak civil activity. Social capital positively correlates with the assessment of economic and political situation in the region, with estimates of own material welfare. The presence of a higher level of accumulated social capital positively affects the attitude of respondents to life, determines their active position and responsibility. On the contrary, respondents with lower levels of social capital trust people around them less, do not feel included in social networks, and do not count on someone's assistance. At the same time, they do not feel themselves responsible for the state of affairs in their life and society. All these factors form their generally oppressed life attitude.

The peculiarities of social capital in the Vologda Oblast are not special. The same situation is typical for other Russian regions and localities. If we compare social capital of population of Russia and other European countries, we can notice significant differences, especially with the most modernized countries like the North Europe. This comparison, based on data of European social research, showed that, according to the level of interpersonal trust, the closeness of friendly communication, trust in state institutions and public

organizations, civil identity, Russia takes one of the last positions in the world [16, pp. 84-97]. The comparative study once again confirmed that societies with developed social capital, including a high level of trust, a strong civil identity, positive social ties and relationships, have more favorable opportunities for economic development, functioning of the country's post-industrial economy, and democratic regime. However, this is a counter movement – this type of economy and society stimulates the growth of social capital on all levels. Like other forms of capital, social capital requires support, and it increases in the process of active usage.

The last chapters of the monograph, which are devoted to social capital, pay special attention to young people's social capital and to a family as the first and primary structure which starts to form this resource of human and society development. It is quite disturbing that even young people have a very low level of trust in people outside their family circle and in institutions of the society. Individualism is quite popular, and there is no desire to participate in social life. Young people are like "fragments" of adult population, they copy adults' attitude toward important forms of cooperation.

Huge work conducted by the authors of the monograph and project participants, especially the creation of the indicator model for measuring social capital, opens up opportunities for a more detailed study of social capital of professional, social, gender, settlement, age, other groups and society strata, different types of families and other small groups, which, as the analysis showed, are the main carriers and producers of social capital in the modern Russian society. The problem of social capital spread beyond the small, inner circles of interaction is a current political and social problem of solidarity and

social life participation increase, alienation of authorities from the population overcome, the emergence and strengthening of mutual trust between them.

**Conclusion.** This research was carried out with the purpose of finding new aspects of social capital analysis, which will let us reveal unused resources of this concept for deepening the analysis of relations on several levels – micro-, meso-, macro-, and meta-. The concept of social capital has the umbrella effect which covers a wide range of relations which may affect success or unsuccess of person's activity, small groups, organizations, enterprises, society, and, finally, interstate associations and unions. A new perspective of the social capital study should be the problem of inclusion of moral capital into it, which allows building relationships based on trust, loyalty, mutuality, solidarity, respect, and justice. Inclusion of moral capital into society's culture creates a steady foundation for relations "working" toward the result of one or another area development and the progress of the whole society. This aspect of the analysis requires empirical research in order to transform social capital into open, "overlapping" capital, which, for a country like Russia, is a valid and long-term task. Today, only microlevel social capital (relations with family and friends) approaches the level of European countries in Russia, while trust on other levels and in state, public institutions is poorly developed.

The measuring of social capital, primarily within comparative research, allows revealing unused development opportunities, especially in the moment of digital economy formation, when the subject of social trust becomes intellectually developed individual who values trust, shows solidarity, and has tight network of relations. The problems of developed social

capital formation are valid for all Russian regions. That is why the study, conducted by the Vologda researchers within grant “Regional social capital in crisis” received from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, attracts natural interest. The indicator model, created by the authors, let us assess and track the dependence of social capital on socio-economic development of localities, to define the structure of its levels. It is possible to support the conclusion made by the authors of the study: regardless of the localization, the peculiarity of social capital in the Vologda Oblast is the orientation to a narrow circle of relatives; social capital is formed and operated primarily on the microlevel, in local networks, with poorly developed institutional trust and low civil activity. Unfortunately, this conclusion is relevant not only for the Vologda Oblast, but also for other regions and the country itself.

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