



„BABEŞ- BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY

CLUJ-NAPOCA

**THE HOUSING MARKET OF THE
ROMANIAN URBAN AREAS – SOCIAL
NETWORKS AND RELATIONAL CAPITAL**

Ph.D. Thesis Summary

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Capital, social capital, social networks, economic behaviour, transaction costs, economic markets, associative participation, social norms, social trust, ego-centred network analysis, resource generator, name interpreter, housing, house, mobilising social networks, economic transition, housing market, residential mobility.

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I. Introduction

The action of social actors is embedded in an institutional system that establishes constraints within which the stakeholders identify and pursue their interests as well as a system of social relations. An efficient analysis of human action requires the avoidance of theoretical extremes of under- and over-socialization of the social actors. The social actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside of a social context, and they do not adhere to a screenplay written for them as a result of certain intersecting of the social categories that they happen to occupy. Their actions directed toward a goal are actually falling in real and continuous systems of social relations. Framing of the social action refers also to the forms of exchange: economic exchanges are dependent on the relationships, mutual interests and reputation. The social networks are structures that also refer to the economic behaviour; the action is fundamentally influenced by the insertion and the position of actors in networks of social relations. Any social system induces specific problems which do not have standardized solutions for people who live in it. People invest partly in relationships with others to resolve these problems. Thus, the resulting social networks provide solutions to problems caused by system and reflect the institutional and social environment.

The social sciences of the 90s and 2000, especially sociology and economics, have proposed a new explanatory factor for the interactions between people: the social capital is framed by social networks. All aspects of human life are embedded in a structure of social relations that form the subject of sociology since the advent of the discipline. The network analysis has made more prominent for the researchers the influence of networks on the lives of individuals. But its focus is more on the methodological and empirical aspects of measuring the influences of social networks on social actors. Theories and empirical findings seem unrelated, being proposed many ad-hoc explanations for the observed effects. In such a way, authors such as Granovetter (1979, 1995) drew attention to the gap theory in the social network analysis. The social capital theory manages to unify some of these theories and empirical results suggesting a new explanatory model for how and why social networks are important in social life.

Social networks and resources assigned to them can be considered as social resources through which social actors can change their life condition.

The concept of social capital appeared in sociology and political science from two theoretical directions: one is utilitarian, the rational choice theory in the variant proposed by Coleman (1988, 1990) and a Marxist and Neo-Weberian one proposed by Bourdieu (1986). Essentially both directions argue that social actors who have more social relationships will be able to achieve their objectives better. The social capital is a relational resource, and having connections with others allow social actors access to their resources. The emphasis on the social relationships can be identified in Weber's sociology (1995): people reach their goals better if they have resources, which may be economic, political and cultural, and other institutions and social conditions determine who can access what resources and how useful are they.

The capital theory allows an understanding of the social interactions both, from the perspective of micro-level interactions between social actors and also from macro-level, as an effect of social structure, being paradigmatic in an intermediate position between structuralism, deterministic and atomistic, individualistic theories. In this sense, the theory of weak links of Granovetter can be interpreted in terms of access to social capital embedded in social networks. Structural equivalence between social actors (similar structure of social connections toward others) can be easily understood as equivalent to social capital. The structure effects on the social actors, such as Burt's theory of structural holes (1980, 1992) can be understood as effects of the differences in social capital of the individuals.

In this paper we undergo a theoretical and empirical research of social capital with application on its mobilization through the social networks in the economic housing market.

II. Structure of the thesis

1. Introduction and objectives

In the first chapter we present our research objectives. The literature on social capital is marked by the absence of a common understanding of what is and what it is not social capital. Classical proponents of the social capital theory, Coleman (1988, 1990), Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1993a, b, 1995a, b, 2001) have developed the concept from different theoretical perspectives. Starting with an analysis of the major theories on the concept of capital developed by the economic discipline, which introduced the term for the first time and from which it was extended in sociology, in order to retain the essence of the notion of capital and social capital theories, the common points and the differences between them, especially their weaknesses, we define the concept of social capital in terms of social relations and the resources embedded in them. *The social capital is represented by the totality of social relations that the individual can mobilize to achieve certain goals and by the resources embedded in a social structure (the social network to which they belong) that can be accessed and / or mobilized.* The dimension of the social capital is given by the size of the potential mobilized social network (number of persons from the personal network of the social actor who are willing or forced to offer help when ego asks and has access) and by the access to resources embedded to it.

Also we want to analyze and restore the theoretical and empirical relationships between the concept of social capital defined as above and other concepts that were included in this concept by the classical theories, namely trust, social norms and civic participation which are consequences and factors that influence the social capital. From our perspective trust and social norms are collective goods able to influence stocks and to smooth functioning of social capital and thereby of the economic factors. The mechanism through which the two collective goods exert their influence is by facilitating cooperation and solving the problem of the collective action. A high level of trust is able to facilitate exchanges within the social network without any suspicion of non-returning the given aid when the individual will ask for it. Civic participation is an indirect indicator of the stock of social relationships and the social resources of the social actors, but it is not social

capital. Also, the civic participation is able to influence the social capital stocks, so we test to what extent there is a significant statistical relationship between the two concepts and empirical indicators.

One of the drawbacks of the studies on social capital is the incomparability of data produced mainly because of different understandings of the concept and design of the studies, which often were not designed to measure the social capital or because they just grasp only certain dimensions of social capital at a level of small population or different fields of the social life. In order to give consistency to the definition of the social capital *we propose and test an instrument to measure it, which can be applied to large populations – the resource generator*. The resource generator measures the social connections of the social actors in different areas of social life, their strength and availability. The starting point consist of the tools previously proposed by other authors such as the name generator and interpreter (Lin and Dumin, 1986; MacCallister and Fisher, 1978), the resources generator (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2002, 2004). Obtaining the resource generator items is based on the theory of social production function (Lindenberg, 1990) which classifies universal purposes of the human individuals on the base of psychological theories. Social capital is measured in terms of access to social resources.

At the empirical level, one of the objectives of the study *is to test the dimensionality of the social capital, his structure and distribution on sub domains of social life and to achieve a global index of social capital at the level of individuals and population based on data obtained through resource generators, that allows carrying out comparisons between populations and social groups*. The social capital is a multidimensional concept and owning social relations and access to social resources in certain areas can ensure the access to resources and relationships from other fields. The theory of structural holes (Burt, 1992) partly explains the access to social resources by individuals who occupy positions of structural hole. Burt's theory gets a new meaning when interpreting these positions and resources in terms of social capital theory. Actors who hold positions of structural hole ensure the access to social capital outside the personal social network of the ego.

Also, we want to see to what extent the social structure influences the social capital of social actors, to what extent the structural changes determine significant changes in social capital level or of the other factors related (trust and civic engagement). The economical, political and social transition that started in 1990 in Romania, was marked by major changes in all the areas, which influenced the social life of the individuals. The new structures and institutions in process of formation or change alter the structure of opportunities and social interactions of individuals which are also in a process of adaptation. In this context, *we study the extent to which social capital reflects these changes, how social actors respond to the gaps and problems of transition in non-institutional ways, such as by social relations*. Using survey data obtained between 1997 and 2007 by the means of the Public Opinion Barometer survey, *we analyze the evolution of mobilization of social networks in several areas of social life, the civic engagement and participation and the generalized trust, to highlight critical issues and to set correspondences between these and the social changes that took place in that period of time*.

Studying the structure of social capital and the social resources embedded in social networks, we try to achieve a deeper understanding of them, to set the position, structure and the mobilization patterns of the social resources within the housing market and for other types of resources. The house is an asset with a great material and social value, which requires the mobilization of large amounts of resources of both material and social type in order to obtain it. Also, the house is a space that expresses the social status of individuals, a manifestation of their habitus (Bourdieu, 2000), it is both an economic tool of investment which retains or increases its value and an emotional investment. Due to its high cost, buying a home is an opportunity to make the most difficult decisions with major consequences for the family life cycle. The structural conditions where these transactions take place affect the opportunities and the economic behaviour of the social actors. We will study the evolution in time of the patterns of mobilization of social networks for access to housing and the structure of these networks for the period until 1990 (centralized market) and beyond that (on a free market, during the formation of competitive market institutions) using data from two surveys carried out on large samples in Cluj-Napoca. *We want to highlight the relationships between social structural*

conditions, their alteration and the changes of the economic behaviour of the social actors active on the housing market.

2. Social networks, social capital and economic behaviour

In Chapter 2 we analyze the evolution of the concept of capital in economics starting with the classical school (Quesnay, 1758/1888, Turgot, 1766, Smith, 1776 [2011] Marx, 1964) and the first concepts of classical sociology (Weber, 1995; Sombart, 2001 [1916]), and the theories derived from them such as human capital theory (Johnson, 1960; Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961), cultural capital theories (Weber, 1968, 1995; Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1989, 1990; DiMaggio, 2005) to retain the similarities and differences between them and to understand the essence of what is the capital - section 2.2. The classical theory is based on the argument that class distinction is fundamental in capitalist society and the exploiting class controls the production and collect all the value-added generated by the work of the exploited class. From this perspective the capital is defined as an investment of resources on the market in order to obtain the desired results.

Approaches of the social capital concept by the social academic disciplines have transformed the this concept into a comprehensive concept, that can include almost everything from economic infrastructure, education, economic capital, infrastructure, social networks and embedded resources, norms, trust, civic participation to any component of the social structure that can facilitate certain actions of the actors. World Bank studies have imposed this concept, developing on Putnam's ideas in a very lax form that was criticized by some of the academic community: the social capital is the bond that holds societies together and without which there would be no growth or human welfare. There is a need to redefine the social capital starting from its essence, applied to social interactions between people. In order to do this we need to understand the origins of the concept of social capital starting from classical sociology. We analyze the social capital theories starting with Weber's sociology who grasped the essence of it (social networks are a tool that influences the development of economic activities, entrepreneurship and facilitate the economic development) and with the classical authors of this concept (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Lin, 1982; Granovetter, 1973, 1983, 1985, Burt,

1992; Putnam, 1993a, b, 1995a, b, 2001; Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2002, 2004, Fukuyama, 1995).

In the "Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism" Weber (2007) analyzes membership of individuals to groups and associations as a way to facilitate obtaining economic benefits. Protestant sects were very important in the development of the American economy. Voluntary associations such as sects exert a strong control on their members. They must have certain ethical qualities (commitment to work, honesty) that facilitated economic exchanges not only between members of the sects, but in general, since the belonging to religious group provides social recognition and a social guarantee that the social actors take into account. In „Economy and Society” (1995) Weber shifts the analysis to the social organisation level, showing that the positive functions of the social networks of religious type do not depend only on the cultural aspects, but also on the political ones. Only in societies in which the legislation is functional and predictable and in which the beaurocratic structures of the of the society are function according to universal rules, the social networks can support the market capitalism. The absence of these rules and the lack of functional social structures can lead to „political capitalism” which is characterized by using power by the state and criminal groups in order to win economical advantages. Without an efficient state, the social networks can more easily develop a social negative behaviour both in economical activities and in public institutions, which leads to the appropriation of resources through political means (contracts, functions, jobs etc.).

Although he had not used the concept „social capital”, Weber (2002) highlights the idea that the social networks are an instrument that influences the development of economical activities, entrepreneurship, and facilitates economical development. Similar to more recent authors, Weber perceived the potential consequences of the social networks on economy as positive.

The notion of social capital developed during the 80s, when several sociologists (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1982) independently started to explore this concept. There exist two approaches regarding the profits/benefits: the profit belongs to the individual (micro perspective), and the profit belongs to the group (mezzo/macro perspective). The micro approach is focused on the use of social capital by the

individuals: how they access and use the resources embedded in social networks for satisfying their instrumental needs. In this way, the social capital is similar to the human capital, since it implies that the investments are made by the individual with a result expected for the individual. The aggregation of the individual benefits is also useful for the whole group. This analysis is focused on the way individuals invest in social relations and how they access resources to derive profits. The macro approach is focused on the social capital as a collective good, exploring the way the social groups develop and support social networks for obtaining collective benefits.

The analysis of the main theories on social capital emphasises the differences and common elements, and also the lack of a definition accepted by all authors. The notion of social capital is juxtaposed to both the notion of relational capital (resources embedded in social networks which are accessed and mobilised for attaining some purposes), and norms, obligations, trust and civic participation. A critical analysis of the social capital theories, especially those of Coleman (1990), Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam(1993, 1995a), Lin(2001) distinguishes between social capital as collective good (social capital is both a collective and an individual good, the resources embedded in the social networks bringing benefits for the groups and for its members) and other collective goods such as trust, norms, and culture. The latter are not considered alternative forms of social capital, but factors that influence the utility of the resources embedded in the social network or get influenced by them. At the group level, the social capital means the aggregation of valuable resources (economical, political, cultural and social) of the members of the network.

The condition of some authors such as Coleman, Bourdieu and Putnam for the social networks to be highly dense and closed (a network is closed if its members are connected by strong ties; the typical forms of closure are the dense networks in which all members are connected to the others), for ensuring the efficiency of the social capital is not mandatory for other authors such as Granovetter (1973) and Burt (1992). Also, we reject the functional definitions of social capital such the one offered by Coleman (1988, 1990), which do not allow the differentiation between cause and effect, the social capital being identified only due to its manifestation.

Based on the common elements, we suggest a definition for social capital from the perspective of the social networks and the resources embedded in them which can be accessed and mobilised to reach certain goals. *The social capital is the aggregation of the social relations the individual can mobilise to attain certain purposes and the resources embedded in a social structure that can be accessed and mobilised.*

In the subchapter 2.5 we explore the institutional perspectives on social capital and social networks, the theory of transaction costs (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1975), the contribution of the social networks theory to modelling the economical behaviour and some approaches on using social capital within economic markets. Social capital perceived as a set of relations that facilitate access to resources allow the actors who are members in a network to attain objectives which could not be attained in the absence of the resources offered by the members of the network or which could be realized on at higher costs. At the macro level, a certain context is more or less rich in social capital as a function of the individual or collective subjects being part of networks of different types (strong or weak, big or small). At the individual action level, the costs of the exchange are often low and not perceived as costs. Since mobilising the social capital involves interaction, offering help can be a pleasant activity, but in some cases it might involve a great volume of effort for the transaction. Only a reduced number of transactions of social capital require physical proximity: the help offered by phone, mail or e-mail is less costly. The help is not always asked immediately. Only for some cases the transaction costs imply a great effort for the person who offers it.

3. Social capital East-European area

The third chapter explores the economical trends in Eastern Europe and Romania after 1990, which are analysed in relation with the results obtained by international researchers. Our analysis is centred on the economical evolutions from the period 1980-2010 in Romania, with a special accent on the transition process. Among the ex-communist countries, Romania is part of the undecided reformers, along with Bulgaria and former Soviet states, which are characterized by prolonged decline during the 90s. The transition process to capitalism has been a gradual one, focused on the gradual introduction of the market mechanisms and policies, according to the development of social support for them so that the transition shocks should have been easier to support by the economy and the population. The chapter 3.3 reviews the literature and results obtained by Romanian sociologists regarding the social capital, trust and associative participation: Dumitru Sandu (1999a, 1999b, 2003), Bădescu (2001, 2007), Comșa (2006), Mondak&Gearing (2003), Howard (2003), Voicu (2010).

4. Research hypothesis

The fourth chapter presents our research hypothesis. The main hypothesis is that the structures, mechanisms and the role of the social networks mobilised on the housing market has changed after 1990 as a result of the transition to capitalism and the development of the free market based on supply and demand. The structure of the social capital has changed during this period, the social networks being reset in the new economic and social context. The studies on the post communist area, the social capital theories and mobilisation of social networks support the hypothesis that the functions played by the social networks have changed from those cognitive-material (social reduction of the transaction costs, financial support, and informative) to emotional-affective (emotional support, opinions, informative). The finding that social actors report different uses of social networks in the post-communist period is a consequence of the development of market institutions and of the increased belief of the social actors that social networks are no longer that important when searching for housing.

The paper test the multidimensionality of the social capital, perceived as social relations capital. The embedded social resources and the social capital can be grouped in several interconnected dimensions. Owing social capital can ensure individuals access to other types of social capital. The social actors can get access to varied resources by using the same network.

Most of the studies upon social capital concept and network mobilisation, starting with Granovetter, Coleman and Bourdieu showed that the demographic variables are able to differentiate between individuals' social capital. The paper analyzes the degree in which the social capital hold by the social actors is influenced by demographic variables such as *gender, education, occupation, income and marital status*.

The concept of social capital has been associated with the relational capital, and even more frequently with associative participation, norms and trust. The classical literature considers social capital as being formed of three elements: trust, norms and associative participation, or as referring to a more complex element which is influenced by these. The present research tests the degree in which the associative participation is *an indirect measure of social capital*. Using data from the BOP survey and an empirical

survey conducted by us the thesis explores the degree in which the associative participation and trust can predict individuals' social capital and the degree in which social capital is a predictor for associative participation.

5. Methodology of research: ego-centred social networks and social capital

In the fifth chapter we discuss the research methodology of ego-centred social networks and general social capital. Starting from the finding that most of the studies on social capital are based on indicators created ad-hoc, derived from data which were not designed to measure social capital, but happened to be available for analysis, the paper develops and argues a research instrument for social capital. This instrument (resource generator), conceived from an individualistic perspective, measures resources embedded in social networks and can be applied to the study of large populations and helps in setting the place of the social networks mobilized in the search for housing in urban areas. In the scientific literature on methodologies for measuring relational capital and characteristics of social networks one can distinguish several research instruments, each having advantages and disadvantages.

The starting point in the measuring process lies in distinguishing between what we want to measure: access to resources held by social networks or their mobilization. Defining social capital as a collection of resources held by the members of a social network, leads to approaching social capital from the access perspective: a potential that can be mobilized for attaining certain purposes. Measuring access to resources can be reduced to generating an inventory of resources embedded in the personal social network which the individual can mobilize, from the perspective of the three dimensions identified by Flap (2004): others (number of persons who grant access to a certain resource), resources (type and variety of resources) and members' availability to offer access to resources. We therefore discuss the methodological alternatives in researching relational capital and the characteristics of the social networks from an individualistic perspective (subchapter 5.3), the instruments used in other studies for researching social capital and the theoretical grounding of the items included in the resource generator (subchapter 5.4), methods for researching from a qualitative approach the characteristics and the mobilisation of the social capital (subchapter 5.5).

For the analysis of the social capital at the urban population level and of the characteristics and the mobilisation of social networks on the housing market the present study uses data obtained from two surveys. In Romania during 1994-2007, on a regular

basis, there were conducted once or twice per year the Barometer of Public Opinion (BOP) survey. From the BOP survey we use data regarding the associative participation of the population. Also we use data obtained from a survey on housing in Cluj-Napoca conducted in 1999 by the sociology department of „Babes-Bolyai” University and „Georg August” University from Gottingen (Hans-Joachim Burkner and Rudolf Poledna, 1999). The representative sample allowed us to have a general picture of the means and the mobilisation of the social networks in the search for housing during the period until 1999. The social networks were operationalized according to the Granovetter model: weak and strong ties, market institutions, mass-media and real estate. The survey explored the strategies and the process through which individuals found their current home, their motivations to change their home and residential mobility. The findings were completed by applying a pilot questionnaire on 36 subjects who changed their house and a semi-structured interview. The participants were randomly chosen as a function of their availability. The questionnaire included questions about residential status, residential mobility, and modalities to access the current house. Also, it includes questions which generate names and interpretations for the social network mobilised within this process, and a resource generator for the subjects’ social capital.

The data emphasise the characteristics of the social networks mobilised while searching for housing until 1999, and allow the testing of the name generator and interpreter and also of the resource generator on a pilot sample. For measuring social capital on individual level and the one mobilized on the housing market through social relations, we then conducted a survey on a sample of 855 subjects. The sample is a random one, stratified, representative for Cluj-Napoca, with a sampling error of 3,35%. The questionnaire includes a resource generator adapted after Van der Gaag and Snijders (2002, 2004). This measures representations about the personal social network and sociability allowing a partial explanation of the social capital distribution identified through the resource generator. It also includes a set of questions regarding the residential status, the strategies for finding housing, a name generator and interpreter for the social networks mobilised for finding housing, measures of associative participation (considered as an indirect measure of social capital), generalised trust, and social status.

6. Membership in associations in Romania

The sixth chapter offers an analysis of membership to voluntary associations in Romania. The aim is to identify the variables which influence associative participation, to explore if there is a connection among them and social relational capital and to test the hypothesis of the influence of structural conditions upon them. It also explores the degree in which associative participation is an indirect measure of social relational capital.

Membership to voluntary association is an indicator for the degree of civic participation and for the democracy of a country. The evolution in time of the levels of participation to associations is in the same time an indicator for social problems: low levels of participation to associations indicate social crises, while high levels indicate economical and social prosperity. The data for our analysis come from the Public Opinion Barometers from the period 1997-2007, starting from the main variable, membership to voluntary associations. Membership to associations has evolved on a sinus wave form, and the general trend is the reduction of membership. The minimum points from 1999 and the maximum from 2002 appear in moments of social and economic crises, respectively of high social optimism.

The classical literature upon social capital states that it is made of trust and associative participation, or that these two elements are positively influencing social capital. The BOP data allow us to test the relationship among these variables for determining the degree in which associative participation and trust can predict individuals' social capital. They also allow us to test whether social capital is a predictor for associative participation. Defining social capital as resources embedded in the social networks to which individuals have access, it can be identified in the 6 variables measuring social relations in different life areas: health, justice (court of justice, public notary, attorney), city hall/public administration, police, financial services/bank, labour market. These variables are an indicator not only for the relationships which could facilitate solutions for a problem through non-institutionalised means, but also in an indirect manner, through social capital. By developing an integrated index based on these variables we explored the relationship between relational capital, trust and associative participation. The correlation coefficients among the 3 variables show weak relations

between the social relations index and associative participation ($r = 0,143$, $p < 0,001$) and a weak, but statistically significant relation between the social relations index and generalised trust ($r = 0,016$, $p = 0,019$). The correlation between associative participation and generalised trust is $r = 0,021$, $p = 0,001$.

The variation of social capital is determined by more factors than trust, associative participation and mass media. We state that it is a mistake to reduce the analysis upon social capital to only these 3 variables, since their explanatory effect is rather low in the total variance of both social relations index and variation of associative participation. The present study results show that the social optimism, material wellbeing, economical situation, gender, residential environment, ethnicity, occupation, the existence of formal structure of services and goods, and their transparent functioning are all variables which influence social capital.

7. Social capital in urban areas

In the seventh chapter we present the results obtained by the implementation of resource generator on a large sample for measuring social capital. Defining social capital as the aggregation of social relations which the individual can mobilise for attaining certain purposes and the resources embedded in a social structure (the social network the individual is part of) which can be accessed and mobilised for attaining certain purposes, the study explores both the structure of the social capital (as it is measured by the resource generator) and the relations between social capital and the classical variables used for measuring relational social capital, trust and associative participation.

On average, respondents know 20,99 alters who can grant access to different resources. There are only a few who have access to all 38 resources of the generator (0,4%), but even fewer who do not have access to any of the resources (0,1%). Considering the quartiles, the first 25% of the respondents has access to 16 resources, 50% to 21 resources, and 75% to 26 resources. The most frequent resources refer to visits (92,4% of the respondents), owning a car (91,6%), being able to repair things in the house 88,8%, trustable persons who could take care of the house 85%, and knowing a foreign language 83,7%. On the opposite side, the least resources are the ones related to the financial capital: borrowing a large amount of money over 500 million lei 12,9%, owning shares at firms for over 50000 RON 12,6%; administrative and institutional resources: works at the town hall 28,7%, is active in a political party 21,8%, works at the police 36,2%, you can discuss what political party you will vote 35,2%, can offer juridical counselling 32,5%; and resources on the labor market such as recommendations for a job 29,6%).

Access to social resources in case of house moving is at the level of 47,5% of the respondents and for searching and buying a house at a level of 39,8%. These levels belong to the central part of the ranking of the potential resources. For the majority of the items, the family ties have been identified as the strongest connections through which a resource can be accessed. Just few resources can be accessed more frequently through weaker relations: persons active in politics, persons with high incomes, persons working in administration. The resources which can be more frequently accessed through relatives

and family are related to immaterial help, information, advice, and help with work. Instrumental resources are more frequently accessed through weak ties.

For testing the dimensionality of the social capital we conducted an exploratory factor analysis of the variables in the resource generator. Using the parallel analysis method based on the analysis of the minimum ranks implemented in the program Factor (Timmerman and Lorenzo-Seva, 2011) we can group a part of the variables in four factors which explain 41% of the variance. The first factor is related to respondents' skills and education. The second factor refers to the information and connections offered by the others. The third factor refers to the physical help, related to housing and labor market. The fourth factor refers to the personal support. The identification of these factors shows the multidimensionality of the social capital measured through the resource generator. These four dimensions show a medium positive correlation among them. Although the social resources are accessed by the subject himself/herself, the significant correlations between factors and items show that the social actors can get access to varied resources through the same connections or social networks.

The average values of the resources vary as a function of education, marital status, occupation and income. Respondents with lower levels of education have lower access to social resources, the differences being statistically significant ($F=19,347$, $p<0,001$). Unmarried individuals have access to more resources compared with those married, divorced or widow. On average, the married persons have access to 20,91 others, those who are divorced to 20,88, and the ones who are widow to 17,15. The unmarried ones have access to 23,72 persons, the differences being statistically significant ($F=11,870$, $p<0,001$). The persons who have intellectual occupations, leading positions in administrative institutions, army, are pupils and students, have access to more resources than those with lower social status occupations, such as technicians, workers in sales, qualified and unqualified workers. Unemployed persons, domestic persons, and retired ones have the lowest volume of social relations, the differences being statistically significant ($F=12,068$, $p<0,001$). The income of the respondents is also related to the number of other persons that can be mobilised ($r = 0,245$, $p<0,01$), the higher the incomes the higher the number of social resources.

The data allow testing the relations between the indicators usually used for measuring social capital (trust, membership to associations) and social capital. Correlation coefficients among the three variables show that there exists a relation, even if it is a weak one, but statistically significant. The social capital index is stronger associated with the membership in associations ($r = 0,223$, $p < 0,01$), while the relation with the generalised trust index is weaker ($r = 0,115$, $p < 0,01$). The relation between generalised trust and membership to associations is even weaker ($r = 0,081$, $p < 0,01$). Trust and membership to associations are predictive variables that have a weak influence upon social relational capital.

A linear regression model of the relation between the index of the social capital and the other factors which can influence its value was build. It explains 33,9% of the variance of the social capital index ($R^2 = 0,339$). The most important variables included in the model are the index of representations, sociality and education.

$I_{\text{social capital}} = -0,269 * I_{\text{representations/sociability}} - 0,142 * \text{Marital status} + 0,264 * \text{Education} - 0,119 * \text{Occupation} + 0,149 * \text{Income} + 0,167 * \text{Trust} - 0,142 * \text{Associative participation}$

8. Social networks on the housing market

In Chapter 8 we research, based on the results of our survey, the operating mechanisms of the social networks and the social capital structure to which social actors have access and that is mobilized by them on the housing market. We also analyze the evolution of the mobilization of the social networks during two economic and social periods (socialism and capitalism) in connection with the development of the economic institutions and the restructuring of the access to these resources through new mechanisms. To that effect, we analyze how the structural conditions (economic, social) influence the market mechanisms, particularly how the social capital mobilized for the access to real estate underwent changes in its structure and functioning along with the appearance of a free competitive housing market. The chapter starts with a review of the literature on urban development under socialism and post-socialism that enables us to understand and to interpret the results of the two surveys carried out in 1999 and 2007.

The communist period has been for the housing market one of state control and structuring according to the communist ideology. Determination by the state through bureaucratic and coercive mechanisms and through policies of construction and planned organization of the residential environment, but also, ensuring the access of each individual to a dwelling has determined the withdrawal of the competitive economy mechanisms from the official housing market on a parallel, unofficial and informal market, where the social networks were very active. The fall of communism has not determined the disappearance of these networks from the housing market, but only a reconfiguration of the functions performed by them.

In these situations, the social actors mobilize both weak (friends, acquaintances) and strong social links (relatives) in the process of finding housing. The structural characteristics of the secondary housing market from the communist period set this mobilization of social networks to be weaker than in the period of capitalism: between 1948-1989 the actors use social networks in 11% of cases, compared to 26% of the cases during the period 1990 to 1999. The use of social networks increases after 1990 particularly for weak social links, which increase on average from 13% to 26% and 31%.

Using social networks is not common only in the case of those who are looking to buy a home, but also in the case of those who are looking to rent. After 1990, with the liberalization of markets, the social networks are much more present on this market at levels similar to ones in the case of purchasing a house.

The functions fulfilled by the social networks can be grouped in several dimensions: information, reducing the transaction costs, reducing the time costs, advice. The survey reveals differences in the weights of the motivations of the respondents who used social networks. Decreasing the importance of information function from 56.9% to 41.2% of answers is explained by the appearance, after 1990, of market mechanisms that are more effective. At the beginning, the appeal to the real estate agent was associated with additional costs for buying a home, but along with the maturing of the market the cost began to be accepted by the population. Increasing the importance of financial cost reduction function during 1990-2007, is explained by the initial attitude of avoiding the costs imposed by the use of real estate agencies. Reducing the time costs becomes an important factor for social actors who appeal to social networks and market mechanisms, but the function of obtaining advices/opinions did not change between the two periods.

The mobilization of social networks has roots in the educational level, occupation and marital status. A higher level of education is associated with a more frequent mobilization of the weak social ties and a lower level of education is associated with the use of strong social ties. The explanation goes to the social resources available for the individuals and which can be mobilized. A higher education is associated with more extensive social networks and mobilized resources within the network.

The marital status influences the mobilization of the two types of social ties through the social networks available. Married people have more extensive social networks, consisting of both husband and wife's social network that facilitate access to more resources. Unmarried people have strong and more restrained personal ties, consisting mainly only of the family of origin, while married people extend their personal network and strong ties through the act of marriage, this being reflected in the higher number of strong ties they mobilize. Along with the change of the marital status, there is a strong residential mobility as the new couple tends to migrate to a new home.

The average dimension of the social networks mobilized is 1.78 people, with an amplitude of 3 people. Social resources in this area are not available for all respondents, only 39.2 having access this resource. The social networks mobilized in the housing market are multiplex in 87% of cases. This is explained by the type of ties mobilized for providing access to network resources. The weak social ties are to people who have more specialized resources than strong ties and which are greater and more multiplexes. Since 2000 there is a trend of increasing multiplexity.

The residential mobility for the period 1990-2007 manifests at 37.6% of the respondents, most of them changing once their home during this period (69.3%), 17.9% twice and 13% three or more times, in 80,1% of cases the mobility being within the city. The period with the highest mobility rate is that during 2000-2007 with 56.4% of the total mobility of the 1990-2007 period. The urban migration is mainly from neighbouring cities and counties, 10.74% of migrants are originate in these areas. In this exchange between different areas, it can be noted a phenomenon of preference for the same residential areas which the social actors have inhabited before.

Thematic analysis of the transcripts of responses to two open questions, per-interview and per-key concept, per-interview and per-type of social mobilized links, per-interview and per-social group reveals social network processes and diverse and complex patterns of social action. There is before the appeal to social networks an appeal to real estate agents and mass-media for information about housing market (housing types available, prices, expensive areas-cheap areas). The appeal to media is widespread; few are those who do not use it for information. The subjects do not fully stated in their questionnaire replies the appeal to the media, because the media is in a background search.

Searching for a home is a long process of internal and external negotiations. The information leading to the final decision not always comes from a process of active search, but the social actors, that ego maintain connections with happen to be those who associate the purchase desire with an accidental information about an available house. The most active processes of personal social network mobilization take place in the context in which some members of the network have knowledge about the housing

market, both knowing the actors involved as suppliers or intermediaries, or being actors who passed at a time through the same process. The process of housing search, takes place against a background of continuous interactions within personal social networks where the strong ties provide the access to goods easily accessible such as opinions, advice and help for some minor problems, but also it is a permanent basis for the access to rare goods, such as housing. If the previous studies have shown that it is expected a decrease in call to social networks, this study has managed to demonstrate that the housing market mechanisms are employed in a dense network of social relations in which the family, parents and friends are the background of negotiations and decisions.

This research manages to reveal changes in the structure and functioning mechanisms of the social networks in the context of a changing structure and rules of operation of the housing market. The macro-level changes have modified at a micro-level the actions of the social actors in order to meet individual needs.

9. Contributions and limits

Chapter 9 presents the conclusions of the thesis, focusing on limitations and future research perspectives.

9.1 Contributions

Starting from the analysis of the economic capital theories of classical and neoclassical economics, from its developments made by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964) as human capital theory, the precursor ideas of Weber (1995) on social networks and their effects on economic relations and the new theories of capital, including that of the social capital developed by Coleman (1988, 1990), Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1993a, b, 1995a, b, 2001), Lin (2001), we propose a new approach to social capital in terms of social networks and the resources embedded in them. The discussions and analysis of the concepts of the classical authors that have been undertaken in this paper show the weaknesses of the concept in the forms developed by Coleman and Putnam and especially by the World Bank. We believe that social norms, trust and associative participation are not forms or components of social capital, but they are products and factors that influence it. As Woolcock (1998) argues, trust and reciprocity are products within and as a result of various combinations of social relations, but they do not exist independently of social relations. In defining the social capital the focus is on social resources rather than its consequences, although the consequences are those that allow their label as capital. Social capital can be defined as capital if it produces resources that can be used by actors to achieve their goals more efficiently than in its absence. Passing over these vague definitions, the essence of social capital concept is the opportunities offered by the mobilization of the resources employed in social networks. Some relationships can help the people to achieve the goals and production, in the same manner that education, skills and physical capital facilitates economic production. Thus *we define the social capital as the totality of social relations that the individual can mobilize to achieve certain goals and the resources embedded in a social structure (social network) that can be accessed and/or mobilized.* Our definition is focusing on social relations as

significant factors in explaining the social structures and behaviour, placing the social action at a meso-level, such as family, neighbours, friends/acquaintances, voluntary associations and public institutions, these being integrative elements between individuals and larger social structures. Our analysis shows how social capital influences the results of social behaviour, so it can be considered a variable in itself in any further analysis on them.

The social capital is a property of social relations and is a relational construct. It provides access to resources where social actors are part of social networks and share a set of rules with others. From this point of view, social capital is a concept closer to Durkheim's classical sociology, than Coleman's rational choice theory. Both theories are valid, people take decisions to invest in social capital, but most of it is created and unconscious destroyed by the daily social interactions. Social capital is an attribute of the individual and the community at the same time.

In this thesis we have studied the social capital and its mobilisation on the housing market using specific tools to research this topic. Most studies on social capital are based on measurement of civic engagement, trust and norms taken from general surveys. These data do not reveal the nature and characteristics of people's social links. The network analysis is a proven method that has evolved over the last half a century developing specific tools for analyzing the relationships between social actors. In order to analyze the general social capital, we used the method of resources generator, developed by Lin (2001) and Van der Gaag and Snijders (2004) to measure the resources embedded in the social networks of respondents and the intensity of the social links. The resources generator manages to measure the social relationships that social actors can mobilize in connections with the access to a set of social resources embedded in various fields of social life, being from this perspective perfectly suitable to achieve a synthetic index of social capital in terms of our definition.

The data obtained show that we are dealing with a multidimensional concept. Although the measured social resources are accessed individually, the existence of strong and significant correlations between items and dimensions, suggests that social actors can get the access to other various resources through the same links or social networks.

Marital status, educational level, occupation and monthly income discriminate between values of the social capital index. Also the generalized trust and membership in associations bear a weak correlation with the social capital index. The correlation coefficients between the three variables have shown weak relationships in intensity, but statistically significant. The social capital index is strongly associated with membership in associations ($r = 0.223$), while the relationship with generalized confidence index is weaker (0.115). Between generalized trust and membership in associations the intensity of the relationship is even weaker ($r = 0.081$). Trust and membership in associations are predictive variables with low influence on relational social capital and they represent weak and partial determinations of general social capital. The index of representations and sociability is also related to that of social capital. Similar conclusions derive also from the analysis of associative participation, relational social capital and trust, based on data from the Public Opinion Barometer survey during 1997-2007.

The data obtained from the analysis of associative participation of individuals during the 1997-2007 period revealed a strong relationship between social anomie and participation. Social and economic crises are likely to adversely affect the population belonging to voluntary associations, and low levels of membership in associations are indicators of the existing social and economic crisis. Social optimism and generalized trust varies in the same direction as the associative participation. But the general trend is towards a reduction of the rate of membership.

The research on the mobilization of social capital confirms the initial hypothesis from which we started. We highlighted how the structures, functioning mechanisms and roles of the mobilized social networks on the housing market has changed since 1990 in the context of the transition to capitalism and the formation of a market based on supply and demand. The structure of mobilized social capital has changed. Structural characteristics of the primary/official and secondary housing market from the communist period, requires only in few cases the recourse to social networks, the allocation being in general administrative. After 1990, due to the disappearance of the allocation and free market in progress, the recourse to social networks grows in importance.

9.2. Limits and future research perspectives

Our perspective on social capital defined in terms of social networks and resources embedded in them has opened up new problems during the research and do not provide definitive answers about the dimensions and the structure of the social capital.

It is necessary to deepen the analysis of the set of social resources starting from a comprehensive theory on important areas of life in general and in relation to each society or subgroups analyzed, because structural conditions, norms/rules, culture may influence the suitability of certain items for the group. The design of resource generator can be improved by including variables that measure the access to other important resources from various fields of social life and eliminate some that are strongly correlated with each other.

The measurement accuracy can be also improve by including a set of questions in order to measure the effective access to resources included in certain periods of time. For getting a comparative measure between populations it is necessary to have a consensus on what it is valued features and resources in the context of a particular society. A standardized instrument that allows a degree of customization would make it possible to run comparisons with other research on social networks.

Future measurements of social capital must take into account its multidimensional nature.

Our analysis of the relationship between social capital and factors that can influence it is incomplete, as the statistical models shown. Trust, associative participation, sociability and demographic variables partly explained the social capital variation. It is necessary to identify other variables that can influence it.

The functioning of social networks and their effects have only a partial explanation. The social capital productivity is still a poorly explored concept by the current studies and some theoretical and empirical answers are required. This research shows that the effectiveness of social actions, including economic and housing market fields, in order to satisfy personal needs depends not only on economic, human,

technological, political factors, but also on social capital and the social networks that the social actors belongs to and which constitute a background for interactions between them. Although the general trend is towards rationalization and institutionalization, social networks and social capital are a present and functional mechanism in certain areas of social life, regardless of the social systems. Current studies on social networks, including ours, do not emphasize the investment behaviour in social capital, but they are based on retrospective responses of the subjects. It is difficult to determine if providing access to social resources owned can be considered an act of support according to the common rules or an investment for the creation of a debt for a future behaviour. From this point of view, the Mauss's essay idea (1997) on the primitive societies is a study that would deserve more study applied to current societies in terms of social networks. A feasible alternative would be an experimental research on investment in social capital to achieve future goals.

Our research does not capture the influence exercised by the social norms and structure of values on the availability and mobilization of social capital. Through a set of questions we tried to evaluate the respondents' perception on the others' availability to provide help, but it is a vague measure. It might happen that the behavioural expectations of the respondents are unrealistic or distorted, so that in a real situation they do not provide the expected help. It is necessary to develop some special tools that can more accurately measure the availability. One option would be to measure the aid in real retrospective situations where respondents could give a specific answer. Another option applicable to small populations would be interviewing the other individuals nominated by the respondents in order to find their availability to provide access to their resources and their motivations for help.

Most studies of social cohesion in societies and social capital distribution are based frequently on indirect measurements such as membership in associations, divorce rates, suicide rates, and number of marriages, trust and social optimism. In a similar way we study the variation of membership in associations in Romania, trying to identify the social, demographic and economic variables that could influence it. Although the data shows variations according to the social and economic crises and social level of optimism, there is a general trend of decreasing the associative participation, in trend

with relevant data from other studies and international surveys. In order to study if there is an international trend in social capital degradation it is necessary to make some longitudinal studies of social networks in many countries.

More researches in terms of social networks and resources employed are required in order to better define the concept of social capital and its operation in the economic markets. In the field of the housing market in which residential mobility and search actions, purchase and rent actions are rare, the research manages to capture the behaviour of individuals over several decades and in two systems of social organization. But the results cannot be generalized to the whole country, not even the entire urban area, because the sample was chosen only from a single urban area – city of Cluj-Napoca. An investigation on a large national sample could show the differences between regions and environments.

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