

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

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

## **2. Historical approach and political opportunity structure (POS)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Briefly about the differences which exist between the POS and the SOS. In practice they are closely tied and turn one into another. Nevertheless, they are different matters. In the end, the struggle of a SM for changing POS it is a struggle for power, for changing the rules of the game. This struggle is not necessarily has a military character. We know now the many examples of peaceful ‘velvet’ and ‘orange’ revolutions. I mean revolutions in a classical (Marxist) sense of the term. Nevertheless, the SM’s struggle for changing POS it is always the battle for seizing power (Tilly 2004). So called a civic protest which spread across many Russian cities and towns in 2011-12s contained the appeal to the ruling elite to play in accordance with the established rules of games, that is, with the Constitution. So, the essence of SOS is the struggle for basic rights and freedoms declared in this Constitution and for the observance of lawfulness. In this sense, the struggle of recent Russian civic activists is not strongly differ from that of the Soviet dissidents in the 1960s. The struggle for changing POS is usually happens in the streets, whereas the struggle aimed at changing SOS presents a routine desk-work in offices, at various sittings, public hearings and litigations<sup>2</sup>.

### **3. The relativity of social capital**

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

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