

# **The Logic of Norm Formation in Civil Society: Comparing the Collective-good and the Individual-good Approaches in Social Capital Studies**

Shunsuke MURAKAMI†

## **Introduction**

Since the late 1990s, and most notably since the first decade of the 21st century, "social capital" has been garnering increased attention. One reason for that may lie in the appeal generating from the concept's ambiguity, so to speak. In fact, the wide range that is covered by social capital, as well as doubts about its measurability, have been brought up time and time again. As if in response to this, social capital has been classified into different types and it has been discussed whether or not such classification has social effects, which has helped to clarify the concept. The different types include: formal/informal, high-density/low-density, inward-looking/outward-looking, horizontal/vertical, bridging/bonding, and structural/cognitive.

From a different perspective than this differentiation into contrasting types of social capital and the analysis thereof, it has gradually become clear that the differences in approaches to social capital have led to major differences in things like how the concept itself is defined and the analysis of its social effects and influence. More specifically, one example of that is the contrast between the individual-good and collective-good approaches. These differences in approach likely bring about major differences in the overall view of society or in the value assigned to social capital.

In the case of the individual-good approach, the issue is how much utility social capital provides for the individual. Meanwhile, in the case of the collective-good approach, the issue is how much influence social capital has on the social structure of a certain society. However, even in these instances, the utility standpoint is not excluded. That is because the diversely valued utility for society becomes an issue.

Accordingly, we can probably describe the difference between the two approaches by saying that the individual-good approach takes social capital as a prerequisite and looks at what the relationship of individuals is to it, while a collective-good approach looks at what that social

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† Professor of Social Thought, Senshu University

capital itself is like and, by extension, examines the social institutions. This paper will compare both points of view, as well as to seek out what social capital itself should be like and the logic behind the formation of "trust," a crucial element in social capital.

### **1. Individual-good approach to social capital**

On December 19, 2009, the Senshu University Center for Social Capital Studies (part of the Institute for the Development of Social Intelligence) welcomed Professor Nan Lin of Duke University (US), the leading expert in social capital research, for a discussion on the concept of social capital. In the year prior to that, Lin's work about social capital, "Social Capital, Theory of Social Structure and Action" (Lin 2001), was translated into Japanese. At his lecture, Lin defined social capital, in accordance with his writing, as "resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions" (Lin 2001a, p. 29; Japanese translation (hereafter, JP) p. 38), and he provided an explanation.

As for the salient features of Nan Lin's approach, one of the translators of that writing, Mitsunori Ishida, points out the following, especially by way of comparison with Putnam. Specifically, "Whether dealing with a person or a group, he focuses on the existence of some individual and his relationship between the social relations and networks around him and examines the benefits the latter bestows on the former" (Ishida 2008, p. 319). Dubbing this approach an "individual-good approach," Ishida positions it opposite Putnam's method, which he dubs a "collective-good approach," and he characterizes that method as follows: "It perceives social capital as a good that is shared by members who belong to a certain group, area, or country. These studies take the viewpoint that the networks, norms, and trust formed inside a group contribute to the increase of healthy growth and group efficiency" (ibid., p. 320).

Actually, Lin himself differentiated between the two approaches and made his own position clear. With regard to the collective-good approach in particular, he says, "The difficulty arises when social capital is discussed as a collective or even a public good, along with trust, norms, and other 'collective' or public goods. What has resulted in the literature is that the terms have become alternative or substitutable terms or measurements. Divorced from its roots in individual interactions and networking, social capital becomes merely another trendy term to employ or deploy in the broad context of improving or building social integration and solidarity. In the following, I will argue that social capital, as a relational asset, must be distinguished from collective assets and goods such as culture, norms, and so on" (Lin 2001a, p. 26; JP p. 34).

Elinor Ostrom expresses these differentiated approaches as "a minimalist view and an expansionist view." According to her (and Toh-Kyeong Ahn), "Common across the minimalist views is an understanding of social capital as (1) belonging to individuals and as a (2) connection to potential helpers as the primary form. Over time, the concept has been expanded — 'stretched' as some critics call it, especially of Putnam's usage to include a variety of other factors and to explain political and economic performances at group, regional, and national levels. An example is Fukuyama's (2000: 4) definition of social capital as 'an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals.' Coleman, although he is cited as being

against Putnam's 'stretching,' has actually provided a theoretical foundation for the expansion."<sup>1</sup> (Ostrom & Ahn 2003, p. 40). This sentence is found in the context of her telling the theoretical history of social capital research, and Ostrom perceives the method of Ronald Burt and Pierre Bourdieu, for example, as a "minimalist view – [an approach toward] social capital as individual connections" – and regards Ostrom's own community level approach and the national level approach headed up by Putnam as an "expansionist view – relating social capital to collective action and public policy." And she says James Coleman falls in the middle of the two views and plays the role of mediating between the two.

While Ostrom's differentiation is understood as the progression of her research viewpoint from a minimalist view to an expansionist view, minimalism has not disappeared from the debate stage. Thus her expansionist view can be understood as a collective-good approach in the context of the contrasting relationship between two present approaches. In fact, others have recognized this as well. For example, according to the editors of "Social Capital, Reaching Out, Reaching In" by Viva Ona Bartkus and James H. Davis, "Ostrom argues for a more expansive view of social capital that emphasizes the importance of not only networks, but also the institutions or norms that they foster" (Bartkus & Davis 2009, p. 6). This is precisely the approach that Nan Lin tries to avoid. Meanwhile, this book itself is not consistent with regard to the differences in approaches being discussed here. Its authors include not only Elinor Ostrom but also Daniel J. Brass, discussed below, who is close to Nan Lin in terms of method.

In this book, there are some who understand, like Daniel J. Brass, that even for Nan Lin, it is not necessarily that the individual-good approach and the collective-good approach are differentiated, but rather that in social capital research both viewpoints are used in a mixed, complex fashion. He says that "The group-level definitions of social capital, which focus on norms, can present an 'oversocialized' view of human behavior that leaves little room for strategic [= based on self-interest] action. Equally unlikely is the 'undersocialized' view that individuals act in isolation, disregarding the impact of social structure. Rather, I adopt a more multilevel definition that allows for strategic action without disregarding social structure. Incorporating both levels of analysis is essential because, as Lin points out: 'Whether social capital is seen from the societal-group level or the relational (individual) level [in this case, Lin uses 'relational level' synonymously with 'individual level,' and Brass also adds 'individual' to this term], all scholars remain committed to the view that it is the interacting members who make the maintenance and reproduction of this social asset possible' (Lin, Cook & Burt 2001,

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<sup>1</sup> Original German: Die Anhänger der minimalistischen Position vertreten die Auffassung, dass soziales Kapital erstens etwas ist, das den Individuen zugehört und primär eine Beziehung zu potenziellen Helfern darstellt. Im Lauf der Zeit wurde der Begriff ausgeweitet bzw. "gedehnt", wie manche Kritiker sagen. Dies gilt insbesondere für Putnams Verwendung des Begriffs, die eine Vielzahl anderer Faktoren einschließt, um politische und wirtschaftliche Leistungen auf der Ebene der Gruppe, der Region und der Nation zu erklären. Ein Beispiel hierfür ist Fukuyamas Definition des sozialen Kapitals als "die Normen und Werte, die kooperatives Verhalten seitens der Gruppen ermöglichen." Obwohl Coleman als jemand gilt, der Putnams "Dehnung" des Begriffs ablehnt, hat er in Wirklichkeit eine theoretische Grundlage für die Ausweitung des Begriffs geliefert.

p. 8)" (Brass 2009, pp. 261-262).

However, this assessment by Brass cannot help but to obfuscate Lin's grounds. The text by Lin that Brass quotes above, in the context in which Lin himself argues, would be placed in the process of the debate that points out the problem of unwittingly making the debates about social capital at the individual level and at the group level coexist, and in that sense, Brass's excerpt is not appropriate. Brass says that Lin also combines both the individual level and group level viewpoints, but Lin himself says that a differentiation between the two levels is necessary.

Allow me to explain. As far as handling the social capital concept, it is clear that, as Brass says, approaches on both the individual level and group level are necessary. As for Lin, he states that when an individual accesses social capital, he uses interaction as a medium for doing so. However, the point Lin makes after the text quoted by Brass is that, "However, the divergence in analyzing social capital at different levels has created some theoretical and measurement confusion" (Lin 2001b, p. 8), and furthermore, of the two approaches, he points to the problems arising from the group level point of view. The following excerpt is long, but it is worth looking at his reasoning. "One major controversy generated from macro- versus relational-level perspectives [individual] is whether social capital is a collective or an individual good. Most scholars agree that it is both collective and individual; that is, institutionalized social relations with embedded resources are expected to benefit both the collective and the individuals in the collective. At the group level, social capital represents some aggregation of valued resources (such as economic, political, cultural, or social, as in social connections) of members interacting as a network or networks. The difficulty arises when social capital is discussed as a collective or even public good, along with trust, norms, and other "collective" or public goods. What has resulted in the literature is that the terms have become alternative or substitutable terms or measurements. Divorced from its roots in individual interactions and networking, social capital becomes merely another trendy term to employ or deploy in the broad context of improving or building social integration and solidarity" (ibid., p. 9). In this way, he says, he attempts to avoid having the collective-good approach and the group level perspective deal with social capital in forms such as trust, norm, and culture.

As is well known, Nan Lin's definition of social capital was "the resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions" (Lin 2001a, p. 25; JP p. 32). Also, because the "action" in this case is driven by, more than anything, the desire to exist and the amassing of resources for that purpose, "Action driven by resource defense is a calculation for minimizing resource loss (relative loss to cost). Action driven by resource expansion, on the other hand, is a calculation for maximizing resource gain (relative gain to cost)" (ibid., pp. 130-131; JP pp. 165-166). That is to say, under the principles of the "minimization of loss" and the "maximization of gain" of resources, people access social capital by way of interaction, and the collective rules for this interaction constitute the basis for the social structure. This is where utilitarian individuals are linked with the social structure. According to Lin, "In general, the utility of social capital (resources embedded in social ties) substantially exceeds that of personal or human capital. This calculation, in the face of the scarcity of valued resources, propels the

extension of interactions beyond one's primordial group. Once such ties and exchanges are formed, certain collective rules follow. These rules, beyond interacting actors' original intents and interests, constitute the basis for social structure formation" (ibid., p. 128; JP p. 162). In this way, an individual forges social relationships through "interactions" in the form of "exchanges" that go beyond the "ties" in their primordial group.

In terms of methodology, Lin takes a rational individual as his starting point and argues the path by which that individual, motivated by the maximization of his own utility (as well as loss minimization), accesses social capital, and he tries to show the connection between the individual and society. The intermediary means for that is "exchanges." He says the rules for these exchanges constitute the basis for social structure formation. As far as taking this rational individual as the starting point, in his logic, this exchange – in the form of an interaction – is methodologically coherent if we look at it only in terms of an economic exchange in the form of an exchange of goods. That is because even when an individual whose actions are driven by utility maximization exchanges goods, or more specifically forges a social relationship, it can be explained consistently by equating rationality with economic rationality. And yet there may be some exchanges that are inconsistent with economic rationality. With that in mind, he distinguishes those from "economic exchanges" governed by economic rationality and proposes something called "social exchanges."

If there are "social exchanges" that are inconsistent with economic or transactional rationality, what are they governed by? Is it "trust"? No. According to Lin, "Unless cooperation also serves an egoistic motivation, the practices of cooperation will be unstable. This means that a social order based on trust not grounded in self-interest will be unpredictable and unstable; for this reason, trust is not always functional" (ibid., p. 149; JP p. 190). This observation consists of citations from several other scholars with regard to social trust, but it is one that is made by Lin himself as well.

Therefore, he also tries to explain social exchanges that are inconsistent with economic rationality and transactional rationality through individual interest and rationality. More specifically, he says that social exchanges are social interactions designed to gain or increase one's "prestige or reputation" in the form of "the aggregation of episodes of such recognition accrued to an actor in a social group or community" (ibid., p. 158; JP p. 201). So in his case, social exchanges that are inconsistent with economic rationality can also be explained by way of individual interest and rationality, which he calls "relational rationality."

According to Lin, "In transactional rationality, typically implicated in the analysis of economic exchange, the purpose is to gain economic capital (resources through transactions), and the interest lies in the transactional aspect of the exchange – the extent to which resources are transacted, and sometimes mediated, by price and money. The utility of the exchange is to optimize transactional profit" (ibid., p. 154; JP p. 197). "Relational rationality, on the other hand, as implicated in social exchange, focuses on the relational aspect of the exchange – the extent to which a relationship is maintained and promoted, usually mediated by recognition (or the expectation that the other actor will spread it). The motivation is to gain reputation through

recognition in networks and groups, and the utility of an exchange is to optimize relational gain (maintenance of social relationships) – also an analysis of gain and cost" (ibid., pp. 155-156; JP p. 198).

With a starting point of a rational individual striving for utility maximization, Lin tries to explain that person's social relationships as well with the notion that rationality is the same as economic rationality and social rationality, and he does his best to exclude such things as trust and norms in the form of relational intermediaries between the individual and society. In that sense, with regard to his social capital theory, Mitsunori Ishida's characterization of Lin's method as an individual-good approach, introduced at the beginning, is right on the mark. Also, this individual is someone who tries to maximize his own utility on both fronts – economic (wealth) and social (prestige, reputation) right down the line. In that sense, Nan Lin's social capital theory is self-consistent.

But is there not a difficulty that arises in his logic with regard to the formation of social norms? While excluding trust, he placed rules that were consistent with economic rationality at the basis of social norms. However, beyond that, he avoided talking about norms. But if social norms are inconsistent with economic rationality, it is possible to criticize those norms from the standpoint of economic rationality. On the other hand, if we start from social rationality, which differs from economic rationality, can we explain any social norms? No, we cannot. This, too, is because individual utility, namely the "prestige and reputation" that inevitably drives interaction, cannot exist without the prerequisite of some social norms. He himself says, "Social credits, recognition, and reputation are all relationally and structurally based utilities. Without persistent social relations, these profits vanish" (ibid., p. 153; JP p. 195). So, unable to elicit any social norm formation from the individuals who interact to gain prestige, all he does is to assume certain social relations. Moreover, he doesn't even ask what those social norms are like or what society itself is like.

What I question is the following. If social rules and, by extension, norms are formed from economic rationality, it is possible to criticize a society that is inconsistent with economic rationality. However, social rationality is something that assumes social relations of some kind or another, and not something that judges or criticizes the rationality or lack thereof of those social relations. Yet Lin himself had no intention to inquire about that, and furthermore, while ruling out any discussion of the formation of those social norms, he discusses social capital's relationship with an individual striving for utility maximization. In that sense, his method is consistent. In contrast to this is Putnam. The reason for that is that Lin consciously distances himself from Putnam's argument in his discussion. However, the social capital theory that argues the formation of social norms on the axis of a collective-good approach is an extremely strong current, and in the following section we review the German debate, which exemplifies that current.

## 2. Collective-good approach to social capital

In December 1999, a little over a year after the German Social Democratic Party took the reins of government in a coalition with the Green party, the German Parliament (the Bundestag) established under itself a study commission (Enquete Commission) on "The Future of Civic Engagement." This commission submitted a report to the Bundestag in the spring of 2002 as well as publishing 11 volumes of a "Library" between 2002 and 2003 that included reports and the results of studies conducted up until then. The reports make policy recommendations for promoting the revitalization of civil society through voluntary citizen participation. With regard to civil society, based on the cumulative studies briskly carried out in Germany beginning in the mid-1980s, they take Jurgen Kocka's civil society theory (Kocka 2002) in particular as a prerequisite. I have already spoken in detail on this point in the first volume of the "The Senshu Social Capital Review" (Murakami 2010).

In this commission report, citizen participation in a civil society is expressed as social capital. It says, "Civic participation means diversity. And it is only within a broad understanding that includes all of this diverse activity that all the dimensions of these activities and their significance for our community become clear. In all the fields of social life, citizens renew our society's cohesive strength day in and day out through their own voluntary participation. Citizens create solidarity, belonging, and an environment of mutual trust. In short, citizens maintain and increase what we now refer to as social capital. More specifically, that refers to the bond between members of a society, their understanding, the rules, norms, and dependability of values that they share, as well as their trust of national institutions"<sup>2</sup> (Bürsch 2002, p. 8.). Here, social capital is argued to mean "solidarity, belonging, and an environment of mutual trust." From this point, social capital research in Germany became brisk in the first decade of the 21st century.

In its efforts aimed at revitalizing citizen participation and civil society, then, based on an understanding of social capital as being synonymous with solidarity, belonging, and mutual trust, the study commission naturally took not an individual-good approach but rather a collective-good approach. In fact, with the objective of drawing on the preceding research in the US, the commission called upon Elinor Ostrom and Toh-Kyeong Ahn and published their "Soziales Kapital und kollektives Handeln: Eine sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektive auf soziales Kapital" (A Social Science Perspective on Social Capital: Social Capital and Collective Action) in the second volume of their "Library." In addition, on April 2, 2001, they invited Robert Putnam to speak at a "Citizen Participation and Social Capital" symposium sponsored by the

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<sup>2</sup> Original German: Bürgerschaftliches Engagement bedeutet Vielfalt, und erst in diesem weiten Verständnis, das all diese vielfältigen Tätigkeiten einbezieht, erschließen sich die Dimensionen dieser Aktivitäten und ihre Bedeutung für unser Gemeinwesen. Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger erneuern mit ihrem freiwilligen Engagement in allen Bereichen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens Tag für Tag die Bindekräfte unserer Gesellschaft. Sie schaffen eine Atmosphäre der Solidarität, der Zugehörigkeit und des gegenseitigen Vertrauens. Kurz, sie erhalten und mehren, was wir heute "soziales Kapital" nennen : die Verbundenheit und das Verständnis zwischen den Mitgliedern einer Gesellschaft, die Verlässlichkeit gemeinsam geteilter Regeln, Normen und Werte und nicht zuletzt das Vertrauen in die Institutionen des Staates.

"Citizen Participation and Civil Society" working group within the commission, and he gave a report there entitled "Sozial Kapital in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in den USA" (Social Capital in Germany and the USA) (Putnam 2002). The commission's viewpoint of social capital is clear from the fact that it made efforts to learn from collective-good approach proponents Putnam and Ostrom. German social scholar Claus Offe also presented a report at the symposium, entitled "Reproduktionsbedingungen des Sozialvermögens" (Conditions for Recycling Social Assets) (Offe 2002).

In line with the content of his "Bowling Alone," which had just been published, Putnam used measurements in this speech such as membership in various groups, frequency of participation in group events, number of picnics attended, and frequency of hosting home parties, and said that in the United States, "in the last 25 to 30 years, there has been a considerable retrogression in all forms of social bonds (Verbundenheit)"<sup>3</sup> (Putnam 2002, p. 267); in short, he argued the retrogression of social capital in the US, and in doing so he issued a warning for the future of German society.

Also, Ostrom (and Ahn) provided a treatise for the "Library" that could be considered an overview of social capital, in which they discuss in detail the formation of social norms in particular. If we explore their logic in contrast to the individual-good approach of Nan Lin discussed in the previous section, it looks as follows.

They divide the approaches toward social capital into two categories. The first is the method of "minimal understanding of social capital," in which they say social capital is something understood as "an individual's gateway into useful personal networks"<sup>4</sup> (Ostrom & Ahn 2003, p. 39). The second is an expansionist understanding, in which "Social capital is primarily manifested in the form of partially divided norms, shared knowledge, and the rules that are ordinarily implemented, and it is emphasized as a means of resolving the various problems with collective action that are encountered by users of relatively local shared resources"<sup>5</sup> (ibid., p. 42). And of these two approaches, Ostrom positions herself and Putnam as representatives who take an expansionist understanding, or, in short, a collective-good approach. This is certainly the case, and Ostrom and Ahn mention three different forms as the essence of social capital – specifically, "norms of trust and reciprocity, networking and citizen participation, and formal and informal rules and institutions"<sup>6</sup> (ibid., p. 55, Ostrom & Ahn 2008, p. 73).

Of these three forms, the ones that Nan Lin painstakingly avoided incorporating into his own social capital theory was "norms of trust and reciprocity" in particular. Ostrom and Ahn,

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<sup>3</sup> Original German: ein erheblicher Rückgang aller Formen der sozialen Verbundenheit in den letzten 25 oder 30 Jahren

<sup>4</sup> Original German: soziales Kapital als der Zugang von einzelnen zu vorteilhaften persönlichen Netzwerken

<sup>5</sup> Original German: Sozial Kapital kommt .... hauptsächlich in der Form geteilter Normen, gemeinsamen Wissens und gebräuchlicher Regeln vor und wird als Mittel zur Lösung von Problemen kollektiven Handelns hervorgehoben, die denen die Nutznießer von relativ lokalen gemeinsamen Ressourcen konfrontiert sind.

<sup>6</sup> Original German: Vertrauen und Reziprozitätsnormen, Netzwerke/bürgerschaftliches Engagement, formelle und informelle Regeln oder Institutionen

on the other hand, make a point of incorporating that as social capital. "Trust" is important for the formation of social solidarity. That is because "Trust as a form of social capital is the most important factor when promoting voluntary cooperation. Other forms of social capital nearly always contribute to the success of collective action by strengthening trust between actors"<sup>7</sup> (Ostrom & Ahn 2003. p. 56). Or perhaps it is because "Information on whether or not the other party is worthy of trust is an important input to help an individual inclined toward reciprocity determine whether or not to cooperate"<sup>8</sup> (ibid., p. 61).

Ostrom and Ahn explain this "trust" formation by likening it to the exchange of goods, in particular a credit transaction. Specifically, they say, "Let's imagine a transaction in which before Actor B provides the desired goods, Actor A must pay for them. When A pays and B provides the goods, both actors are in a better condition than when this transaction does not take place. However, it is possible that even though A has already paid the price, B does not provide the goods. This lack of trust will likely lead to a material loss for Actor A. If A does not trust B from the beginning and refuses the transaction, B loses the chance to sell his products and, in doing so, to increase his own happiness. Trusting and being worthy of trust are therefore of decisive importance for the conclusion of many complex transactions in modern life"<sup>9</sup> (ibid., pp. 57-58). Also, when another pair of actors are added to these two, the relationship expands. That is, "Even if transactions between A and B are not repeated that frequently, let's assume there is also a C and a D. C and D obtain information about those transactions and decide whether or not to carry out a transaction themselves with A in the future according to whether or not A behaved in a trustworthy manner in their transaction with B. Therefore, A receives an incentive to not cheat B again. In that case, he does so not because of the prospect of future profit from another transaction with B, but rather because of the expectation of profit from transactions with C and D"<sup>10</sup> (ibid., p. 59).

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<sup>7</sup> Original German: Vertrauen als eine Form sozialen Kapitals ist der wichtigste Faktor bei der Förderung freiwilliger Kooperation. Die anderen Formen sozialen Kapitals tragen zu erfolgreichem kollektiven Handeln fast immer dadurch bei, dass sie das Vertrauen zwischen den Handelnden stärken.

<sup>8</sup> Original German: Informationen über die Vertrauenswürdigkeit der Anderen sind ein wichtiger Input für die Entscheidung eines an Reziprozität orientierten Individuums, ob es kooperieren soll oder nicht.

<sup>9</sup> Original German: Zu denken wäre an eine Geschäftstransaktion, bei der Akteur A bezahlen muss, bevor Akteur B das gewünschte Gut liefert. Wenn A den Preis bezahlt und B das Gut liefert, stehen beide besser da, als wenn die Transaktion nicht stattgefunden hätte. B könnte jedoch versucht sein, das Gut nicht zu liefern, obwohl A den Preis schon bezahlt hat. Dieser Mangel an Vertrauenswürdigkeit würde für Akteur A zu einem Nettoverlust führen. Wenn A B nicht von Anfang an vertraut und sich weigert, die Transaktion abzuschließen, hat B eine Gelegenheit verloren, sein Produkt zu verkaufen und damit seinen Wohlstand zu vermehren. Daher sind Vertrauen und Vertrauenswürdigkeit entscheidend für den Abschluß vieler komplexer Transaktion im modernen Leben.

<sup>10</sup> Original German: Nehmen wir an, dass, obwohl die Transaktion zwischen A und B sich nicht oft wiederholt, es andere Akteure C und D gibt, die Informationen über diese Transaktion erhalten und ihre zukünftigen Transaktionen mit A davon abhängig machen, ob A sich in seiner Transaktion mit B vertrauenswürdig verhält. Dann hat wiederum A einen Anreiz, B nicht zu betrügen, und zwar nicht wegen der Aussicht auf einen zukünftigen Nutzen durch Transaktion mit B, sondern wegen der Erwartung von Vorteilen in Transaktion mit C und D.

In this case, it goes without saying that the actors in the transaction established here are selfish individuals. "It is possible that even an extremely selfish individual would not cheat someone who trusts them under these circumstances. In fact, a selfish individual who is embedded in unfailingly repeated interaction is likely to respond to trust. And he does so because he is selfish, quite simply, and because he expects profits from future transactions with someone who trusts him"<sup>11</sup> (ibid., pp. 58-59).

Furthermore, Ostrom and Ahn point out that the decision of whether to trust under circumstances in which "there is no information on whether or not another person is trustworthy nor about the structure of their motivation"<sup>12</sup> (ibid., p. 60) is based on the observable characteristics of the relevant party, such as their appearance, clothing, gender, age, and language. But they go no further than simply pointing this out.

So they argue that trust is essential for the realization of credit transactions and other transactions in the venue of an exchange of goods, and that trust is expanded through the repetition of such transactions as well as through observations of the other party, although the actors in this case were "selfish individuals." In this case, we can explain the exchange of products carried out by selfish individuals who sympathize with each other's self-interest as in Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments." And furthermore, aren't we reminded of the logic by which the same principle enables social formation? Smith says, "Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy. ... But though the necessary assistance should not be afforded from such generous and disinterested motives, though among the different members of the society there should be no mutual love and affection, the society, though less happy and agreeable, will not necessarily be dissolved. Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation" (Smith 1759, pp. 85-86; JP (Vol. 1) pp. 222-223). Smith tells exactly the same thing when he explains the principle for the establishment of the division of labor at the beginning of "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations." According to Smith, "But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favor, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them" (Smith 1776, p.

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<sup>11</sup> Original German: Es kann sein, dass selbst sehr eigennützige Individuen die Vertrauen schenkende Person unter diesen Umständen nicht betrügen. Tatsächlich wird ein eigennütziges Individuum, das in gesicherte wiederholte Interaktionen eingebettet ist, das Vertrauen erwidern, und zwar genau deshalb, weil es eigennützig ist und sich von zukünftigen Transaktionen mit der Vertrauen schenkenden Person Vorteile erhofft.

<sup>12</sup> Original German: Da es weder Informationen über die Vertrauenswürdigkeit noch über die Anreizstruktur der anderen Person gibt

26; JP (Vol. 1) p. 38). And that is how an exchange relationship is formed when someone needs the cooperation and assistance of another person. Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" further explained the formation of "due consideration" in every individual's social actions by the self-internalization of these sentiments.

The method of trying to explain social reciprocity with selfish individuals, and moreover by an occasion where those individuals exchange products, even if it is not original to Ostrom and Ahn (Smith!), can be considered as appropriate and fundamental for discussing the formation of civil society and social capital. Nan Lin placed a utilitarian individual at the starting point for social capital and discussed the relationships through which this selfish individual accessed social capital. When trying to preserve the coherence of this method, he painstakingly avoided incorporating trust and social norms as factors in social capital. However, Ostrom and Ahn show that it is possible to explain things like trust and social norms even with a selfish individual as the basis. There is a need to discuss social interaction without first and foremost going out of one's way to bring up love, friendship, and respect. That is because civil society should consist of the reciprocity and solidarity that, as relations between people expand, causes people who are basically strangers to be unavoidably woven in.

### **3. The Logic of Norm Formation in Civil Society**

After the publication of the "Library" by the German Parliament's study commission on "The Future of Civic Engagement," numerous studies of social capital came out in Germany. I introduced, as one example, "Civil Society and Social Capital" (Klein/Kern/Geissel/Berger 2004), which strongly reflects the tenor of "Library," in the first volume of this collection of essays, the "The Senshu Social Capital Review (Murakami 2010)." The essays compiled in the collection do not treat civil society as simply a model but as something that relies on a political and social context. And at the same time, emphasis is placed on pointing out that social capital, too, does not necessarily have a happy cause and effect association with democracy as purported in Putnam's hypothesis. Moreover, the essays were an attempt to criticize politics and institutions that produce negative civil societies and social capital. This book does not deny the positive elements of civil society and social capital, though, but rather takes the position of alleging that negative elements do presently exist (Murakami 2009, Klein/Kern/Geissel/Berger 2004). In the context of this paper's argument, this book also leans toward a collective-good approach of social capital.

The book's editor summarized the main thrust of the book as follows. He wrote, "First, the formation of a 'good civil society' and 'positive' social capital comes about in a variety of contexts and forms. Second, automatic links between participation in civil society networks and associations and, on the other hand, social and political integration does not exist. Third, the promotion of the associations that can create bridges between groups, in particular, can be considered meaningful for social and political integration. That is because only in that way is it possible for the positive effects of social capital (mutual support, cooperative action, trust formation, institutional effects) to be maximized, and the negative effects (formation of factions

and sects, ethnocentrism, corruption) to be minimized"<sup>13</sup> (Klein/Kern/Geissel/Berger 2004, p.13). Even these authors, who criticize a rose-colored model of civil society and social capital, do not deny the value of its positive effects. Its value in that case is likely to eventually be further realization of social integration and democracy. Even for them, democratic social integration is a "value," hence it is clear that their approach to social capital is also a collective-good approach.

In the wake of Ostrom and Ahn's argument, a book appeared that deals with norms, particularly trust formation, as its main subject. That was Sandra Seubert's "Das Konzept des Sozialkapitals, Eine demokratietheoretische Analyse" (Theoretical Analysis of Democracy and the Concept of Social Capital) (Seubert 2009). What interests her regarding social capital in the context of civil society theory is, first of all, "the problem of reacquisition or improvement of the state's capacity for action.... [Here,] a new form of control is sought, one that includes a decentralized action system of non-state-based actors and networks. In association with this, a bridge is built to the social capital concept as the source of the autonomous collaboration and self-organization that is envisioned in a civil society"<sup>14</sup> (Seubert 2009, p. 11). Secondly, "Although it is a debate in which social integration and social bonding pose a problem, here the social capital concept becomes a theme that covers the exploration of potential for the solidarity of modern society and the organization of the welfare state. ... Insofar as the danger to the welfare state can currently be interpreted as the danger of the legal and bureaucratic modification, or Umsetzung, of solidarity – that is to say, caring for people as if they were clients instead of out of a specific readiness of the mind and responsibility, etc. to provide assistance – the theory of social capital is well-suited for taking into account civil society's contribution to social welfare"<sup>15</sup> (ibid., p. 12).

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<sup>13</sup> Original German: Aus den Resultaten lässt sich erstens ableiten, dass die Bildung von "guter Zivilgesellschaft" und "positivem" Sozialkapital in unterschiedlichen Kontexten auf verschiedene Weise erfolgt. Zweitens lässt sich folgern, dass es keinen automatischen Zusammenhang zwischen dem Engagement in zivilgesellschaftlichen Netzwerken und Assoziationen auf der einen und sozialer wie politischer Integration auf der anderen Seite gibt. Drittens scheint für die soziale und politische Integration vor allem die Förderung jener Assoziationen sinnvoll zu sein, durch die Brücken zwischen Gruppen aufgebaut werden, denn nur so können die positiven Auswirkungen von Sozialkapital (gegenseitige Unterstützung, kooperatives Handeln, Vertrauensbildung, institutionelle Effektivität) maximiert und gleichzeitig die negativen Effekte (Bildung von Cliquen und Sekten, Ethnozentrismus, Korruption) minimiert werden.

<sup>14</sup> Original German: Ausgangspunkt in dem ersten Diskurs ist das Problem der Wiedergewinnung bzw. Verbesserung staatlicher Handlungsfähigkeit. Gesucht werden neue Formen der Steuerung, die nicht allein auf hierarchische anweisungs- und Kontrollstrukturen setzen, sondern auch eine Beteiligung nicht-staatlicher Akteure in dezentralen Verhandlungssystemen und Netzwerken vorsehen. In diesem Zusammenhang wird eine Brücke zum Sozialkapital-Begriff als Quelle freiwilliger Kooperation und Selbstorganisation, die in der Bürgergesellschaft vermutet wird, geschlagen.

<sup>15</sup> Original German: In dem Zweiten Diskurs, in dem es um soziale Integration und gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt geht, wird das Konzept des Sozialkapitals mit Blick auf die Suche nach Solidaritätspotentialen moderner Gesellschaften und die Organisation von Wohlfahrtsstaatlichkeit thematisiert. ••• Insofern die Krise des Wohlfahrtsstaats nun als Krise der rechtlich-bürokratischen Umsetzung von Solidarität interpretiert wird, die eine klientelistische Versorgung an die Stelle konkreter Hilfsbereitschaft und Verantwortung setzt, bietet sich die Theorie des Sozialkapitals an, um bürgergesellschaftliche Beiträge zur sozialen Wohlfahrt in anschlag zu bringen.

In other words, the clarification of social capital is said to have as its objective the reacquisition or improvement of the state's capacity for action through the revitalization of civil society, or an attempt to find the potential for using social solidarity to prevent the welfare state from becoming a mere shell. This means, therefore, that Seubert effectively takes a collective-good approach as well. But according to her, the very act of making an analogy in which social capital is the same as physical capital and human capital, or equating "capital" with goods, is a problem. For her, without the initiative of an actor in relation to these "goods," social capital cannot help but to be external to that actor, and that situation does not lead to the revitalization of civil society. Therefore, the actor's initiative and the formation of norms that underpin that initiative become very important for her. Below, I will present her logic on that point which she presents in response to Putnam.

Seubert narrows down the core of Putnam's social capital concept, which she calls too broad and vague, to "goods [Vermögen] for collective action by way of social networking"<sup>16</sup> (ibid., p. 90). This 'Vermögen,' borrowed from Claus Offe (Offe 2002, p. 273), means not only goods but also potential. Specifically, social capital is still potential, and it is activated only by actors who are related to it. And as for the norms of reciprocity that are shared by these actors, she says the principles for their formation are not yet understood. Only once this is explained is it possible for "the social capital concept to concord with the republican basis of civil society that places at its core the distinctive value of public freedom and inclusive citizens"<sup>17</sup> (Seubert 2009, p. 91). She says the problem lies in trying to discuss social capital as a concept in which the value of social interaction is not taken into account in the first place and is considered analogous to "capital," or in other words, in an economic framework. Specifically, she says, "The traditional model of collective action, as I have sketched, is based on the action understanding and rational understanding originating from individual people's calculations of utility. In response to this, social capital is also being conceptualized using the logic of investment and profits. However, this approach comes up against the question of whether rationality, a concept borrowed from economics, can capture the distinctive logic of society or not, and whether we can appropriately judge the meaning of social moral resources for the sake of democracy"<sup>18</sup> (ibid., p. 93).

Meanwhile, according to Seubert, Ostrom effectively goes beyond the rational preference frame of mind inasmuch as she "discusses how numerous the contrary examples are featuring

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<sup>16</sup> Original German: durch soziale Vernetzung geschaffenes Vermögen zu kollektivem Handeln

<sup>17</sup> Original German: Könnte ein solches Begriffsverständnis prinzipiell unvereinbar sein mit einer republikanischen Grundlegung der Bürgerschaft in den Mittelpunkt stellt?

<sup>18</sup> Original German: Das traditionelle Modell kollektiven Handelns legt, wie skizziert, ein Handlungs- und Rationalitätsverständnis zugrunde, das von individuellen Nutzenkalkülen ausgeht. Dementsprechend wird auch Sozialkapital nach der Logik von Investition und Ertrag konzipiert. Diese Ansätze sehen sich allerdings mit der Frage konfrontiert, ob ein dem Ökonomischen entlehnter Begriff der Rationalität, die Eigenlogik des Sozialen erfassen und die Bedeutung soziomoralischer Ressourcen für die Demokratie angemessen einschätzen kann.

irrational cooperation due to a one-dimensional concept of rationality"<sup>19</sup> (ibid., p. 95). Certainly Ostrom did say that at the heart of conventional collective action theory "there is an image of an individual who is autonomous and selfish, and who acts completely rationally. In reality, people do not live in one self-sustaining world"<sup>20</sup> (Ostrom & Ahn 2003, p. 55), and that in reality, there are some unselfish individuals who are part of a group and consider the interests of other people. However, because they consider other people's interests, Ostrom presents the "expectations" of people involved in an exchange of goods as the origin of individuals' trust and reciprocity, a fact that is just as we saw in the last section. Also, Ostrom mentions circumstances such as observing the other party's characteristics, such as their appearance, clothing, gender, age, and language, as another example of granting trust to that party, but all she does is point it out.

Seubert tries to go beyond this "rational preference approach," or the economic frame of thought. The premise for that is the theory of communicative action (Habermas!), she says. As Ostrom says, "It causes trust to grow inside an actor, in the form of expectations regarding the future behavior of other actors. This affects the decision to trust them again. In this way, a positively strengthened cycle is created"<sup>21</sup> (Seubert 2009, p. 96). She says that when this happens, it is due to communicative interaction. That is to say, "First, when people see each other or speak with each other, they can better judge whether the other party is worthy of trust. Communication clearly guarantees the social existence of norms (expanded validity). In the absence of communication, no one's reputation is threatened. That is because no one is firmly and consciously bound to their own word. Second, what does an agreement expressed in words rely on, but the power of an individual promise? The expression of an individual promise turns the renegeing of that promise into a question of individual identity. If someone does not keep their word, he is no longer the person he declared himself to be beforehand. In that case, not only the verbal expression itself but things like the way he talks and the expression on his face, for example, play a role. (Thus face to face interaction cannot easily be replaced by computer communication)"<sup>22</sup> (ibid., p. 96).

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<sup>19</sup> Original German: Es gebe.....zu viele Gegenbeispiele der Kooperation, die nach eindimensionalen Rationalitätsbegriff irrational seien.

<sup>20</sup> Original German: Im Zentrum der Theorien der ersten Generation steht das Bild atomisierter, eigennütziger und völlig rational handelnder Individuen. In Wirklichkeit leben Menschen nicht in einer atomisierten Welt.

<sup>21</sup> Original German: Das lässt Vertrauen als Erwartung über das zukünftige Verhalten anderer unter den Akteuren wachsen, was wiederum die Entscheidung zu vertrauen beeinflusst. So entsteht ein sich positiv verstärkender Kreislauf.

<sup>22</sup> Original German: Zum einen kann man Vertrauenswürdigkeit besser abschätzen, wenn man sich sieht und spricht. Kommunikation führt aber offensichtlich auch dazu, die soziale Existenz .... von Normen sicherzustellen. ....Ohne Kommunikation ist niemandes Ruf gefährdet, weil niemand sich bewusst festgelegt hat. Worauf eine verbal geäußerte Übereinstimmung also baut, ist zweitens die Kraft persönlicher Versprechen. Durch das Äußern des persönlichen Versprechens wird das Halten des Versprechens zu einer Frage der persönlichen Identität. Wenn man sein Wort nicht hält, ist man nicht mehr diejenige, als die man sich vorher präsentiert hat. Dabei spielt nicht nur die sprachliche Äußerung an sich, sondern auch die Art des Sprechens, der Gesichtsausdruck etc. eine Rolle (weshalb Face-to-face-Interaktion sich auch nicht ohne weiteres durch Computer-Kommunikation ersetzen lässt).

The principle of the formation of reciprocity as a norm is the same logic. "What reciprocity means is, namely, it can be seen as a conditional norm along the lines of 'If X does A, Y must do B.' ... In this exchange relationship, there exists an expectation of mutuality, that is to say an expectation that an action in the form of assistance or things will probably be 'paid back' in the future, or that this will be repeated"<sup>23</sup> (ibid., p. 105). However, "If we see reciprocity as not merely a social norm but rather a moral norm, it is not the value of the things that are exchanged that plays the primary role but rather people's approval that plays the primary role. In reciprocity, the individual goes beyond the quid pro quo logic of 'give because it was given to me' and seeks fundamental approval as a morally equivalent actor"<sup>24</sup> (ibid., p. 107). She says it is not through economic exchange but precisely through this kind of reciprocity by communicative action that mutual recognition as an equal actor can come about, and this, as a result, finally makes it possible to argue the "horizontal interaction as equals" in an association that Putnam also mentions. She must have thought that this is what substantiates an actor's own principle for forming a norm of reciprocity, and the initiative for interaction that arises from that.

This logic of social norm formation that Seubert holds, as is already clear, is put forth as essentially a theoretical prerequisite for Jürgen Habermas's communicative action theory. Habermas, in his 1968 "Knowledge and Human Interests," defined knowledge gained by people's actions relating to a subject in the labor process as "instrumental knowledge," and he searched for something different than knowledge and action exclusive to the processing and control of the subject at hand, or instrumental knowledge and instrumental action. And that turned out to be communicative action (1981, "Theory of Communicative Action"). The evolution of "instrumental knowledge" in the form of technically processed knowledge brings about "the colonization of one's life world" by marketing and bureaucracy. If this is true, in order to go beyond that, we must separate the venue of knowledge formation from the economic process (labor process). That is his motivation for perceiving communicative action as the venue for knowledge formation. Habermas's logic is that people's social relationships emerge from this and form a venue for critical debate that is relatively independent from the economic process and political process – in other words, a civil society.

However, if civil society is formed this way in a position of isolation from the economic process, then what sort of knowledge is it, after all, that is formed through communication? Won't the critical knowledge that is formed by civil society end up being merely the acquisition of "self-awareness"? Actually, I believe the current civil society theory that has been expounded

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<sup>23</sup> Original German: Reziprozität ist so gesehen eine bedingte Norm, die im Wesentlichen besagt, "if X does A, Y should do B". .... Generalisierte....Reziprozität beschreibt dabei eine anhaltende Beziehung des Austauschs, in der die wechselseitige Erwartung besteht, dass eine Leistung in Form von Hilfe oder Gütern in Zukunft "zurückgezahlt", also erwidert wird.

<sup>24</sup> Original German: Betrachtet man Reziprozität nicht bloß als soziale, sondern als moralische Norm, so spielt nicht der Wert des Getauschten die primäre Rolle, sondern die Anerkennung der Person. Über eine do ut des-Logik hinausgehend, verlangt sie nämlich eine grundsätzliche Anerkennung als moralisch gleichberechtigte Akteure.

under the influence of Habermas falls, as a whole, into the framework of solidarity brought about by the self-awareness of citizens (Murakami 2011).

If we think of it this way, Seubert's social norms (norms of trust and reciprocity), which are premised on Habermas's theory of communicative action, look like they too could end up being just a naive "self-awareness" theory, if we look only at the logical composition described above. She probably thought she surpassed not only Putnam but also Ostrom in terms of creativity. In fact, Ostrom tried to explain the formation of trust based on an "exchange of goods" relationship, and even though she did earmark the other party's "behavior" as a deciding factor in trust formation, she did nothing more than to point it out, only expressing it as "merely a clue," according to Seubert. Seubert probably thinks that she pushed that idea further along by identifying communicative action as the principle for forming trust, reciprocity, and the "initiative" behind them, without resorting to an economic analogy. However, in order for the civil society theory not to end up as merely a self-awareness theory, it may actually be better not to go beyond the scope of Ostrom's logic, in which she tries to discuss norm formation between the members of a civil society in the venue of an exchange of goods.

Civil society is not reciprocal relations between members in what is an intimate sphere to begin with, but rather reciprocal relations with strangers in which people exchange things outside of an intimate sphere, and it has the expansion of exchanges (division of labor) as an unavoidable condition. Therefore, we can say that Ostrom, in trying to explain the norms of trust and reciprocity between members, stays just barely within the framework of a civil society in this sense.

This paper has compared Nan Lin, Elinor Ostrom (and Ahn) and Sandra Seubert and examined their approaches to social capital and, by extension, the concept of social capital itself.

Taking rational individualism as his starting point, Nan Lin attempted to clarify how social relationships could be conceptualized as capital because of how an individual seeking to maximize his utility accesses social relationships and how he is able to elicit benefits from those relationships. His method takes the standpoint of a rational individual and is consistent about not digressing from it. He thus purposefully did not touch upon what social capital or the social structure itself should be like, or the underlying social norms. Yet if that is the case, the issue of what social norms and social structure should be like does not pose a problem, since the criteria for social capital is whether or not it is beneficial for individuals. To the extent that it benefits the individual, social capital is a social structure based on communal relationships such as shared territorial bonds and blood relations, or the modern civil society structure shaped by the demise of communal relationships, and Lin would not likely question the difference between them.

Meanwhile, Ostrom (with Ahn), in contrast to Nan Lin, takes a collective-good approach and inquires about the formation of social norms and the characteristics of social structures and institutions that are organized by those norms or influence the formation of those norms. However, she basically holds fast to the standpoint of rational individualism and explains the formation of norms of trust and reciprocity based on the exchange of goods (credit transactions).

In contrast to this, Seubert's position is even clearer than Ostrom's in that she inquires about social norm formation as well as about what social structure and institutions should be like (envisioning, in this case, democratic values). Furthermore, both Ostrom and Seubert explore how the underlying norms of trust and reciprocity are formed. But Seubert points out the limits of social theory based on utilitarian rationality and divorces the explanatory principles of the formation of norms of trust and reciprocity from the economic process represented by the exchange of goods. More specifically, communicative action serves as the venue for the formation of norms of trust and reciprocity. According to Seubert, who relies on Habermas's framing of the issues, it is only in this venue that an actor's initiative with regard to norms is created and the democratic revitalization of civil society becomes possible.

What is characteristic of Habermas, and thus also characteristic of Seubert, is a method that uses communicative action as an explanatory principle for human relations. Let's recall Seubert's words that were quoted earlier in this paper. "... [What] does an agreement expressed in words rely on, but the power of an individual promise? The expression of an individual promise turns the renegeing of that promise into a question of individual identity. If someone does not keep their word, he is no longer the person he declared himself to be beforehand"<sup>25</sup> (p. 96). Therefore, she says that mutual agreement to a promise between two individuals relies on the self-obligation of the parties who submitted the promise. To rephrase this in simple terms, she is basically saying, "If one does not keep one's promise, one betrays oneself." Arguing the formation of trust by communicative action using this explanation is too naive. Seubert probably sees herself as having surpassed Ostrom. Although I agree with Ostrom's perception of the issues across the board, there is something I would like to say to Seubert. That is: It'd be more valuable not to go beyond Ostrom.

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<sup>25</sup> Original German: Worauf eine verbal geäußerte Übereinstimmung also baut, ist zweitens die Kraft persönlicher Versprechen. Durch das Äußern des persönlichen Versprechens wird das Halten des Versprechens zu einer Frage der persönlichen Identität.

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Center for Social Capital Studies  
Institute for the Development of Social Intelligence  
Senshu University  
2-1-1, Higashimita, Tama-ku, Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa 214-8580, Japan  
TEL:+81-44-911-1347      FAX:+81-44-911-1348  
E-mail [socio@acc.senshu-u.ac.jp](mailto:socio@acc.senshu-u.ac.jp)  
<http://www.senshu-u.ac.jp/scapital>

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