

Center of Studies on Politics and Society
Department of History, Society and Human Studies

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Working
Paper
Series

2

issue 1

2012

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Social Movements Study:
On Possible Development
of its Theoretical Apparatus

University of Salento

ISSN 2239-7434

ISBN 978-88-8305-091-6

Center of Studies on Politics and Society - Working Paper Series

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UNIVERSITÀ
DEL SALENTO

2012

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UNIVERSITÀ DEL SALENTO
<http://siba2.unisalento.it>

eISBN 978-88-8305-091-6 (electronic version)

<http://siba-ese.unisalento.it>

*Social Movements Study: On Possible
Development of its Theoretical Apparatus*

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ABSTRACT: The paper analyses some possible ways of the development of theoretical apparatus of the study of social movements (SMs). It bases on the long-term experience of the study social movements in Russia in the years of the 1987-2012. I focus particularly on environmental and local lore movements for two reasons: They have a long-lasting history dated from the early XX century and have much in common in their history. According to my findings, some notions, for example, a political opportunity structure (POS), are needed to be developed in more details, others gained a new sense in the processes of their application, still others should be introduced or/and comprehended anew. A more general conclusion is that the theoretical apparatus developed by west European sociologists for the study of SMs in the relatively ‘calm’ years of 1980-90s, should be reconsidered to meet the challenges of the time of the ‘turbulence’ and of stressful changes.

Key words: context, social movements, theory, transition society, Russia

1. Introduction

The world is changing therefore a theoretical apparatus of any branch of sociology should be critically reconsidered and developed. The developments of a theoretical apparatus of the sociology of social movements (SSMs) in Russia are going in three directions. First, it is the mastering of a set of approaches and theories developed by western sociologists by their Russian colleagues. From mid-1980s onwards, Russian sociologists of SMs widely used theoretical instruments created by their Western counterparts. Secondly, for the reason of a quite different Russian sociopolitical context it has become necessary to rethink these instruments and to give them more detailed interpretation. In the run of long-lasting research of a variety of social movements in parallel with the concept of a political opportunity structure (POS), the necessity of introduction of the concept of social opportunity structure (SOS) has emerged. Thirdly, it is the appearance of new notions and concepts which reflect the dynamics of the modern world. Unfortunately, a majority of Russian sociologists continue to 'talk' the terms developed by the western sociologists for entirely different events and contexts. This produces difficulties while translating these terms into Russian and/or entails diffuse comments that often change the meaning of the original term. The most convincing example is the notion of a 'social fact' which is actually now has a non-social (or using the B. Latour's term), a hybrid nature. The consequences of disasters or the processes of socio-ecological metabolism have the hybrid nature as well (Fischer-Kowalski and Haberl 2007). Above all, there is a constructionist sociology (Hannigan 1995) which firstly 'invents' social facts and then introduces the notions which resembles them into the discourse of the sociology of SMs.

Finally, the topic of this article mirrors my personal interest to the problem in question. From 1976 onwards, I took part in a set of international programs and projects initiated and guided by M. Castells, A. Touraine, M. Wieviorka, H. Kriesi, B. Klandermans and many other leading figures in SMs' studies¹. My participation in the ESA Research network on SMs added an additional interest to the problem of the development of theoretical apparatus for the SMs studies. The period of early 1980s – mid1990s

¹ For example, in 1986-91s, I with T. Deelstra from the Netherlands initiated and carried out the comparative research project 'Cities of Europe: The Public's Role in Shaping the Urban Environment' in 16 European countries including the USSR (Deelstra and Yanitsky, 1991). In 1991-94s, I took part in the research project 'New Social Movements in Russia' guided by A. Touraine and M. Wieviorka, etc. I've learned a lot being a member of the ESA Research network on SMs for a decade.

was the time when the founding works on the theory of social movements were issued (Castells 1983; Klandermans *et al.*, 1988; Tarrow 1988 1995; Gamson 1990; Morris and Mueller 1992; Jonston and Klandermans 1995; Kriesi *et al.*, 1995). So that for me, it had been a lucky chance to be simultaneously an insider and distant observer and critic. Naturally, I cannot embrace all the developments in the theory of SMs. I will touch only upon those which seems to me necessary as a researcher of Russian SMs.

In the run of almost 35-years of my study of various Russian SMs (Ianitskii 1991, Ianitskii 1995, Yanitsky 1993, 1999, 2000, 2010, 2011), I have got convinced that it is necessary to formulate more accurately some theoretical instruments without which the analysis of a specificity of these movements in Russia would be incomplete and sometimes incorrect.

2. Historical approach and political opportunity structure (POS)

In western sociology of the SMs there are a lot of historical studies. But in the period I am speaking about a history has been mainly reduced to the notion of POS. It is well understandable because in relation to a SM current history meant POS. In other words, the POS was considered as a master frame which had been not so much different from country to country in Western Europe in those times. Till the beginning of perestroika (1986), Russians had it own POS called ‘administrative-command system’. But after a short period of democratic upsurge, those who studied SMs should do it together with the study of rapidly changing and risk-laden social and political context.

Therefore, I offered to consider the master frames as the lenses by which a collective actor perceived the surrounding world, ie as a paradigm which represented the dominant *world-view of elite* (in Russian condition it has been the world-view of the ruling elite). From my viewpoint, the overall period under consideration (from the late Stalin’s era to recent times) might be presented as three paradigms in consecutive order: The paradigms of system exclusivity, of system adaptability and the new one which could be labeled as the ‘paradigm of regressive stability’. The key point of the first paradigm is that ‘the totalitarian system is a new type of society potentially capable of transforming the whole surrounding world’. The key point of the second paradigm was the idea that ‘the socialism is an indispensable element of world community. Russia as superpower is the factor in its stability and security’. The key idea of the third paradigm sounds as the strong Russian state is the necessary precondition of inner sustainability as well as of maintaining peace in the whole world (Ianitskii 1995). It is clear that at

all phases of the evolution of Soviet/Russian society the strong, resourceful and well-armed state has been playing a leading role.

Dispositions of forces – a term which serves to operationalise the notion of the POS introduced by S.Tarrow (1995). Under the ‘forces’ I mean the actual social actors (state, business, population, NGOs) as well as their social orientations and political preferences that determine their collective behavior (Yanitsky 1999: 184-205).

Some further clarifications are needed. On the one hand, a POS may be widened or narrowed as a result of the struggle between SMs and the state structures. On the other hand, the POS may be totally (re)constructed by the ruling elite as it has been done from the 2000 onwards. In fact up to 2011, all SMs fought for the human rights and freedoms fixed in the Constitution of the RF. In other words, the SMs fought for their civil rights, that is, for the maintenance of declared *social opportunity structure* (SOS). Ironically, that in Soviet times, the opportunities for self-organisation, at any level of collective activity, had been much wider than in Yeltsin, Putin or Medvedev times.

Historical approach has another facet. That is why many students of SMs prefer to use the notion of a SM’s context. Superficially, one could divide it on three levels: global, national and local. Or into an economic, social and cultural, etc. But actually any ‘objectivity’ has today a *situational and hybrid* character (Latour 1992: 2-3). That is why I use to consider as a context of a particular SM only those forces and environments with which the SM is in immediate interaction. The study of historical perspective of this interaction is beyond my capacities. It, in turn, means that the most relevant instruments for the study of the short-term interactions are the investigations of the dynamics of a particular case, including observation and in-depth interviews. The analysis of a SM-context dynamics is realized by building chronicles of events, which allows to reveal: (1) the evolution of a SM in space and time; (2) to reveal the major channel of it and its branches; (3) to understand an alignment of forces involved; (4) to fix the ‘turning points’ in the evolution of a SM; (5) to know a reaction of population to a SM’s activity; (6) to discover cycles of protest, etc. (Yanitsky 1993, 2000). The fixation of day-to-day history of a SM coupled with the changing social context is important for the study of SMs in an unstable, transitive state of a society when the critical change of mode of social production takes place. In this interpretation, a historical approach harmonizes well with the principle of the sociology of social knowledge: ‘Follow the actor’ (Irwin 2001: 87).

Briefly about the differences which exist between the POS and the SOS. In practice they are closely tied and turn one into another. Nevertheless, they are different matters. In the end, the struggle of a SM for changing POS it is a struggle for power, for changing the rules of the game. This struggle is not necessarily has a military character. We know now the many examples of peaceful ‘velvet’ and ‘orange’ revolutions. I mean revolutions in a classical (Marxist) sense of the term. Nevertheless, the SM’s struggle for changing POS it is always the battle for seizing power (Tilly 2004). So called a civic protest which spread across many Russian cities and towns in 2011-12s contained the appeal to the ruling elite to play in accordance with the established rules of games, that is, with the Constitution. So, the essence of SOS is the struggle for basic rights and freedoms declared in this Constitution and for the observance of lawfulness. In this sense, the struggle of recent Russian civic activists is not strongly differ from that of the Soviet dissidents in the 1960s. The struggle for changing POS is usually happens in the streets, whereas the struggle aimed at changing SOS presents a routine desk-work in offices, at various sittings, public hearings and litigations².

3. The relativity of social capital

Recently, the social capital of a SM is mostly produced in social networks (Diani and McAdam 2003). It is a matter of course, and there is no sense to concentrate on this topic. More important, is that this capital is relative in character. Its value depends on the SM-context relationships, or, more exactly, on the degree of involvement of a social actor in a particular context, ie his/her embeddness in one or another social networks. Therefore, this capital may exist as actual capital only, that is, produced in a particular network community, and the accessibility of activists and their groups to this capital depends on the openness/closeness of this community. The relativity of this capital depends on two more things. First, this capital, informational in particular, is short-lived and therefore its permanent renewal is needed. Secondly, some pieces of information may be directly used, whereas others should be treated, decoded and, what is most important, may be used after sociological interpretation only. Thirdly, ‘re-

² It is interesting to note that in the comparative analysis of the role of civil societies in the old and new member-states of the EU such eminent British theorist as D. Lane had mentioned an NGO the only one time but no one time the role of SMs in this giant transformative process (Lane 2010).

sources need resources'. It means that some part of accumulated capital should be spent for the treatment of accumulated new information. Fourthly, as A. Arsenalt and M. Castells pointed out, the importance of two mechanisms of regulation of social capital: programming and switching. 'On the one hand, the power to exclude human communities ...from networks ...is the most fundamental mechanism of domination. On the other hand, if we consider those who are included in the networks, the capacity to assert control over others depends on two basic mechanisms: (1) the ability to program/reprogram the goals assigned to the network(s); and (2) the ability to connect different networks to ensure their cooperation by sharing common goals and increasing their resources. The holders of the first power position are the programmers; the holders of the second power position are the switchers' (Arsenalt, and Castells 2008: 489).

4. Risk and energy of decay

Intentionally, SM's activists are in a manner 'progressists' because they strive for a better world. Or at least, they are the 'evolutionists', that is, they perceive the world as rationally functioning: Something dies, something emerges. Unfortunately, our recent world has lost this balance: It became more and more risky.

A society of all-embracing or all-encompassing risk is a basic concept of my model of modern society. All-encompassing risk is the state of a social organism when the positive logic of public production (accumulation and dissemination of public wealth) is more and more overlapped by the negative logic of production of risks which this wealth destroys. Such situation undermines the principles of market economy in any form, leads to a devaluation of national wealth, transforming the living environment into the source of threats to health and the very live of any individual and threatening to the basic underpinnings of rational organization of human existence – to science and democracy (Yanitsky 2000a). Under conditions of all-embracing risk there are no more absolutely safe living conditions (shelter, food-stuffs, medicine) – there are only more or less dangerous. In other words, any SM exists in a risky and wasted environment.

The problem is that these risks and wastes do not disappear. They are there and active, considerably hampering and disorganizing any kind of modernization process. Paraphrasing Beck, one could say that the risks of decay are an ineradicable product of civilization (Beck 1992). This is one of the key points of this article. Emission of energy of decay is not a social pathology in a particular part of a 'healthy society' but its overall immanent

component. This energy involves mass social action destroying the old social order with its norms, values and institutional structures. The production of decay energy means the actualization of social risk in the form of uncontrollable actions by atomized or politically constructed social actors. Empirically this energy exists in the form of new risk groups emerging and spreading everywhere: forced migrants, refugees, homeless, jobless, 'wasted people' (Bauman 2004), 'unidentified armed groups' (UAG), persons suffering from Afghan, Chechen and other syndromes; this energy also manifests itself in interethnic conflicts, local wars, shootouts, the disappearance of tens of thousands of persons, contract killing and mass terrorism. It exists, furthermore, in economic forms such as artificial bankruptcy, violent entrepreneurship, corporate raids, driving people out of their homes in order to commercialize the land, etc.

Theoretically, the emission of energy of decay is a process opposite to the mobilization of resources and accumulation of human and social capital. Creative social action requires mobilization of resources (human, financial, and information), while disintegration as a destructive action means the transformation of these resources and their bearers into unsafe 'waste' and their dispersal into the environment. Yet there is another source of decay energy: it is the entire human-made environment, including cultivated nature which either seems redundant or is exploited until its physical disintegration. This is no longer a phenomenon of normal accidents (Perrow 1984), nor is it a modernization of risk. Following Beck I am convinced that our generation is living in the age of side effects (Beck 1992: 19-20, 23-24, 60-62).

5. The role of internet

This role is carefully investigated in many works of European researchers of SMS. What is it specifically to Russia? First of all, we are witnessing a beginning of renewal of democracy inspired by the internet communication. But in contrast to the West, it is going hand by hand with changes in parliamentary democracy itself, especially at the national level. Russian sub-politics initiated by internet, is targeted to the restoration of such underpinnings of democracy as honest electoral process at all levels. We are witnessing then, how the internet communication has become an alternative public sphere, especially in the 'turbulent times'. This process has a set of important consequences. First, it helps to restore the feelings of collectivity (togetherness). Second, it empowers rank-and-file people to become activists. Thirdly, the very possibility to be an attendant of independent public

sphere returns to these people the sense of being a citizen. Fourthly, this independent public sphere which is up to now beyond the state control makes its participants more free and creative in their mental and practical activity. Fifthly, the membership in a SM via internet helps to the newcomers to shape or reshape their identity, which in turn gives an impetus to reshape their primary eco-structures. Sixthly, a political activity in the internet tends to be more *ad hoc*, less dependant on the variety of local situations and conflicts. Internet as a global network facilitates the emergence of the grassroots and other forms of local activism. The diversity of situations requires a variability of local forms of internet activity of a SM or of its branch. In all cases, the internet communication is an instrument of positive selection of various forms of a SM's activity as well as of its leaders. Simultaneously, the ordinary people have become convinced that information is not simply knowledge, but it is a power too. Counter-expertise, counter-information and shaping an alternative public opinion are the main tools of it. It should be noted that if the pressure of adversarial forces (the state, counter-movements inspired by it, or the environment which has overcome its carrying capacity) has become excessive, two interrelated transformations are happened. The activity of SMs shifts to the internet and social movement organizations (SMOs) are converted into the NGOs. In the emergency cases the internet has become an instrument of a first aid. Finally, not only in the EC but in recent Russia as well, 'contemporary social movements and their use of ICT constitute a major element in the landscape of late modern democracy' (Dalgren 2004: XIII). And communication among activists and ordinary citizens via internet I see as a basic prerequisite for their civic and political activity.

6. The carrying capacity of an environment

The term 'carrying capacity' is borrowed by me from the natural sciences. What is new here is that when the social capacity of a particular environment is surpassed (by corruption, law violation, concentration of criminals or drug-takers, etc.) it transforms from the absorber of risks into its producer (Yanitsky 2000). If such transformation infects many human communities and the whole settlements, it calls in question the very possibility of emergence of 'positive' SMs aimed at the bettering of living environment, – natural, social or institutional. In Russia the state and its institutions are the main environment. If this environment is totally alien to a SM, the latter acquires a defensive if not illegal character (Yanitsky 1999).

If the situation is not critical, there is a sense to introduce one more term: *generating* or *engendering environment*. It is a micro-milieu which is shaping in the pores of already existed legal institutional structures. This micro-milieu is aimed at the establishment of core actors cohesion which in the future would be legal leading groups for the creation of an alternative, in particular, pro-ecological form of public life. In the transition period of Russian society the role of engendering environment is played by universities, research institutes, professional unions and associations of intelligentsia, clubs of free lancers of various kinds. Today social networks play the leading role as generating environment.

One more question is closely associated with the problem of SM-environment relationships. It seems to me reasonable to distinguish between *foreign and domestic politics* of the SMs. Foreign politics of the SM it is first of all its public policy targeted at modernization of the state policy by means of collective actions. Participation (in decision-making made by representative and executive bodies) is a key word here. These outward-directed actions are aimed at the institutionalization of organizations of civil society which have emerged in the run of a SM's activity. Foreign politics of a SM includes the establishment of contacts and exchange of information and other resources with sister movements abroad as well. To my mind, the ultimate goal of this politics is 'diversity within unity', that is, the establishment of world-embracing network of organizations fighting for health, safety and well-being of the majority of world population. If anybody wants to call it 'the Network International', it will be the International of entirely new type: Not only of poor workers but of all those who strive to live in safe and healthy environment.

A domestic politics of a SM is the politics of its leading core in relation to its rank-and-file activists or in relation to other SMs (Yanitsky 2011). In particular, it includes recruiting new members, teaching and adapting them to the SM's spirit and mode of living. The domestic politics means establishment of business-like relations with various wings of the SM, and with local population, the resolving a problem of fundraising and dissemination of resources at hand, etc. The neutrality of a leading core of a SM in relation to its branches and sister groups, offering them the maximum of self-dependence on condition of their full responsibility for their tactics and action repertoire are the typical examples of domestic politics. Of course, I am speaking of true SMs and not about counter-movements initiated and sponsored by the state or even criminals. Finally, the leaders of this politics were changing in the course of time. In the years of perestroika (1987-91),

it was predominantly academic intelligentsia and representatives of free professions. Why dissidents did not head any SM – it is still an open question. Recently the SM's leaders are mainly representatives of the 'new Russian middle class', that is, they are relatively young (22-35 years old), well educated, white-color employees came from the information industry and the service-class.

7. How to reconcile individuality and collectivity?

The EC and mainly Russia are the world of individuals. At the same time, we observe a growth of collective forms of social action. Is it the temporary phenomenon, ie the result of 'turbulent times' pressure, or having more deep roots? The sociology of SM always draws our attention to macro-processes such as mass rallies, marches, demonstrations, etc. The attention to micro-processes is mainly given in the research of recruiting processes.

As a step for reconciliation of these two sides of shaping a SM, I offer the concept of the primary eco-structure. Structurally, it is double-sided. On the one hand, it is a social micro-structure with an individual in the centre. On the other hand, it is a structure of networks which allows to an individual to enlarge his/her human and social capital and at the same time to be protected from the excessive pressure of outside world. A primary eco-structure is functioning in the regime of permanent switching of networks with the aim of transforming the 'global' into the 'local', that is, collective aims, norms, and modes of action into individual attitudes, decisions and actions. The specificity of the primary eco-structure concept is that its links tie an individual not only with other SM activists, but with his/her past (family and its history, relatives, friends and other people). At the same time, an individual builds ties with his/her foreseeable future. Using the words of A.Giddens, the primary eco-structure is a kind 'of cocoon of basic trust'.

Initially it seemed to me that for Russian researchers of SMs, this concept would be much more important than for Europeans, because any strong opposition to the existing regime could mean the destruction of this eco-structure. But in 'turbulent times' this concept also has a value to the EC researches of the SMs³.

Besides, this theoretical explanation of the interdependence between individuality and collectivity, there is another – direct – form of it. Being

³ This concept was offered by me in 1984 and empirically tested many times later (see: Yanitsky 1988; 2010).

deeply rooted in the culture of Russian revolutionary intelligentsia in the late XIX century ('Going to people'), it is based on two ethic principles which should guide a SMs researcher: To be an insider and an advocate of population affected by the invasion in natural and social ecosystems of huge construction projects like 'River diversion project' (Zalygin 1987). I am deeply convinced that such researcher should be first of all an insider or even participant of a particular movement (as adviser, expert, etc.). And only in the second turn he should be a distant observer, that is, to gain information from second hands (interviewers, local informants, media sources, etc.). In this vein, my understanding of SMs advocates is a bit different from that of in the western sociology in which the term 'advocacy science' has a neutrally-market character (offering a service). In the Russian context this term has moral coloring: to support, to explain, to teach practically, and always free of charge. My empirical studies have shown that there is a ladder of such advocates built by the criterion of their involvement: neutral-distanced; those who understand the issue; partly involved in a SMO's activity; and fully integrated in it (Yanitsky 2009).

8. SMs in emergency cases

To begin with, there are two kinds of a SM mobilization: 'a regular', for example, in preparation of mass protest campaigns, marches and rallies, and of 'emergency character' when SM members are mobilized for rescue activity. But in our disciplinary structured sociological community, the activity of collective social actors dealing with disasters is related to a separate discipline called the sociology of mass emergences and disasters (Perrow 1984; Quarantelli 1998). The discipline has its own legal status, journals and textbooks, research networks and other institutional arrangements. In cases of disasters SMs continue to act but in other forms. Of course, participants of some SMs may be seen as victims of a disaster only. But many others, for example, the charity, environmental and local lore movements, in essence, are of a rescue nature. How their role, structure and functions are changing in such critical conditions – this question is rarely discussed in sociological literature, especially in Russian one.

I think that at least four concepts are of a paramount importance here: The already mentioned the concept of all-embracing risk, a social order in conditions of disaster, a risk-reflection of SM's leaders, and risk-solidarities of affected people (Ianitskii, 1998; Yanitsky, 2000a).

In conditions under consideration, the concept of all-embracing risk may be presented as a 'critical case', that is, the state of a human community in

which the production of risks (as losses, calamities) becomes a dominant mode of production. In this case, the aim of any social action is destruction, the instrument of an action is violence, and the outcome is the destruction of the existing social order.

As a result of genocide, wars, terrorism, violence there shapes a ‘critical symbiosis’ of the foreseers of violence, resisters, and the suffering peaceful population. The critical case is a humanitarian catastrophe when an affected human community is able to survive due to the external aid only. I consider this critical social order as the case when a community is forced to be subjected to abnormal natural or technical processes, for example, to processes of natural disasters or technical accidents (Yanitsky 1982, 2011). The typical examples are the Chernobyl and Fukushima catastrophic accidents when the social order had been determined by the spread and metabolism of the poisoning substances. As the result, the living environment has changed qualitatively for years or decades. Accordingly, the type of a SM and its activity has changed as well. I called the mechanism of this change a *risk-reflection*. It designates the cognitive process which transforms a direct perception of a risk by the SM leaders into one or another form of collective action. At the same time, risk-reflection as an interdisciplinary process plays the role of a practical tool for the definition of the level of socially acceptable risk for an individual or society. It is important that the notion of risk reflectivity is used both in the sociologies of risk, social conflicts and of SMs (Yanitsky 2000: 91).

If the sociologies of risk and of SMs are closely tied, there is a sense to introduce one more notion, that is, ‘*risk-solidarities*’. It is a tricky notion because it has a several meanings. First, it marks people from different social strata affected by a disaster. Secondly, risk-solidarities may be composed of socially and politically adversarial groups who are forced to act together with the aim of self-protection and survival (Yanitsky 2010: 78-95). Thirdly, risk-solidarities may present a temporal combination of affected people and their rescuers.

Schematically, this case may be presented as a set of concentric rings. In the very centre the affected people and their immediate rescuers are situated. The latter may be or may be not the SM members. Within the second ring there are those who are rescuers as well, but with another function: to organize a supply those who are affected with necessary resources, be it water, food, shelter or means of transportation to escape from the defeated zone. The third ring presents a space of actors and their networks which may embrace a region, state or whole world. These actors again may be or

not may be members of a SM. Their main function is to organize the aid and provision of the first two and to monitor the process of development of a disaster.

The permanent exposure of population to different kinds of risk (all-embracing, temporal or everyday) gives the impetus to the emergence of different SMOs. Here I'd distinguish the only two: a stable and permanent. In Russian condition the leader's core is usually stable. First of all because they have not opportunity to mount by the social ladder and therefore they are forced to implement routine work within a SMO (recruiting, fundraising, distribution of resources, etc). But in the emergency cases, the temporal structures are mushroomed. These emergent structures are the result of internet communication, by means of which the SMs leaders capable to mobilize volunteers and local population for coping with the disasters and its aftermaths. When the critical points have passed these structures may be transformed into new SMOs or its sustainable communicative structures (forums, social networks) or to switch their attention to another emergency case.

9. Social interpretation of natural and technical knowledge

It is not sufficiently reflected by the scholars of SMs that their object of study is multi-functional and multi-sided. It is obvious that interaction of SM with their counterparts – the state and its branches, business structures, NGOs, various experts and population strata – have their own subculture and language. What a sociologist sees from the 'top', (public opinion survey) is does not always coincide with the view from the 'bottom', ie of local people. I fully agree with those western sociologists who introduced and used in their empirical research the concept of local knowledge (Brush and Stabinsky 1996; Irwin, 2001; Irwin and Wynne 1996; Fisher 2003; Gregory and Miller 1998). Besides, many conflicts in which a SM is involved have rather complex, multi-sided character. All said speaks for the need of a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of SMs. In addition, I'd stress that natural and technical sciences have their own manner to present an accident in the media which is rarely resembles the actual causes and consequences of a given accident.

But there is more general substantiation of the necessity of interdisciplinary approach to the study of social movements. The further the more we are witnessing disasters and accidents, in particular of continental or global scale, when a behavior of individuals and collective actors is governed by natural and technical processes. To be capable to response to these calami-

ties adequately, SM's researchers have to be armed with methods of social and political interpretation of the cumulative effects of these critical events.

There are three possible way to cope with this problem. The first is to have a mediator (translator) who is able to translate from one language to another. It is a widely used method. However, it has two principal defects. The translator gives to a sociologist 'the objective information' whereas he is needed in subjective, ie contextually sound knowledge. Then, translator gives 'the static information' but sociologist should convert it into a form of 'dynamic information' (say, in some form of action repertoire) by himself. Needless to say, that translator is never thinks about possible 'knowledge gaps' (Gross 2010; Gross and Heinrichs 2010), when for a sociologist it is very important information.

The second way is to have a very solid research collective which is capable to organize periodically a brain-storming and to solve the majority of emergent problems by themselves. Or they invite well-known to them experts. It is a regular practice of a routine work of some core groups of a SM. It is clear that in this case the majority of such core members should be specialists in three-four realms of knowledge. And it is actually so. The practical deficit of this scheme is that, keeping in mind the huge distances from one 'hot-spot' to another, it is rather difficult to gather all necessary experts in a due time. Another deficit is that the brain-storming is usually resulted in strategic, principled decisions, when activists are needed in decision 'here and now'. In Russia nearly all eco-activists are overloaded with work and nearly all possible time is spent in urgent business trips, and it is an additional impediment to shift from strategy to action repertoire.

The third way is the combination of the above two. It is practices in big umbrella organizations with sufficient budget for attracting volunteers and with the ability to communicate with sister organizations abroad. In small local SMs with a permanent budget deficit it is impossible. Therefore, these SMs are capable to fight against things and events which are before their eyes (pipe-line construction, forest cuts or fires, etc.). In this latter case it would be more accurate to call them not SMs but SMOs which in urgent cases attract local population and volunteers. Here we see a difference between the western and Russian SMs. The western SMs use to act all over the world, while the Russian SMs tries to attract all possible resources to resolve the particular socio-ecological conflict.

10. Conclusions

The development of a society and its environment requires the reconsideration of theoretical instruments of SM's studies. The causes of such reconsideration are as following: the processes of globalization, the development of network society including that of the SMs, and the ongoing 'turbulent times' including a radical transformation of the existing social order, on the one hand, and mass emergences and disasters, on the other. In any cases, the development of a sociological thought in the study of SMs should follow the twists and oscillations of a context.

To begin with, the 'classical' notion of political opportunity structure (POS) should be reconsidered. The POS is not only defined by the opportunities of a SM, but it is conditioned by its activity. One should distinguish between the POS and SOS as well.

Then, any SM is a multi-sided phenomenon, it is of a 'hybrid nature', and therefore, should be analysed from various angles or viewpoints. At the same time, a SM is a context-depended phenomenon, thus the subject matter of a sociological research of SMs is their interdependent evolution. The impact of the environment on a SM should be analysed in the following aspects: (1) the role of the given environment in the formation of social capital of a particular SM; (2) a dependence of SM's aims, strategy, tactics and action repertoire on the degree of how risky this particular environment is, and what kind of risks should be taken into account in the first place; (3) one should keep in mind that the flow of energy of decay is potentially capable to destroy any SM; (4) in recent times any social agent lives and acts in a network environment which creates a public sphere independent from the media governed by the state (as in Russia) or by Big Business (as in the West); (5) the impact of non-social facts on the strategy and tactics of a SM means that these facts requires a social interpretation. This interpretation could be implemented by the SMs leaders themselves, by specially trained professionals or in the process of 'brain-storming'.

In our individualized and consumer-oriented society a SM's researcher should pay more attention to the interplay between macro- and micro-processes which has a great impact on an individual's choice of form of participation, on his preparedness to share his social capital with other activists, etc. Anyhow, the dialectic of individuality and collectivity should be investigated in a more detail. In Russia, after two decades of forced individualization we observe a reverse process conditioned by the understanding that any progress in individual life and well-being could be achieved only by collective efforts.

Finally, it seems to me that unstable (turbulent) social structures are more and more often shifted into critical situations, and the margin between SM's studies and studies of mass emergency processes, be it local wars, frozen conflicts or disasters, should therefore be overcome.

As to the role of sociologists, I am convinced that the researcher of the SMs have to be not only a distant observer but an insider and a participative researcher as well. It coincided with the stand of left-oriented sociologists: 'We need to step beyond our internal dialogues and debates, and turn outwards, not as servants of power but as public sociologists, interlocutors with diverse publics...' (Burawoy 2008: 355). As D. Smith added, '*public sociologists* who engage with groups that have experienced social degradation or other aspects of humiliation should bring with them (and later add to) the knowledge we are developing about the dynamics of humiliation. The only way to develop this knowledge further is by applying the whole range of comparative, historical, micro and macro approaches available to *professional sociologists*' (Smith 2008: 378). When professional sociologists have become public sociologists they would be capable to comprehend the 'turbulent world' much better.

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eISBN 978-88-8305-091-6 (electronic version)

<http://siba-ese.unisalento.it>

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Suggested Citation:

Yanitsky O.N. (2012), "Social Movements Study: On Possible Development of its Theoretical Apparatus", *Center of Studies on Politics and Society - WP Series*, vol. 2, issue 1, pp. 1-21.