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Social Capital and Diversity

Social Cohesion and Regimes of Diversity

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Abstract
In recent years, an impressive amount of evidence has been collected, documenting a negative relationship between levels of ethnic diversity and social capital indicators, in particular generalized trust. Looking at the definition and the theoretical development of trust, however, it can be argued that this relation is to some extent tautological, given the fact that the development of trust itself requires predictability and familiarity. Second, it is argued that in order to arrive at a better understanding of the relation between diversity and social capital, at least three intermediary variables need to be taken into account: 1) the question whether diversity entails segregation of networks at the individual level; 2) the increase in diversity rather than the absolute level; 3) the regimes societies use to govern diversity, and especially the variation with regard to the openness of these regimes. Finally it can be argued, that the insistence on social trust presupposes homogeneous societies, while this form of social capital apparently is less adapted to more diverse societies. Under such circumstances, recognition of group differences and identities, and group relations based on equality-based concepts of reciprocity seem to be more meaningful strategies, rather than to rely on the 'thick' moral norm of generalized trust.

1. Introduction

One of the most troubling findings in current social capital research is the fact that survey investigations routinely depict a negative relation between social capital measurements and indicators for ethnic and cultural diversity within a society (Delhey & Newton 2004). Although some researchers also show other evidence, at least with regard to certain indicators, it seems clear that, diversity certainly does not lead to strengthening trust levels in society (Marshall & Stolle 2004). Diversity might, in some cases, have a positive impact on the likelihood of political participation, but the same kind of effect certainly cannot be observed for social trust (Oliver 2000; Costa & Kahn 2003). The finding is particularly troubling since we know that diversity is increasing in most contemporary democracies, while, both because of labour market pressures, as of demographic trends, we can also predict with a high degree of confidence that this form of diversity will further increase in the decades ahead. For most developed countries, the most likely scenario is that relatively large flows of migration during the next decades will further strengthen the multicultural character of society (Cornelius & Rosenblum 2005). If the negative relation between social capital indicators and ethnic diversity would be confirmed by future research, this would indeed spell trouble for the stability and the cohesion of Western societies.

The current line of research on social capital and diversity, however, also poses conceptual and theoretical challenges for the way the concept of social capital is routinely used. An often-heard line of criticism questions the normative assumptions underlying the social capital research line, that is accused of referring mainly to closed, homogeneous and traditional societies (Stolle & Hooghe 2005). This seems to be the case especially with regard to the concept of generalized trust, that is depicted as being at the heart of the social capital complex. The development of generalized trust, i.e., a basic form of trust extending to all members of society, can be taken to imply a thick value consensus within a society (Seligman, 1997; Cohen, 1999). Citizens will be more likely to express trust in their fellow-citizens if there is a certain degree of resemblance between the members of a society. Liberal

critics of the social capital literature have claimed therefore, that the insistence on generalized trust and social capital in general, refers mainly to homogeneous societies, while it tends to neglect the role of intra-societal diversity and conflict. Within the social capital literature the absence of generalized trust is usually interpreted as an indicator for social disintegration; critics, on the other hand, argue that distrust might as well be seen as a consequence of inequality and conflict within society.

The negative relation between diversity and social capital, therefore, should not come as a surprise: if we first define social capital in a way that inherently refers specifically to closed and homogeneous societies, the conclusion that diversity has a negative impact on social capital is almost tautological. Rather than to assume that social capital serves as a universal and constant source of social cohesion, it makes more sense to assume that various type of social capital will be found in various kind of societies. While in societies with high levels of homogeneity a thick, trust-based form of social capital would seem to flourish abundantly, this most probably is not the case for societies that are characterised by higher levels of diversity.

In this paper, we first put forward the claim that research on the relation between generalized trust and social diversity suffers from a tautological confusion. Given the way generalized trust is being defined in the literature, the relation between trust and diversity can only be negative (Macedo 1999). Current research, therefore, to some extent misses the point: what is being portrayed as a direct consequence of diversity, in fact calls for a more fine-grained study on what are the precise mechanisms at work. While the current assumption seems to be that, inevitably, and no matter what the circumstances are, diversity will have this negative impact on social capital, it should be acknowledged that societies have developed various ways of dealing with diversity. While in some societies ethnic minorities receive few opportunities to express their identity, and to interact on an equal footing with the dominant groups in society, other societies offer better opportunities to express group identities, relying on open access regimes for managing diversity (Koopmans & Statham 2000).

Therefore, rather than to lament the negative relation between heterogeneity and trust, it would make more sense to focus on the precise circumstances under which we would assume

that diversity will have stronger or weaker effects on social capital. More specifically this refers to the degree of segregation that results from conditions of diversity, the timing and intensity of diversity trends, and the regimes of diversity that are being employed by a society or a political system.

We can even take the argument a step further, by arguing that the negative relation between diversity and social capital to a large extent revives a discussion that was prevalent within political science during the 1950s, and that was based on the question how political system can maintain stability and cohesion, given the presence of fundamental differences and cleavages among the population. The classical solution to this problem was already suggested in the 1960s studies by Arend Lijphart, demonstrating how diverse societies succeed in maintaining their stability by developing various ways of power-sharing, based on a recognition of group differences and rights. Most of the current research on social capital and diversity seem to depart from the same basic assumption that was underlying the research in the 1950s, i.e., that societies can only maintain their stability and identity, if the social structure is based on homogeneity and a common allegiance to this identity. If we include the insights offered by the contemporary literature on multiculturalism and diversity, on the other hand, we can more readily make the claim that what we are observing is not the result of diversity as such, but rather of the lack of recognition of group identity in diverse settings. Not just from a policy point of view, but also for theoretical reasons it is important to make a distinction between these two elements.

2. The Origins of Trust

More than twenty years ago, Bernard Barber (1983) opened his book on *The Logic and Limits of Trust* with the observation: "Today nearly everyone seems to be talking about "trust". Presidential candidates, political columnists, pollsters, social critics, moral philosophers, and the man in the street all use the word freely and earnestly" (Barber 1983, 1). Since that time, academic and social interest in trust has continued to surge, and books on this topic now fill entire library shelves (e.g., Kramer & Tyler 1996; Warren 1999a; Hardin

2002; Uslaner 2002; Cook 2001; Ostrom & Walker 2002; Seligman 1997; Gambetta 1988a). Especially following the success of Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and the subsequent rise in social capital studies, trust has come to the forefront of current social and political science research. In this study, Putnam argued that social capital, i.e. "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks (…) can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993, 167). In subsequent studies, trust is routinely referred to as the most important element within the social capital complex. Trust facilitates better and smoother cooperation between actors because transaction and monitoring costs are being reduced. Trust has even been described as a universal lubricant, allowing the wheels of society to run smoothly (Arrow 1972; Stolle 2001).

However, the insistence on trust as a central component of social capital, also implies various problematic consequences. The claim that generalized trust is what actually allows a society to function, tends to obscure the internal divisions and struggles within a society. We know from empirical research that the dominant groups in society are characterized by higher trust levels than marginalized groups, and this should not come as a surprise. In effect, marginalized groups, whether with regard to gender, language or ethnicity, objectively have fewer reasons to express trust in society as a whole, since they are more likely to have experienced various forms of domination and marginalization (Williams 1998). Newton (1999, 185) therefore notes: "Social trust is most strongly expressed (…) by the winners in society, in so far as it correlates most strongly with education, satisfaction with life, income, class, and race. For that matter, social trust is the prerogative of the winners in the world". Given this skewed distribution of trust levels throughout society, it can be argued that at least some questions can be raised with regard to the allegedly universal character of trust as a social lubricant.

Contrary to what is assumed in most contemporary studies on social capital, therefore, generalized trust should not be considered as an attitude that entails just positive consequences for a community. On the one hand, trust also clearly functions as a mechanism of social control, as dominant groups within a society have more resources available allowing them to express trust than marginalized groups have. Second, trust could even be taken to

serve as an instrument of cultural hegemony, obscuring internal divisions and pluralism within a society. The insistence on generalized trust, extending toward *all* groups of the population, pays no attention to the argument that some disadvantaged groups of society simply have fewer reasons to develop trust in society.

When analysing the concept of generalized trust more closely, the only conclusion can be that, by itself, it refers to resemblance, predictability and closure of social networks. Various accounts on the nature and the emergence of trust have been developed in social psychology, political science and economy. The main division line in theories on the origins of trust is based on the distinction between, on the one hand approaches perceiving trust to be a context-dependent or even rationally informed decision, and on the other hand those considering it to be a rather stable personality trait or even a moral value (Kramer 1999; Stolle 2000; Uslaner 2002). Within the first approach, trust is seen as an instrumental decision, and some authors even think of it as a form of encapsulated interest (Hardin, 2001, 3). The second approach relies more clearly on psychological insights and argues that trust can be seen as a more general attitude or disposition, without any reference to specific actors, experiences or expectations.

Instrumental accounts treat trust as a specific decision: actor A trusts actor B to perform act C (Baier, 1986; Hardin, 2001). In this view, trust is always dependent on a calculus about the future behaviour of an independent actor; there is no point in expressing trust if the actions of actor B are fully determined (Luhmann, 1988). Trust can only be used meaningfully if an independent actor has a range of possible options to act in a certain way, and if we, for whatever reason, are confident that B will choose an option with our own legitimate interests in mind. Trust, therefore, can be considered as a reaction to a problem of risk: only when a certain risk, even infinitely small, arises, that actor B will behave in a harmful way, it makes sense to express trust. We use trust to deal with the risk of betrayal: consciously or unconsciously, we balance the likelihood and the costs of betrayal with the benefits that would result from successful cooperation (Hardin, 1993). In this view, the decision to trust is a very specific one, since inherently we have to decide on something that cannot be known,

i.e., the likelihood of future behaviour C by actor B. This implies that the decision to express trust is necessarily based on insufficient information, which means that actors have to rely on all available indications or clues about the trustworthiness of the other. The decision to trust is always an expression of bounded rationality.

Familiarity with the motives and behavioural patterns of the other serves as an important clue to assess trustworthiness. As Luhmann observes: "trust is a solution for specific problems of risk. But trust has to be achieved within a familiar world" (Luhmann 1988, 95). Our familiarity with the actions and the likely motivations of actor B allows us to develop a more reliable view on his trustworthiness, than if we were to deal with a total stranger (Messick & Kramer 2001, 91). The information on which we build our decision to trust, however, is always incomplete: we rely on second hand information, stereotyping, vague notions, empathy or even first impressions. The decision to trust is to some extent dependent on stereotyping, or to put it differently: "trust is based on reputation and (…) reputation has ultimately to be acquired through behaviour over time in well-understood circumstances" (Dasgupta 1988, 53). This central role of reputation and stereotyping also implies that closed networks will be more effective in developing trust than open and rapidly fluctuating networks (Coleman 1990). The closure of networks has a double impact on the decision to trust. First, closure allows for a more effective sanctioning of behaviour. In our calculus whether to trust or not, we can therefore assume that the price B will pay for a possible betrayal will be steeper than in an open network. Second, reputation (and gossip) travels faster in closed networks than in open environments. Not only will we receive more information about the trustworthiness of B, its reliability will also be enhanced because we retrieve this information from various sources, operating independently from one another. Reputations are more easily gained, and lost, in closed networks.

While instrumental accounts argue that the decision to trust is based on a rationally informed calculus, dispositional approaches argue that actors simply show an ingrained tendency to trust others (Uslaner, 2002). In this view, trust is perceived as a fairly stable personality trait, that could be induced by early life cycle experiences, but will not be changed substantially by what happens later on in life. Psychological accounts claim that trust is a consequence of

empathy or identification: “trust develops as one both knows and predicts the other’s needs, choices, and preferences as one’s own. Increased identification enables one to “think like” the other, “feel like” the other, and “respond” like the other” (Lewicki & Bunker 1996, 123). Some experimental research indeed shows that this kind of group identification can have very powerful positive effects on the likelihood to cooperate. Dawes, van de Kragt and Orbell (1990) show that respondents with a strong group identification were willing to invest more resources in common endeavours, even if this implied that they had to forsake personal gains. This obligation to cooperate for the common benefit was probably even interiorised, since the group-identifiers continued to contribute resources to the common pool, even if the design of the experiment was changed in such a way that their defection would go unnoticed, so that their reputation would not be damaged by a decision to defect.

3. Trust and Resemblance

Despite the fact that instrumental and dispositional accounts on the origins of trust depart from conflicting assumptions about human behaviour and agency, it is striking that both of them lead to the same conclusion: trust is developed more easily between actors resembling one another, who are familiar with one another, who have abundant access to information about the other’s previous track record or about the other’s trustworthiness. Predictability, familiarity and identification breed trust (Lewis & Weigert 1985, 970; Williams 1995, 166). The main purpose of developing trust is risk minimalisation: we develop trust in conditions where we perceive the risk of betrayal as being low. This perception is partly based on previous knowledge, but it can also be based on prejudice or cultural stereotyping, as Dasgupta clearly states: “We wish to know the sort of person we are dealing with before we deal with him. But we will know it only imperfectly. We form an opinion on the basis of his background, the opportunities he has faced, the courses of action he has taken, and so forth” (Dasgputa 1988, 54). The group based account too, leads us in the same direction: we develop trust more easily in actors with whom we can identify : “We trust (and help) people

with whom we are familiar, with whom we have frequent contact, whom we believe to be similar to ourselves, and for whom we have positive regard" (Messick & Kramer 2001, 100). One lesson to be learned from this brief review of trust theories (for a full review, see Kramer, 1999; Stolle, 2000), is that the emergence of generalised trust is largely dependent on the presence of a number of objective conditions. Trust prospers most strongly and most abundantly in predictable, homogeneous and closed settings. Unpredictability, uncertainty, risk and vulnerability render it less likely that trust will be developed. This insight is especially troublesome for the currently dominant conceptualisation of social capital. If on the one hand, trust is an essential component of social capital, and on the other hand we know that the conditions for the establishment of generalised trust are being undermined, this indeed spells trouble with regard to all the positive consequences social capital is attributed with, both for individuals as for society as a whole. Indeed, the only relation we can expect between trust and diversity is negative, since trust refers to a "familiar world", that simply is no longer there in more diverse and evolving societies.

The available body of theory and research on the emergence of trust implies that for contemporary societies, the maintenance of high generalised trust levels becomes increasingly problematic. In most Western societies, the rise of diversity has made it more difficult to predict the future behaviour of other citizens, and therefore to express a thick form of trust in them. Often this growing diversity is equated with growing ethnic diversity, but that is just part of the story. A far more important contribution to the rise of diversity is the fact that processes of individualisation have led to the emergence of a more fragmented society, with citizens enjoying a wider range of life style options (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1996; Heelas, Lash & Morris, 1996; Bauman, 2001). Standard and therefore predictable life cycle options have been abandoned in favour of a more individualistic and diverse set of options available to the citizens of post-industrial societies. The result is that differences within the population have become more prominent, both with regard to gender roles, relational status, sexual preferences, religious beliefs as with regard to basic ethic norms. Routine answers to basic life style transitions and problems in human lives (choice of partner, belief, political conviction, the decision whether or not to have children) have lost most of

their self-evident status and have been abandoned in favour of more individualistic choices (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). It can be argued that in most Western societies processes of individualisation have led to an ever increasing pluralism (Bauman, 2001). Societies and governments can no longer invoke a normative consensus that could function as a cornerstone for a widely shared feeling of common identity and purpose (Sandel, 1996; Galston, 2002). These societies therefore will have to cope with a plurality of different, and sometimes even incompatible religious, moral and political doctrines.

4. Dimensions of diversity

The finding that a negative relation occurs between diversity indicators and trust, therefore, is to a large extent tautological: given what we know about the conditions under which trust is most likely to occur, the only possible outcome is that the establishment of trust is less likely under conditions of diversity and unpredictability. The fact that there is a tendency toward highlighting these findings in some recent research, also has a social drawback. In the current debate on multiculturalism and cultural identity, the well-publicized findings on diversity outcomes can only serve as a further argument in this debate, and this by itself should serve as an incentive for social sciences scholars to express their findings in a more cautious manner.

A more interesting research question than simply establishing the relation between diversity and trust, is under which conditions the relation between social capital and diversity can be mitigated or influenced. To phrase it differently: a promising question is whether, given conditions of increasing diversity, societies have means available to prevent this trend to have strong negative consequences for social cohesion. Three elements stand out in this respect: the question whether diversity implies segregation or not; the timing of diversity trends, and the regimes societies develop to recognize or to handle forms of diversity and difference. It is important in this regard not to limit ourselves just to the use of generalized trust as an indicator for social cohesion, but also to include other attitudinal variables that

express feelings of cohesion. Outgroup hostility, ethnocentrism and prejudice can just as well function as indicators for a lack of social cohesion.

4.1 Diversity and Segregation

An important distinction, that is all too often lost in current research, is the one between diversity and segregation. While diversity refers to the general composition of the population of a given society of geographical area, segregation refers to the degree to which the various groups of a population actually interact or not, and under what circumstances. While diversity is a community characteristic; segregation is a network characteristic. The empirical problem is that while diversity is relatively easy to measure and to monitor in a reliable and one-dimensional manner, this is not the case for segregation. Segregation refers to network properties, that should be measured at an individual or an aggregate level. We are not just interested in finding out one whether the networks of a single person should be seen as segregated, but we also want to know whether on an aggregate level, the combination of all networks within a diverse society can either respond to a segregation logic or not. Furthermore, even at the network level, it remains unclear in what kind of settings heterogeneity can best be measured. People interact with one another in a multitude of settings and social spheres, and we cannot assume that all of these settings will have the same impact on, e.g., prejudice of tolerance.

It can be argued, however, that what matters from a theoretical point of view, is not diversity by itself, but rather the combination of diversity and segregation levels. There is no reason why the mere presence or proximity of persons with, e.g., a different religion or a different ethnic background in a society or community would have an immediate impact on the likelihood of person to trust these groups or individuals. We do have theoretical reasons to assume, however, that the interaction with members of these groups could reduce prejudice and could lead to higher levels of tolerance. At least in some studies, it has been shown that while diversity as such has a negative impact on out-group prejudice, desegregation counterbalances this effect to some extent (Marshall & Stolle 2004). We can expect that this

kind of findings should be repeated in future research, since they are in line with some well-established results from social psychological research. Building on what has been called the contact hypothesis, Mutz (2002) argues that interaction with persons with different background characteristics (e.g., with regard to political opinion, religion or ethnic background) is associated with a reduction of prejudice toward these groups. Although the contact hypothesis entails various qualifications and questions, it nevertheless seems clear that this can be seen as a plausible causal mechanism, leading to less outspoken stereotyping.

This would imply that what is problematic is such, is not the level of diversity, but rather the relation between segregation and diversity. In homogeneous societies, personal networks automatically will tend to be rather homogeneous since there are fewer options to socialize with people who do not have the same background characteristics. In heterogeneous societies, on the other hand, personal networks can be either segregated or inclusive. If the personal networks of citizens are inclusive, this would give them an opportunity to reduce their stereotyping of outsider groups, thus compensating for the negative consequences of diversity that have been observed in some of the literature. If personal networks remain exclusive and homogeneous, this learning effect, however, is not present at all.

Even in diverse societies, the most likely scenario is that networks in fact will remain homogeneous, given the tendency that people seek the company of like-minded others, or at least of persons with the same background characteristics. Personal networks show a distinct tendency toward homogeneity, as a long tradition of network research has demonstrated (Lin 2001). This form of 'bonding social capital', however, seems less likely to translate itself into generalized trust than more bridging forms of interaction (Putnam 2000). For theoretical reasons, therefore, it makes much more sense to study segregation instead of studying diversity on a community level, despite the obvious methodological problems created by this shift in focus. The assumption would be that segregated forms of diversity more easily lead to the emergence of antagonistic feelings between various groups of society than non-segregated forms of diversity.

If we give an overview of the various possibilities to combine diversity and segregation, we get the following two-by-two table, in which we also indicate the most likely results of that combination for the development of trust between social groups.

		Diversity	
		Y	N
segre-gation	Y	-	empty cell
	N	+/-	0

4.2 Diversity trends

While the increase in diversity can be seen as a general trend for all Western societies, we can also observe clear differences with regard to timing and precise characteristics. Already since the 19th century ethnic and cultural diversity has been considered as a defining characteristic of American society, but for a lot of countries in Western Europe increasing ethnic diversity was a new phenomenon from the 1960s onward, with the arrival of relatively large groups of migrant workers originating from Southern Europe and Northern Africa. The basic point here is that we can expect that stable patterns of diversity would have other effects on feelings toward outsider groups than quickly changing patterns of diversity. One of the main forces driving feelings of prejudice toward outsider groups, is the fear for increasing economic and labour competition as a result of the arrival of these new groups within the population (Young-Bruehl 1996). Established groups typically fear the fact that newly arrived groups will somehow drive them out from at least some parts of the labour market, and this is indeed a major incentive for forms of economic ethnocentrism and out-group hostility. Most of the current research on this topic, indeed documents a relation between the intensity of the perceived threat, posed by the outsider group, and the resulting feeling of ethnocentrism and prejudice toward that group. There is more disagreement, however, about the precise causal mechanism explaining this relation. While some researchers argue that this

mechanism operates at an individual level, others take societal factors into account. E.g., Citrin et al. (1997) have demonstrated that while the individual economic situation of the respondent only has a limited impact on the feeling of economic threat, this negative feeling is to a large extent spurred by a general fear about the state of the economy and the resulting tensions on the labour market. The perceived economic threat of newly arrived groups, according to this line of research, is more a societal phenomenon, operating independently from the individual labour market or economic position of the respondent. The rapid upsurge in asylum seekers that most Western European societies experienced in the 1990, is therefore more closely related to feelings of ethnocentrism and threat than the long-established presence of ethnic minorities, despite the fact in purely numerical terms the asylum seekers are just a minimal part of the overall population (Citrin & Sides 2004). For Germany, on the other hand, Semyonov et al. (2004) argue that the extent to which individuals themselves feel threatened by increasing competition from newly emerging groups actually serves as one of the main driving forces for ethnic stereotyping.

Perceived economic threat is one important course of ethnocentrism and out-group hostility, together with a perceived cultural threat (Sniderman, Halman & Prior 2004). The fundamental fear is here that the influx of newcomers, with different traditions and a different religious and cultural heritage, in some way or another will form a threat for the maintenance of one's own cultural identity. In this case too, however, the perceived threat is determined not as much by the level of diversity as such, but rather by the rise of the presence of other groups. In societies where various cultures traditionally have been present, the presence of other groups normally is not seen an acute threat to one's own cultural identity. In societies with a long history of diversity, like Switzerland or Belgium, the mere existence and the presence of different communities is hardly conceived as a cultural threat, since constitutional arrangements have been developed to ensure that there is a stable and fair division of resources between the communities. Also with regard to the perceived cultural threat, therefore, the main element is not diversity as such, but rather the rise of new groups, whose culture is seen as incompatible or even threatening to one's own culture (Florack et al. 2003). Rather than to focus just on *current* levels of diversity, as has been done in most of the

current research, therefore it makes more sense to include measurements of diversity trends during the past decades. We can expect that stable levels of diversity (no matter what level) will not lead to a feeling of being threatened by minority groups, while we do expect this feeling to emerge as a result of rapidly growing forms of diversity.

Given the fact that perceived threat, both with regard to economics and labour market considerations, as with regard to culture, is such a vital element in explaining prejudice and ethnocentrism, this time dimension should be taken into account more explicitly. What basically determines feeling of threat is not the actual level of diversity, but rather the difference between the traditional, or expected levels of diversity and the actually experienced levels. Building on data from the early 1970s, e.g., Marshall and Stolle (2004) arrive at the conclusion that diversity in that era did not have a negative impact on levels on trust. Given the strong cultural differences between the early 1970s and the current era, however, with a stronger emphasis on the polarisation between various ethnic groups in the population, it cannot be taken for granted that these historical findings could be replicated in the current circumstances.

If not diversity as such is driving the erosion of social cohesion indicators, but rather the increase in diversity, this would imply that the conclusions to be drawn from the current line of research do not need to be as pessimistic as they often are formulated. There are more than sufficient historical examples of societies that not only learned how to cope with high levels of diversity, but who actually succeeded in turning this form of diversity to an asset, by uniting people with very different background characteristics. The main problem, however, is what happens if this traditional pattern is disturbed, and when a society needs to find a new form of equilibrium. Within cultural anthropology, it has long been taken for granted that tensions between communities are mainly a result of the lack of clear and identifiable boundaries (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2004). The problematic point is not as much where exactly these boundaries are being drawn, but rather whether they are seen as stable. In that sense the current increase in diversity, and the accompanying rise in perceived threat by minorities, could also be seen as a transition process, by societies that learn to adapt to new realities.

Looking at it from this perspective, however, would imply that the real test lies in a comparison between stable homogeneous and stable heterogeneous societies, a comparison that has not yet been made so clearly. Most of the available research, thus far, has been conducted on countries like the US, Canada, and various European countries, that have known an upsurge of diversity in recent decades. As such, they do not offer a good setting to test the consequences of *stable* patterns of diversity.

4.3 Forms of recognition

Societies differ not just with regard to the timing and the intensity of diversity trends, but also with regard to the way they manage forms of diversity. A well-known and classic distinction is the one introduced by Brubaker (1992) between societies that stress conformity and compliance to 'national' standards, and others where pluralism is more easily accepted. While the German notion of citizenship is more closely linked to a historical and cultural linkage with Germany, the French citizenship concept is portrayed as being more open, since it is relatively easily accessible for newcomers that are willing and able to integrate into French culture. These different citizenship regimes imply that in countries like, e.g., Germany the full integration of outsiders, and their acceptance as full citizens into society will be much more difficult to establish than in a society with relatively open citizenship concepts like France or the United Kingdom (Soysal 1994). The resulting assumption therefore is that, given equal levels of diversity, the antagonism between various groups of the population will be stronger in societies with closed citizenship concepts, than in societies that are more open and welcome to newly arriving groups.

This distinction can be elaborated further, by surveying various regimes of diversity that nations have developed. The recognition of group rights, e.g., with regard to religion, education and language use, shows a large degree of variation across European societies. Some comparative research has already demonstrated that in countries that are open to the recognition of groups rights and differences, the cultural and discursive opportunities for claims making by minority and migrant groups are much larger than in countries where forms of national unity and national identity are being stressed more forcefully (Koopmans &

Statham 2000). Citizenship concepts in countries stressing a closed and traditional form of national identity are much less conducive for minority groups to establish themselves as meaningful and full participants in political decision making. Not only a relation can be ascertained between restrictive citizenship concepts and the occurrence of ethnic violence, directed against migrant groups (Koopmans & Olzak 2004), but in a broader way a lack of recognition will be associated more strongly with stereotyping and marginalizing ethnic minorities (Citrin et al. 2001). So the theoretical assumption here would that in societies where forms of multicultural citizenship, and group rights are being recognized, the negative effects of diversity on social cohesion would be mitigated (Kymlicka 1995). If multiculturalism mainly implies a 'politics of recognition', the groups being recognised in that manner have more reason to put faith in the social system than groups in societies where this is not the case.

5. Cohesion and stability without resemblance

A basic tenet of the classical political science literature of the 1950s was the claim that homogeneous societies were better equipped to maintain stable and democratic political systems. It was taken that these political systems could only flourish, if citizens would identify quite strongly with the nation-state and if the major cleavages within the population can be controlled or mitigated to a large extent. Internal strive and fundamental cleavages within a society were taken to have a negative impact on the stability of the political system. This kind of reasoning clearly was not conducive to the recognition of minority rights, and most of the newly independent countries in the developing world stressed the need for a sense of national unity, as a prerequisite for the long term survival and stability of their emerging political systems.

An important contribution to this debate, however, was the study by Arend Lijphart (1968), on the way the political system of the Netherlands managed to maintain its stability and its democratic character, despite the presence of fundamental social and religious cleavage in the country. Lijphart's formula entailed two major elements. First, the Dutch political system

relied on a recognition of groups rights and group identity. The various religious groups in the country were allowed, and to some extent even encouraged, to set up their own institutions, and to develop distinct subcultures. Second, the citizens of the Netherlands were expected to develop a sense of loyalty, not just to their own religious groups, but simultaneously also an over-arching form of loyalty toward Dutch society as a whole. These two forms of loyalty did not contradict one another, since the Dutch political system was taken to be perceived as fair, allowing equal opportunities for all the religious groups in the country. This form of equality was obtained by introducing a form of power-sharing that came to be known as consociational democracy (Lijphart 1999). This form of power-sharing can be seen as a very effective manner to maintain stability and cohesion, while simultaneously granting extensive group rights and group autonomy to various segments in the population. The strange thing, however, is that much of these insights of the 1960s, seem to have been forgotten in the current social capital research. Again, it is assumed that a basic necessity for stable societies is to be able to rely on a mass of citizens that are trusting toward one another and toward the system in general, without any distinction. Just like in the 1950s, the ideal situation that is implicit here, is that of a fairly homogeneous society, without any clear cleavages, or without any form of internal strife. The only difference between the classical theory and the current conceptualisation would be that the form of thick value consensus that is presupposed is no longer being called patriotism, but rather generalised trust. Given the increasing diversity of Western societies, the question therefore becomes whether generalized trust is still able to function as a source of social cohesion, just as it was in more homogeneous conditions. More diverse societies will be characterized by a thin form of consensus, not building as much on trust, but rather on norms of reciprocity and equal treatment. Already in the classical social capital definition by Putnam (1993), norms of reciprocity figure just as prominently as a part of social capital as trust does. Reciprocity does not presuppose the existence of a shared normative consensus, and therefore it is more easily to establish under conditions of multiculturalism and internal difference.

The main purpose of social capital is to facilitate collective action among free and equal citizens, and if we consider norms of reciprocity as an important element of social capital, this implies that we have to limit ourselves to those specific forms of reciprocity that are

most conducive for establishing this kind of cooperative agreements. In contemporary liberal democracies this inevitably means that these norms have to incorporate the idea of equality and fairness: only if these conditions are being met, rational citizens will have an incentive to participate in collective action schemes that are conducted on the basis of reciprocity (Rawls 2001, 6; Dworkin 2000). In these circumstances, the idea of reciprocity refers to a fair division of labour and rewards among all those who are engaged in a cooperative effort (Levi 1998, 88-89).

Rawls provides a rather elaborated definition of the concept of reciprocity. For Rawls, reciprocity can be considered as a set of procedures or rules, allowing cooperation between free and equal citizens:

> (reciprocity) "requires that, when terms are proposed as the most reasonable terms of fair cooperation, those proposing them must think it at least reasonable for others to accept them, as free and equal citizens, and not as dominated or manipulated or under pressure caused by an inferior political or social position" (Rawls 1999b, 14).

It is important to note here that this definition does not require that individuals act out of altruism or benevolence toward other members of society (Rawls 1993, 16-17). The pursuit of self-interest, too, can lead to cooperation with others, and in order to allow this cooperation to be successful, equality-based norms of reciprocity can function as a prerequisite. In this respect, equality-based reciprocity can be conceived of as a procedural norm applying only to the cooperation itself, while it does not entail agreement between the actors on more substantial issues. Reciprocity can be regarded as a minimal requirement: if we want citizens to cooperate, at least they will need some agreement on the rules pertaining to that cooperation. It is also a rational strategy: even starting from a rather narrow focus on self-interest, rational actors would rely on strategies of reciprocity to make sure others want to cooperate with them (Perugini & Gallucci 2001, S20).

Rawls, however, uses the concept of reciprocity in a more restricted sense than the standard approach in economics. In Rawls' framework, the norm of reciprocity is closely related to equality and to egalitarian arrangements: acts of exchange can only be considered as

reciprocal if the other party would accept the rules of the exchange under conditions of equality. Elsewhere, Rawls makes clear that we can only expect norms of reciprocity to flourish if at least some form of equality is being guaranteed. Following his framework for distributive justice, Rawls does not require that all citizens have access to the same amount of resources, but he insists on the fact that all citizens should have access to at least a sufficient quantity of primary goods, in order to allow them to lead decent and full lives. Only if that condition has been fulfilled, reciprocity can be used meaningfully (Rawls 1999b, 114). If a substantial part of the population does not have the means to ensure them a basic quality of life, the affected groups are in no position to bargain with the well-off and reciprocity becomes meaningless to them (Rawls 2001, 77). Equality-based reciprocity, therefore, can be considered as an inherently *democratic norm*: one cannot think of any situation in which treating others as free and equal citizens could have anti-democratic consequences.

The idea that the exchange between citizens in a society relies just as strongly on reciprocity as on trust, at first sight might not seem a very attractive one, as this is clearly not the kind of cosy, comfortable society that some of us would like to prefer. If we take Luhmann's argument about the interdependence of trust and familiarity seriously, however, the only logical consequence can be that trust will be less central as a coordination mechanism in a more diverse future. In stead of focusing just on generalized trust as a resource, it is equally important to acknowledge that societies can also rely on other mechanism to ensure their cohesion and stability.

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