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Social Capital and Norms of Citizenship: An Ambiguous Relationship?

Sonja Zmerli

Abstract
From a theoretical viewpoint, the consequences of social capital for norms of citizenship are usually perceived as benign. However, empirical evidence indicates that its impact may be detrimental. To investigate this phenomenon further, this article examines the specific nature of the relationships among social involvement, social trust, and four different types of norms of citizenship. Social capital acts on these norms in two different ways. First, it varies with the specific norms of citizenship. Second, the different components of social capital do not necessarily exert similar effects. In this article, the negative and significant relationships between social trust and norms of social order are revealed, indicating the “dark sides” of social capital. This finding challenges the common wisdom about the positive interrelationship between social capital and a citizenry’s public spiritedness in a democratic state.

Keywords
social capital, norms of citizenship, political trust, social trust, social involvement

“Social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19) are considered to be constitutive for social capital, a concept to which increasing scientific attention has been paid over the past 20 years. The theoretical relevance of social capital lies in its potential to explain mechanisms of collective and coordinated action that, in complex interrelationships, fosters civic orientations, institutional effectiveness, and system stability (Putnam, 1993).

In particular, Esser’s (2008) approach to social capital stresses its dual character. On one hand, social capital can be perceived as a “stock of resources that an actor controls” (p. 23). On the other, social capital refers “to the existence of shared social

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norms, aimed at an efficient control of the members’ behaviour within a collectivity” (p. 37). Consequently, Esser distinguishes between relational and system capital. Although relational capital consists of the positional capital, trust capital, and obligation capital of individual actors, system capital emerges from system control, system trust, and system morality. Systems, according to Esser, can be perceived as different kinds of networks, such as informal social networks, organizations, communities, regions, or whole societies (p. 25). Norms of citizenship, in their own right, can be assigned to the sphere of system morality where reciprocal commitment and the validity of norms and values are undisputed by actors of any given collectivity. Societies with a strong sense of citizenship are referred to as examples of system morality (p. 39). As Esser stresses, however, “system morality . . . can only develop as a result of efficient system control and circulating system trust” (p. 39). System trust is conceived of as “a diffuse and generalized trust in the proper functioning of the entire system and [which] is not related to single actors” (p. 38). The notion of this intimate relatedness between generalized or social trust, as system trust, and shared norms of citizenship, as a form of system morality, has been theoretically and empirically established in a considerable body of literature (Hooghe, 2003; Newton, 1997; Putnam, 1993, 2000), even though most of the authors have not particularly referred to Esser’s distinction as outlined above. Recent empirical studies (Gabriel, Kunz, Roßteutscher, & van Deth, 2002; Zmerli, 2002, 2008a) have, however, questioned this established wisdom. They have suggested that not every type of civic norm is underpinned by system or social trust. If, however, the interrelatedness of constitutive components of social capital turns out to be less clear-cut than widely assumed, an important part of the social capital (success) story would have to be rewritten.

Until now, social trust, for instance, has been assumed to strengthen civic virtues, such as solidarity or law abidingness. A positive impact on law abidingness is expected because individuals are believed to trust their fellow citizens to behave in accordance with the law, leading, subsequently, to a higher individual propensity to act in a similar manner. Furthermore, social involvement as the structural component of social capital is assumed to foster participatory orientations and critical skills, both of which are essential for citizens to take part in processes of democratic decision making. Yet despite these reservations, positive interrelationships between the components of system capital are generally expected. In light of recent empirical evidence, however, the existence of this general positive interrelatedness is in question (Gabriel et al., 2002; Zmerli, 2002, 2008b). The results show that although social trust and norms of social citizenship, such as solidarity or altruistic orientations, are, indeed, positively interrelated, norms of social order, such as law abidingness and disapproval of some types of free riding, can unveil negative relationships with social trust. These negative consequences of social capital become particularly visible when the impact of political trust on norms of citizenship is taken into account. As empirical analyses suggest, it is distrust in others that leads to a stronger emphasis of respecting the state’s authority by abiding by its laws and regulations provided that political institutions are deemed to be trustworthy. Or, in other words, a lack of system trust can go along with a stronger
orientation toward the state whose authority is required to compensate for this societal deficiency.

Given the undisputed importance of norms of citizenship for democratic societies (Dalton, 2008a, 2008b; Denters, Gabriel, & Torcal, 2007; Gabriel et al., 2002; Roßteutscher, 2004; van Deth, 2007), these are rather counterintuitive empirical findings. In this article, the specific nature of the relationship between social involvement in voluntary associations and social trust, on one hand, and norms of social citizenship, social order, autonomy, and participation, on the other, is under empirical scrutiny. As a result of discrepancies between the theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence, the particular focus of this investigation is on the potential negative relationships that, subsequently, are considered to be the “dark sides” of social capital.

In the following section, a conceptualization of norms of citizenship is presented. Next, we describe the data sets used and the methods applied and discuss the empirical validity of the concept of norms of citizenship. A comparative approach is chosen to scrutinize the context dependency of the interrelationship of these components of social capital. In the following section, major empirical findings are presented and discussed. In the concluding section, the main aspects of the “dark sides” of social capital are summarized, and an outline of their theoretical consequences is presented.

Social Capital and Norms of Citizenship—Empirical Challenges to Theoretical Concepts

What does it mean to be a “good citizen,” what are the prerequisites, and why should one bother about norms of citizenship at all? Although some of these issues have already been largely addressed in debates of political philosophy dating back to Aristotle, others have been the focus of only recent empirical research (Dalton, 2008a, 2008b; Denters et al., 2007; van Deth, 2007). Diverse strands of political theory suggest different answers to these questions, emphasizing solidarity and tolerance, the authority of the state, public participation, or individual autonomy. Regardless of its specific theoretical emphasis, however, citizenship can be defined as “a set of norms of what people think people should do as good citizens” (Dalton, 2008a, p. 78). These norms define an individual’s situation in society. Accordingly, they either specify the relation between an individual and her fellow citizens or her relation toward political institutions (Denters et al., 2007, p. 90).

On theoretical grounds, four distinct norm dimensions can be distinguished. The norm of participation, encompassing a broad range of civic engagement, substantiates the meaning of democratic citizenship. Participating in public debates, casting one’s vote, or trying to exert an impact on processes of political decision making by other legitimate means ensure that basic democratic principles are adhered to (Dalton, 2008a, p. 78). Furthermore, the norm of autonomy “implies that good citizens should be sufficiently informed about government to exercise a participatory role” (Dalton, 2008a, pp. 78-79). Being self-critical, discussing politics with others, and attempting to understand their views represent the core elements of the norm of autonomy. The
willingness to accept the authority of the state by abiding by the law and refraining from other harmful behavior—a precondition for peaceful and stable democratic societies—is reflected by the norm of social order. If both the rule of law and the legitimacy of the state are challenged by its citizenry, meaningful political discourse is at risk, too (Dalton, 2008a, p. 79). Finally, the norm of social citizenship is perceived to be of particular importance as well. Following T. H. Marshall, there exists a “trilogy of citizenship” that is based on economic, political, and social rights. They range from safety and a minimum of substance to “a bond of a different kind, a direct sense of community membership based upon loyalty to a civilization which is in common possession” (Marshall, 1950, pp. 40-41). Social rights, therefore, include social services that provide resources indispensable for the adherence to democratic principles such as political equality and participation. Consequently, social citizenship reflects an ethical and moral obligation toward others (Dalton, 2008a, p. 79).

Turning to the precursors of norms of citizenship in general and to the function of social capital in particular reveals, first and foremost, strong theoretical claims. In his theoretical account of the concept of social capital, Putnam stresses the interrelationship among social involvement, social trust, and norms of citizenship such as habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public spiritedness. According to this concept, people who are trustful and socially engaged support civic norms more strongly than do nonmembers or nontrusters (Putnam, 1993, pp. 86-87). Furthermore, Putnam argues that belonging to “bridging” groups (social networks encompassing people across diverse social cleavages) enhances a number of important personal traits such as civic norms (2000, p. 22). In addition, the organizational structure of groups is believed to be influential. While horizontally structured associations will help create a “good citizen,” vertically run organizations do not perform as “schools of democracy” (Putnam, 1993). Apart from the associational structure, group goals should also make a difference in determining whether social activists’ civic norms and virtues are bolstered. As Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) observed, the strengthening of democratic values can be expected “if the group’s goals are democratic, politically oriented, and tolerant of others” (p. 239). Warren (2001) made a similar claim, arguing that associations striving for public material and inclusive social or interpersonal identity goods are particularly strong promoters of civic virtues.

Despite these strong claims that are all based on the assumption that social involvement and social trust induce civic norms, some criticisms have also been raised. Rosenblum (1998), for instance, put into question this so-called “transmission belt” model of civil society that refers to the idea that “the beneficial formative effects of association spill over from one sphere to another” (p. 48).

In view of these opposing theoretical positions, all the more importance is assigned to empirical studies that help to unveil the interrelationship among social engagement, social trust, and norms of citizenship. However, before turning to the inspection of their interrelatedness, an examination of the distribution of the norms of citizenship outlined above shows largely consistent patterns among European and U.S. citizens. As it turns out, norms of social order and autonomy are strongly supported by citizens...
throughout Europe and the United States. Although norms of social citizenship are also considered to be an important prerequisite for being a “good citizen,” they are less supported, and this is particularly true for Eastern Europe. Norms of participation, on the other hand, show the largest variation across countries and the lowest average values. Although the duty to vote is strongly supported across Europe and the United States, civic engagement is much less perceived as an important attribute of a “good citizen” (Dalton, 2008a, 2008b; Denters et al., 2007; Roßteutscher, 2004).

In scrutinizing the interrelatedness among social involvement, social trust, and norms of citizenship, Denters et al. (2007) detected that different forms of social involvement and social trust are only weakly interrelated with norms of autonomy and social order. This pattern, however, contrasts with the finding that norms of social citizenship are more strongly linked with social capital, albeit still to a limited extent and with considerable country-specific variances. Among the social capital indicators, social trust turns out to be the strongest and most consistent antecedent of norms of citizenship (Denters et al., 2007, pp. 99-102).

In an attempt to trace the democratic effects of membership in voluntary associations and the importance of group goals Glover, Shinew, and Parry (2005) showed that the intensity of civic engagement as well as a leisure-oriented context induce civic norms. Maloney, van Deth, and Roßteutscher (2008), however, who examined associational effects, found that “it is affiliation per se, not the local context, the level of involvement, or the size or type of group that matters” (p. 284, italics added).

By contrast, the results based on the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey show that ethnically highly diverse communities are associated with lower levels of social trust, a smaller likelihood of participating in the community, and a weaker propensity to cooperate, suggesting that there is a negative impact of heterogeneous social networks on civic virtues (Putnam, 2007). In a similar vein, Gabriel et al. (2002, pp. 88-89) as well as the author of this article have exposed the negative consequences of social capital for norms of citizenship (Zmerli, 2002, 2008a, pp. 236-240). Although social trust and norms of social citizenship are, indeed, mostly positively interrelated, norms of social order and social capital only rarely depict statistically significant and positive relationships. In particular, recent studies have suggested that one important promoter of norms of citizenship that might help to enhance the notion about when exactly social capital casts its clouds has been neglected so far in empirical analyses (Zmerli, 2002, 2008a). As these analyses show, political trust is also strongly interrelated with norms of citizenship. As mentioned above, civic norms either specify the relationship between an individual and her fellow citizens or her relationship with political institutions. One’s relationship with political institutions is likely to be affected by the trustworthiness of these institutions. In addition, Barbera and Albano (2009) demonstrate in their article in this issue how different types of welfare regimes influence one’s willingness to provide informal social help to others, thus directly affecting the relations among citizens themselves. In our specific case of interest, putting trust in political actors and institutions as well as in the police and the courts strongly and positively affects norms of social order and social citizenship (Zmerli,
Amer. Behavioral Scientist 53(5) 2008a, pp. 236-240). In the case of norms of social order, however, it seems as if distrust in others increases the likelihood to attribute more importance to state authority, especially when political institutions and actors are perceived to be trustworthy. Without including this important predictor of norms of citizenship in empirical analyses, however, this “dark” side of social capital remains mostly undetected.

Accordingly, and in light of their research strategy, it is not surprising that Denters et al.’s (2007) study, which was based on the European Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy survey (CID) neither disclosed nor discussed possible negative relationships between social trust and norms of social order.10 Notwithstanding, norms of social order and political trust are mutually interdependent. Although political trust increases an individual’s propensity to abide by laws and regulations and avoid free-riding behavior, norms of social order likewise increase a citizen’s willingness to put trust in political institutions and actors (Zmerli, 2008b).

In sum, both the theoretical assessments as well as the empirical evidence sketch a rather incoherent picture of the interrelatedness of social engagement, social trust, and norms of citizenship. Even though social involvement and social trust are generally assumed to promote civic virtues, the insights presented above suggest, first, that their effects vary according to different norm dimensions and, second, that the structural and cultural elements of social capital might also differ in terms of the impact they exert.

From a theoretical point of view, no significant and negative relationships between social trust and our four norm dimensions can yet be assumed, even though recent empirical findings provide some counterevidence. Nevertheless, social trust should exert a stronger impact on norms of social citizenship with “showing solidarity” as a core element than on norms of autonomy. In addition, varying degrees of social involvement are expected to make a difference with regard to the strengthening of norms of citizenship. Where face-to-face communication within associations and social activities is present, we would expect a positive influence on norms of social citizenship and participation. Accordingly, our assumptions can be categorized along two lines. Because no plausible arguments are available as to why social trust or social involvement should significantly overshadow the development of norms of citizenship, no noteworthy negative relationships are expected. Empirically, however, numerous studies suggest that the impact of social capital does, first, indeed vary in accordance with the respective norm dimensions and that, second, even negative effects can exist (Denters et al., 2007; Gabriel et al., 2002). The latter is particularly true for norms of social order (Zmerli, 2008a). In accordance with the arguments presented above, social capital’s negative consequences should, therefore, come to light when examining norms of social order and are expected to be particularly accentuated when the impact of political trust is controlled for.

However, social capital is not the foremost predictor of norms of citizenship. Other relevant determinants have been detected in recent studies. As Dalton (2008b, p. 51) observed for the United States, age, income, religious attachments, and a Republican party identification significantly increase one’s so-called norm dimension of citizen
duty, while being an African American constrains it. Civic virtues referring to an engaged citizenship, on the other hand, are fostered by education, belonging to a racial minority, and religious attachments, whereas age, income, and a Republican party identification significantly and negatively affect this norm dimension. Similar relationships are disclosed by Denters et al. (2007, pp. 104-105) for a range of European countries. However, the assumption being put forward by Putnam (2000) that excessive exposure to television should exert a negative effect on norms of citizenship is only partly supported by Denters et al.’s empirical evidence.

**Data and Measurement**

The subsequent empirical analyses are based on three different population surveys. The European CID survey, carried out in 2001, covers 13 European societies. It collected information about eight different norms of citizenship, and respondents were invited to place themselves on an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 (not at all important) to 10 (very important). The questions read as follows:

As you know, there are different opinions as to what it takes to be a good citizen. I would therefore like to ask you to examine the characteristics listed on the card. Looking at what you personally think, how important is it:

A. To show solidarity with people who are worse off than yourself
B. To vote in public elections
C. Never to try to evade taxes
D. To form your own opinion, independently of others
E. Always to obey laws and regulations
F. To be active in organizations
G. To think of others more than yourself
H. To subject your own opinions to critical examination?

Items A and G reflect norms of social citizenship, whereas Items B and F represent norms of participation. Items C and E depict norms of social order, whereas Items D and H represent norms of autonomy. This four-dimensional norm concept was also empirically validated. We ran a confirmatory principal component analysis fixed on four factors that were meant to reflect the four dimensions of norms of citizenship outlined in the second section. However, “voting in public elections” was apparently multidimensional. It could not be clearly assigned either to norms of participation or to norms of social order and was therefore excluded from further analyses. The findings suggest that this fourfold dimensionality is found in most countries. Although in several countries some norm dimensions depict an interrelatedness (also see Denters et al., 2007), it is only in Portugal where one norm dimension, the norm of participation, cannot be predominantly assigned to the questionnaire item “being active in organizations.”
In addition, the European CID measures various forms of social engagement in a number of voluntary associations. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had been a member of, been socially involved in, donated to, or participated in voluntary work for one or more organizations during the past 12 months.\textsuperscript{18} The survey also included the well-known social trust question. Respondents were asked to place themselves on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (\textit{can’t be too careful}) to 10 (\textit{most people can be trusted}).\textsuperscript{19} Finally, the survey measured several items of political trust. Respondents were asked to place themselves on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (\textit{no trust at all}) to 10 (\textit{very strong trust}). Based on the responses to these political trust items, an index of political trust is constructed.\textsuperscript{20}

In many respects, the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) replicates the European CID questions.\textsuperscript{21} Nevertheless, some noteworthy differences do exist. First, the ESS was carried out in 2003 in 22 countries.\textsuperscript{22} Second, the ESS collected only six norms of citizenship compared to the eight norms in the European CID. In addition to the European CID, the ESS asked respondents how important it is to be active in politics and did not ask questions related to paying taxes, being self-critical, or thinking of others more than oneself. Unfortunately, the question wordings of the importance of solidarity question in the ESS and the European CID are not identical. The ESS questions read as follows:

To be a good citizen, how important would you say it is for a person to

\begin{itemize}
  \item A. Support people who are worse off than themselves
  \item B. Vote in elections
  \item C. Always obey laws and regulations
  \item D. Form their own opinion, independently of others
  \item E. Be active in voluntary organizations
  \item F. Be active in politics?
\end{itemize}

Item A reflects norms of social citizenship. Items B, E, and F represent norms of participation. Item C reflects the norm of social order, and Item D represents norms of autonomy. As in the European CID, this four-dimensional concept was empirically validated in the ESS.\textsuperscript{23} Again, a confirmatory principal component analysis was executed, and “voting in elections” was dropped from the overall set of available norm items. With the exception of norms of social citizenship in Italy, this four-dimensional concept is found in all countries.\textsuperscript{24} Although especially the dimension of norms of social citizenship shows some interrelatedness with “being active in voluntary organizations,” the defining norm items always reveal the highest factor loadings.\textsuperscript{25}

The empirical findings are also based on the U.S. CID survey, which was carried out in 2005. Because an important criterion of the U.S. CID survey design was to compare the data to the first wave of the ESS, there are differences neither in the question wordings nor in their measurement.\textsuperscript{26} Therefore, the findings based on this survey...
are included in the overview of the ESS results (Table 2), even though these two surveys were carried out at different points in time.

**Social Capital and Norms of Citizenship—An Ambiguous Relationship?**

According to Putnam (1993), civic communities rich in social capital draw on citizens who are likely to be interested in the common good, trustful, tolerant, cooperative, politically interested and active, and endowed with norms of citizenship. For that reason, it would be counterintuitive to expect any negative relationships among social involvement, social trust, and civic norms. As outlined in the second section, however, these relationships are not unambiguous at all. Especially, norms of social order and social trust may oppose rather than reinforce each other. In addition, the inclusion of political trust as another predictor of norms of citizenship is expected to highlight this particular interrelatedness even further.

The multiple regression analyses presented below, therefore, focus on the specific nature of the relationship among social involvement, social trust, and the four dimensions of norms of citizenship outlined above. Because we are predominantly interested in testing whether including political trust as another determinant into our explanatory models results in a more accurate depiction of these relationships, we proceed in a stepwise manner. First, we present and discuss the impact of social involvement and social trust on the four norm dimensions, thereby focusing on possible “dark sides.” We control for age, gender, years of education, church attendance, Left–Right placement, and time of exposure to TV (Model 1). In the second step, we inspect whether and in what ways including political trust as an additional predictor brings about a more accurate notion about our case in point (Model 2).

The first model (based on the European CID survey) shows that social involvement, social trust, and norms of citizenship are, in none of the 13 units of analysis, significantly and negatively related with each other (Table 1). Even though negative coefficients are found in a few countries, none of them reach statistical significance. In addition, both social involvement and social trust turn out to be relevant predictors of norms of citizenship, though to varying degrees.

Although social involvement is a robust determinant of norms of participation (with two interesting exceptions), social trust is a strong determinant of norms of social citizenship, autonomy, and participation. Including political trust as another predictor (Model 2) results in interesting changes, yet it does not disclose significant and negative coefficients. Only the coefficients of social trust change when political trust is included as another determinant, and in most cases this is true for norms of social order as dependent variables. Rather than revealing social capital’s “dark sides,” however, social trust is solely losing its statistical explanatory power. With the exception of Norway, social trust now does not exert any influence whatsoever on norms of social order. On the other hand, the impact of social involvement is not affected by the inclusion of political trust in any of the countries. Nonetheless, being socially active
Table 1. Social Involvement, Social Trust, and Norms of Citizenship: Ordinary Least Squares regressions, European Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Survey

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Note: Entries are beta coefficients based on the calculation of the full models and weighted data. For control variables, operationalization, and coding, see Section 3 and Notes 18 and 20. Countries are depicted according to their international abbreviation and are ordered alphabetically.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
does not convincingly perform as a precondition of norms of social order either. Even though some significant and positive effects are revealed, the majority of the coefficients are either insignificant or even negative. These findings do not depict the “dark sides” of social capital, but they clearly do not support most theoretical expectations outlined in Section 2 either.

In pursuit of uncovering systematic negative consequences of social capital, the findings based on the first wave of the ESS and the U.S. CID surveys (Table 2) depict a more concise picture than the European CID findings. At first, however, the ESS data by and large replicate the European CID findings. Social involvement is most important in predicting norms of participation, whereas social trust is a relevant predictor of norms of social citizenship and participation (with the exception of Slovenia). However, some significant though admittedly not particularly alarming “dark sides” of social capital are disclosed even without controlling for the influence of political trust (Model 1). Interestingly, this is twice the case for Slovenia. Civic norms relating to an individual’s autonomy, however, are considerably less positively affected by social trust than the European CID findings suggested. With the inclusion of political trust as another determinant of norms of citizenship, the outcome of the multiple regression analyses differs remarkably (Model 2). First, in only 1 out of 88 possible cases does political trust affect the impact of social involvement as a predictor of civic norms to a remarkable extent. This finding is contrasted by its impact on social trust as a promoter of norms of citizenship in 30 cases. Second, it is with regard to norms of social order and participation where the inclusion of political trust induces most of the observable changes. Scrutinizing social capital’s “dark sides” clearly provides the systematic negative relationships we were searching for in the realm of norms of social order. In particular, social trust figures as an impediment to this norm dimension. In half of the cases, it significantly and negatively affects the dependent variable. Interestingly, this negative impact of social trust also contrasts with the significant and positive influence of social involvement in Austria, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. By and large, these negative relationships between social trust and norms of social order are contradicted only by Italy. Given the consistency of the results, social capital seems to cast its clouds on norms of social order irrespective of the political or societal context. Although the strength of its negative impact is limited, its apparently systematic presence calls basic assumptions about the benign effects of social capital into question.

A few statistically significant “dark sides” of social trust can also be found in the sphere of norms of autonomy. With regard to norms of participation, on the other hand, we do not observe similar statistically significant negative consequences of social trust but rather a tendency to lose its predictive power.

By contrast—and just as social capital theory predicts—social involvement acts as a promoter of norms of autonomy and participation.

In conclusion, as diverse as the norms’ objects of reference are, so is the function of social involvement and social trust as their precursors diverse. First and foremost, their impact is more important for norms of social citizenship and participation than for norms of social order and autonomy. In addition, it is also necessary to separately
## Table 2. Social Involvement, Social Trust, and Norms of Citizenship, Ordinary Least Squares regressions, European Social Survey and U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy

| Social citizenship | AT | BE | DK | EG | ES | FI | FR | GB | GR | HU | IE | IL | IT | LU | NL | NO | PL | PT | SE | SI | USA | WG |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Model 1**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .09*** | .09*** | .07* | .06 | .09*** | .06* | .11*** | .08*** | -.03 | .06* | .05* | .05* | .12*** | .06 | -.02 | .07*** | .04 | .04 | .04 | -.10** | .11*** | -.02 |
| Involvement       | .04 | -.01 | .02 | .05 | .15*** | .05* | .01 | .05* | .08*** | .05 | .01 | .01 | .10*** | -.02 | .07*** | .05* | .05* | .12*** | .05* | .00 | .13*** | .06** |
| **Model 2**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .06* | .07** | .04 | .03 | .08*** | .01 | .09*** | .06* | -.03 | .01 | .04 | .05* | .10*** | .01 | -.03 | .05* | .03 | .03 | .01 | -.11*** | .09* | -.03 |
| Involvement       | .04 | -.02 | .02 | .05 | .14*** | .05* | .01 | .05* | .08*** | .05 | .01 | .01 | .10*** | -.03 | .07*** | .04 | .05* | .13*** | .05* | .00 | .13*** | .06* |
| **Social order**  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| **Model 1**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | -.04 | .02 | .04 | .04 | .00 | .07*** | .02 | -.05* | .00 | .02 | .05* | -.03 | .17*** | .01 | -.03 | .02 | -.02 | -.03 | .00 | -.03 | .01 | -.01 | -.02 |
| Involvement       | -.06* | .02 | -.06* | .01 | .11*** | .01 | -.01 | .07*** | .05* | .04 | .01 | .02 | .08* | .01 | .08*** | .00 | .03 | .11*** | .01 | .02 | -.01 | .01 |
| **Model 2**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | -.08** | -.06* | .01 | -.02 | -.05 | -.04 | -.06* | -.10*** | -.03 | -.02 | .01 | -.04 | .15*** | -.08* | -.10*** | -.05* | -.04 | -.05 | -.08*** | -.08* | -.07* | -.07** |
| Involvement       | .07*** | .01 | -.06* | .00 | .11*** | .01 | -.02 | .06* | .05* | .04 | .01 | .02 | .08* | .01 | .06*** | -.02 | .03 | .11*** | -.02 | .01 | -.01 | -.01 |
| **Autonomy**      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| **Model 1**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .03 | -.01 | .09*** | -.04 | -.03 | .00 | -.02 | -.04 | -.05* | .00 | .01 | -.01 | .13*** | .00 | -.04 | -.04 | -.03 | -.02 | .03 | -.04 | .08* | .00 |
| Involvement       | .08*** | .10*** | -.04 | .03 | .12*** | .00 | .02 | .10*** | .09*** | .09*** | .06* | .01 | .12*** | .06* | .03 | .05* | .07*** | .03 | .06* | .17*** | .06* | -.03 | .08* | .11*** |
| **Model 2**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .03 | -.02 | .08*** | -.04 | -.04 | -.04 | -.04 | -.05* | -.07** | -.01 | .00 | -.01 | .12*** | -.01 | -.05* | .05* | -.04 | .04 | -.02 | .05 | -.06 | .01 |
| Involvement       | .08*** | .10*** | -.04 | .03 | .12*** | .00 | .02 | .09*** | .09*** | .09*** | .05* | .01 | .11*** | .06* | .02 | .05* | .07*** | .03 | .17*** | .06* | -.03 | .07* | .11*** |
| **Participation** |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| **Model 1**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .09*** | .04 | .04 | .02 | .13*** | .12*** | .11*** | .06* | .00 | .08*** | .05* | .13*** | .14*** | .00 | .07*** | .02 | -.01 | .04 | -.05* | -.07* | .15*** | .05* |
| Involvement       | .14*** | .11*** | .13*** | .09*** | .12*** | .13*** | .25*** | .14*** | .24*** | .18*** | .06* | .09*** | .10*** | .18*** | .16*** | .10*** | .19*** | .11*** | .10*** | .21*** | .25*** |
| **Model 2**       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Social trust      | .04 | .00 | .00 | -.02 | .11*** | .03 | .05 | .00 | -.02 | .04 | .01 | .09*** | .11*** | -.03 | .01 | -.03 | -.04 | -.07* | -.01 | -.11*** | .10*** | .02 |
| Involvement       | .15*** | .10*** | .13*** | .29*** | .12*** | .13*** | .25*** | .14*** | .24*** | .18*** | .05* | .08*** | .09*** | .17*** | .14*** | .09*** | .20*** | .10*** | .10*** | .21*** | .24*** |

Note: Entries are beta coefficients based on the calculation of the full models and weighted data. Significant and negative coefficients are in bold. For control variables, operationalization, and coding, see Section 3 and Notes 25 and 26. Countries are depicted according to their international abbreviation and are ordered alphabetically.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
scrutinize how, and to what extent, the structural and cultural elements of social capital affect civic norms. Moreover, Putnam’s original theoretical claims about social capital’s overall benign effects are not supported by the findings depicted in Tables 1 and 2. Taking the impact of political trust into account, on the other hand, contributed, indeed, to the disclosure of systematic negative consequences of social capital.

In sum, the empirical findings detected so far pose a series of questions. Certainly, the most striking one pertains to the consistency of results over time and/or across measurement instruments. Although the empirical insights drawn from the European CID survey do not support the assumption of systematic statistically significant negative relationships especially between social trust and norms of citizenship, the consistency of significant and negative coefficients across countries detected in the ESS and the U.S. CID is striking.

The difference in results between the European CID, on one hand, and the ESS and U.S. CID, on the other, is all the more confusing given the methodological similarities of both CID surveys and the ESS as well as the short time period of less than two years between the fieldwork of the European CID survey and the ESS, and this phenomenon surely asks for explanation. Apart from scrutinizing effects that could possibly stem from questionnaire bias, another research strategy could aim at inquiring about composition effects that might be the result of differences in the distribution of gender, age, or years of education between these surveys. To investigate this further, Table 3 presents multiple regression analyses of those countries that were included in both the European CID and the ESS. To test whether the differences in findings detected in Tables 1 and 2 reflect composition effects, we first pool the European CID and ESS data sets. Next, multiple regression models are designed to test the effects of our social capital indicators, age, gender, and years of education on norms of social order. They also include a dummy variable for the type of survey used. Where the dummy coefficients remain insignificant and the sociodemographic predictors disclose a statistically significant impact, composition effects could be present. With the exception of the Netherlands, however, the results suggest that the differences cannot be attributed to composition effects.

Another potential explanation for these differing results could be linked to the events of 9/11, which occurred right after most of the European CID surveys had been carried out and before data were collected for the ESS and the U.S. CID. Beyond doubt, these terrorist attacks targeting the United States had a decisive impact on domestic and foreign security and the defense policies of a large number of states. Hence, it seems plausible that in the aftermath of this world-shaking event a general strong need for security and protection emerged among many populations, which, subsequently, has prompted calls for a strong state that should be endowed with the power to enforce laws in an environment suddenly perceived as insecure. Certainly, this assumption is difficult to unequivocally substantiate, but it cannot be entirely dismissed either. For instance, in the United States there was an enormous increase in trust in government after the events of 9/11, reaching levels last attained in 1966 (Chanley, 2002). As Chanley (2002) pointed out, this high level of trust in government went along with high
levels of public support for expenditures on homeland security. We can, therefore, conclude that these terrorist attacks did at least directly affect Americans’ views of the role of the state. Likewise, in half of the European countries that are included in both the European CID and the ESS, an increase in political trust can be observed over this short period of time. By contrast, in the Netherlands, Slovenia, and West Germany, where there exists clear evidence of the “dark sides” of social capital, there is a decrease in political trust, and, concurrently, a drop in social trust. This could also account for the differences between the European CID and the ESS.

Conclusion

Given the general focus of this article, the detection of negative consequences of social capital, the empirical analyses have provided some astonishing insights. Despite the theoretically well-founded arguments about the generally benign effects of social capital on norms of social order, quite the contrary seems to be true. Especially the findings based on the ESS and the U.S. CID support the assumption that this norm dimension is rather strengthened by the distrust in one’s fellow citizens, which, at the same time, goes along with higher trust in political institutions. So it seems as if distrustful people develop norms of social order exactly because the “generalized other” cannot be trusted, thus promoting a strengthening of state regulations and support for the state. Social capital also appears to act negatively on norms of autonomy, albeit in a weaker and less consistent way. By contrast, norms of social citizenship and participation are significantly increased by social involvement and social trust. The differing influence

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Note: Entries are beta coefficients. Survey dummy is coded 0 = European CID and 1 = ESS. For Slovenia, no functionally equivalent variable for education was available for the European CID and the ESS.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.
of the structural and cultural components of social capital on norms of participation is particularly striking. Although social involvement figures as an indispensable determinant of norms of participation, social trust does much less so.

Even though the relationships outlined above do not hold in every country included in the analyses, they nevertheless depict a general pattern. What is remarkable is that this pattern is found in a wide range of diverse countries irrespective of the specific political or societal context. However, the two waves of surveys do not produce comparable results. Although the European CID does not point at a convincing systematic structure with regard to the negative consequences of social capital, both the ESS and the U.S. CID support the assumption that social trust and especially norms of social order are systematically and negatively related to each other. As outlined above, period effects could account for this change.

What consequences for the discussion of the “dark sides” of social capital result from these findings? Taking for granted that norms of social order are a precondition for accepting the authority of the state, which leads to the stability of democratic societies, the disclosed amount of significant and negative relationships between these civic norms and especially social trust has severe implications. From a theoretical perspective, it can be assumed that system trust does not increase citizens’ willingness to abide by the rules just because they simultaneously would put trust in the adequate behavior of their fellow citizens. Another explanation of this phenomenon, however, might be related to changing attitudes toward authorities in general and the authority of the state in particular. As values change worldwide (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), a growing number of citizens may not consider an unreflected obedience to the state as a value in itself. This does not imply, however, that they would not follow rules or behave as free riders. It could, rather, reflect the importance attributed to other civic norms such as self-reflection and autonomy. Yet without a doubt, this finding represents a remarkable constraint for social capital theory because it directly links the sphere of civil society to the functioning and stability of the political system.

Acknowledgments

I am particularly grateful to Jan W. van Deth for his instructive remarks and to Sigrid Roßteutscher, whose methodological and theoretical advice has also been incorporated into this article. Special thanks also go to Ofer Feldman, whose views on norms of citizenship and reciprocity inspired this work.

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Notes

1. For an introduction to this conceptualization of social capital, see Esser (2008).
2. In addition, Putnam (2000) mentions norms rejecting free riding, for example, “cheating on taxes, insurance claims, bank loan forms, and employment applications” (p. 137).
3. More differentiated approaches, however, suggest that associational features, such as groups’ goals, diversity of membership, and level of associational involvement, should also be taken into account to specify the consequences of civic engagement for citizens’ orientations and virtues (Maloney, van Deth, & Roßteutscher, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005).
4. In this regard, the European and U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Survey (CID) surveys as well as the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) include a wide range of countries. The CID network, responsible for the European CID, was funded by the European Science Foundation (for further information, see http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/cid/; van Deth, Montero, & Westholm, 2007). Data can be obtained from the Zentralarchiv in Cologne (Study 4492; http://info1.za.gesis.org/). For more information about the ESS, see http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/. For more information about the U.S. CID, refer to http://www.uscidsurvey.org/.
5. Dalton (2008a, pp. 78, 80) referred to both norms of political participation and norms of participation. Apart from voting in elections and being active in politics, the latter refers also to being active in voluntary organizations and is applied in the remainder of this article.
6. Also see Denters, Gabriel, and Torcal (2007) and van Deth (2007) for notions of citizenship that are only marginally different.
7. Also see Zmerli (2008a) for an empirical validation of Warren’s argument.
8. To empirically test the concept of norms of citizenship, Dalton (2008a, 2008b), Denters et al. (2007), and Roßteutscher (2004) used different data sets, chose different approaches, and came to different conclusions. Although Roßteutscher, basing her analyses on the first wave of the ESS, did not empirically validate her four dimensional norm concept, Denters et al., working with the European CID data set, clearly identified norms of social order, social citizenship, and autonomy across 13 European societies. Based on analyses of two U.S. population surveys (General Social Survey and U.S. CID), Dalton attempted to empirically validate this four-dimensional concept of norms of citizenship that resulted in a twofold differentiation between norms of citizen duty and norms of engaged citizenship.
9. Denters et al. (2007) referred to critical and deliberative principles, law abidingness, and solidarity, which can be assigned to the norm dimensions presented above. Their comparative study is based on the European CID survey.
10. Denters et al. (2007, pp. 100-105), first, did not control for the impact of political confidence on their three norm dimensions. Second, they decided to collapse these three norm dimensions into one single dependent variable, thereby giving up any meaningful differentiated analytical approach that could have accounted for the norm dimension’s potentially diverging preconditions.
is still considered to comprise two different societies, we subsequently discuss 13 societies rather than 12 countries.

12. These four norm dimensions are operationalized as indices by summing up the scores of the respective variables and dividing them by the number of valid answers.

13. Results are not presented here but can be made available on request.

14. A confirmatory approach of this technique of data reduction is chosen because an exploratory test of a four-dimensional theoretical concept requires a larger number of norm items. In a Swedish study on citizenship, however, Petersson, Hermansson, Micheletti, Teorell, and Westholm (1998, p. 129, cited in Roßteutscher, 2004, p. 182) chose an exploratory approach and empirically identified these four norm dimensions based on 16 norm items. The European Science Foundation CID research network that designed the European CID questionnaire based its selection of the eight norm items on the findings of this Swedish study. Instead of selecting four items per norm dimension as in the original study, the CID research network decided to reduce the indicators to two per dimension. The same is true for the ESS where the CID research network incorporated part of its CID questionnaire. However, three of the four dimensions (social citizenship, social order, and autonomy) are measured in the ESS by one single item only, whereas the norm of participation is measured by three items (in addition, “being politically active” is included; Roßteutscher, 2004, p. 182).

15. The same applies to the voting item in the principal component analyses based on the ESS and the U.S. CID survey.

16. The explained variances vary from 70% to 83%.

17. In other instances, though, where dimensional interrelatedness occurs, the defining norm items depict the highest factor loadings. This can mostly be observed with norms of participation and social citizenship.

18. The complete list of voluntary associations varies slightly by country. The common core questionnaire of the survey, however, covers the following organizations: sports club or outdoor activities club, youth association (e.g., scouts, youth clubs), environmental organization, association for animal rights or protection, peace organization, humanitarian aid or human rights organization, charity or social-welfare organization, association for medical patients, specific illnesses or addictions, association for the disabled, pensioners’ or retired persons’ organization, lodge or service clubs, political party, trade union, farmers’ organization, business or employers’ organization, investment club, professional organization, consumer association, parents’ association, cultural, musical, dancing or theatre society, other hobby club or society, automobile organization, residents’, housing, or neighborhood association, immigrants’ organization, religious or church organization, women’s organization, association for war victims, veterans, or ex-servicemen, and other club or association. Based on this information, a variable for social involvement is created where 0 = no social involvement, 1 = passive membership, and 2 = socially active. Participation, donation, and/or doing voluntary work for at least one of these associations are assigned to Category 2. Accordingly, the individual amount of social engagement is not reflected in this variable of social involvement. Respondents with an active engagement in only one voluntary association would be assigned to Category 2 just as would a respondent with activities in 10 voluntary associations.
19. The question reads as follows: “I would now like to ask you some questions about how you view other people. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”
20. They comprise trust in the municipal board, cabinet, political parties, national parliament, courts, civil service, police, politicians, European Union, and the United Nations. Because these items are strongly interrelated with each other (see Zmerli, Newton, & Montero, 2007), political confidence is operationalized as an index by summing up the scores of the respective political trust items and dividing them by the number of valid answers.
21. See Note 14.
22. The countries included were Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. In the subsequent analyses, the Czech Republic and Switzerland are excluded because of missing data on social involvement. As before, Germany is treated as two different societies in the analyses.
23. Results are not presented here but can be made available on request.
24. The explained variances vary from 88% to 95%.
25. Further differences between the various studies should be noted. As in the European CID, the ESS asks the respondents about their social involvement during the past 12 months. However, the whole European CID range of voluntary associations was not included in the ESS. Respondents are asked whether they have been a member of one of the following organizations during the past 12 months: sports club or club for outdoor activities, organizations for cultural or hobby activities, trade union, business, professional, or farmers’ organization, consumer or automobile organization, organization for humanitarian aid, human rights, minorities, or immigrants, organization for environmental protection, peace, or animal rights, religious or church organization, political party, organization for science, education, or teachers and parents, social club, club for the young, the retired or elderly, women, or friendly societies, and any other voluntary organization. The social involvement variable is operationalized in the same way as the respective European CID variable (see Note 18). Finally, and in accordance with the European CID, the ESS comprises the same measurement instrument for social and political trust. The political trust items tapped by the ESS comprise trust in a country’s parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians, the European Parliament, and the United Nations.
26. In addition to the voluntary associations listed in the ESS, the U.S. CID includes the following: neighborhood or homeowners associations, veterans organizations, nationality or racial groups, self-improvement or self-help groups, and organizations that provide social services to the needy. For obvious reasons, the U.S. CID does not include the item of confidence in the European Parliament. As is shown in Table 2, the four-dimensional concept of norms of citizenship can also be detected in the United States.
27. We restrict the presentation and discussion, however, to our social capital components only.
28. This is the case for norms of social citizenship in Norway.
29. Although in the European CID the questions pertaining to norms of citizenship are listed after questions pertaining to political trust and satisfaction with democracy in one’s country, they are listed after questions pertaining to social trust in the ESS.
30. This is true for Denmark, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland (which was excluded from the ESS analyses because of missing values for the social involvement variable). These findings are not included here.

References


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