

Part 1 Introduction

Chapter 1

Youth and social capital

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Social capital and young people

Since the pioneering efforts of James Coleman and Robert Putnam in the U.S.A. and Pierre Bourdieu in France in establishing the idea of social capital few people in policy, social science and social science circles need convincing of the importance of trust-based relations in social and economic life. The cohesive quality of trust and the opening up of opportunities and mutual support through social networks is now seen as a form of capital that all societies need to promote. But it is also recognised that such 'bonding' social capital needs to be tempered by 'bridging' and 'linking' social capital to ensure that cohesion is fostered between as well as within social groups. The Canadian psychologist James Côté takes the idea further in seeing the different forms of social capital as significant components of what he describes as 'identity capital'. This encompasses a role for social capital in the expressions of identity and active agency, which are at an increasing premium in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalised society. The loosening of borders and widening immigration present new opportunities for societal development. They also bring new forms of tension between communities defined by ideological and religious conviction. Building social capital supplies the critical means of resolving the potential conflict and ensuring positive growth.

Research on social capital has generally addressed the situation of adults and the communities in which they live. Far less attention has been directed at younger age-groups, adolescents particularly, but also children. They are typically seen as gaining the benefits of social capital in education and the transition to work largely through the social capital of their parents. However, young people in their move towards autonomy and independence from their parents transfer their allegiance increasingly to the peer group. This supplies the means of resolving identity conflicts and coping with uncertainties on the route to adulthood. Young people's social capital is therefore of major interest in its own right.

The existence of social capital in the peer groups formed by young people is one distinctive feature of their experience. Another comes from the advances in information and communications technology (ICT) and various media. For example the internet gives access to a virtual world comprising an unlimited range of groups, unconnected by geographical proximity. It also supplies a setting for experimentation with new forms of relationship and new forms of identity, if not 'multiple identities'. The somewhat disturbing aspect of some features of these developments needs to be set against the opportunities supplied for expanded networks and new horizons for example in formal and non-formal education, employment, cultural expression, political engagement and social life, i.e. bridging and linking, as well as bonding, social capital.

Contents of the book

This book, written by authors mainly from England and Finland, is intended as a source book in a non-traditional sense for students and faculty in youth studies, and it will also be of much interest to youth policy makers and practitioners working with young people. The book has been put together at a time of growing concern about the alienation of many young people in today's society and the negative consequences including drug and alcohol abuse and anti social behaviour and political apathy.

The book consists of five sections: Introduction; Youth and Capitals; Social Capital and Identity; Social Networks in Education; and Transitions and Potentials. Each section contains a response from an expert who offers his or her personal perspectives on the papers' themes. The chapters provide much in-depth analysis of issues such as inventing adulthoods, ethnic and religious identities, adolescent's goal-related social ties, education and juvenile crime, the potential for change within and across generations. The book gives youth workers, researchers, and policy makers important and timely information about young people's social capital from different life perspectives in different contexts. Looking at issues from the perspective of England and Finland deepens our understanding as well as giving us new ideas about how to engage with young people's interests and concerns.

The Youth and Capitals section is divided into four topic areas focusing on issues related to social, cultural and human capital especially in studying youth and adulthood from a number of different perspectives. The chapter by Janet Holland draws on a unique qualitative longitudinal study which has involved following a group of young people, using various methods but mainly repeated

biographical interviews, over a ten year period. The young people live in five locations in the U.K. varying by socio-economic status: inner city, leafy suburb, disadvantaged northern estate, rural area, and a contrasting location in a city in Northern Ireland. The study focuses on the emergence of distinctive forms of adulthood, shaped by social class, gender, locality and ethnicity, and related to the type of social capital available to the young people in their differing communities. Drawing on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu the author regards social capital as a resource available to the young people in the study, along with economic and cultural capital. Access to these resources and agency in recognising and deploying them, play through the biographies of the young people, entwined with personal, family and community factors, and subject to individual, social and policy contingencies.

Tarja Tolonen in her chapter also uses Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital, in pursuing her interest in the social stratification of Finnish society and how individual young people are positioned in their social fields. She has observed the processes through which social capital is being created and used by young people in certain cultural, socio-economic locations: What kinds of social relationships do young people have, how are they formed and what meanings do these relationships have for young people themselves? By social capital she refers to social networks, skills and recognition as well as to the emotional support and responsibilities carried by adults or children within these networks. Her data includes interviews with young people with different life histories made in different locations in Finland.

Namita Chakrabarty and John Preston focus on Putnam's *Bowling Alone* text in which Putnam grieves for the death of sociability through both generational change and the threat of the socially isolated exhibiting the 'dark side' of social capital. *Better Together* is an expected line of flight from his earlier text in which Putnam makes social capital 'perform' to bring together class, race and gender divisions. Starting with Putnam's *phantasies* of the social, they use the work of Deleuze and others to consider the possibilities of anonymity, loneliness and nomadism to de-territorialise the 'over-coded social body'. Using the events around 7/7 in London as a springboard and an ethnographic study of youth drama in two London sites, they consider the role of the anti-social, eccentric and 'evil' in subverting conventional practices of youth drama. In their conclusions they consider that in emphasising the 'performative' nature of social capital, Putnam reifies a limited form of human sociability. They consider the

revolutionary possibilities of alternative forms of social organisation which do not fix youth as a predominantly social or anti-social entity.

In his discussion chapter of the papers *Youth and the provision of resources* James Côté distinguishes between the interpretation of young people's situation by Holland and Tolonen, with broadly Marxist undertones and that of Chakraparty and Preston's post modernist account. They share in common a sense of oppression of the young in which social capital as conceived by Puttnam and Coleman particularly—less so Bourdieu—is an instrument. Côté disagrees with this analysis, seeing its emphasis on bonding social capital as locking young people into disadvantage as patronising of working class communities. He also argues vehemently for more recognition of the role of parents and adults more generally in the 'guidance' of the young preferring to see them as a crucial resource in young people's development rather than as an obstacle that has to be overcome. In his terms the heightened complexities of the situation of young people in late modern society demand the development of identity capital, in which the resources of the family and the community are central to identity achievement.

The second topic, Social Capital and Identity (three chapters) embraces the more general topic of ethnic identity through a case study of Caribbean young people in Britain and religious identity through a study of the Seventh-day Adventists in Finland. In her chapter Tracey Reynolds shows how young people utilise social capital to develop and sustain friendship networks and how these networks inform the young people's thinking concerning ethnic identity formation. The analysis explores different aspects of young people's experience to illustrate how bonding and bridging social capital are drawn on to establish ethnic specific or multi-ethnic friendship networks. She is also interested in identifying in what arenas and contexts the young people are choosing their friendships (i.e., through schooling/education, employment, kinship networks and membership of social interest groups) and the social resources they acquire through these networks. By drawing on various case studies of the young people in the study she highlights the different types of and categories of friends characterised by different levels of emotional closeness, trust and caring reciprocal relationships. There also exists a clear demarcation between 'work friends' and 'associates' and these categories of friendship are generally racialised (also class based). The paper is based on research findings from her project '*Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities*'. This is one of a number of projects within the Families and Social

Capital ESRC (Economic & Social Research Council) Research Group, led by Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland at London South Bank University. This project critically investigates how Caribbean young people in the U.K. construct ethnic identity, and the ways in which they utilise family and kinship networks and relationships as important sources of social and material capital to do so.

Arniika Kuusisto examines the social capital of young people who have grown up affiliated with a religious minority, the Seventh-day Adventists in Finland. Her study indicates that the denominational network serves as a social capital generating social structure. It brings several benefits to young people and their families; both intangible things like lasting relationships and social support for developing and maintaining a value system and religious identity, and concrete benefits such as finding a summer job or a place to live. Social ties and networks can support religious identity by reinforcing the socialisation process, for example, learning values and helping young people maintain the denominational value system. Parental attitudes and religious socialisation in the home are of principal importance for religious attitudes; after all, it is a rule rather than the exception that there is continuity in religious identity between generations. Thus significant others, especially parents, have a monopoly on forming children's habits and beliefs. Learning from parents is tied to: a) the children's dependence and the parents' power over them; b) perceived authority of the parents; c) love of the parents, and identification with them. In addition to these, parents are also in a good position to influence children's social contacts with others. A religious minority provides an interesting context for research. The value system in a minority, especially a small minority like the Adventist community, is not only more cohesive—both in terms of value system and social networks — but it may also be more effective in producing social capital. Whereas parental values are increasingly fragmented in contemporary postmodern society, within a more coherent minority setting the culture and lifestyle are more uniformly defined and child-rearing practices typically vary less.

In the discussion chapter by Helena Helve the focus is on the identity and social capital of religious and ethnic minority young people. In her chapter she raises new questions: How do relationships and social networks enable minority young people to increase their social capital? Is social capital inherent in the structure of religious or ethnic family relationships, particularly intergenerationally? How does this differ for majority young people, and how do these minority young people form cohesive social and moral norms of trust and co-operation? Are strong family and kinship for them more important in

their identity construction and formation of social capital than they are for other young people. Does the concept of social capital for these young people differ from that of majority young people?

Even if it seems that minority young people still form their social capital in 'traditional' families and community relationships, the 'individualisation' identified with late modernity means that ethnic or religious minority young people also have their own life courses, values and beliefs, which contribute to the formation of their identity and social capital. In the minority position the term 'identity' seems to refer to individual identity, group identity, and social identity of the minority group, which means integration with the minority group with a strengthening of boundaries between 'us' and 'the others' i.e. 'bonding' rather than 'bridging' social capital. In the transition to adulthood strong bonds to the family and to the minority communities can be negative leading to social exclusion within the wider society. In contrast, bridging social capital can lead to social inclusion in wider social networks and social integration and participation in society. Furthermore we need to know how important are family and family relationships to the well-being and transitions of minority young people when building bonding and bridging social capital.

The third topic area (three chapters) focuses on Social Networks in Education. This section draws upon the findings which explore how both children and parents use their networks and resources, broadly their social capital in England and Finland, and how education can have a potentially large influence on individual propensities to offend. Susie Weller's research into secondary school choice in Britain over the last few years has increasingly included 'social capital' in its framework of analysis. This work has often focused on parents' perspectives with regard to the nature of complex admissions processes and it is widely viewed as a stressful and challenging time for many families. Nevertheless, this body of research rarely considers how children learn friendship and use their own social capital to manage the transition from primary to secondary school. The chapter draws upon the findings from a three-year research project which explores how both children and parents use their social networks and resources—broadly their social capital—to find and locate schools, gain school places and settle into secondary school. In particular this chapter focuses on children's friendship and familial networks as social resources which enable them negotiate the transition to secondary school. The study has been carried out in areas of high deprivation, such as in London, the South-East and the Midlands, where access to highly esteemed secondary schools is very limited.

Katariina Salmela-Aro focuses on adolescents' goal-related social ties and changes in them during school-related transition. She examines in her chapter the extent to which bonding would be more typical during the transition period. It has been suggested that social capital changes during life transitions. In consolidation periods, social capital is more meaningful than psychological capital, while at a crisis point the psychological capital counts more. In her study she examined adolescents' goal-related social ties and changes in them during transition from comprehensive school with questionnaires twice, at the end of the comprehensive school and one year later. The results showed that the most often mentioned goal-related social ties were to parents. The next often mentioned were ties to friends and siblings. After the transition from comprehensive school the results showed that social ties to mothers, peers and boy/girlfriends strengthened. In addition, the results showed that adolescents' with higher GPA (Grade Point Average), and those on the academic track mentioned social ties with parents more compared to those with lower GPA or in the vocational track. Girls mentioned mother and peers more often than boys, while boys mentioned fathers more often than girls. In addition, the results showed that in divorced and non-divorced families mothers were mentioned as often, while in the divorced families father was mentioned less often as a social tie than in non-divorced families.

In his chapter on *Education and juvenile crime: understanding the links and measuring the effects* Ricardo Sabates explores the relationship between education and crime at the level of the LEA (Local Education Authorities). In doing so, he first reviews the empirical evidence on the relationship between education and crime and on the possible mechanisms linking education to crime outcomes. He then uses the random variation provided by the area-specific provision of EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowances) to estimate the effects of the educational programme on juvenile crime rates. Results show that juvenile conviction rates for burglary fell in areas that introduced the EMA initiative relative to other LEAs. This was not the case for convictions for thefts or other minor offences. In conclusion, there is an indication that the EMA programme has external benefits in terms of burglary reduction, but the lack of effects on other type of offences lead him to conclude that this may be partly because EMA works with other interventions targeted at reducing crime.

The fourth topic area (four chapters) focuses on Transitions and Potentials in England and Finland. Across most societies the timing of transitions into adult roles has extended from the early to the late twenties, or even into the early

thirties. The average age of primary employment, marriage and family formation has been pushed back, as more education and skill development is required to take on adult roles. The period of preparation for adulthood has been elongated, especially for those who can afford to invest in their human capital, bringing with it a polarisation between fast and slow track transitions. Early life transitions such as young motherhood can have developmental consequences, setting in motion a chain of cumulative advantage and disadvantage, with implications for subsequent transitions in other life domains. Adopting a 'life course perspective', the chapter of Ingrid Schoon examines the pathways linking experience of early social disadvantage, timing of life course transitions and associated adult outcomes capturing social exclusion or inclusion in mid adulthood. The study draws on data collected for two British birth cohorts, comparing the experiences of over 20,000 individuals born 12 years apart in 1958 and 1970 respectively. Many young people show the capacity to meet and overcome challenges and use them for growth or maintenance of adaptive functioning. There is great heterogeneity in responses to adversity, which correspond to the contingencies of social environments experienced by young people, and the risks encountered therein. Without enduring protective structures and opportunities even the most resilient individuals will not be able to maintain their adjustment. This leads to the conclusion that the crux in understanding how individuals navigate developmental transitions and challenges lies with the availability of relevant personal and structural resources.

Markku Jokisaari's chapter examines the role of social capital in the transition to working life in Finland. For example, how different network mechanisms, i.e. for young people, who you have access to and how you gain access to them, might be related to successful transition from school to work. In addition, based on a longitudinal study, he presents results which are in line with social capital theory. For example, the results showed that recent graduates' social ties and resources were related to getting a job and salary level after graduation.

In his chapter Tom Schuller offers reflections of a general kind on issues surrounding the status and utility of social capital as a research and policy concept. His focus is specifically on the gender-social capital link as a key dimension of young people's transitions; and his chapter offers some comments on young people's engagement in civic institutions. His approach tends to focus on the links between social capital and education or human capital. He distinguishes between instrumental and intrinsic forms of social capital, and reflects on how these might apply to young people's transitions into adulthood.

Gender differences in educational achievement have been one of the most remarkable trends in education over the last decade, and one which is certainly already having a major effect on youth transitions.

John Bynner's chapter focuses on the arenas where different roles of young people are demanded—for example in the leisure context. Young people are connected with the new media and communications technology to which they have increasing access; the links extend globally and to the virtual world as well. With the growth of internet-based systems for the creation of communities and communications that are entirely self-determined, bridging, takes on new forms. For example social capital resides in a system that offers new democratic forms with great liberating potential, but also the possibility of new forms of coercion.

The papers making up the content of the book offer an exceptionally rich array of evidence to illuminate its major themes. They also highlight the challenges to conventional thinking and the methodological issues that future research and theory in the field of social capital needs to address.

What have we learned about young people's social capital

The strongest message is that young people's networks and trust-based relationships are not only a manifestation of growing up as a 'sub-cultural response' to the oppressive structures and instruments of coercion of the adult world, but a vital means of demonstrating how society can shape up to the new. In seeking to weaken, if not to sever, the strong ties to family that are the hallmark of childhood, adolescents find their own modes and strategies for relating to each other and the wider world, which in many respects matches modern realities better than those of adults. Their social capital is thus not only of immediate value in supplying a kind of security in the teenage world but through use of new technology—mobile phones and the internet—offers models that may be of vital importance to effective adult functioning now and especially in the future.

Thus young people's social capital is not just a product of the social capital of their parents—the means of hoisting them up the ladder of achievement, as the founding fathers of the subject tended to believe, but as a vital means of renewal and development for society as whole. This is not to deny the strong ties of the family which will continue to play a part in the choices and developmental opportunities with which young people have to engage. Family, by mixing the generations, will continue to supply the most effective means of achieving

intergenerational solidarity, of especial value at times of societal crisis and stress. Teachers will also continue to offer major inspirational models both in emotional and identity terms as well as didactically in supporting identity achievement.

It is too easy to see the younger generation as oppressed by the adult world. Better rather to see them within the family (at least) as offering the potential for continual dialogue about what the future should be. In the world of work, which is changing at an ever increasing rate, young people should not be seen as simply some kind of problem but as one of the major means of re-invigoration—a resource through which the strong and weak ties of community and workplace can be renewed.

Although the theoretical challenges may be surmountable at least in the short term, the methodological challenges raise issues that will continue to bedevil social science. The pace of social change suggests that few, if any, of the traditional stabilities in the family or the community or the workplace can be taken for granted. We need repeated cohort studies on a massive scale to monitor the new ways the transition to adulthood is being differentially shaped, and re-shaped, across gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity and community (regional, urban and rural) with the passage of global time.

At the same time we need to understand the configurations of events and contexts in young people's lives that prompt particular decisions about the pathways to pursue. Ethnographic studies of closely knit groups of young people will continue to supply the essential means of access to the thought processes, values and bonding mechanisms of the coming generation. They can also help us to enter the much more difficult territory of the extended networks and weak ties on which effective functioning in the modern work place is built. Surveys, though valuable for mapping the broad picture of changing transitions, can never capture all the nuances of individual—context interaction through which change processes are expressed. Better perhaps to draw on the modern methodology of web-based data collection and analysis to capture a range of real and virtual scenarios through which the different options available to youth of the future might be understood.

Over all we think the book takes a valuable step towards understanding the largely uncharted territory of young people's social capital. By doing so it opens the doors to the new programmes of research and action that will be central to supporting the achievement of identity and effective functioning in the late modern world.