

Social Capital, Social Inclusion and Changing School Contexts: A Scottish Perspective

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Introduction

This paper draws upon a collaborative review of the existing theory of social capital, with a particular emphasis on its significance and value for school and community contexts. That review, undertaken by members of the Schools and Social Capital Network, part of the Applied Educational Research Scheme in Scotland (www.aers.ac.uk), attempted to define social capital in relational terms, through comparisons of Putnam, Bourdieu and Coleman, the three ‘founding fathers’ of social capital. Their relevance to schools was then explored, considering different ‘types’ of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking – and identifying what social capital ‘resources’ are brought to schools by children, families and communities, and acted upon by the schools themselves. This was taken further through a mapping of the particular relational networks within schools and of the prevalence of trust, a key dimension of social capital.

This paper highlights the key insights from the review and uses these to provide some co-ordinates for a wide range of changes to curriculum and assessment 3-18, school renovation and amalgamation, and changes to management and career structures and inter-professional involvement that are currently altering the educational map of Scotland. These issues can be paralleled across the UK, but with post-devolution powers now available to the Scottish Executive to take forward a national education system which historically has long been organised and monitored differently from

those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the differences between the Scottish and other UK curriculum and assessment systems seem to be ever more apparent.

Social Capital is an attractive and immediately useful perspective, it would appear, in trying to make sense of a range of outcomes, processes and institutions within changing times. Part of its attraction is the way it can help us to think about institutional and social outcomes, and their processes and problems, in new or innovative ways. Another aspect is its potential use as an explanatory tool to elaborate on aspects of relationships and their associations with other factors and variables. Fine (2001) reminds us that social capital theory operates at the intermediate level, attempting to explain the spaces and processes between the micro level and the macro level. This is the level at which thinking needs to be done most urgently in Scottish education at present, as schools and communities are caught up in an insistent but slowly emergent reshaping of educational and social policy by the Scottish Executive. Between the macro-vision of Ministers and the as yet unrealised classroom implications of new curriculum and assessment arrangements that are in the process of design, the meso-level at which social capital operates can help establish the '21st century school' (Scottish Executive, 2003: 1).

Researchers who have attempted to put ideas about social capital to use, however, consistently record their concerns about the difficulties attached to defining this concept. There is a chameleon-like quality to notions of social capital and Morrow (1999) endorses Levi's (1996: 52) contention that 'We need a more complete theory of the origins, maintenance, transformation, and effects of social capital'. She also accepts his recommendation that, in terms of current progress, social capital may

perhaps be best seen in terms of a ‘descriptive construct’ or a ‘useful heuristic device, a tool with which to examine social processes and practices’ (ibid). The literature on the theoretical exploration of social capital is not well developed in relation to empirical evidence in education. This paper points towards sites where such evidence may be encountered, and its potential explored, both within the communities of individual schools and also in the wider social relations of such schools and their local community. That community includes parents, the wider public, employers and trainers who will engage with young people and help to shape their sense of social roles, duties and values within the society they will inherit.

Towards a Definition of Social Capital

In approaching a definition of social capital with reference to Bourdieu (1979, 1983), Coleman (1988; 1990; 1994) and Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000), the AERS review suggested an arrangement that focused more carefully on Bourdieu and Coleman, on the assumption that Putnam took his inspiration and developed his definition from a reading of Coleman (Baron et al., 2000; Fine, 2001; Winter, 2000). In all three, however, social capital is seen as *intrinsically relational*, with attendant *emotional and perceptual consequences*, and as being open to useful exploration through the *metaphor of capital*.

Intrinsically relational features of social capital

What is central to Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam’s attempts at definition is the clear location of social capital as belonging to and existing within the relational bonds of human society. This is its *socialness*, the ‘durable network of ... relationships’ (Bourdieu, 1983: 248), the ‘social structure’ (Coleman, 1994: 302), or ‘social

networks' (Putnam, 2000: 19). *Socialness* is the medium in which social capital operates, strengthens or diminishes. This relational context is a common defining feature of social capital. The metaphors may vary, but social capital can only exist within a pattern of relationships. Such relational structures may vary in duration, density, distance and interconnectedness, but social capital is intrinsic to the relational network. Since educational links exist both within and beyond classrooms, the relational life of individual schools and their communities thus becomes the key element of social capital within the educational process. That these communities are themselves changing, with a school population that is reducing in number and becoming more ethnically diverse, and with a teaching population that is statistically aging (Scottish Executive, 2004a) may present certain problematic issues for this relational and social aspect of school life.

Emotional and perceptual consequences

A second feature of social capital common to Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam is that the relational behaviours have emotional and perceptual consequences. This is the oxygen of social capital, providing either a potentially rich environment for growth and change, or a limiting context. Through investment in certain forms of behaviour and their products, social capital is sustained and nourished. The 'unceasing effort of sociability' (Bourdieu, 1983: 241), the 'general level of trustworthiness' (Coleman, 1994: 306), the operation of 'norms, trust and reciprocity' (Putnam, 2000: 19), all speak to the domain of interpersonal conduct. Interpersonal interaction and associated behaviours, along with their attendant affective dimensions, are clearly identified by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam as 'aspects', 'features,' and 'entities' that affect social capital. The complex social context of pupil-teacher relationships within

schools, and the possibly even more complex relationships of parent, child and school (particularly where either parent is also a former pupil of the same school), and the links between any school and the adult community of employers and further education personnel with whom school leaders deal, thus become the crucial nexus for exploring how social capital operates within secondary schools and their communities.

Capital as metaphor

A third defining feature of social capital shared by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam is expressed in the symbolism of capital as an economic metaphor. Social capital is a form of power, a currency, a *resource*: it can be utilised, traded, exchanged, drawn upon, invested, cashed in. Social capital is a form of energy, a force; it is a capacity, a facility that can be deployed and activated towards some desired goal. Social capital ‘may serve as currency’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 503), it can ‘facilitate certain actions’ (Coleman, 1988: S98), and it can be used to ‘pursue shared objectives’ (Putnam, 1996: 66): social capital is a purposeful means toward other ends.

Although it appears that there is concurrence on the meaning of social capital as used by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, it is worth remembering that each was pursuing different lines of research and theory building. Bourdieu was interested in theorising a general economy of capitals, how they were accumulated, exchanged and utilised. He was concerned with how the social relations of groups and classes are reproduced, and particularly in the role of culture in this process. Capital, in various forms – economic, cultural and social – is deployed by Bourdieu in theorising the nature of the reproduction and the maintenance of class position or advantage. Coleman’s long-

standing academic interest was in the relation of individual behaviour to the systemic and combined interests within sociology, social exchange theory and an economic orientation (Fine, 2001). Coleman is interested in explaining the relation between stratification and educational outcomes (an area of interest he shared in common with Bourdieu). His empirical studies established school performance as being influenced by the nature of the relations and patterns of interaction between the home, the school and the local community. Coleman put social capital theory to work in explaining such different educational outcomes, notably in relating them to the development of human capital. Putnam's initial study was focused on the efficacy of regional government, comparing the performance of regions in the north and south of Italy. It thus involved the civic sphere, the health and vitality of civil society as measured in such aspects as participation and voting behaviour. Drawing on Coleman he made use of social capital in this study. It was his writing and engagement with the question of the decline of civic engagement in America, however, that propelled him to the status of public intellectual and made him synonymous with social capital. Measures and proxies for social capital formed the index by which Putnam charted the decline of civil engagement.

A second characteristic of divergence within the work of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam is in relation to the scale or level of analysis (Winter, 2000). Whereas Bourdieu focuses mainly on the advantages of social capital to the individual, Coleman examines the inter-relationship of individual, family and community, and Putnam explores regional discrepancies and the role of social capital and civic society generally. Drawing on Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, then, can provide us with a core understanding of social capital as outlined in all of the social aspects of national life highlighted above. While there exist conceptual and cultural differences between

Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam in disentangling the strands of human, cultural and social capital, and relating these to economic capital, all three also suggest or imply action that might be taken by governments or organisations to foster social capital with its norms and networks towards the strengthening of effective social and civil life. Education is a key site for such action and is, according to Fukuyama (1999), the area where governments have the greatest direct ability to generate social capital.

Social capital and Scottish education

Teachers within Scotland, because of the worthy tradition of nineteenth and early twentieth century civic engagement (Paterson, 2000), have been traditionally and quite confidently placed *in loco parentis* until relatively recently. Teachers have thus had, potentially, an influential role in maintaining social capital of civic society whose decline in small-town North America Putnam famously laments. However, the climate of accountability within education may represent a significant barrier to the development and maintenance of social capital because of the mistrust engendered. The drive for attainment may also lead innovative teachers or schools to revert to more traditional pedagogies.

Bourdieu, social capital and schooling

Working out of an academic French theoretical milieu from the late 1960s onwards, it is clear that Bourdieu is at ease in his exploration, sometimes by metaphor or analogy, of systems of thought and the tensions therein between dynamic subjectivity and more or less objectified structures of social class and cultural influence. Bourdieu's metaphorical freedom and lack of definition in the influential *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), whilst parading

cultural, linguistic and scholastic capital alongside social capital, with only an implicit linkage to economic capital, clearly frustrates Schuller et al. (2000). But cultural capital emerges as the most potent of these, in its ability to explain how the taste of the dominant high bourgeois group is universalised, partly through education, and thus used to buttress its social dominance. He clarified matters further in *The Forms of Capital*, distinguishing economic capital, which is immediately convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights; cultural capital, a currency used by social groups to maintain superiority over others and social capital, the ‘durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119).

Such terms can be used to explore how schools, curriculum and national assessment structures combine to create cultural capital in the form of qualifications and cultural norms, and how teachers may model for learners the values involved in academic work. Prizes are awarded to ‘achievers’ within this system, and balanced, optimistic learners can learn a great deal through praise and mentoring, ‘consciously or unconsciously’ laying down patterns of connectedness (if not yet connections) and familiarity with the discourse and epistemology of their areas of intellectual strength. The role of education in countering social disadvantage can be seen most clearly in the Executive policy agenda of ‘social inclusion’ in respect of pupils with a range of learning and behaviour difficulties in mainstream schools (Scottish Executive, 2000).

Since social capital is mainly a means of access through social connections and networks to the collectively owned capital of a whole group or (in this case) community, the effort that schools make to establish and maintain social networks for

pupils ‘by proxy’ with their local community, through work experience, links with social services, further and higher education visits, local media and sports facilities and so forth, becomes one vital indicator of potential for growth in social capital. Such social networks need to be foregrounded in any school’s planning for enhancing the life-chances of all its pupils, with some shifting of the balance from the cultural capital of assessment qualifications towards the relational and perceptual dimensions of social capital.

Provision of social capital is of itself not enough. The extent to which individuals actively draw upon this, taking advantage of community resources to improve their own economic position while in the process learning lessons of trust and reciprocity in their dealings with others, is a key part of Bourdieu’s analysis of capitalist society and its social divisions. Social capital exists as a resource to action, emerging in engagement. Thus while schools can create potential opportunities for pupils to actualise the community’s social capital, it may be that because of immaturity or social factors or attitudes beyond what some consider to be the normal scope of schools to deal with, not all young people will take full advantage of what is offered, or be willing to reciprocate the investment made. However, an explicit attention to the mechanisms of trust and reciprocity within pedagogy could enhance young people’s understanding of the need for such engagement, as might school-based developments towards the active use of social capital by disadvantaged youngsters. Such an approach would address a significant gap in Bourdieu’s work.

Coleman, social capital and schooling

James Coleman, working in a North American academic tradition and in a much more empirical way than Bourdieu, came to prominence with robust studies of adolescents, schooling and community in the 1980s, and in particular through his exploration of the causes of higher levels of academic attainment in faith (Catholic) schools than in state schools. Working in areas where economics and sociology meet, he explored relations between human and social capital. Like Bourdieu, he defined social capital firstly by what it does – its function being at first fairly broadly defined as ‘the value of [certain] aspects of social structure to actors as resources that they can use to achieve their interests’ (Coleman 1988: S101). He later became more explicit about the relationship between social capital and education: ‘social capital is the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organisation and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person’ (Coleman 1994: 300). Again, social capital is viewed as a stock of resources out of which other collective action may be taken to attain mutually beneficial ends.

Although dealing with individual advancement and hence the maximisation of individual human capital through effective schooling, there emerges in Coleman a clear sense of the role of community norms and sanctions, of obligations and expectations, and of the role of trustworthiness that leads obligations to be repaid in the working out of the balance of social life. Hence there is a sense not only of the complementarity of human and social capital (Coleman 1994: 304), but also of its being essentially ‘a by-product of activities engaged in for other purposes’, and not normally a result of direct investment. In the Scottish context, the development of Integrated Community Schools by the Executive represent attempts to improve the

delivery of educational, health social services in a co-ordinated way within a shared location (Scottish Executive, 1998) in order to improve individual life chances for the poorest and most marginalised.

Crucial to the generation of social capital, according to Coleman, is the existence of 'closure', the consistency or concordance of view supplied by sufficient ties among members of a group to ensure the observance of that group's norms. The stronger sense of identification between Catholic parents and teachers with regard to morality or religious framework was seen to unlock for pupils the resource of academic action and future achievement; the cohesion of faith schools and their links with parental aspirations ensured higher standards of attainment compared with the more diverse communities of state schools.

There is, in Scotland, some research evidence that faith schools do enhance the academic attainment of pupils in the lowest achieving bands, while enabling high attaining pupils to perform as least as well as their peers in non-denominational schools (Paterson 2000). How that academic and pastoral success is sustained with a decrease in the social 'closure' that is implied in an ideologically more diverse body of parents and staff is one of several issues that might be researched. Coleman's studies of Catholic schooling have been criticised by Portes (1998: 5) for their overemphasis on the close or dense ties of 'bonding capital'; it may be, however, that enhanced bridging and linking capital may be available to pupils in the context of Catholic education, whether in charitable work beyond the immediate community, or idealistically through an awareness of prayer and spirituality and may provide a

qualitatively different and paradoxically enlarged vision of life for pupils. It is an area which requires extensive investigation.

Putnam, social capital and schooling

Robert Putnam examines social capital on a different scale, considering its links with regional and national participation in democratic institutions, and the economic development that may follow from this. He has been most influential in his use of regional, national and international social data to focus on evidence for collective action, and particularly the networks and norms that facilitate such action.

As with Putnam's predecessors, however, we note the emphasis on social capital as an interactive means to socially effective action and mutual benefit. To put this in terms of the faith schools discussed above, for example, it is not necessarily school assemblies or collective acts of worship that matter with regard to social capital, but what these signal to those present, what they represent or call into being. In Putnam's view, social trust and altruistic action (with attendant economic or political outcomes) are fostered by norms of reciprocity: a confidence that working for and with others will bring a future reward. The current far-reaching curriculum and assessment review, *A Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004b), entrusts teachers with the delivery of a 'decluttered' curriculum in ways that are responsive to individual pupil needs and which promote more engaged citizenship. A similar approach may be signalled in the movement in Scotland's HM Education Inspectorate follow-up procedures to school inspections from a supposed measurement of 'ethos indicators', as outlined in their 'How Good is Our School?' document (SEED/HMIE

1996); towards an estimate of trust in any institution's potential for change and improvement (SEED/HMIE 2002, revised edition; Pepin 2005).

Such policy approaches may address a perceived weakness in Putnam's approach, namely the absence of a shaping role for democratic government in the creation of social capital (Harriss and de Renzio 1997; Putzel 1997). Not everything is cheerily optimistic, however, and a notable aspect of Putnam's work is its recognition of a potentially 'dark side' to social capital. This emerged most clearly in his regional study of Italy in the role of social capital among Mafia families, which produce positive outcomes for the few at the expense of the many. Thus Putnam comes to identify both 'public-regarding' and 'private-regarding' intentions in the working of social capital, and to note that trust and reciprocity may overarch social fissures but may also bring 'like-minded or like-ethnic individuals together' to positive or negative effect (Putnam 1998, in Winter 2000: 4).

Putnam, following Gittell and Vidal (1998), distinguished between two types of social capital, bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital involves connections between people with similar characteristics and/or interests and tends to reinforce homogeneity and exclusivity (Field 2003). Families may have strong bonding social capital, as may people with apparently distant links, such as through chat rooms or Internet gaming. There is strong bonding social capital within schools, for example within departments, and this poses limits to collaboration as there may be resistance to ideas brought by outsider groups or even by one of their own returning with them, for example from staff development courses. Bridging social capital, in contrast, involves connections between people from diverse contexts and is seen as more inclusive. Within schools,

bridging social capital might be found within cross-curricular planning and development groups for teachers and other professionals, or in ‘buddying’ arrangements for vulnerable pupils. Woolcott (1998) identified a third form of social capital, linking social capital, which concerns relationships among people with differential power and allows access to resources, ideas, information and knowledge within a community or groups. Linking social capital would require bringing parents and children – less powerful brokers – into networks, with some real capacity for involvement. This would have to move beyond the kind of tokenistic consultation which is prevalent, whereby children’s views were sought on matters such as uniform, but not on teaching and learning. The type of networks established through linking social capital are necessarily looser and more open-ended than those which presently exist. They would also depend on higher levels of trust and the ability to engage authentically with others. An example of linking social capital can be seen in the Young Consultants group associated with the development of the macrobert Arts Centre at the University of Stirling (Mannion and I’Anson, 2004).

Social capital spaces

Schools offer each child contact with additional human capital in the persons of an intelligent and generally caring staff. This leads through curriculum and classroom interaction to the accumulation of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications and also insight or entry into a range of intellectual and social activities, including sports and other interests, which allow a young person to profit at a deeper level from the culture into which he or she is being inducted, through an increasingly confident ability to read its semiotic codes and social norms. Social capital is

provided by the school through internal networks of association within the institution and also external networks which bridge to community life and work experience. It is also established, in certain cases, by linking to intellectual or social contexts or challenges in locations (real or virtual) beyond the immediate community, through projects, visits and competitions. Frank (2004) reminds us that social capital networks are dynamic, not static and are also episodic and content specific. So, the impact of types of social capital may differ according to the school's wider social, political, economic, and cultural environment.

Secondary schools have multiple spaces which offer opportunities for the establishment of social capital opportunities, with different groupings of pupils, staff or staff and pupils. The evidence from a two-year P7/ S1 transition project which supported pupils from two primary schools for six months in P7 and the first six months of S1 (Perth and Kinross Council, 1999) revealed a complex map of spaces within the secondary school in the project. Much of the space in a secondary was not directly managed by staff so there was considerable freedom to use the space to create social capital, just as the groups themselves limited access to it and excluded some individuals from it. In the primary schools, in contrast, a different map of space for social capital was found, all of which, even the toilets, was managed or supported by staff. For some pupils, the transition to the secondary space was difficult and they had to be 'rescued' from difficult social situations in their first few weeks. Their difficulty appeared to be in reading the signposts to the spaces and so they found themselves themselves with no place to go to access social capital.

There are many other informal spaces in and around school where young people develop and trade social capital. The chip shop and 'the van' could be more problematic sites, offering positive or negative social capital, possibly at the expense of health. School dinners are another powerful site for the production of social capital, but this is a space in which children's behaviour and choice of food is still highly regulated. Texting, of course, creates and maintains networks without the need for space to meet. These networks can function both productively, keeping young people in touch with friends and family, or negatively, for example in harassment or bullying.

Concerns have been expressed that the creation of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schools has restricted the space available for pupils and staff and this may limit opportunities for the development of social capital. A survey of teachers by the Educational Institute of Scotland found widespread dissatisfaction with the accommodation provided in new build schools and concerns about the inadequate space available in classrooms, corridors and staffrooms (Scotsman, 25/4/04). New build schools may also inhibit the growth of community social capital by reducing the operating space for community groups. Whilst authorities have indicated that new schools will be accessible to communities, the fees charged to cover maintenance and supervision may prove prohibitive to certain groups. If this is the case, it can militate against social connectedness, public association and civic engagement, thus limiting possibilities for the growth of community social capital. Here we see a clash of policy initiatives or promises that undercuts trust in the political process itself.

Children and families

Social capital is provided by families, to differing degrees and extents. To this each family adds the cultural capital of its own history and identity, its recognised 'place' within the community that has been gained, sustained or (sometimes) diminished over time. According to Coleman (1988), close interaction between parent and child is seen as crucial to the development of social capital and is a key mechanism by which the human capital of the parent is transmitted to the child, creating inter-generational closure through the mutuality of relationships (Croll, 2004). Coleman also identifies factors which are more likely to have a negative effect on social capital and lead to children dropping out of secondary school including single parent families (characterised by 'structural deficiency'), too many siblings, working mothers and moving house. Coleman has been criticised for adopting a narrow view of family life based on the "nuclear" model – and for failing to recognise considerable opportunities for the development of social capital which can arise from alternative contexts (Morrow 1999; Seaman and Sweeting 2004). Children in single parent families can benefit from closer relationships with extended family members such as grandparents and relationships with others such as step-parents which can compensate to some extent for the absence of a second resident parent. Siblings may dilute the interaction of individual parent-to-child but they can also provide wider opportunities to develop social relationships. Family mobility may have a negative impact on both cultural capital and school performance. This may well be true, but in a society where residential mobility is increasingly common, the experience of being a newcomer may not be unusual and may present opportunities as well as difficulties. Also, the effect of moving could be more significant at particular times in a child's school career, so the nature of such moves could be more significant than the number as taken into

consideration by Coleman. It is the number of moves which Coleman finds to be a strong determinant factor in secondary school drop-out rates.

Social diversity is recognised as a determinant factor in social capital amongst parents by Jack and Jordan (1999) who comment that participation rates in social or community organisations are lower amongst those with lower income and education levels. But if this is the case then how can the input of a broad diversity of parents be engaged? Gamarnikow and Green (1999: 58), in the context of an Education Action Zone, detail the case of one primary school where the head teacher actively sought the involvement of the parents by working with their concerns and priorities and this turned around the school: 'there is nothing in this school that does not come from the parents.' This kind of collaboration with parents is an important means of building social capital between schools and parents, particularly where parents' views are sought on significant issues rather than just peripherals. Children bring to school their own potential as human capital, which will interact with and benefit from, the breadth of cultural capital offered by school, curriculum and qualifications. If social capital acts in schools as elsewhere, then its role will be to activate and assist in the full development of both human and cultural capital in each individual. This will take place through interaction and networks that will manifest differently at class and school level. The role of classroom dialogue, interaction and affirmation through pedagogy and assessment are likely to be a key focus, but independence, self-direction and responsibility for tasks and communication are also likely to be involved in the development of an active social capital, made real for individuals at a metacognitive level through awareness of purposeful learning habits and personal learning style.

Children are in effect treated by Coleman (1988) as passive subjects who form part of their parents' social capital, but it should be remembered that they are also 'social actors who shape and influence their own environments' (Morrow 1999: 757).

Children generate their own social capital networks and particularly in the later years of childhood it may be these which are more influential than parents. Peer networks which have their own norms and values may be a significant factor in educational attainment. Children are highly competent at moving between different networks of their own friends and acquaintances, the formal and informal networks of the school, and between home and school. There may be conflict between the different networks, and schools may contribute to such conflict. Children are also competent in more negative kinds of networks such as bullying, vandalism and truancy, – examples of social capital's 'dark side' (Field 2003: 71). Locational variables, dialect and accent, while creating a strong sense of identity at neighbourhood and regional level may generate social capital which contrasts with that generated through the standard English of school learning (which may, of course, vary across subject disciplines and staff members). As the policy of the Scottish Executive is to encourage immigration from new members of the European Union, different accents and languages as verbal signals of sub-cultures may impact upon the social, as well as cultural, capital of individual pupils.

Social capital will be encountered and made active by schools and by pupils in multiple and multiply related ways. We might expect some of the following to be operating at any given time:

- ❑ ‘Club capital’ operating at physical (sport), intellectual (chess or debating) and emotional/social (charity or community service) levels.
- ❑ ‘Envisioned capital’, operating through the imaginary tasks and contexts that are frequently used as learning strategies in classrooms, ranging from role play and simulations to talent competitions and school shows.
- ❑ ‘Virtual capital’ which will use websites and sanctioned Internet contacts, as well as local media, to link with the wider world. This will also involve the use of mobile phones, even where the use of these in schools is not officially sanctioned.
- ❑ ‘Working capital’ which will operate formally through work experience placements, and informally through part-time and weekend jobs.
- ❑ Alternative or ‘black economy’ capital of subcultures, evidenced in gangs, sets of pals or in-groups, style norms and petty crime.

Generating Social Capital in Schools

The trust that is typically involved in social capital in schools may be seen and estimated in such factors as belief in self, belief in others (through cooperative learning practices with peers, perhaps, but also through testing out of adult teachers’ authenticity of attitude and skill over time) and belief in the world (through acquiring new knowledge that is true and makes increasing sense). Through such pedagogical

approaches, interactions and opportunities within the school community, and through more or less structured occasions in the wider local community for reciprocity and generosity of service to others, social capital ought, in theory, to be observable. It is worth noting, however, that attempts at effective measurement of it by both Coleman and Putnam have not been wholly effective, and have been considered somewhat crude or tangential, with analyses which are highly normative (Croll, 2004). Bryk and Schneider (2003) researching in the US, identify relational trust as the 'connective tissue' (p. 45) that holds improving schools together. They found that schools with a higher level of trust were more likely to show improvement over time than those with lower levels of trust. Again, however, it is necessary to be cautious about these claims, given the difficulty associated with measuring trust.

Baron, et al (2000) emphasise five elements which could have direct relevance as a method for creating institutions such as secondary schools that are socially and network rich. Firstly, the notion of social capital shifts the focus of analysis from the individual to the patterns of relations which exist within an institution, and is therefore capable of dealing with the complex ambiguities of cooperation and conflict that characterise such a community. Such issues could be openly addressed through both staff development and social education.

Secondly, it offers a way of examining the links between micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis in an area that has struggled with the interrelationship between the individual, small groups and the large organisation in education. This becomes an issue where schools with declining roles are amalgamated to ensure a wide and

balanced curriculum. Again, a social capital perspective enables staff and pupils to explore the implications of such change at a relational level.

Thirdly, social capital could promote multi-disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity in organisations noted for insularity, within secondary subject disciplines for example. A *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004b) is posited on cross-curricular themes and cross-institutional movement of staff and such a marked shift in working practice demands a new way of thinking about the social processes of both teaching and learning.

Fourthly, developing social capital as a concept within schools could reinsert issues of value into the heart of the discourse, with terms such as trust, networks, norms and reciprocity gaining both theoretical and practical emphasis. Because these terms are value-laden, they call in to question relationships between teachers, other professionals, pupils and members of the wider community. Whilst the outcome of such interaction may be uncertain, it could of itself start to build the social capital that can take collaborative working forward in secondary schools.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, there is social capital's heuristic ability to open up avenues for exploration of complex, multidimensional issues. By applying notions of social capital to institutions such as mainstream secondary schools, the features which both facilitate and inhibit the collaborative working promoted by much educational literature and policy could be re-examined with a view to improving the secondary experience for many children, particularly those who are marginalised. The agenda necessary in a period of major change with as yet unforeseen impact on the

daily work of secondary schooling may not be attempts to second-guess an imagined outcome, but instead to reinstate values of trust and norms of co-operation, and discussion of these values, in staffrooms, departmental bases and classrooms. These are, after all, the values that led many of the teachers into their profession, and which have been given too little consideration in the culture of accountability that has pertained in Scotland as elsewhere in the UK over the last two decades.

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