

3.B. A broader social capital perspective

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Introduction

The paper is in general a very skilled piece of work with a comprehensive evaluation of existing research on the topic.

From a European point of view the objective of the study is highly relevant. In the scientific and political debate about the future of Europe, the European Commission (EC) has put forward the model of the knowledge-based economy and society as the scaffold to support the rebuilding of the inclusive European socioeconomic model. There are concerns that globalisation threatens the European social model, which has so far been relative successful in combining social inclusion and economic growth (Atkinson, 2004). In the renewed Lisbon strategy it is stated that a high quality education system is the best way of guaranteeing the long-term competitiveness of the Union. Knowledge and innovation, the role of science technology and lifelong learning (Alheit *et al.*, 2004) are considered to be the “beating heart of Europe” (EC, 2005a).

In the ongoing European debate about the Lisbon strategy some scholars (Moulaert *et al.*, 2005) have introduced the notion of “Creative Social Europe”. They argue in line with the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the social agendas objective (EC, 2005b) that the knowledge based economy approach must be combined with concerns about how to strengthen the collective capacity of societies to ensure social inclusion and cohesion. They introduce the notion of “social innovation” and argue that European citizens have an “untapped potential to create prosperity and offer opportunity and justice for all its citizens... European citizens in fact store a wealth of local knowledge, social capital, diversity, solidarity and creativity” (Katarsis, 2005).

Following this line of thought it is obvious that the objective and message of the Campbell report is extremely important in today’s ongoing discourse about the road forward in the age of globalisation. Civic and social engagement seems to be condition for coping with not only the economic challenges, but also social and political challenges – not least multiculturalism, which has caused turbulence in political life in most European countries and in life and identity politics of post-industrial societies.

With regard to the *policy relevance* of the study – from a democratic and social exclusion point of view – we suggest emphasising more strongly that CSE investment seems to be one of the answers to the present and future challenges for democracy in a

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more and more complex globalised, multicultural and post traditional world, and research has its own role to play as agenda setting around these issues.

Note that even in a relatively well functioning democracy like in Denmark (where the general trends of falling voter turnout is not the case) a recent study of inclusion and exclusion (Larsen, 2005) shows that 15% of the Danish population do not, or only to a very limited degree, participate in politics.

The outcome of education with regard to CSE needs systematic attention – not least by international organisations like OECD. Education which effectively stimulates CSE must be regarded as a necessary investment in the social cohesion and the collective socioeconomic and democratic inclusion capacity of future societies. Alone the fact that voter turn out on average has fallen by 13.2% in 16 OECD countries since the 1960s should in itself give rise to serious political concern. As Campbell notes, a lot of complex factors are in play in the determination of levels and changing character of CSE, but education is – unlike *e.g.* mass media influence – one important field for public intervention, where policy makers have a direct hand in the design and implementation of the system of education. In the following we will comment on the general analytical framework.

Social capital, education and CSE

Campbell states that “The return of socialisation as a subject of serious study has been helped by the emergence of the social capital literature schools” and referring to Coleman he continues: “While schools are by no means the only organisations in which social capital occurs they are certainly an important source of the norms and networks that constitute social capital... it is logical to look at schools as means to enhance the political and civic engagement of young people”.

Research inspired by the concept of social capital has a strong position in the academic field – among other things because it has opened for creative interdisciplinary dialogue between economic, sociological and political perspectives on the role of education. The conditions for social capital formation also attract huge interest in the political field – not least because international organisations, such as World Bank and OECD have put it on their agendas. The challenge of the SOL project is to expand this existing agenda. Therefore, the link to the social capital discourse in Campbell paper is very fruitful both in relation to the policy agenda and the research agenda.

In the review of the social capital literature he stresses among other things the importance of norms as vital in social capital formation, and later in the paper he links this to “school ethos”: “The ethos of a school matters... schools are communities in which norms are taught and enforced. Schools level of social capital – especially the norm shared – has civic as well as academic implications”.

We will return to the question about how to measure aspects of schools ethos, but first we will suggest a broader perspective on social capital in order to define a framework for analysing the relation between different social capital approaches and their perspectives on education and CSE. This could also be a way to transform the tendency to a US bias in the paper and to open up for discussion about the role of education in *different welfare regime contexts* in order to grasp the differences between the American and European contexts – and different welfare regimes within Europe. The term welfare regime is here used in the same way as Esping-Andersen (1990), who distinguishes between liberal, social democratic and conservative regimes.

In this context, social capital can roughly be approached from three perspectives; neo-liberalism/rational choice, communitarianism and welfare statism (Oinonen, 2006). These approaches emphasise either the role of the market, civil society or welfare state and social capital scholars, such as Coleman, Putnam or Rothstein, each advocates for and can be situated in one of these approaches. These approaches can also be found in the political discourse even if they do not always fit simply into the left (welfare statism) wing and right (neo-liberalism) wing dichotomy. It should be underlined that the suggested distinction serves a heuristic purpose – as a framework for discussion of the complicated relations between education and social capital – including the complicated linkages between micro and macro levels of analysis (Woolcock, 1998).

Paradigm	Neo-liberalism	Communitarianism	Welfare society
Emphasis	Market	Civil society	State-society relations
Social capital scholars	James Coleman	Robert Putnam	Bo Rothstein and Dietlind Stolle
Other scholars	James Buchanan, Peter North	Amitai Etzioni	Pierre Bourdieu, Emile Durkheim
Economical approach	Neo-classical economics, rational choice theory, public choice theory, monetarism	Neo-Keynesianism, new institutional economics, Schumpeterianism	Keynesianism, corrections of the market mechanism
	Under-socialised concept of a man		Over-socialised concept of a man
Emphasises	Weak bridges	Strong bonds	Both
Approach to education	Market relations Education as a private good and investment in individuals economic performance	Community relations Education as community good and mechanism for strong civic norms	State-society relations (negotiated economy). Education as a common good linked to social citizenship
Important norms for the learning environment	Competitive meritocratism	Commitment to shared norms	"Soft" egalitarian meritocratism
Sources of social capital	Individual level:	Individual level:	Individual level:
	Rational exploitation of network relationships, social exchange	Belonging in a community, participation in associations, civic engagement	Socialisation processes in schools and education, experienced fairness and impartiality, internalised norms, social structure
	Collective level:	Collective level:	Collective level:
	Cost effective public sector management	Civil society, citizens participation (Putnam), informal institutions, religion	Public sector institutions, including free education, collective social security/social citizenship
Outcomes of high social capital	Individual level:	Individual level:	Individual level:
	Higher social position, returns on the labour market (incomes, career)	Civiness (Putnam), family support, trust in other people	Happiness, individual welfare and social security
	Collective level:	Collective level:	Collective level:
	Reduced transaction costs, economic growth	Active civil society, generalised trust (Putnam). High level of CSE	Trust in public and political institutions. High level of CSE

Starting with the first column of the table above, the neoclassical economic theories take methodological individualism as their starting point and argue that maximisation of utility is the universal engine of action in both economic and non-economic action (Coleman, 1988). Social exchange theory has got its economic variant: rational choice theory and when applied in public institutions, public choice theory. In this paradigm education is primarily seen as a *private good* and investment in human capital and skills to build rational social exchange and network relations for individuals. The implication of this is also that the dominant principles and norms for learning in the schools are competitive meritocracy. The school and the teachers should facilitate norms of just and fair competition in the classroom based on *meritocratic* principles: *rewards* (including student's marks) should constantly be directly linked to the achievement of individuals from an early age. Schools should also (in line with new public management principles) be ranked after their scores according to (national and/or international) predefined measurable standards for students outcomes.

Communitarian approaches are not unitary, but basically they oppose the assumption of utilitarian individualism. The influence of the home contexts, social ties within the community, and the socialisation processes form the basis of human behavior (Etzioni, 1988). This also presents a shift away from utilitarian view of ethics and norms and emphasises the altruistic motivation of public officials like teachers, who according to their professional ethos should act as facilitators of the common good. Note here, that Brewer (2003, p. 20) in his interesting empirical study of public servants found that they are more civic minded than other citizens and motivated by a strong desire to perform public and community service.

With regard to education and norms in the school and class room the communitarian perspective emphasises education as a community good and as a mechanism for promotion of strong civiness and commitment to shared norms.

The welfare statist – or rather welfare society approach often associated with the Scandinavian countries – situates social capital in the realm of the welfare society and its public institutions: government policies and institutions create, channel and influence the amount of social capital (Rothstein and Stolle, 2002). In this paradigm education is seen as a *common good*: free education is part of social citizenship. Important norms for the learning environment are some sort of egalitarianism. Meritocracy and hence sorting of students after individual skills and achievements is a universal feature of any school system, but sorting and reward systems can be balanced by other more egalitarian and pedagogical principles, which could be labeled “soft meritocracy”. For example individual marks can be introduced at a later stage in the school career and parts of the mark and reward system in the schools can take form of collective marks and rewards for good participation in group work and project work. In Denmark, instruments like project group work have been very influential (but also constantly disputed) since the 1970s.

Civic and social participation in Denmark

In the European Union the Danish population shows the highest degree of interest in politics (van der Aarts and Wessels, 2002) and this interest has been growing during the last 30 years (Goul Andersen, 2003a). The Danish “Power Investigation” (*Magtudredningen*) explained this by a long Danish tradition of collective mobilisation and by the fact that poverty is low – similar to the other Nordic countries. One important lesson to be learned is that the high level of CSE – irrespective of differences in formal

education – is highly dependent on other economic, social and cultural factors embedded in a nation’s history. The strong labour and peasant movement dating back more than 100 years has been crucial for mobilising and “educating” low skilled people for CSE. Since trade unions have played an important role in both mobilising and educating people in CSE (especially in the Scandinavian countries) we think that trade union membership should explicitly be included in the ”Social Movement Index”.

Class differences in CSE therefore were and still are relatively small, and during most of the 20th century, the political parties had an overrepresentation of members from the classes with low education. The historical tradition and culture for CSE among all classes in Denmark has a clear impact on how Danes perceive their abilities to influence decision-making at all levels. Due to a combination of institutionalised channels in different associations and an anti-authoritarian culture which is encouraged through socialisation and education in schools social and political trust among Danes is among the highest in Europe and it has been increasing since 1971. Furthermore, the political culture is not dominated by a narrow self-interest. For example, it is among the 40- to 59-year-olds who relatively have the heaviest tax burdens, that the most positive attitudes toward public expenditures and the most negative attitudes toward tax cuts are found.

However, there has also been a change in CSE in Denmark. Fewer people are members of political parties today than 20 years ago (8.0% in 1979 and 5.0% in 2000), but this has not influenced participation in elections, which is comparatively high and stable (85.6% in 1979 and 87.1% in 2000). The Danish “Power Investigation” concludes that overall CSE has not declined. On the contrary, both CSE and the ability to engage (“political competence”) have grown. This is not least due to civic and social learning in schools and in different types of associations (Togeby, 2003). On average, Danes are members of 3.2 associations, and in 1998 63% of the Danes were active in at least one association (Goul Andersen, 2003b). However, the “Power Investigation” also points out that there has been a change in CSE: 1) from formal political channels (parties and organisations) to informal and context related issues, 2) from the input side (actions that are directed against political decisions) to actions that are concerned with the practical implementation of political decisions, 3) from collective actions to more individualised political engagement (for example buying or boycotting certain goods of political reasons) and 4) from issues concerning the common good (or collectives or larger groups of people) to issues that concerns one self or one’s family. However, it has also been shown that most people are engaged in issues related to both the big democracy (for example elections) and in the small democracy (for example engaged in activities in the children’s school) (Larsen, 2003). To learn more about the school ethos and school democracy some indicators on parents’ participation in schools are needed. A Danish study has shown that more than 50% of parents within a single year are trying to influence different conditions in day care institutions and schools (Goul Andersen and Rossteutscher, 2003).

The Danish case, however, is not just a positive example. A study of inclusion and exclusion (Larsen, 2005) shows that 15% of the Danish population do not or to a very limited degree participate in politics. Exclusion in relation to CSE is especially high among lone mothers, ethnic minority groups and unemployed people. The educational level clearly plays a role for CSE, but it seems that the concentration of multidimensional exclusion is more important than education itself, since the CSE rate is high among unskilled and low educated people in the Danish society compared with other European countries. On the other hand, among those groups with a low degree of CSE, some specific types of CSE are found. Members of ethnic groups are for example more

engaged in political and religious youth organisations than ethnic Danes, and lone mothers have the highest degree of participation in public demonstrations (Larsen, 2003). Therefore, one needs to be aware of the specific economic, cultural and social context that encourage or hinder CSE among different groups in the population. Furthermore, some types of CSE or more broadly social capital are difficult to measure because they are of a more invisible character. More invisible types of network are for example found among immigrant women, who in general have a low visible participation rate irrespective of educational level (Lindstrom, 2005), but some of these women nonetheless form strong networks (Guldager, 2006).

One way of capturing these informal types of communication is to develop some indicators on the use of information technology in relation to CSE, for example using the Internet to gather information on civic and social issues.

The importance of pre-school learning/education

The most important factor for attainment in the formal educational system is pre-school socialisation, learning and education. Much of this takes place in the family. Several studies conclude that social origins still seem to play a major role for inequality in educational attainment and in other societal areas, for example in cultural participation in adolescence and adulthood (Nagel and Ganzeboom, 2002). Research on intergenerational mobility seems to suggest that a good part of intergenerational transmission in earnings, education and occupational outcomes are mediated via parent's impact on children's cognitive development (for example Esping-Andersen, 2002; Danziger and Waldfogel, 2000; Solon, 1999). Research from the United States shows that the return from investment in children is highest in early childhood. Investments that prepare children to enter school ready and motivated to learn have greater effect than additional investment in school resources such as reduction in class size (Heckman and Lochner 2000). However the learning and socialising environment in the family is not the only important factor preparing and motivating children to enter school. Esping-Andersen (2002) has pointed out that the day care institution system in the Scandinavian countries is a crucial precondition, on the one hand to avoid poverty among lone parents (access to labour market participation), and on the other hand to maximise children's possibilities for learning. Children's learning and socialisation in high quality day care institutions are the most effective way to combat negative social heritage from the family. At the same time, public day care institutions are a major investment in society's social capital. Children and parents form local political and social communities around the day care institutions.

A related issue of concern is segregation of the school system. From a social inclusion point of view it is important whether the schools are highly segregated in relation to different socioeconomic and ethnic groups or if the schools to a higher degree mix children with different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Segregation is not only related to a divide between public and private schools but also due to segregation in housing areas, especially in the major cities.

These considerations lead us to conclude that indicators are needed about the impact of pre-school learning environment on later CSE. In the CivEd there are some indicators on "Home Experiences", but these need to be developed further, and it seems useful to have some indicators on the cognitive learning environment in the family as well. Additionally indicators are needed in relation to how day care institutions may have an impact on children's later CSE.

Recommendations: methodology and reflections over a revised research design

In methodological terms cross-national research, which has an ambition of identifying causal relations, is complicated. We suggest a more complex multilevel research design in order to grasp the complexity of the links between welfare regimes, educational and learning regimes and CSE in different OECD member states and in order to grasp the impact of different outcomes for different social strata *within* nations (the social exclusion perspective discussed in the introduction).

A revised research design could try to combine different levels, units of analysis and different types of quantitative and qualitative data (documents analysis of legislation, discourse, data from development programmes, field work, qualitative interviews in a creative, holistic way) (for general methodological inspiration see for example Allardt, 1990; de Vaus, 2001; Yin, 2003).

The *optimal* methodological approach would be a double strategy: explorative qualitative studies could give input to the construction of the cross national questionnaire, and the questionnaire could be followed up by additional case/qualitative studies in order to explore in a deeper way the findings from the quantitative analysis.

The purpose is to open up the research agenda, and we suggest a variety of combined approaches in order to improve the quality of the quantitative indicators and to make possible reflections about causality on a “deeper” level, where the impact of the different contexts among and within nations can be taken better into account.

Grasping the diversity of national contexts

By using nations as the analytical unit the study could contextualise and identify important similarities and differences (configurations) between different nations in order to identify different educational and “CSE regimes”.

Suggestion for focal points and research questions:

In which ways are the educational systems linked to the core characteristics of the welfare regime?

Are there spill-over effects from the welfare regimes: is education regarded as mainly a private or public good? Does the educational system in reality equalise or reproduce life chances along class, race and gender lines?

Questions like these may lead to some kind of analytical useful “cluster of educational regimes” with regard to their objectives and effects on social stratification – parallel to the welfare regime modelling business. The “primitive” hypothesis which might be tested in the quantitative study would be that the educational systems in strong welfare states are less sorting and less individualistic in their ethos and that this might explain a higher level and comparatively less unevenly distributed CSE. But so far we do not know. However it would be extremely interesting to test the correlation between the degree of socioeconomic inequality and CSE and determine the impact of the educational system.

To what extent and how are elements of CSE defined as objectives of the primary and secondary school curriculum in national school policy, and how is this eventually rooted in distinct political cultures and citizenship traditions?

The Campbell study correctly documents that there are huge differences between nations. In some countries, CSE skills are part of the national curriculum – in other cases more or less absent. In some countries, distinct citizenship and political traditions, for example republicanism in France, social democracy in Scandinavian countries or more liberal traditions would be manifest and have strong spill-over effects on the education policy tradition. In other countries, for example post-communist societies such a path dependency would be very different. In other words: an important part of the national context for education policy and CSE is the nature of the “*democratic ethos*”, which in some way must be taken into account.

A third aspect (closely linked to the former research question about spill-over from citizenship and political culture) is to illuminate whether and how CSE components play a role in the discourse about school policy – since neither welfare regimes nor political cultures are static. What seems to be the dominating and/or competing discourses over the legitimacy and role of CSE outcomes?

In Denmark, for example, the OECD/PISA survey has fuelled an intensified discourse about what should be seen as the most important success parameters for primary and secondary schools. In this debate two main camps or poles can be identified. On the one hand are those (e.g. the present government), who identify the dominating challenge as how the school system can be adjusted to improve the scores on the PISA scale as a way to strengthen primarily human capital building. The core argument is that open class rooms and too much CSE emphasis pull down the cognitive level.

On the other hand, are those (e.g. represented by the teachers union) who defend the priority of the “participatory and social schools ethos”. This discourse is closely linked to a critique of new public management (NPM). Gregory (2002, p. 250) argues that public administration in New Zealand, a country that has been kept as a laboratory of NPM doctrines, is facing legitimacy crisis, because citizens have become increasingly distrusting toward political and public institutions generally. In Denmark, the teachers union refers to New Zealand and argues that too much testing in schools undermines local creativity and social capital building. They argue that professional autonomy and ethics of the teachers guarantees that they serve the common good. Furthermore, they argue that trust in teachers as competent (semi)professionals and student participation is the best way to enhance social capital in schools.

However, in practical policy-making we see an emerging compromise bridging the two poles: national standards and test systems can be used as tools to identify low quality and failures in the school system in order to channel resources to schools facing difficulties, but this should not be at the expense of the priority of “the open class room climate” and further development of the “participatory school ethos”. The Danish case suggests that the challenge for the SOL project is to try to document in more detail the conditions under which the relation between CSE outcomes and PISA outcomes can be a plus-sum game. This is also the way Campbell argues: “Educators need not worry” that open class room climate diverts schools from their core educational mission. Hard evidence which can document this will have a very powerful impact on the discourse.

The school level in each country

Does schools governance matter?

Moving down from national education policy to the meso level of schools the next question is: To what extent and how are parental and student involvement in “school governance” institutionalised? In Danish schools, for example, there have been formal students councils in all schools for decades. We need to classify national “school governance regimes” and distinguish between high, medium and low degrees of formal parental and students involvement in the daily management of schools. The guiding question would be: Does schools governance matter?

The sample

One crucial question is the composition of the sample. We suggest that the sample in each country includes schools with different socioeconomic/social status (parental and students socioeconomic neighbourhood environment). Roughly three criteria should be met: (1) middle and upper class dominated, (2) socially mixed schools, (3) segregated schools in relative deprived areas – and “ethno-national” profile (mixed versus ethno-national segregated schools). This would make possible cross national comparisons of how social exclusion/social class and ethnicity (intersectionality) interacts with CSE effects and how this is handled in the educational system.

Another supplementary criterion for the composition of the national samples – and/or a small number of supplementary case studies (this would be the preferred solution) – could be a smaller number of strategic chosen case studies of “best and worst” practices with regard to school ethos. Evaluation research and data from pilot programmes could probably provide useful contextual information about “schools ethos”, etc.

Grasping the school ethos, class room climate and students opinion

In terms of indicators, we would therefore argue for indicators that could enlighten the relation between different types of learning environment and the rate of school drop-outs, and the relation between school drop-outs and CSE.

A recent Danish study (Jacobsen *et al.*, 2004) sponsored by the Danish “Power Investigation” relates to this issue, because it covers many of the topics in Campbell’s report and supports the overall hypothesis of the study that classroom and school ethos matter. The study is based on a survey of 10- to 16-year old Danish students in 250 classes and 90 schools. The survey data are complemented with classroom observations and qualitative interviews with teachers and students. The study examines the correlation between a number of democratic and community experiences in the school and classroom as well as their future expectations (at the age of 30) with regard to democratic participation. The logistic regression analysis showed that:

- The largest positive effect with regard to future voting was found among students who regarded the classroom as functioning well both in terms of community attachment and identification. However, boys were more affected than girls by the quality of the classroom community.

- Experiences with positive handling of disagreements in the classroom and participation in students councils also increased the expectation of future political participation.

These results could partly support the republican (the quest for “positive freedom” through participation in communities) or communitarian thesis where democracy is rooted in the community with shared norms. However, the same survey also shows that aspects of the liberal democracy approach matters: the possibility for expression of own values and interests (“negative freedom” or freedom from binding norms) also increased future expectation in relation to democratic activities.

The overall conclusion was that positive democratic experiences in the school, that is a tolerant and inclusive class community combined with space for individual expression, increase the chances for democratic participation at the age of 30. This suggest that “good school ethos” is about combining space for diversity and individual expression, good social relations in the class room and positive democratic experiences in the school as a whole.

The same study documents that bullying in schools has a negative important impact on both civic and social learning and increases school drop-outs. Therefore, it might be a good idea to think about indicators for negative school ethos such as presence of bullying and school drop-out rates.

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