

Networks and political mobilization: Beyond structural argument

ABSTRACT: The article reviews major findings in the studies of social networks and contentious politics within the structural approach. By discussing the contribution of structurally oriented research over the previous emphases on personal pathology and social disorganization, it also points to the limitations of such approach. The focus on political opportunities, resources and social networks should be supplemented with the analysis of social processes and interactive dynamics that account for the structural (or network based) effects. The problem of the interaction between structural and cultural aspects of the process of political mobilization is discussed in relation with the following topics: repertoire of action, movement emergence, scale shift, and recruitment.

KEY WORDS: social networks, mobilization structures, political mobilization, contentious action, recruitment

1. Introduction – conceptualizing social networks

The informal social networks of everyday life have been widely linked with the process of mobilization for collective action. This is what scholars have called “micro-mobilization contexts” (McAdam 1986, 1988). These are social sites within people’s daily routines where informal ties among people serve as conduits for solidarity and communication. A well known concept of “netness” proposed by Charles Tilly (1978) was one of the first to express precisely this notion that the denseness of social relations among movement constituencies arise from daily associations and involvement in the communal life.

The article discusses major theoretical questions that have been raised in the studies of the relationship between social networks and contentious politics within the structural approach. At the time when it emerged the structural analysis provided a completely new framework for the understanding of contentious action, and its contribution should be endorsed when compared with previous explanations of movements in terms of personal pathology (Rothman and Lichter 1978, Klapp 1969, Kornhauser 1959, Adorno et al. 1950) or social disorganization (Kornhauser 1959, Smelser 1962). Yet, after the twenty years of structurally oriented research it became clear that the focus on political opportunities, resources and social networks alone does not suffice and that it should be supplemented with the analysis of social processes and interactive dynamics that account for the structural (or network based) affects (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994,

Goodwin and Jasper 1999). In this review I discuss the most important findings within the structural argument that deal with the role of social networks in political mobilization, and indicate what kind of questions are left open for further research that would focus on social mechanisms instead of structures.

I start by reviewing the arguments in the tradition of historical sociology about the major changes in the form of collective action and the role of social structures and cultural changes in this process. The focus is on the body of literature that includes historical studies of collective violence (Tilly 1968, 1986, 1995; Hanagan 1980, 1989; Sewell 1980; Margadant 1979). These studies build on the assumption that informal social networks are important as relational underpinnings of collective action providing the necessary solidary incentives for overcoming the “free rider” problem, and as a social basis constraining a range of possible mobilizing structures available to activists in a given situation.

The first question discussed in the article is *what kinds of groups, associations and organizations* are most likely candidates to turn into the units of contention. The answers provided by the literature suggest that social boundaries and identity of contentious actors depend, first, on the networks in which people are embedded at a given time, and second, on the cultural images and tools of what kinds of collective loyalties and identities are meaningful. The dualism between structure and culture, and the role of structural versus cultural processes in explaining the boundaries of contentious actors is at the center of the polemics between authors such as Charles Tilly and William Sewell (Section 2). Although they depart significantly in their understanding of the historical process, they agree that which of the networks and collective identities in which people are embedded will become a locus of collective action doesn't depend solely on political opportunities or the manipulative skills of political entrepreneurs and elites, but also on the ways these networks are structured and imagined through everyday sociability. In addition, they argue that there is an identity of collective actors, claims and claim-making behavior, which can be observed by studying major changes in the historical forms of contentious action.

The second problem relates to the question of the *emergence and strength of collective action*. Here the focus is on the question why do certain social groups revolt and others don't. The problem closely related to this one is also why is contentious action among certain groups stronger, better organized and more successful than in others (Section 3). The literature on differences between the artisans' and workers' resistance in the early-nineteenth century is especially telling in this respect. These two groups – artisans and workers - have been widely studied and compared, and the contentious action among them explained in terms of social ties and networks in which they were embedded (Thompson 1964, Hobsbawn 1984, Sewell 1980, Shorter and Tilly 1974, Perrot 1986, Cottureau 1986, Gould 1993a, 1993b).

Most instances of collective action spread beyond the communities and networks in which they first emerged. This *shift in the scale* (McAdam et al. 2001) follows the pre-existing social ties and networks, and is usually achieved through two different processes: diffusion and brokerage (McAdam 2003). In section 4 we discuss two historical

cases, the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Nazi mobilization of the public sphere in Weimar years, which both raise the problem of the spread of the mobilization and the role of political organization as a broker. From these two cases we can learn that the relationship between local networks and organization can be symbiotic in a sense that informal networks provide the social infrastructure for recruitment and mobilization, but it can also give rise to tensions when identities involved in networks and organization start to contradict each other over time.

The literature on contemporary social movements builds on the above ideas about the strong relationship between contentious action and social networks. One vein of it presents a so called “new social movements” approach which argues that social movements are the backbone of a strong and healthy civil society (Cohen and Arato 1992). The argument says that close relationship between social movements and the underlying social microstructure creates a reciprocal relationship: on the one hand, the movements are indicators of the existence of vigorous society. On the other hand, their occurrence further strengthens the society from which they arose in the first place. The view that social movements are instruments of the civil society in the system of rigid, unresponsive, and increasingly alienated state institutions has important implications for research (Touraine 1981). In his programmatic statement, Melluci (1980, 1981) argued that we should not focus on single occurrences of protest because they are just manifestations of the ongoing underlying mobilization of the civil society. Instead we should turn away from the study of the particular instances of mobilization and focus research attention to the role social movements play in the creation of social networks, vigorous institutions of civil society and collective well being.

The other vein of research emerged around precisely those questions that the social movement literature explicitly ignores. McAdam (1986) argues that we need to “shift the focus of analysis from these unwieldy abstractions known as movements to specific demonstrations, actions, campaigns, or other bundled forms of activism.” The most relevant question from this perspective is how instances of activism emerge and what are the mechanisms of recruitment of participants into a movement. The research focus is exactly the opposite from the one taken above: social networks are seen as microstructure bases of social movement recruitment. This part of the literature deals with the question of what exactly are the *mechanism through which informal networks contribute to the movement recruitment* (Section 5).

The article aims to contribute to the discussion how to conceptualize social networks. The analysis of social networks has been in recent years recognized as very promising tool for the analysis in social sciences in Slovenia, which raises a need to rethink our understanding of social networks and our use of network methodology. The present review of the historical studies on different cases of contentious action shows that the analysis of social networks is most productive when it considers social networks in their structural and cultural dimension. As Harrison White pointed out: “A social network is a network of meanings” (1992, p.67). The expectations people hold about one another, and their understanding of social relationships in a sense of what is constitutive, permissible and/or desirable in these relationships should be considered

along with the structural properties of social ties, in order to better understand the dynamics of social networks and their role in explaining social processes. Recently published book on *Social Movements and Networks* (Diani and McAdam 2003) acknowledges that there is a growing consensus among authors writing in the network tradition that both networks and culture matter for our understanding of nonroutine, or contentious, politics. The field is moving beyond structural analysis in a sense of trying to complement it with the insights from more culturally (and rationally) oriented approaches.

The article is also relevant more generally for the development of political sociology in Slovenia: with the rise of the concept of social capital to its present prominence within the field of social sciences also its potential applications spread to a variety of social phenomena, among them being political mobilization and political participation. But the use of the concept of social capital in political sociology in Slovenia today is still in the stage of a “metaphor”: it is claimed that it matters but it is not very clear *how* it matters. For this reason the concept of social capital can only gain by turning back to the existing models developed within the field of historical sociology and social movements literature, which study political mobilization and the role of social ties and networks in this process.

2. Repertoire of action

Major changes in the history of contentious action and the impact of everyday sociability on the form of collective action have been studied in connection with the concept of “repertoire of action”. This notion of the repertoire of collective action is one of the most important theoretical contributions by Charles Tilly (1978:143-171). Tilly suggests that “repertoire of action” at any point in time consists of all the ways in which people deploy their resources in the pursuit of common ends. It is what people do when they engage in contentious action. The repertoire of action is constrained by limits in people’s knowledge and resources, as well as by enduring cultural expectations and collective identities. This is why the repertoire of collective actions available to population is surprisingly limited given the many ways real groups have pursued their own collective goals at one time or another. Different authors have argued that collective actors most often adopt mobilizing structural forms, tactics and strategies that are known to them from direct experience, i.e. from previous engagements in the collective action, especially if the chosen form of contention had proved successful, or from the situations which have nothing to do with the contentious action but which nevertheless offer some collective practices which can be put in use in the situation of conflict. While the invention of totally new forms of contention is rather rare, the innovation usually consists of putting the familiar forms into new or newly recombined uses (McCarthy 1996).

Tilly’s primary interest is in the major historic changes in the collective action. His articles and books are all driven by the questions when, how and why was a new repertoire of action invented. *Competitive*¹, *reactive*², and *proactive*³ (C.Tilly, L.Tilly and R.Tilly 1975) forms of repertoire of action are defined in close connection to the type of claims people make, the kind of collectivities that engage in contentious action, and the

form of claim-making behaviour. All three elements of repertoire of action are conceived as highly interdependent: the nature of claims depends on the kind of actors involved in the conflict, and the form of claim-making behaviour corresponds to the kind of claims raised by the parties. Thus, different historical forms of contentious action and the kind of claims made by the actors are deeply related to the nature of the collectivities that are revolting.

In his recent work on France (1986) and England (1995), Tilly slightly changes his typology of contentious action. He does it in order to make clear that the same elements of action repertoire can be used to make different claims, thus to show the relative independence of the actors, claims and claim-making behavior (how people act). For example, a strike is not a proactive form of collective action by definition. Strikes of urban artisans in France in the early and mid-nineteenth century had all the characteristics of the new repertoire of action, if we look at claim-making behavior, but the claims the participants made were cast in the defensive language. The “rebellious craftsmen” of the big French cities resisted industrialization because it entailed dispossession of the means of production, loss of autonomy and control over the production process - a defense of the *status quo*. For this reason, Tilly now defines a dichotomy; he distinguishes a *parochial*, *particular*, and *bifurcated* collective action from the *cosmopolitan*, *modular*, and *autonomous* one.⁴

The chief determinant of changes in the repertoire of contentious action is the rise of centralized and bureaucratic state and the advance of capitalism. The expanding states of the seventeenth and eighteenth century needed far more resources from the society than the surplus they used to extract from the peasantry. In addition to ever greater financial extractions, state’s penetration into society also meant that state took on a function of maintaining order, providing a legal framework which regulated the relationships between the citizens, and standardized the relations between the citizens and the state (Tarrow 1993). In the course of this process the targets and arena of collective action shifted from private and local actors to national centers of policy-making and nation-wide networks. In this shift state figured not only as object of contention due to the political centralization which in the long run weakened local actors, but also due to its becoming a mediator between the conflicting groups in the society. While the processes of state development - such as increasing scale, complexity and bureaucratization – first provoked a reactive type of violence, the final victory of the state over local resistance caused this reactive violence to be replaced by the proactive one.

Most important critique of Tilly’s understanding of the historical change in contentious action was formulated by William Sewell (1990). He argues that although Tilly locates different types of collective action in different kinds of collective loyalties (corporate groups and local communities versus associations, social networks, and movements), his focus on the long-term processes of state centralization and the advent of capitalism prevents him to see the impact the autonomous changes in collective loyalties had on collective action. For Tilly, the shift from one kinds of revolting groups to another is a structural one. It results from the changes in the object of contention. Thus, when the focus of contention changes from local to national level the nationally orga-

nized groups and movements had an advantage compared to local groups. For Sewell, on the contrary, it was the autonomous changes in the collective loyalties, i.e. in the patterns of sociability and in the content of collective loyalties, which had a tremendous impact on the way people mobilized. The ways claims could be formulated and the kinds of groups that could be mobilized on behalf of these claims are constrained by culturally available means of forming collective loyalties (Sewell 1990:532-534).

The changes in collective loyalties are not only a result of long-term political processes, but also of political events, which cause major breaks in the cultural images of collective loyalties. If Tilly focuses on the processes of state development which hold more or less irrespective of the regime in power, Sewell argues instead that regime changes are as crucial for collective action as trends described by Tilly, mainly because they effect changes not only in state institutions of coercion and control, but also in its cultural foundation. Regime changes significantly reconstitute the bases of collective loyalties and thereby create new possibilities for collective action.

Sewell's favourite case to support his argument is French revolution of 1789. In the society of the Old regime, which was organized according to corporate principle the only claims that were legitimate were claims to traditional privileges.⁵ This is why the claims of collective actors in the Old regime were backward looking; when the effective legal redress was denied, corporate groups resorted to collective violence. The scope of such collective action rarely extended beyond the local communities, because corporate loyalties were defined by specific privileges of a particular community. For Sewell then, the most important features of the collective action in the time of Old regime are that claims are made in terms of preexisting privileges, and as a consequence that the scope of action remains limited to a particular community.

The French Revolution of 1789 is important in this respect because it launched new associational idiom in the society by redefining the state itself. The associational nature of the modern state was expressed in the notion that the state was formed on the basis of social contract among independent individuals, an act of voluntary agreement of independent individuals to associate with one another. French revolution effectively created the voluntary association as a basis for collective action. The new associations differed from the corporate bodies of the Old regime in a sense that they claimed no privileges and their members were bound to one another only by their voluntary adherence to the association. While the public sphere emerged in France, like in England, already in the second half of the 18th century, all new forms of sociability at that time were either informal (salons) or secret (freemasons).⁶ It was for the first time during the French Revolution that formally organized special-purpose organizations, which claimed a public role, rather than just having defended their particular interests, appeared on the French political scene.⁷

For Sewell, French revolution was important for the development of the new repertoire of action because it both launched new associational idiom in the society and made citizens and their associations legitimate public actors capable of influencing public policy. As a result the claims made by the new type of collective action were forward-looking instead of defensive, and the action was not any more limited to a particular community. The nature of collective actors is thus crucial in understanding the character

of contentious action, although the emphasis can be placed in different aspects of social organization, in the structure of social networks in Tilly, and in the cultural understanding of social ties and collective loyalties in Sewell.

3. The emergence and strength of contentious action

So far we have discussed how pre-existing social structures affect the kind of actors engaging in contentious action and the form of this action. In this section we turn to the problem how social networks and collective identities contribute to the emergence and strength of contentious action. This is one of the most intriguing questions in the analysis of political mobilization. It asks what kind of social structure is especially conducive for collective action. The answer has been sought in social networks and organizations in which people are embedded prior to their mobilization. The argument runs as follows: most instances of contentious action develop within established social settings, because these settings provide insurgents with the various resources such as leadership, communication channels, networks of trust, etc. (McCarthy 1996). Political mobilization is thus conceived as “en bloc” politicization of existing social groups and networks. We can find this emphasize on the importance of pre-existing social settings for the movement emergence in both the resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977) and political process school (Gamson 1975, Tilly 1978, McAdam 1999). This approach has been taken also in studying very different kinds of political mobilization, from civil rights movements in the USA (Obershall 1973, Morris 1984, McAdam 1999), to mobilization of black communities in South Africa (Marx 1992), to democratic transitions in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Opp and Gern 1993, Zhao 2001, Osa 2001, Iglič 2003).

The well-known historical example that illustrates the above argument is artisans reaction to early-nineteenth-century industrialization. Thompson (1964), Hobsbawm (1964, 1984) and Shorter and Tilly (1974) were among the first to reopen the problem of working class movement. Their studies showed that the role of artisans in the revolutions of the early-nineteenth-century France and in the rise of working class consciousness and organization was crucial. At that time, their argument went against the conventional wisdom that the class-conscious workers movement was a product of factory. They pointed to the fact that artisans in France and Britain outnumbered factory workers past the middle of the nineteenth century⁸, that textile workers in cotton, woolen and linen industry remained at the margins of the workers movement in the France of 1830s⁹, and that artisans’ mutual-aid societies and other forms of associations were crucial for organizing the resistance.

Artisans represented a group that was very able to put up a resistance.¹⁰ From the middle of the nineteenth century on they also provided leadership for the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. This argument is developed in Hanagan’s (1980, 1989) studies of trade militancy in three French towns for the period 1871-1914, which show that skilled workers engaged in collective action together with unskilled and semi-skilled workers whom they found as valuable political allies. The artisans even played a vanguard role

in the rise of more general workers' movement, but at the same time retained their identity as skilled workers. Similarly, Victoria Bonnel (1983) in her study of the workers politics in Saint Petersburg between 1900 and 1914 provides the evidence about the "trade unionism" acting as a vital block in the larger workers' movement. She concludes that the images of class and craft clearly coexisted among Petersburg workers in the first decade of the twentieth century.

What was a difference between the collective action of artisans and workers? The collective protests among factory workers were in general rare in the early nineteenth century, and when they did revolt, their strikes were poorly organized, of short duration, spontaneous and with no clearly articulated claims. They looked very much like grain riots or village festivals characteristic for the rural population. Although in such protests factory workers expressed anger and solidarity in the face of some perceived injustice, they were most of the time unable to put a sustained pressure on the employers. In contrast, the strikes in artisans trades were well organized, planned in advance, disciplined and much less expressive. The goals were usually well articulated: the strikes attempted to induce the employers to accept certain regulations over the trade (for example, higher wage rates, changes in hiring practices, and similar). Although the claims of artisans and factory workers were all defensive (or "reactive" in Tilly's typology), the differences in the form of collective action were such that one can consider artisans and factory workers as living in two distinct worlds until the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Stearns 1964, Reddy 1984, Sewell 1986).¹¹

Why was the mobilization of factory workers so weak despite the fact that they gathered together under one roof and cooperated with each other in much more complex system of division of labor than artisans who worked in small workshops? In the line with the above argument of the "en bloc" mobilization it is the ordinary relationships that are considered a key to the problem of what bound artisans together with such particular strength. The life of urban artisans was in the nineteenth century still pervaded with the legacies of corporate values and organizational forms from the Old regime, which contributed to their frequent and well-organized contentious action. Artisans' understanding of work was deeply social as it derived from the corporate or guild system of the medieval and early modern cities. Corporation was a moral as well as regulatory social unit. While most of the authors who studied the impact of pre-existing social structures on collective action focused on moral (or solidarity) aspects of social groups, and on their capacity to make people engage in cooperative rather than "free riding" behavior, Sewell (1980) notes that one should not disregard the "regulatory" legacies of social groups and the endurance of organizational forms. Artisans didn't act collectively only because of the high solidarity with their community, which was coexistent with the trade, but also out of conviction that corporate organization is a basic unit of self-regulation and resource mobilization, a conviction based on their past experience.¹² In fact, social relationships within trades were often ridden with conflicts and competition that made trades but harmonious communities.

Very differently, the textile workers of the early-nineteenth century descended from semi-peasant weavers and spinners whose production used to be organized around the

independent rural families, linked together in commercial networks called “collective works” (Cottureau 1986:115). This system of production had been known in France since the early seventeenth century when merchant capitalists, in order to avoid guild’s high labor cost and restrictions, began to put out spinning and weaving operations to rural families working in their cottages. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century the collective works included over nine-tenths of French industrial activity. The basic units of social organization for rural spinners and weavers were thus families linked to other textile producing families as members of common communities of residence. In contrast to urban trades, there was little sense of identity and loyalty pertaining to work community transcending the family and residential ties.

The introduction of spinning and weaving factories in the first half of nineteenth-century took place in the same districts. Only later it came to the re-urbanization of the textile industry. But the studies of the internal organization of textile factories show that the work was still organized in family units. This means that formerly independent weaver now operated a machine in the factory, but still as a “père de famille”, assisted by his children, brothers and their children, and sometimes also wives. Because the “family remained the basic center of decision making,” the place of residence, and more broadly the local community, - the village or neighborhood - presented the basis of collective action. And when the conflicts between employers and workers broke out they usually involved the whole village community.¹³

While for artisans the important networks of social relations - family, friends, acquaintanceship - all took place within the framework of trade, for early nineteenth-century textile workers such framework was neighborhood and village. Because of the lack of strong corporate legacies among the factory workers their capacity for collective mobilization was much weaker than among the artisans – weaker in a sense of being rather rare as well as less strong and organized.

How has the role of the craft in the workers’ mobilization changed by the second half of the nineteenth century? It changed tremendously, argues Gould (1993a) who shows that in the Paris Commune of 1871 the most organized and solidary crafts, which conducted the strongest acts of resistance half a century earlier, were now systematically underrepresented in the ranks of insurgents. The most active participants in the insurrection were artisanal workers from weakly organized crafts. The participation in Paris Commune depended on the balance between the embeddedness in neighborhood and trade networks. While members of old and strong urban trades were only weakly tied to neighborhood networks, the urban neighborhood was important source of sociability for members of occupational groups with only weak craft traditions. One of the consequences of this partial shift from trade to neighborhood as the social framework for the mobilization of protest was that workers participating in the Commune came from a broad range of trades. The disappearance of trade boundaries during the insurrection was, according to Gould, not a result of increasing “class unity” but rather of the change in mobilizational framework. The artisanal activism is an accurate analysis of shop-floor protest, but it can not explain the participation in big insurrections such as Paris Commune in 1871, which required considerable cooperation between trades. Trades

with weaker legacies were in better position to carry out such large-scale mobilization, compared to either older trades or unskilled and semiskilled workers. Their “medium” level of internal integration enabled them to achieve a sufficient level of organization and purposefulness, on the one hand, while being open enough for establishing ties of cooperation with other trades, on the other hand.

Gould’s study calls attention to the fact that pre-existent networks and social ties can act as “mobilizing structures” that enable collective action, as well as as constraining factors that prevent mobilization to occur. The reason is that existing networks and prior social ties can not by themselves facilitate the protest. They should rather be conceived as structural sites within which the communication and social interactions take place. It is in this interactions that shared meanings and identities are created that legitimate emergent collective action. The above discussed Gould’s studies of the French Commune of 1871 (1993a, 1995), which pointed to the lack of activism among old trades, showed that despite the strong corporate legacies these trades were not able to transform their strong inward looking identities and loyalties into more open ones. The same problem was noticed by authors studying the role of black church in civil rights movement (Obershall 1973, Morris 1984, McAdam 1999). Although the role of the church was crucial in providing the resources and organizational framework for movement, the conservative local black clergy presented serious obstacle to mobilization. Their initial conservatism had to be overcome and collective identity redefined in order to turn black congregations into vehicles of collective protest (Payne 1996). As McAdam (2003:290) puts it: “Prior organization and all the resources in the world matter little if their use is not governed by shared meanings and identities legitimating contention.”

4. Interaction of informal networks and organizational framework

The Paris Commune of 1871 provides a good illustration also for the problem of scale shift (McAdam et al. 2001). By this is meant a spread of mobilization from local communities to the city, regional and national level, along the lines of pre-existing networks and social ties.

In the above discussion on the Paris Commune we emphasized the fact that crafts with weaker corporate legacies, which presented majority of collective actors in the insurrection, were open to cooperation with one another primarily because for them neighbourhood solidarity was just as important as craft solidarity. But this does not say much about how this possibility for cooperation was actualized. Large-scale collective action requires the formation of new social ties, and the way these ties were established in the Paris Commune was through the organizational framework of the Paris National Guard. Gould (1991, 1993a) provides the extensive evidence about the role of cross-neighborhood enlistments that made the levels of commitment to contentious action interdependent across residential areas: the degree to which each neighborhood was successful in mounting resistance to the Versailles army depended on the levels of resistance in the other neighborhoods to which it was linked. From Gould’s studies we can

learn the following: the studies of contentious action should not limit their explanation of mobilization to only one kind of social networks (informal or formal network), or even treat multiple networks in additive way (in the »more of the same« manner), but rather look at their interaction.

Large-scale mobilization typically requires *organizational network* which acts as a broker and interacts with pre-existing social structures. This raises the problem of the linkage mechanisms between multiple networks and the ways the basic units of contention are integrated into broader organizational framework. There are many historic cases which show how political organizations used the traditional forms of sociability and culture for their political purposes (see, for example, a well known study of diffusion of republican ideas to the French countryside after the Revolution of 1848 by Agulhon, 1970; or the study of mass mobilization of peasantry and small-town workers in the resistance to the coup d'état in December 1851 by Margadant 1979). From these cases we can see that interaction of multiple networks can lead to symbiotic relationship between them in a sense that informal networks provide social infrastructure for political recruitment and mobilization. But this same interaction can also give rise to tensions when the identities involved in informal networks and movement's organization start to contradict each other over time.

A good example of such symbiotic relationship which turned into conflictual one is the rise of Nazism up to 1932. Koshar (1987) in his study on local public sphere in small and medium-sized German towns, which were crucial to Nazi success, challenges the prevalent views on the relationship between Nazism and local public sphere, which regard voluntary associations and clubs as subjects of very extensive Nazi infiltration at the local level. He shows, first, that Nazi joiners in the years up to 1932 indeed tended to held multiple organizational affiliations, thus they were more exposed to the political socialization and agitation, but that joining the NSDAP was less a result of Nazi infiltration by party agitators than "...relatively autonomous decisions by individuals who wanted a local political anchor for political activities" (1987:21).

The second point is equally important: there was a contradiction between the local public sphere and the NSDAP, which became more distinct after Hitler came to power. The small towns' public sphere evolved around ostensibly un-political sociability and local Nazi joiners were interested primarily in defending grass-roots social life against the politicizing attempts by national parties. For them, the NSDAP represented "no radical break with the past; it seemed to be an un-political extension of the threatened local public sphere." (1987:22). In this sense, entering the NSDAP was part of social activity of joining rather than a revolutionary alternative to public life and the many voluntary associations that shaped it. In contrast, Nazi agitators and mobilizers were building a public sphere, which was activist and national. The tensions between the two were considerable and Nazi joiners were aware of them. While at the beginning the Nazi mobilization adapted or made use of local forms of sociability and activities, the contradictions grew as NSDAP transformed into a strong mass party at the national level.

Koshar's study helps us to see that the interaction between multiple networks is not necessary productive for the movement. Actors involved in different networks can hold

very different understandings of the political reality and their role in the public sphere. Such conceptualization of the interaction between multiple networks, which takes into account meanings attributed to networks and social ties, goes beyond purely structural analysis. The existence of brokerage ties and overlapping memberships does not by themselves guarantee the successful spread of mobilization.

5. Recruitment through networks

The research on movement recruitment is yet another vein of research that has demonstrated the value of preexisting social ties and networks (for a review of early research see Snow, Zurcher and Eklund-Olson, 1980). It is now taken for granted that preexisting ties to activists help to pull potential participant into the movement. But the research has not been very precise in stating the exact causal nature between the networks and recruitment. This criticism has been voiced already by Marwell et. al.: "It is widely agreed that participants in social movement organizations are usually recruited through preexisting social ties and that mobilization is more likely when the members of the beneficiary population are linked by social ties than when they are not... But exactly how and why social ties are important is less well established." (Marwell, Oliver and Prahl 1988:502) The lack of systematic theory which would explain why social ties play a role as facilitators of activism has had serious implications for research. In the words of McAdam and Paulsen: "Having failed to establish the precise link between social ties and activism, empirical researchers have been content to assess the basic strength of relationship instead of testing the causal power of the various dimensions of social ties, of the salience, centrality, or strength of a tie that determines its effectiveness as a recruiting agent." (McAdam and Paulsen 1993:641)

One of the first pieces of research which explored causal link between recruitment and the role of social ties was the seminal article by Snow, Zurcher, and Eklund-Olson (1980). They were interested how social networks lead to differences in structural availability of potential participants for movement activity. They enumerated three causal mechanisms which directly link networks with differential participation. First, family and friendship ties were important microstructure avenues of recruitment because those who have such ties: "...will have a greater probability of being contacted and recruited into that particular movement" (1980:792) than others without such ties. Second, the ties to activist are not enough because of differential availability of potential recruits. Differential recruitment "is a function of how tightly individuals are tied to alternative networks and thus have commitments that hinder the recruitment efforts of social movement organizations." (1980:794) And third, since the "recruitment among acquaintances, friends, and kin is more successful than among strangers" (p.797) the spread of movement depends on the secondary network of their members. The "extent to which movements are linked to other groups and networks via members' extra-movement interpersonal ties" (1980:797) determines how many individuals are exposed to movement's recruitment efforts. All three propositions suggest that social ties and networks make people differentially available to the recruitment efforts of movement organizations,

which in turn determines differential participation. One example of their structural argument is particularly compelling. They compared recruitment success of Nichiren Shoshu of America (a Buddhist movement) and Hare Krishna movement by the method of recruitment. A large majority (82%) of members of Nichiren Shoshu were recruited through networks while 92% of Hare Krishna members were recruited in public places and only 4% through interpersonal networks. The explanation for this differences in recruitment mechanism is that in Hare Krishna movement core membership is contingent upon the severance of extra-movement interpersonal ties. Not only that preexisting social ties did not lead to recruitment, they had to be systematically avoided by movements' members.

Subsequent research abandoned this purely structural approach as enlightened but insufficient because it was lacking in determinism. Explanations in terms of structural opportunities assume that opportunities are structured but the process of recruitment is random. Individual's decision to participate is not seen as a result of influence process but as a random event. Participants and non-participants are assumed to have the same motivation. But due to a greater availability of participation opportunities through their networks, they more often ended up among the activists. Structural approach had few followers who found in their research that movements can be invested with strong ideologies and normative contents. Empirically, structural approach seemed to be on the wrong track. This was especially true for high risk as opposed to low risk activism. The choice for participation in high-risk activism is consequential for an actor who therefore needs to make a positive choice to participate.

McAdam proposed a model of recruitment to high-risk activism which closely looks at the influence process ignored by structural theory. In his earlier article (1986) he finds that recruitment to the Freedom Summer Project, an instance of high-risk activism, was a function of strong ties to recruiting agent. Based on the literature, he distinguished between two recruiting agents. Organizational membership in civil rights organizations, church and religious organizations, student clubs, and political organizations was one important conduit to participation in the freedom summer. The second one were prior ties to other applicants. Not all ties proved to be important. Only strong ties to later participants and activists served as a pull factor to the movement. Strong ties to those applicants who did not participate were a strong and significant predictor of nonparticipation. While the results offered strong support for the theory that strong normative contexts such as strong interpersonal ties and exposure to multiple movement organizations induce participation in the movement, the model was lacking in the specification of the causal mechanism. In spite of the fact that the model made a step forward by distinguishing between organizational and interpersonal recruiting agents and between strong and weak ties, it basically reiterated the point of earlier theories that "netness" of movement constituencies was conducive to solidarity and mobilization (Obershall 1973, Tilly 1978).

In the later article McAdam and Paulsen (1993) tried to overcome these shortcomings. In order to be able to assess the nature of the influence process and the role of the networks in it they began by breaking down the recruitment process in four analytical

steps. First, there needs to be a recruiting attempt. Second, potential participant needs to establish a tentative linkage between the movement and his or her “salient identity.” In short, there needs to be a match with what movement does and what an individual values, stands for, and strives to achieve. Third, there needs to be support for that linkage by those people who normally sustain identity in question. And fourth, there should be no opposition from significant others. This four-phase model shows that social networks can exert influence in the last two phases. They serve as reinforcement of actors’ dispositions’ rather than their source as might have been assumed in the earlier theories.¹⁴

While reinforcement model has been useful in providing an explanation for the positive effect of personal ties, one needs to stretch this model to make the same argument also for the role of organizations. Why would multiple organizational memberships induce participation? There is, by all means, a link between organizations and personal networks but organizational ties can not be simply reduced to informal ties because they may have different status than personal ties and may therefore have different role in the affirmation of ‘salient identities’. Alternative approach to the analysis of organizational recruiting agent is to look at the organizational structure of ties surrounding the participant. Fernandez and McAdam (1988) examined the role of individual’s prominence in multiorganizational fields in two campuses, Berkeley and Wisconsin. They found that prominence in multiorganizational field (a measure derived from the relational matrix of the number of organizational overlaps between applicants) was a strong predictor of recruitment in Wisconsin. Here is an explanation why: “Sharing organizational memberships with individuals who are linked to more centrally located individuals in the network of overlaps is more important than sharing the same number of overlaps with the people who are in the periphery of the network. Because they are linked to many people, more central individuals are more likely to experience social influences ... on their decisions to attend the program.” (Fernandez and McAdam 1988:365) Multiple organizational memberships alone do not induce participation in a movement. Instead, belonging to multiple organizations *and* being tied to others who hold multiple memberships is what encourages involvement in a movement because that not only exposes one to multiple influences but also provides immediate reinforcement for those influences.

This review of recruitment process attempted to peel out the argument about the specific mechanisms through which networks influence recruitment. We showed that there was enormous progress in the argument leading from purely structural arguments to the argument which specified the role of networks as reinforcement agent. Actors embedded in both organizational and interpersonal networks have their own dispositions regarding participation. The role of informal networks is to reinforce those initial positive dispositions and thus encourage actors to pursue them through involvement in movement activity. This argument represents a tremendous improvement over earlier theories, which argued that embeddedness, i.e. the existence of interpersonal ties and dense social structures were conducive to recruitment and collective action without specifying the mechanism.

Recent developments of the recruitment models go further in the specification of the mechanisms and dynamics of recruitment. They show how the importance of different recruitment mechanisms depends on the characteristics of contentious action, such as its public visibility and action repertoire (Passy 2003). They also continue the work in the direction of rational choice models dealing with the individuals' decision to participate in the protest (Gould 1993b, 2003). These later studies contribute to our understanding of the process of reinforcement by looking more closely at the motivations and concerns of people who are recruiting and being recruited, in particular their concerns with the issues of efficiency, justice, loyalties and personal affinities.

6. Discussion

The article discusses the contribution of network approach to the understanding of the phenomenon of contentious action, which includes a variety of collective endeavors to affect the political process: from insurrections to protests and movements, from non-violent to violent and bloody encounters between state and societal actors. It shows that network approach can be applied in very different lines of inquiry: in the study of the role of social ties in individual recruitment to contentious action, in the explanation of the emergence, strength and character of contentious action, and in the examination of the linkages and interactions between different kinds of collective actors.

The concept of social networks is often considered as an alternative to explanations cast in terms of macro variables of political opportunities and inequalities, and explanations made in terms of micro variables of motivations, values and personal traits of people. Very differently, social networks approach captures individuals as located in the web of interpersonal exchanges, thus allowing for the formulation of "micro-macro" link and the focus on the relationship between structure and agency (Alexander *et al.* 1987, Sewell 1992) Social networks act as meso-level social structures that are constraining social actors as well as facilitating their attempts to adapt to and modify existing patterns of relationships. But social networks can live up to this theoretical expectations only if their conceptualization changes from presenting yet another version of resources and structural opportunities (Jasper 1997), to their understanding as sites of social interaction and meaning attribution (White 1992).

The focus on social networks should thus be joined with more "open" approach to the study of social phenomena. The examination of recent trends in the social sciences analysis shows that the emphasis has gradually turned from the identification of general and unvariable laws, and the formulation of necessary and sufficient conditions of various large-scale political processes (for example, revolutions or political democratization), to the examination of the differences and variation in the process. As Tilly (1995:1601) pointed out: "...the test of a good theory is not so much to identify similarities among instances as to account systematically and parsimoniously for their variation" (1995:1601). This variation stems from different combinations of factors, circumstances, and sequences. What needs to come in the forefront of a research is question of mechanisms that account for process dynamics (Hedstrom and Swedberg 1998), link-

ages between the sequences of the political process (Tilly 1995, McAdam *et al.* 2001), and variable interactions between different kinds of factors and conditions (resources, political opportunities, cultural understandings, social networks).

Yet another aspect of openness lies in the recognition that boundaries between phenomena under study are not as clear as usually assumed, partly because the phenomena themselves are variant rather than coherent. This problem of monadic thinking in social sciences has been discussed a decade ago by authors such as White (1992), Somers (1992), and Sewell (1992). Their critique of sharply bounded and coherent units in social sciences opened the possibility of cross-disciplinary exchange among researchers who traditionally saw their social concepts as falling within the separate fields of social sciences, defined either more broadly in terms of political sciences, sociology, and organizational studies, or in more specific terms such as social movements, contentious action, public interest groups, small democracy participation, political action, voluntary organizations, civil society, political democratization, etc.

Weakening of the boundaries of social science phenomena called for the cross-disciplinary exchange, and the concept of social capital was the one that fulfilled this task since it intuitively resonated in the ears of many authors working in their own fields of expertise. We can actually say that there has been no better reason for the rise of the social capital concept to its present prominence than its capacity to link the concerns of scientists from different fields, for the concept by itself is notoriously too vague to present a starting point for a serious research program. Social capital helped in its own way to establish the communication among researchers and contributed to the increase in interest for each other's work where before they were absent. The work that has been done in the field of social networks, movements and contentious action over the last twenty years, can contribute greatly to this commonly renewed interest in social conditions of political action that is expressed through the notion of social capital.

Notes

1. The *competitive* type of collective action was most common sort before the late seventeenth century, this is before the French state launched intensive efforts at administrative centralization. This sort of violence expressed the constant conflicts within and between the local communities and corporate groups over resources claimed by rivals. It included such different phenomena as feuds, brawls between the youths of neighboring villages, battles between the rival groups of artisans, charivaries or Rough Music, and pulling down of houses, all very richly symbolic and expressive actions.
2. *Reactive* forms of collective action involve communal and corporate groups threatened by the centralizing efforts of the French state. This form of violence was characteristic from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. It was a resistance to the state's efforts to extract ever greater tax resources from the population, draw local grain supplies into national market, and promote capitalist development. Typical repertoire of action included tax rebellions, grain seizures, and invasions of enclosed lands and forests by local people. The claims made by communal groups were defensive. They insisted on the priority of traditional rights and controls that were threatened by the modernizing state.

3. In *proactive* sort of collective violence people make offensive, instead of defensive claims. They no longer resist the expansion of the state, but rather attempt to control it and assert group claims to privileges and resources that are under state's control. Typical repertoire of *proactive* violence includes the political meeting, the petition, the strike, the barricades, the insurrection, the petition, and the nationally-oriented electoral campaigns. The new repertoire of action was developed progressively between the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century but it did not become a predominant form of collective action in France before the Revolution of 1848. Also the typical social location of collective violence changed. The groups that engage in such violence are special-purpose associations rather than corporate groups and local communities.
4. The older repertoire of action was *parochial* because the scope of action rarely transcended local communities and corporate groups. The collective action most often grew out of routine assemblies of communal groups, local markets and festivals. The action was *bifurcated* because it either acted directly on a local relationship or asked privileged intermediaries to convey claims to more distant authorities, and *particular* because it adopted forms and symbols peculiar to the relationship between claimants and the objects of their claims. The new repertoire of action is called *cosmopolitan* because the scope of action spans multiple communities, connected among themselves through various kinds of brokers, networks and organizations. It is *autonomous* because the organizers - political entrepreneurs - frequently schedule the contentious events in advance at their own initiative rather than taking advantage of authorized assemblies and routine gatherings. And it is *modular* because people employ very similar kinds of actions in different situations. The shift from the old to the new repertoire of contentious action also involves a step toward social-movement logic: toward sustained challenges to authorities by "a set of people who voluntarily and deliberately commit themselves to a shared identity, a unifying belief, a common program".(Tilly 1994:5-8)
5. For example, in tax rebellions villagers who assaulted tax collectors justified their action by the claim that village was obliged to pay only the level of taxation it had customarily paid in the past. Similarly, grain rioters often demanded that state officials carried out the traditional regulations that locally produced grain to be put up for sale in the local markets. And, when they invaded enclosed land and forests, villagers did so to enforce their traditional communal rights to use this land when needed.
6. See, for example, very vivid description of the French public life in the years just before the Revolution by Till (1994, chapter 5): "In the Parisian catalog for 1780-1788, clandestine workers' guilds surely lay behind some of the workers' strikes and attacks, but not one publicly-visible association of any kind made claims or organized collective action. 18th century France certainly has secret societies, lay religious confraternities, lodges, and underground workers' organizations, but in general French public authorities struck down as a danger to public order any attempt to create political clubs or their equivalent. They also strongly discouraged any associations they did tolerate from making public claims except through the courts and/or the mouths of eminent patrons.....Very different from France, in England in the same period of 1780s different sorts of clubs, committees, societies and associations flourished, not only in London but also in other cities."
7. The outbursts of new forms of associations during the Revolution was so widespread that: "With its Revolution, France temporarily reversed the cross-channel balance. In 1789 the clubs of Paris and other French cities became major rallying-point for revolutionary demands.....By that time, popularly organized clubs, societies, and militias were doing much of the revolutionary work in Paris and all the provinces. For four years — until the Terror, and then Thermidor — special purpose-associations spearheaded popular participation in the French revolution." (Tilly 1994, chapter 5). But French revolution also had an effect on the

English public sphere in a sense that it changed the discourse or intellectual means with which political leaders presented their political alternatives in the direction of individual rights and the priority of individual interests. Thus, for Tilly the main consequence of French revolution was to make available new intellectual means for rationalization of the claims rather to produce a new form of collective action rooted in voluntary associations. If this kind of collective action was absent in pre-revolutionary France this was so because of the political repression of associations rather than the lack of cultural tools (i.e. collective identities).

8. The relationship between artisans and workers was even more in favor of artisans in the countries that were on the periphery of industrial development in the early nineteenth century; for example, around 1800 there was in Ljubljana about eight times more artisans than workers (Slokar 1977:27, Kramberger 1999:74-86).
9. The movement of the 1830s was concentrated in two cities, Lyon and Paris, which had overwhelmingly artisan labor force while the bigger textile centers remained uninvolved (Bezucha 1974).
10. The capacity of artisans for resistance is demonstrated by the fact that, in France the employers when setting up to organize a plant or factory even avoided cities "with their rebellious craftsmen who know how to defend their wages, preferring the countryside or the rural periphery of great centers" (Perrot 1986).
11. Yet, one should never stop inquiry of collective action at "non-organization," warns Cottureau (1986). Not only do different groups mobilize and act collectively in very different ways, but most of them, even if they look "passive" in terms of the usual indicators of militancy, develop a variety of control practices which are rather informal and exist independently of any institutionalized organization, such as mutual aid societies, unions, and strike committees. According to historical evidence, factory workers in the nineteenth-century France indeed made extensive use of such practices. They included passive resistance that often verged on sabotage, urban clientelism, and collective defense by mobility.
12. In corporations of the Old Regime, both master and workers were subjected to collective discipline which regulated many aspects of one's life and work and gave rise to the especially strong sense of work as a very social practice. In addition, journeymen organized illegal corporate brotherhoods, which put the pressure on the masters over various issues of the trade. The legal prohibition of the French Revolution on the masters' corporations had little effect on journeymens' brotherhoods. Skilled workers in the big urban centers passed on the traditional journeymen system and its forms of struggle from one period into another. While masters were increasingly disunited in the early-nineteenth-century once they were freed of collectively imposed constraint of the trades in the Old Regime, workers were in general united. By the late 1820s, writes Sewell, virtually all skilled trades in major cities had some kind of workers' organization which was trying to impose controls over the working conditions in their trades. Perrot gives an example of unruly papermakers, one of those groups of artisans who defended their corporate structures even in the absence of corporations: "Solidly organized under the Ancien Regime, they obeyed neither the Le Chapelier Law against "combinations in restraint of trade" nor the similar law of 6 Fructidor, Year IV, which was aimed against at them more specifically. They continued to impose all sorts of obligations on manufacturers, including local and familial recruitment, beds to be reserved for traveling journeymen, and payment by the month (including holidays!). They obliged delinquents, employers as well as workers, to pay fines into a common fund that they later žate' in the course of joyous libations that shocked Restoration philanthropists, keener on saving than on feasting. Deciding to keep the best of the day for themselves, in the Puy-de-Dome they went to the workshops from midnight to noon, working by candlelight" (Perrot 1986:80).

13. Perrot provides a vivid description of this kind of conflict: "The following took place in Houleme, near Rouen, in 1825: after Levasseur, owner of a spinning mill, reduced the pause from one hour to half an hour.....the workers went on strike and brought into it the entire village community, which engaged in a three-day confrontation with the forces of law and order. There were a number of victims, including a gendarme, and a hundred arrests." (Perrot 1986:84)
14. The authors conclude: "The conclusion is unmistakable: neither organizational embeddedness nor strong ties to another volunteer are themselves predictive of high-risk activism. Instead, it is a strong subjective identification with a particular identity, reinforced by organizational and individual ties, that is especially likely to encourage participation.... Prior ties - either through organizations or particular others - would seem to be necessary, but not sufficient, for recruitment to high-risk activism. In the absence of (a) strong identification with the identity sustained by the tie and (b) a link between that identity and the movement in question, prior ties are no more productive of participation than the absence of ties." (McAdam and Paulsen 1993: 659)

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Po mnenju uredništva je prispevek uvrščen kot izvorni
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