SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL:
A NETWORK PERSPECTIVE ON MOVEMENT OUTCOMES*

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This article presents an approach to the study of the consequences of social movements that focuses on their capacity to produce "social capital." By social capital I mean ties that are based on mutual trust and mutual recognition among the actors involved in the relationship, although they do not necessarily imply the presence of collective identity. The influence of social movements may be regarded as dependent on their structural position, i.e., on the solidity of the linkages within the movement sector as well as—more crucially—of the bonds among movement actors, the social milieu in which they operate, and cultural and political elites. Therefore, the impact of a given movement or movement sector will be assessed in the light of changes in its components' relative centrality in various social networks. The broader the range of social capital ties emerging from a period of sustained mobilization, the greater the impact.

While social movement research has consistently expanded in the last years, analyses of movement outcomes are still largely unsatisfactory. Analysts have often set themselves either tasks that were virtually impossible to achieve, such as the assessment of movements' impact over broad social and political changes; or, conversely, too narrow goals, such as the evaluation of the effects of specific protest campaigns or movement organizations. Both strategies have somehow failed to grasp the complexity of social movements as multidimensional phenomena.

As an alternative, I suggest we adopt a mesolevel perspective, focusing on changes in the structural location of movement actors (individuals and/or organizations) in broader social networks. This approach assumes that social influence is usually related to the position that actors occupy in social networks. The more central actors are in a given network—in other words, the more they control exchanges among different components of that network—the greater their influence and, ultimately, their power will be (Knoke 1990: chapter 1).

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More specifically, the influence of social movements at a given political phase is dependent on their structural position, i.e., on the solidity of the linkages within the movement sector as well as—more crucially—of the bonds among movement actors, within their social milieu, and with cultural and political elites. The impact of a given movement or set of movements will thus be assessed in the light of changes in the relative centrality of its components in various social networks. Structural position will affect movement actors' impact on both political decisions and cultural production. Rather than concentrating on movements' direct effects on social change—very difficult to assess unless we focus on very narrow processes—emphasis should be on modifications in the structural preconditions of influence for social movement actors.

This perspective reverses the dominant way of conceptualizing the role of social networks in social movement analysis. To date, the bulk of the literature has focused on how preexisting social networks shape actors' behavior, in particular, how they affect individuals' chances to get involved in collective action (Knoke and Wisely 1990). Here I focus on how during mobilization social movement actors create new linkages to prospective supporters, the general public, and elites. In particular, I note a particular type of tie, which I define as "social capital" (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990; Putnam 1993). By "social capital" I mean ties which, while they do not necessarily imply the presence of collective identity, are however based on sentiments of mutual trust and mutual recognition among actors involved. The broader the range of social capital ties that emerge from a period of sustained mobilization, the greater a social movement's impact is expected to be.[1]

My argument runs as follows. First, I discuss the state of the art in the study of movement outcomes, and point to persistent problems that existing approaches have left unsolved. Second, I introduce the concept of social capital and show how it might improve our understanding of movement effects. Third, I provide examples illustrating how the concept of social capital may provide a common theoretical framework to analyze the impact of social movements in quite heterogeneous political and cultural milieus. In conclusion, I outline preliminary steps for the application of this approach in a more detailed research strategy.

RESEARCH ON MOVEMENT OUTCOMES

It would be unfair to suggest that social movement scholars have made no effort to investigate the effects of contentious collective action.[2] Expanding on seminal works like Gamson's (1990 [1975]), several studies have devoted more than scattered attention to the long- and short-term consequences of social movements.[3] However, if the spectrum of

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[1] Elisabeth Clemens's neo-institutional approach to movement outcomes is in many respects close to the perspective advocated in this paper, in particular her insistence on the importance for movements of replacing existing "webs of interdependence" with new patterns of relationships (Clemens, forthcoming).

[2] Here I treat terms like "outcomes," "effects," and "consequences," as synonymous. Others (e.g. Amenta and Young, forthcoming) propose that "outcomes" be restricted to deliberately pursued consequences.

[3] See in particular a forthcoming book edited by Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam, and Charles Tilly, which presents an overview of different research perspectives and results. Other recent contributions range from the analysis of the relationship between protest and reform cycles in several European countries (Tarrow 1989; Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, and Giugni 1995) to the impact of the pro-choice movement in the USA (Staggenborg 1991) or that of antinuclear protests on energy policy in Western democracies (Rudig 1990; Flam 1994). Additional important insights have been provided in cognate fields such as the historical study of revolutions (Tilly 1993) or urban politics and policy (Lowe 1986).

available references to movement outcomes is broad, the amount of conclusive evidence produced to date is smaller. Available reviews document a persistent uncertainty of results (Tarrow 1991: chapter 6; Rucht 1992; Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995: chapter 9; della Porta and Diani 1997: chapter 9; Giugni et al., forthcoming). Given that the inadequacy of available knowledge about movement outcomes has been frequently recognized (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988), one might wonder why this is so.

The major problem in the study of movement outcomes is the identification of causal paths linking movement actions to certain events—ranging from broad changes in values, beliefs, and lifestyles, to policy decisions—even when other factors are controlled (Rucht 1992). Macrolevel analyses of social movements and social change have been most vulnerable to this shortcoming. For example, it is very difficult to demonstrate a relationship between the policy responses to environmental problems and the mobilization capacity of environmental movements. Rucht (forthcoming) finds substantial correlation between movement pressure, public opinion attention, strength of Green Parties, and degrees of policy innovation and substantive improvements in the state of the environment in eighteen OECD countries. However, he is extremely careful not to postulate the existence of specific causal paths from this evidence. And rightly so: consistent with political opportunities approaches, one might argue that responsive political elites may well encourage political mobilization from people holding environmental concerns, rather than being forced towards policy innovation by the latter (Tarrow 1989). Similar remarks apply to the relationship between environmental movement actions and broader cultural changes. Once again, it is virtually impossible to adjudicate between those who suggest that movements have acted as agents of cultural innovation and the alternative interpretation that both environmental activism *and* general environmental sensibility are outcomes of broader modernization processes such as the increasing commodification of modern societies and the growing role of private consumption in shaping social relations (see Diani 1988, Donati 1989).

Several researchers have faced the problem of causal attribution by substantially restricting their focus of analysis. Some have studied specific protest organizations or sets of organizations (Gamson 1990); others have focused on specific mobilization campaigns (Turk and Zucker 1984). In either case, such reduction has allowed a better specification of both the meaning of movement success/failure and the causal impact of movement action on certain developments. However, these gains have been obtained only at substantial costs. On the one hand, distinctions between movements and SMOs have been blurred. This is an unwarranted procedure which forces analysts to concentrate on the most bureaucratic and established SMOs (Tilly 1978 and 1994; Oliver 1989).[4] While more formal SMOs undoubtedly play a key role in a number of movements, restricting the analysis of movement outcomes to this level entails the highly problematic assumption that (a) they are representative of movement sectors as a whole; and (b) movement success can be reduced to the degree of formal legitimation and/or policy influence enjoyed by specific organizations.

The other major problem, the impossibility of drawing generalizations, applies only partially to studies like Gamson's that rely upon a relatively broad unit of analysis. It

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[4] This is also due to the greater problems attached to the study of informal grassroots groups: their radicalism renders access difficult (Kriesi 1992), and/or their lack of written records renders systematic analysis a la Gamson virtually impossible (see in particular Gamson 1990: 277-321).

fully applies, however, to studies that focus on specific campaigns or SMOs. These studies still represent the substantial bulk of work in the field (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1996). While they enable analysts to take into account the diversity of movement actors' goals and orientations, and the dynamics of the conflictual process, they are strongly exposed to risks of ad hoc explanations.

Another increasingly popular response to the problem of causal attribution has been to move the focus away from single SMOs or campaigns to broad mobilization processes (Tilly 1978, 1995; Tarrow 1989; Kriesi et al. 1995). By concentrating on sustained conflicts developing over long time spans, the advocates of the political process approach have produced accounts of protest waves and their outcomes which are empirically better grounded than traditional macrolevel approaches, without confining themselves to too-small objects of investigation. Recently, Kriesi et al. (1995: 209-212) have elaborated an encompassing typology of movement outcomes, which also takes cultural outcomes into account. This may be regarded as a response to previous criticism of political process approaches (Melucci 1985), charged with focusing on political action and ignoring movements' contributions to cultural innovation—at least, to innovation not bearing directly on political culture and public life.

However, Kriesi and his associates have not systematically attempted to explain those outcomes in the light of available data on protest activities. Rather, they have (wisely) confined themselves to ad hoc assessments of different movements' impacts in different contexts. Other scholars adopting this perspective have been similarly careful not to exaggerate the general theoretical implications of their findings (Tilly 1993: chapter 7), or to point out that, while movement action may be plausibly regarded as one important determinant of political change and, eventually, revolution, the direction of the relationship might as easily be reversed (Tarrow 1991: chapter 6). As the Italian experience of the 1960s and 1970s suggests, if protest cycles often stimulate cycles of reform, significant reform attempts by political elites may in turn stimulate the spread of large-scale contentious protest (Tarrow 1989).

To sum up, available accounts of movement outcomes perpetuate the tensions between improving the explanatory capacity of our models and efforts offering broad, sweeping interpretations of macrolevel changes. Studies focusing on single SMOs or campaigns usually demonstrate higher explanatory capacity, thanks to their restricted research focus, but struggle to generalize their findings. The latter offer more encompassing accounts of social movement effects, but the number of intervening variables which are virtually impossible to control renders the empirical foundations of these contributions much shakier. As for political process approaches, they are in principle better equipped to cope with the dynamic nature of collective action. However, their advocates are extremely critical of the current state of theory (Giugni, forthcoming; Tilly, forthcoming). They deny in particular that we have adequate causal theories of social movement dynamics able to relate movement outcomes to the broader processes through which social movements develop (Tilly, forthcoming).

It seems to me that one shortcoming common to many analyses is their unsatisfactory conceptualization of "movement outcomes." They largely focus on the determinants of success/failure, or on the factors accounting for different outcomes—however defined—rather than discussing what an outcome is (Giugni, forthcoming). But as long as we keep defining outcomes as broad changes in policies, cultural perspectives, or lifestyles, we shall hardly move towards the sophisticated theories that Tilly advocates. The problem of causal attribution will resurface again and again. My suggestion is that we scale down our ambitions for causality claims and focus on the

structural preconditions which may facilitate or constrain movements' attempts to influence both politics and culture. In particular, I propose to look at the social networks movement actors are involved in and their evolution over time. To the extent that network position indicates influence and power (see Knoke 1990: chapter 1), social movement outcomes may be assessed in terms of the movements' capacity to achieve more central positions in networks of social and political influence.

For example, in this perspective we might reformulate one of the conventional indicators of movement impact, namely, formal inclusion of movement leaders in various public and private bodies. How should one interpret the cooptation in public agencies and sometimes private firms of leaders and other figures close to the environmental movements? This signals the growing influence of environmental organizations only if the actors coopted occupy core positions within the movement networks, or are at least directly connected to core figures in those milieus. Our evaluation would be different if cooptation is restricted to figures who, despite some public visibility, are peripheral within movement networks.

In order to tackle these problems we need to focus on the reticulated structure of social movements and reconstruct the linkages which connect movement actors to each other and to their social milieu. By doing so, we should be able to (a) assess the strength of ties among movement actors, and therefore their capacity to effectively mobilize at different times; (b) identify the movement allies in the polity and in other social circles, and their own social centrality, in order to assess the potential for influence that these linkages represent for the movements; (c) evaluate both the integration of movement leaders, representatives, and prominent figures into broader elite networks, and their centrality within movement networks. We must also discriminate ties which are purely instrumental and do not presuppose any lasting social bond—e.g., the occasional alliance between movement organizations and a political patron—from those that entail some degree of solidarity and mutual recognition. The latter are at the core of our concerns here. As I will argue in the next section, the concept of social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990: chapter 12; Putnam 1993: chapter 6; Mutti, forthcoming) captures some central properties of these ties.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AS MOVEMENT OUTCOME

Social capital may be defined as the complex of "relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" in which social actors—both individuals and organizations—are embedded (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). Among the proponents of this concept, Coleman was the most explicit in viewing networks as its most important component (1990: 304-305). Social capital is social relations through which resources circulate, and trust and norms are generated and reproduced. Others have proposed slightly, but significantly, different definitions. Some have emphasized, rather than the networks per se, the sentiments of solidarity and mutual trust associated to them: "networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved." (Putnam 1995: 67; see also Putnam 1993: 199). Others have focused on the "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships" (e.g. Bourdieu 1986: 248). Coleman himself at times shifted between his favorite view of social capital as social relations and another

emphasizing norms and mutual obligation (1990: 311). Also, while some have focused primarily on the consequences of social capital for individuals (Coleman: 1990: chapter 12), others have stressed the positive effects of social capital on collective goods: "dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we," or (in the language of rational choice theorists) enhancing the participants' 'taste' for collective benefits" (Putnam 1995: 67).

Recent interest in social capital is probably due to the recognition that opportunities open to those who are embedded in social networks.[5] However, I suggest we concentrate on the social ties which entail sentiments of trust and mutual recognition among social actors, rather than on their consequences. There is a broad consensus regarding the centrality of social networks as a constitutive component of social capital.[6] Moreover, attention to mutual trust allows us to differentiate between social capital and other forms of stable interactions driven by instrumental calculations (e.g., market relationships, at least in their ideal-typical form), or by authority principles (e.g., the linkages originating from membership in a given state).

But how does this notion of social capital relate to social movement analysis? And how may it contribute to our understanding of social movement outcomes? Answering the first question is quite straightforward. It is easy to reformulate a substantial number of studies of social movement organizations and networks in terms of social capital. First, the rise of collective action and its subsequent developments are affected by the distribution of social capital within potential movement constituencies. Mobilization processes rely heavily upon previous networks of exchange and solidarity (Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow 1988; McAdam 1988; Gould 1995); individual involvement in collective action depends upon identification with other members of the social group, and upon the presence of mutual trust (Pizzorno 1977); alliance building is easier when movement organizations share some core activists and can thus rely upon interpersonal channels of communication (Diani 1995: chapter 5). Second, we can also point to the importance of social capital linking movement actors to political and social elites. For example, its existence can be regarded as conducive to more open attitudes by the elites towards political challengers, and therefore as a determinant of greater openness of the "political opportunity structure."

Addressing our second question—the relationship of social capital to movement outcomes—is more difficult. Let us start with the general remark that social networks do not just constrain action—as the largest body of research on networks seems to suggest (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988). They are also outcomes of action, inasmuch as social action persistently generates new types of interdependence and sometimes new solidarities (Cook and Whitmeyer 1992; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). Simmel (1955) offered what has become a classic formulation of this argument when he stressed the integrative function of conflict not only *within*, but *among* collectivities. To put it in our terms, while bonds based on collective solidarities—i.e., social capital—show a strong capacity to persist even over long time spans (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Gould 1995), they rarely go through different political phases unchanged: on the contrary, new social bonds and new identities are also constantly generated (Melucci 1984). This applies to

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[5] They may be individual benefits such as job opportunities, personal help, patronage from political representatives, or broader collective goods like those described by Putnam (1993, 1995).

[6] Putnam for example adopts Coleman's definition of social capital as the starting point of his analysis of civic traditions in Italy (1993: chapter 6).

relationships between movement activists and sympathizers, as involvement in collective action creates new solidarities which often persist even when protest activities fade away. It also holds true, though, for links between social movements and their environment. While these linkages do not necessarily result in strong identities, they nonetheless create opportunities for exchange and communication among different social milieus. For example, social movements are often the breeding ground for new political leaders, who may gain recognition by political elites as representatives of previously excluded interests (Gamson 1990). Available empirical evidence—admittedly, far more scattered than that available on mobilization processes—shows the influence of movement organizations in the policy process to be positively related to their leaders' integration among political elites (Knoke and Wisely 1990).

In other words, social movements do not merely rely upon existing social capital: they also reproduce it, and sometimes create new forms of it (Sirianni and Friedland 1995). We can regard their performance in this regard as an indicator of their social and political impact. This implies that we move our focus away from causality, which we have seen can be properly addressed only at the cost of restricting our investigations to specific movement organizations or protest campaigns, and concentrate instead on the preconditions of success, i.e., on the structural position occupied by movement actors after phases of sustained political and/or cultural challenge. The structural location of movement organizations, activists, and sympathizers in broader societal networks may be regarded as a crucial predictor of their ultimate capacity to affect both policy making and/or the production of cultural norms and codes. According to this perspective, the central problem is no longer whether and how mobilization campaigns, and cycles of protest determine specific changes at different levels of the political and the social system. It becomes instead whether they facilitate the emergence of new networks, which in turn allow advocacy groups, citizens' organizations, action committees, and alternative intellectuals and artists to be more influential in processes of political and cultural change. In the next section I will show how this perspective allows us to integrate different strands of research on movement outcomes in a common theoretical framework.

FORMS OF MOVEMENT-GENERATED SOCIAL CAPITAL

In order to illustrate the argument presented above, I will distinguish between the *political* and *cultural* impact of social movements, and between their *internal* and *external* impact (Rucht 1992). By political impact I refer to the complex of activities meant to affect all stages of the political and policy process. By cultural impact I mean the even broader set of actions meant to shape the processes by which contemporary societies produce and reproduce moral standards, information, knowledge, and life practices.[7]

The "internal vs. external" distinction separates the impact of movement action on their chances to mount further challenges at later stages (internal impact) from the movement's capacity to build bridges to their social environment. On the one hand, movements consist of more or less loose networks of actors who, in spite of their heterogeneity, exchange resources and information and share solidarity and beliefs. In

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[7] It goes without saying that both distinctions are purely analytical. In practice, as our examples will demonstrate, the boundaries between internal and external, and political and cultural outcomes are thin at best.

this perspective, assessing the outcomes of a social movement—even better, of a sustained series of protest activities and/or countercultural initiatives—entails assessing these networks at the conclusion of a wave of collective action. The impact of collective action will be stronger where permanent bonds of solidarity have emerged during the conflict. It will be weaker, in contrast, where collective action has consisted mainly of ad hoc, instrumental coalitions, without generating specific new linkages. In the former case, the newly created social capital is expected to have an impact on movements' capacity to mobilize resources for political action at later stages. It will also affect the production and circulation within the movement of ideas, cultural practices, and alternative lifestyles.

On the other hand, movement actors' chances to be influential will also depend on the extent and strength of their linkages to their environment, in particular to political and cultural elites. In this perspective, social movement impact will be higher when the conclusion of a wave of collective action will see a greater integration of movement leaders and activists within elite circles (both nationally and locally), or simply within the associational networks of their societies, than was the case before collective action started. Movement impact will be similarly higher the stronger the ties of movement intellectuals to the social circles (mass media, corporate cultural operators, intelligentsia) where dominant interpretations of reality are generated.

Social Capital and Movements' Mobilization Capacity

Let us start our exploration with the most obvious example of social capital creation by social movements, namely, the impact of social movement mobilizations on subsequent collective action. Few would deny that protest groups' chances of success are greater the stronger their roots in the communities they want to mobilize (Woliver 1993). Similarly, few would dispute that protest waves produce solidarities which last after the most contentious phases are over, and provide favorable ground for later insurgency (Melucci 1984; McAdam 1988).

However, not all mobilization campaigns have necessarily the same effects on the production of social capital, as the case of environmental and antinuclear mobilizations in Italy suggests. Between 1976 and 1978 massive antinuclear opposition developed for the first time (Farro 1991; Diani 1994). A number of demonstrations took place, and antinuclear forces organized summer-long camps on proposed new plant sites. However, the antinuclear front was deeply divided into conflicting internal components. Radical left-wing organizations, opposing nuclear power in the context of their global challenge to capitalist forms of production, established only occasional alliances with moderate oppositional coalitions. Nor did the early antinuclear committees founded by concerned scientists and environmentalists overcome the potential for dispute over either divergent partisan affiliations and/or disagreements over strategies.

During that early phase of antinuclear action, little social capital was produced in the movement. Factionalism and ideological incompatibilities largely prevailed over the early timid attempts to forge a sense of common purpose among antinuclear forces. No permanent coordinating networks emerged from the conflict, nor did solid ties of mutual trust develop among the different actors in the campaign. Failure to develop extensive ties among critics of nuclear power in the late 1970s affected the structure of the environmental movement in the mid-1980s. Even then, systematic cooperation among movement organizations with different approaches developed only among the most central, core organizations. At the grassroots, barriers among groups with different

orientations (in particular, between conservation and political ecology groups) persisted, especially when activists had different political backgrounds. Having or having not been active in political ecology or other new social movement groups in the 1970s still represented for many 1980s activists a criterion for selecting allies (Diani 1995: 118-126).

What lessons can we draw from this example? First of all, personal involvement in collective action at a given time was not merely a predictor of later participation; it also produced loyalties and identities which in turn affected the pattern of interorganizational exchanges during new mobilization campaigns. Second, the Italian case suggests that collective action does not just produce ties and solidarity, and therefore, social capital, without further qualifications. Rather, the type of social capital being produced varies according to the salience of political cleavages and identities. In the 1970s, bonds and mutual trust developed among those activists who shared a given perspective on environmental problems (for simplicity, either a conservationist or a political ecology perspective), but not among those holding different views. Therefore, the temporary coal-itions which developed locally during the first wave of antinuclear opposition created the preconditions for the later growth of a political ecology sector in Italy. However, these ties were not strong enough to overcome traditional left-right barriers, which largely prevented cooperation among conservation associations, local opponents of nuclear energy, and more radical groups. On the contrary, the impact of these differences persisted well into the 1980s. In conclusion, while the early antinuclear movement in Italy had some impact in slowing down the construction of nuclear plants, its impact in terms of social capital was quite modest. When environmental action restarted in the early 1980s, and took momentum after the Chernobyl accident, movement activists could rely upon previous linkages and mutual trust only to a limited extent.

Social Capital and Movement Subcultures

Sometimes the community ties and associational linkages in which both activists and prospective constituents are embedded present a distinctive subcultural profile. Contemporary ethnonationalist movements, especially those that developed in authoritarian regimes, from Franco's Spain to the Soviet Union, have largely relied upon previously existing solidarities in such cultural institutions as the local churches (Johnston 1994, Johnston and Snow, forthcoming). Social movements also create new cultural infrastructures. This may be particularly evident after intense phases of political contention, such as in Italy in the second part of the 1970s (Melucci 1984); but is a permanent feature of contentious collective action, as shown by the American women's and lesbians' movements (Taylor and Whittier 1992; Taylor and van Willigen 1996).

The infrastructures which provide movement sympathizers with opportunities for alternative lifestyles, broadly understood, may take several distinct organizational forms. They may be close to the traditional model of the secluded, "world-rejecting" countercultures, or to the model of the religious sect. Examples include the agricultural communes which have developed in Western countries since the 1970s, or the neoreligious groups that, if they did not originate outright from the social movements of that period, nonetheless provided an alternative perspective to many movement militants who were frustrated by political radicalism (Leger and Hervieu 1983; Robbins 1988). Other times, symbols and lifestyles adopted by movement activists are quickly integrated into mass culture, thus deprived of their antagonistic potential (Sassoon 1984)—the

transformation of punk counterculture into punk fashion being an obvious example.

Somewhere between radical isolation and total incorporation lie, however, intermediate outcomes closer to the concerns of this paper. Often, movement activists create cultural and social organizations that are part of broader countercultural networks. Leisure time venues such as youth and social centers, urban communes, and cultural associations, or alternative businesses such as bookshops, cafes, food shops, and alternative media are usually related through networks which involve their members, customers, patrons, and/or clients, as well as those who make a living from them (Melucci 1984; Taylor and Whittier 1992). The ties which develop in these milieus should not be reduced to pure market relationships, although this component is obviously present. By participating in these activities, for example by supporting cooperative banks or ecobanks (the German Okobank, connected to the Green movement being the most important example) people may demonstrate their commitment to specific causes, or their willingness to differentiate themselves from ordinary consumption behavior.[8] By doing so, they also strengthen specific solidarities and identities.

But why focus on social networks rather than simply note the existence of alternative activities? First, the strength of ties between pairs of alternative agencies, as measured for instance by the number of "clients" they share, testifies to the capacity of a specific movement subculture to reproduce itself, albeit in changing forms, and to resist market absorption. This may have important practical implications. For example, the existence of strong subcultural ties may have helped gay communities to better face the spread of AIDS in several Western European countries (Kriesi et al. 1995: 225-230).

Second, it is important to ascertain the presence of actors capable of bridging different activities of a countercultural sector. In movement subcultures, centralized forms of leadership are usually neither wanted nor necessary (Melucci 1984; Diani and Donati 1984). Yet the circulation of ideas and identifying symbols is crucial for the reproduction of alternative identities. Strongly connected networks are also essential to spread practical information that can keep a subculture alive. While information often circulates through interpersonal networks, the role of specific agencies is also crucial. Among these, alternative media play a distinctive role.

For example, an independent left-wing radio station based in Milan, Radio Popolare, has been a crucial resource for the social movement sector since the late 1970s (Diani and Donati 1984; Donati and Mormino 1984). It not only represents an independent source of information about local and nonlocal events. It also directly promotes activities (concerts, mass parties and feasts, leisure time activities, public debates) which have largely defined a left-wing, alternative lifestyle in Milan. Its obvious centrality as a communication hub at a time of decreasing alternative grassroots action has rendered this broadcasting station so influential that it may even be regarded as a specific source of collective identity: "*Siamo dell'area di Radio Popolare*" (We belong to the area of Radio Popolare), a group of listeners replied recently when asked to define their political and cultural identity. Local groups, cultural associations, and single individuals wishing to promote a specific cause regularly use the radio station to spread their messages to an audience that they know shares their basic value orientations. The linkage radio stations or other alternative media create among their audience is indeed based on solidarity and mutual recognition (first among these organizations and the individuals in their audience, and then among the individuals themselves through the intermediation of the alternative media). One may

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[8] See however Donati (1996) on the pervasive impact of the commodification and commercialization of public life, from which alternative politics is not exempted.

thus conclude that broadcasting stations and other movement cultural agencies play a double role: they represent an organizational resource for the movement, and at the same time a source of social capital.[9]

Social Capital in the Political Process

The role of social movements in policy making and political representation is another crucial area of investigation for those interested in social movement consequences, and one which has attracted much attention thus far. From our perspective, an important question relates to the integration of social movement actors in their broader communities, and to their capacity to mobilize consensus outside movement subcultures. The influence of personal networks over individual orientations, beliefs, and behaviors has long been recognized (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1948). Here our problem is how to measure the influence of movement actors in these micronetworks. Network approaches have usually focused on the form and composition of ego-networks, i.e., on the set of actors directly connected to a given individual, and on the ties among them (Knoke 1990: 40-43). It would be interesting to check whether individuals with backgrounds in or sympathies for a movement or set of movements play influential roles in networks of informal discussion. In particular, if social movements strengthen their roots among "opinion makers" in these micronetworks, does the influence of these movements increase?

Available research points in this direction. Kriesi (1988) has analyzed the relationship between Dutch citizens' inclination to support the petition against deployment of cruise missiles in 1983, and their integration in countercultural networks. This was measured by a questionnaire item asking for the number of members and/or sympathizers of different social movements every citizen was connected with (1988: 50-54). Kriesi demonstrates that the presence of ties between "ordinary" citizens and movement activists increased the probability that the former would sign the petition without specific encouragement from antimissile campaigners. In other words, the resources required to mount effective protest against cruise missiles were fewer where social movements could count on solid personal roots in local communities. In our terms, the presence of social capital in the form of local integration of activists increases both awareness about activists and movement groups, as well as trust in movement members. This in turn might facilitate their mobilization attempts.

Part of the social capital controlled by social movements also consists of their leaders' integration in broader social and political elite networks. In particular, studies conducted by Laumann and Pappi (1976) and Galaskiewicz (1979) have shown that "people and organizations that were more central [in community networks] were: (1) seen by other community actors as more influential in community affairs; (2) more likely to become active in community controversies; (3) more likely to achieve their desired outcomes for these events" (Knoke 1990: 130). One may look at the structural position of individuals from social movement networks among elites in order to estimate a movement's impact on a political system.[10] In this case, looking at the configuration of

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[9] One should not overlook the recently increased importance of virtual networks such as the internet, based on communication technologies. As a recent analysis of membership in PeaceNet suggests, participation in discussion groups and other forms of electronic exchange provides many otherwise isolated people with a context in which to express their views but also develop specific collective identities (Sachs 1995). Overall, the relationship between new communication technologies and media is largely unexplored (but see Myers 1994).

[10] One might object that many of the ties linking movement leaders to elites are actually based on mechanisms

network ties is a useful corrective to the naive assumption that the cooptation of movement leaders is automatically a sign of movement success. The cooptation of leaders may result in the simultaneous weakening of their ties to the rest of the movement. In order to check this it would be useful to investigate to what extent they (1) become integrated in new elite networks while (2) remaining integrated in old movement networks. If both occur, this intermediate position allows coopted movement leaders to act as "brokers" between otherwise noncommunicating worlds, and thus to create new social capital for movement organizations (Marsden 1982; Gould and Fernandez 1989).

For example, representatives of the postpartum support and breast cancer movements in the U.S. have managed to develop conspicuous collaborative ties to health professionals, doctors and administrators, and scientific researchers. They have been recognized as legitimate participants in cultural and political debates on these issues, but have never loosened their ties to the grassroots of these movements (Taylor and Van Willigen 1996). In this case, new social capital has clearly been created. In contrast, one should not conclude from the simple hiring of former environmental leaders as consultants to top corporations that the environmental movement has increased its social capital and therefore its influence. This may well be a plausible hypothesis, but it should be tested by looking at the persistence of the ties between the "Green" consultants and their former groups. Should relationships of mutual trust persist between the former and the latter, then the claim that the influence of the movement has increased would be substantially strengthened.

Social Capital and Cultural Change

Identifying the impact of social movements on cultural change is even more complex (Gamson, forthcoming). First, processes of cultural change occur over long periods, which may not be easily captured by social scientists (Putnam 1993: 318). Second, it is very difficult to provide a parsimonious definition of cultural change. Third, it is also hard to identify reliable indicators of movements' impacts. Here I can offer only a very tentative discussion of how social capital generated by social movements may shape intellectual production, dissemination and diffusion of innovation, and community organizing.

Intellectual Production. I mean by this the activities and the institutional and organizational contexts where new ideas are elaborated and circulated, artistic standards are set, criteria of taste are defined, technology innovation is developed, and moral and ethical principles are redefined, challenged, or reinforced. This conceptualization represents culture as an elite-driven process. A network approach may help us assess the structural position of individuals and organizations in networks of intellectual production. One example is the location of activist scientists in their respective academic and professional networks. For instance, in the last decades, many scientists voiced their opposition to nuclear power, or earlier, to the Vietnam War. They have also played the role of "mediators" between antinuclear and peace movement organizations, on the one hand, and the political and scientific establishment, on the other (Moore, forthcoming). By doing so, they increased the movements' opportunities. Thus, the centrality of activist scientists in their professional communities represents an indicator of the scope and amount of support and legitimacy that protest movements in areas like peace, energy, and

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of political exchange and patronage rather than on trust, and thus do not qualify as indicators of social capital. To a large extent this is an empirical problem: it refers to our capacity to identify those ties that imply trust between actors, and therefore social capital. In principle there is no reason why relations of trust, which do not equate to collective identity, should not develop between movement actors and established actors.

environmental protection have secured.

Another example comes from the democratic movements in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s (Johnston 1994). While political repression largely prevented explicit political opposition, artists had long played critical roles as dissenting voices in those countries. As the case of Vaclav Havel and the theater networks in Czechoslovakia or that of ethnographic film makers in Estonia suggests, the central position within the global artistic milieus of artists with a strong relationship to underground oppositional forces not only helped circulate oppositional ideas before the collapse of the socialist regimes, but proved to be a powerful organizational resource after processes of change began (Johnston and Snow, forthcoming). The capacity of oppositional movements to develop ties of mutual trust within artistic milieus, and therefore to generate social capital, could therefore be regarded as an important indicator of their success in the period preceding democracy.

Dissemination and Diffusion of Innovation. This corresponds to the more or less structured organizational practices by which new ideas are spread and new patterns of behavior and lifestyles are supported. Here again the range of examples is quite broad. We may look at the structural position of the economic actors who originate from social movements: for example, at the location of alternative shops, cafes, and cooperatives within their broader markets. As noted above, participation in these activities may be an opportunity to generate or consolidate social capital among movement sympathizers. At the same time, however, the capacity of movement organizations to reach beyond their current constituencies is also crucial for cultural diffusion. This may further increase the amount of social capital that movements control by creating regular ties among movement agencies, their clients, and other economic operators in their sectors.[11]

Another possible focus is the impact of movement organizations in educational institutions. While it may be difficult for sympathetic teachers to speak up openly on political issues, they may address the moral and ethical dimension of social problems. Therefore it may be important to explore the connections between movements and educators or educational institutions. For example, most core environmental organizations develop cooperative strategies with schools, either through sympathetic teachers, the joint promotion of environmental education initiatives, or both. These activities are often made possible by personal linkages between schools and movement organizations, as well as by broader feelings of mutual trust. Both may be regarded as a reflection of movements' capacity to generate social capital.

Both intellectual production and dissemination are strongly affected by the media. The media system is first of all an arena in which themes are discussed, grievances are turned into public issues, competing definitions of reality clash, and cultural diffusion takes place; but the media are also specific actors with their own agendas and a considerable capacity to shape public perception of the problems (Hannigan 1995: chapter 3; van Zoonen 1996; Gamson, forthcoming). Strong relations to the media system are therefore crucial for movement organ-izations. When social movements can create specific media agencies, these nonetheless need to be integrated into broader, professional media networks to be perceived as reliable sources of information, and thus extend their reach beyond movement boundaries. New-left radio stations in Italy often represented the broader independent radio sector, and developed cooperative linkages to commercial stations on specific issues. This has once again extended the social cap-ital they may rely upon, and increased their potential for

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[11] Once again it should be noted that the notion of social capital adopted in this paper emphasizes the presence of trust and mutual recognition among actors who may or may not share a specific collective identity.

influence. More frequently, however, movements' access to the media depends on personal linkages. In the environmental or the wo-men's movements, former activists—or sympathizers turned media professionals—are the most obvious channel for challenging groups. Frequently, however—especially in relation to issues with strong technical content, like most environmental ones—movement organizations become a major source for journalists who may not have previous ties to them (Donati 1994; Szerszinski 1995; van Zoonen 1996). While existing social capital facilitates movements' access to the media, news-gathering practices in turn facilitate new ties among movements, reporters, and editors.

Community Organizing. Movement organizations often move their focus away from political organizing towards a broader range of voluntary and cooperative initiatives aimed at community problem solving (Sirianni and Friedland 1995). Movement organizations or indi-viduals with a history of movement activism have proved capable of establishing cooperation with community groups, public agencies, religious and lay foundations, and even private businesses. Environmental movement organizations increasingly collaborate with innovative industries to promote environment-friendly commodities and sustainable production tech-nologies.[12] Women's movement organizations join forces with public agencies, charities, and voluntary associations to promote self-help groups, battered women's shelters, and other not-strictly-political (albeit far from apolitical) activities (Taylor and Willigen 1996).

The recent development in Western countries of cooperative rather than confrontational relationships between social movement sectors and national and community elites marks a substantial change from the 1960s and 1970s. While not all forms of community organization are equally close to social movement milieus, nor have they necessarily originated from past social movement activities; substantial cross-fertilization between contentious and noncontentious collective action still seems to have taken place. Close observers of the American situation have argued that

> [environmental movements] have been a vast reservoir for generating social capital. We do not simply mean dues-paying memberships in large environmental and other public interest organizations, which, of course, have grown enormously since the 1960s, and have focused largely on lobbying and litigation. Nor do we mean participation in grassroots protest organizations as such, which has also grown substantially. Rather, we mean the activist social networks that have focused on problem solving, and developed new forms of local collaboration and civic education (Sirianni and Friedland 1995).

CONCLUSIONS

Social movement analysts have traditionally treated social networks as predictors of collective action. In this paper I have reversed the causal order of the relationship and have focused on social movements' capacity to generate new ties and solidarities. In particular, I have suggested that the concept of social capital provides a useful analytical tool for understanding different types of movement influence, and assessing social movements' potential to effect political and cultural change. By facilitating communication and strengthening trust and solidarity, social capital increases actors' control over their own lives. There is no reason why this general principle should not apply to social movements. To the contrary: as political challengers and/or advocates of

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[12] For an introductory discussion of this issue see Yearley (1992: chapter 3).

cultural innovation, social movements both rely crucially on previous social capital and have to be able to generate new forms of it if they are to exert a lasting influence over their social environment.

While I regard this approach as complementary rather than alternative to existing perspectives, I also feel it offers a number of distinct advantages. First, it is realistic: it does not claim to account for macrolevel changes that are virtually impossible to link with specific causes due to their multidimensionality. More modestly, it recognizes the unpredictability of global outcomes and focuses instead on patterns of linkages that, in their relative stability, may be better predictors of movement actors' influence in the middle rather than long term. At the same time, this point of view is not restricted to the analysis of single campaigns or organizations. Instead, it allows us at least in principle to look at the structural location of a given movement sector. Third, it can be conveniently applied to the study of both reform and radical political and cultural movements. While the distinctions I have proposed between internal and external and political and cultural impact should be regarded as purely analytical, still it seems plausible to expect movements with different characteristics to have impacts on certain networks rather than others. The outcomes of world-rejecting, subcultural movements should be assessed mainly in terms of their capacity to strengthen communitarian ties between adherents and sympathizers. Likewise, when dealing with political reform movements, while the reinforcement of internal linkages will still be important, greater attention will be paid to the creation of social capital between movements and political elites. Finally, by regarding networks as a product as well as a precondition of action, this approach assigns greater importance to agency than structural approaches, without surrendering to the tendency to ad hoc explanations displayed by many advocates of the autonomy of social action.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to discuss how the perspective I have outlined above could translate into a specific research strategy. In a very preliminary fashion I would focus on four steps:

First, a convenient time span should be identified for the analysis. One should specify the points in time against which changes in the structural location of movement actors should be assessed. The broader the movement whose impact is being analyzed, the longer the period to consider. If focus were on social movements' impact over a society as a whole, then a reasonable choice would be a long wave of protest (e.g., the 1967-1975 protest cycle analyzed by Tarrow [1989] in Italy).

Second, one should then identify the key movement actors (individuals and/or organizations) at the start of the time period under investigation, and reconstruct their structural location in both movement networks and broader social networks.

Third, the same procedure should be repeated by looking at the actors' positions at the end of the period of interest. One should allow for the emergence of new movement actors in the process by looking at their connections to previously existing actors, and allow for the disappearance of others.

Fourth, researchers should not restrict their focus to the structural position of movement actors within certain social milieus. They should also look at the relative position of these milieus within broader social circles. For example, when assessing the impact of environmental movements, one should not just assess the position of environmental movement organizations within environmental policy or media networks; the relative importance of these policy and cultural networks vis-a-vis other policy or cultural networks should also be taken into account.

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