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A Theory of Success for Disadvantaged Children: Reconceptualization of Social Capital in the Light of Resilience

Social Capital

Social capital is a term widely used in diverse contexts and in diverse meanings. For the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1998), social capital is defined as networks with shared norms and values that facilitate cooperation (Cote & Healy, 2001); for Putnam (1995), as networks, norms, and trust that enable members of the community to pursue common objectives. In the context of education, social capital is conceptualized in terms of its function in producing human capital (Coleman, 1988). It is lodged in the structure of relations between a child and his or her parents, other adults in the community, and his or her friends.

The Origin of Social Capital Concept

The origin of social capital, like the concept itself, is a subject of debate. Lin (1999) traces its conceptual development to the notion of capital by Marx and regards it as the extension of his classical theory of capital. The other two major concepts inseparably related to that of Marx's capital are *surplus value* and *investment*. Capital is part of the surplus value generated and captured in the process of production. Capital can be invested to produce more surplus value, hence a return on the investment. According to Lin, the premise behind the notion of social capital, like that behind the notion of capital, is: (a) *investment*

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in social relations with (b) *expected returns*. Social capital can be captured from resources embedded in social networks and can be used to produce profits.

Other scholars and researchers attribute the initial conceptual development of social capital to sociologists Bourdieu and Coleman (Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998). Portes asserts that Bourdieu conducted the first systematic analysis of social capital in his work published in the *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* in 1980. Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital also captures the two basic elements associated with Marx's capital theory: profit and investment. For Bourdieu (1985), social networks are a product of human efforts rather than a natural given. As a result, in order to have social capital as a usable and reliable source of other benefits, investment strategies should be orientated to the construction and institutionalization of social relations (Portes).

Coleman (1988), another contemporary sociologist, is also deemed one of the pioneers in theoretical development of social capital. His contributions to social capital have been regarded as seminal (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000). His conceptualization of social capital focuses on its function and its surrounding social structures. His work on the function of social capital in creating human capital has been widely cited in the educational literature (Dika & Singh, 2002) and has started a new trend of research and scholarly discussion in education. Coleman sees social capital in the family and the community as facilitating the creation of human capital in the younger generation. His research on High School and Beyond data has indicated that higher social capital in the family was associated with a lower incidence of dropping out of school. People with similar perspectives regard social capital as a positive social control, a tool for increasing one's human capital and thus advancing one's life chances.

Like Coleman (1990), Bourdieu (1985) has been frequently cited in the educational literature. However, his approach to social capital is quite different from that of Coleman. Bourdieu sees social capital as the sum of resources that can be accessed by individuals or groups through possessing networks or institutionalized social relationships. These resources can be used in class competition. Because the socioeconomically more advantaged classes possess more networks, they tend to have more access to such resources and to gain more benefits from the use of these resources. By the same token, the socioeconomically disadvantaged classes possess fewer networks and have less access to these resources. Accordingly, social capital is seen as facilitating the reproduction of social stratifications.

Major Characteristics of Social Capital Concept

Despite the differences in perspective and definition, a loose consensus on the characteristics of social capital emerges. First, social capital is not an attribute of individuals that distinguishes it from human capital consisting of a stock of personal skills, competences, qualifications, and knowledge (OECD, 1998). Social capital is an attribute of communities in the forms of networks, institutionalized social relationships (e.g., family and school), and informal relationships (e.g., between neighbors and friends, Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1995). Succinctly, Woolcock (2001) characterizes the

difference between social capital and human capital as follows: “where human capital resides in individuals, social capital resides in relationships” (p. 12).

Second, social capital includes norms, values, expectations, and sanctions (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Cote & Healy, 2001; Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998; Putnam 1995) that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions in a given society and regulate behavioral dispositions of individuals, groups, and institutions (e.g., trust, reciprocity, contract enforceability). Reciprocity and trust are deemed a crucial element either as part of social capital (Cote & Healy) or as an outcome (Woolcock, 2001).

Third, social capital generates effects. Social capital in the form of family, friends, and social networks is an important asset that can be leveraged for social mobilization and for economic or other benefits (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2001). It can also be employed to reproduce cultural and social stratification (Bernstein, 2000; Bourdieu, 1985). Most scholars and researchers agree that social capital has positive effects on health (Putnam, 2000), educational achievement (Coleman, 1988; Crosnoe, 2004), effective government, and low crime rates (Putnam).

Putnam (2000) suggests that social capital enables community members to resolve collective problems more easily because shared norms and values make cooperation possible and effective. In addition, networks facilitate information dissemination, and hence are beneficial to the achievement of both individual and collective goals. Coleman (1988) implies that social capital of the family, the community, and the school plays an important role in creating human capital of the younger generation. For example, social capital in a family allows a child to have access to the human capital of adults, which helps the child acquire knowledge and skills. High social capital in a family for a child, manifested in such forms as strong child-parent relations and parental support, contributes to the child’s academic success.

Some researchers and scholars, however, acknowledge that social capital is sometimes associated with negative consequences such as in the case of hate groups, cults, and criminal organizations, which generate destruction and corruption and impose enormous burdens on society as a whole. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argue that enforceable group norms are not necessarily productive for individual members’ benefits and that some norms can stifle individual growth and creativity. The same argument is also reflected in educational issues concerning peer pressure, particularly that among adolescents. The strong desire of adolescents to fit in tends to induce them to start an unhealthy habit that is seen by their peers as “cool.” That is why many parents are worried that their children might make friends with the wrong group and develop bad habits or commit crimes because of its influence.

Fourth, social capital is a multidimensional concept. Although its nature of multidimensionality has been recognized by several scholars, there is hardly any consensus on what constitutes the dimensionality. Coleman (1988) perceives social capital as having two elements: social structures and productive function. He suggests that social capital makes possible certain achievements that are otherwise impossible in its absence. On the other hand, Putnam (2000) conceptualizes social capital as three-dimensional: bridging, bonding, and linking. According to Putnam, bonding social capital refers to strong relation-

ships with family members, relatives, and close friends; bridging capital to relatively loose ties with distant friends, acquaintance, associates, and colleagues; and linking social capital to relations with groups or institutions. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) also define social capital as three-dimensional: structural, cognitive, and relational. However, they relate the structural dimension to connections to others in a community; cognitive dimension to the common ground that makes possible effective and meaningful communications; and relational dimension to trust, norms, obligation, and identification.

Resilience

Like the concept of social capital, resilience enjoys a variety of definitions. Resilience was earlier defined as an individual's successful response to risk (Rutter, 1987). However, as resilience research developed, more definitions emerged. Some perceive resilience as the qualities or traits of a person (Nettles & Pleck, 1993) that enable him or her to survive and succeed despite adversities; others view it as the process of surviving and succeeding in spite of adversities (Pianta & Walsh, 1998); still others see it as the result of overcoming the negative effects of adverse environments or experiences (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). Garmezy and Masten's (1991) definition embraces all of the above and describes resilience as "a process of, or capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging and threatening circumstance" (p. 459). However, Rigsby (1994) is critical about the perspective that defines resilience as a human trait or characteristic. He argues that this perspective has offered a generic explanation for the phenomenon of resilience, but dashed the hope of intervention aimed to foster or facilitate the development of resilience. In addition to its neglect of the contextual factors contributing to the building of resilience, the perspective of viewing resilience solely as a personal trait is arguably flawed because of its circular nature. Resilience research from this perspective suggests that the following traits are found in resilient people: (a) easy temperament, (b) autonomy, (c) self-esteem and self-efficacy, (d) problem solving skills, (e) senses of purpose, and (f) aspiration (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Werner, 1994, 1995). These measures (e.g., problem-solving skills and autonomy) were interchangeably treated both as causes and outcomes of resilience. As a result, resilience is often seen as self-generating and self-reproducing, which may discourage efforts to explore other areas where resilience resides, for example, organizational structure and mechanisms.

Although no single definition of resilience stands out as the most appropriate, most definitions hold two basic elements: (a) successful adaptation (i.e., outcome or process) in the presence of (b) adversities and risks (i.e., context). In the bulk of resilience research, resilience is seen as an outcome, and most efforts are made to examine the factors, also called *protective factors*, which help at-risk people surmount adverse environments or experiences and attain successful outcomes.

The Origin of Resilience Research

The study of resilience emerged from pathological research aiming to identify the risk factors that occurred to certain children and to examine how these children responded to high risks such as trauma, war, and parental mental illness (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Several researchers of the 1960s and 1970s

discovered that many of the children living with such substantial risks were well adapted and achieved successful developmental outcomes (Garmezy, 1974; Murphy & Moriarty, 1976; Rutter, 1966). It is reported that three out of four children born to an alcoholic family will not become alcoholic (Bernard, 1991). The discovery of resilience in children brought about the question about why and how some at-risk children can surmount the difficulties and live a successful life. It also led to the recognition that a shift of focus from risk and pathology to protection and strength is necessary. As a result, research attentions and efforts have since then been directed to self-righting factors (also called resilience factors or protective factors) that help children at high risk surmount adverse environments and become competent (Masten, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1982).

The pioneering study on resilience was launched by the work of Garmezy (1974), Rutter (1987), and Werner (1994, 1995). The earlier longitudinal study of Rutter (1966) on children of people with mental illness revealed that many of these children did not exhibit maladaptive behavior. This research finding prompted Rutter's (1987) search for explanation of the unusual phenomenon, and he found resilience as the answer. In addition, he identified several personal traits as the sources of resilience: (a) self-efficacy, (b) problem-solving and social skills, and (c) adaptability to change. His work with others found that school conditions were related to students' behavior, and an ethos of high expectations at school protected students against the negative effects of adversity (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). The longitudinal study of Rutter et al. (1979) concluded that schools had an effect on students' behaviors and the learning outcomes of children even when factors such as socioeconomic status and family background were controlled. In a sense, this study challenged those that downplayed the role of schools by claiming individual ability, family conditions, and socioeconomic background to have made a greater difference to student outcomes and started a research trend focusing on school conditions such as organization and ethos.

The work of other pioneers in resilience research followed the similar pattern of reorientation. Garmezy's earlier studies (1974, 1985) on children at risk for severe psychopathology encouraged him to search for the protective factors of stress-resistant children and the protective role of competence in at-risk children. He and his colleagues indicated that problem-solving skills, independence, and sense of purpose are the important attributes of resilient children (Masten et al., 1990). Similarly, Werner and Smith (1982) shifted their earlier focus from risk factors and psychopathology to resilience and protective factors. This shift of paradigm resulted in their famous declaration of the triumph achieved by at-risk children in their slogan-like and often cited book *Vulnerable but Invincible*.

Resilience research soon caught the attention of educators who were discouraged by high risks for schoolchildren such as family discord, child abuse, and poverty and sometimes frustrated by unsuccessful attempts to work on student problems such as suicide, substance abuse, bullying and violence, teenage pregnancy, delinquency, school dropout (Hamburg, 1992; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Willms, 2002). Fostering resilience in children through working on their strengths and/or on the strengths of the environment has

become an alternative to the traditional manner of educational intervention that focused efforts on problems and/or risk factors. The increased work and research on resilience of school-aged children gave birth to the term *educational resilience*, which refers to success in school and in other personal developments in spite of difficulties and adversities (Wang et al., 1994). In the educational context, factors or mechanisms that help generate resilience outcomes are examined, and efforts are made to create or reinforce the protective conditions and processes.

Characteristics of Resilience Research

One of the characteristics of resilience research is that it is inseparable from the notion of risk. Although research on resilience represents a paradigm shift from a pathological approach focusing on risk factors to one emphasizing building on people's strengths, it is closely related to risks. First, as described above, the recognition of resilience as a phenomenon originated from developmental psychopathological research in risk factors (Masten, 1994). Second, risks are the conditions under which children develop their resilient qualities. Accordingly, research on resilience has been contextualized in an adverse environment. However, research on resilience does not mean to ignore the well-being of the children living in more favorable conditions. Although some children live in more favorable environments than others, most children are to live some adversities and challenges one way or another in certain periods of their lifetime. Lessons learned from resilience research could generate efforts that are beneficial to children in both favorable and unfavorable environments (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

The second characteristic of resilience research is its focus on successful stories of at-risk children and on protective factors that foster and sustain success. Resilience research acknowledges the dark side of the environment, but looks at and works on the bright side. Protective factors and mechanisms are the major interests of researchers and practitioners. According to Bernard (1991), protective factors or protective processes as contextual conditions alter or reverse expected negative outcomes of substantial risks and enable at-risk individuals to adapt and grow successfully.

The empirical orientation constitutes another characteristic of resilience research, which is often the case with most new research fields. The concept of resilience emerged from the unintended findings of empirical research in developmental psychopathology, and it has a short history as a social science construct. Topic concerns of developmental psychopathology have transferred to be those of resilience research. Although a shift of emphasis to protective factors and mechanisms is observed in resilience research, its conceptual framework is predominantly that of developmental psychopathology (Masten, 1994). Cicchetti, Nurcombe, and Garber (1992) stated that developmental psychopathology entails "a comprehension of and appreciation for the developmental transformations and reorganizations that occur over time; an analysis of the risk and protective factors and mechanisms operating in the child and his or her environment" (p. 2). Both developmental psychopathology and resilience research are interested in (a) individual competence or traits, (b) risk factors, (c) protective factors and mechanisms (of the individuals and environment), (d) developmental transformations, and (e) maladaptation and/or

adaptation (outcomes). The difference between the two approaches seems to be in their respective emphasis on the outcome: developmental psychopathology looks at maladaptation more than at adaptation, whereas resilience focuses only on adaptation and success.

Because of its heavy reliance on the framework of developmental psychopathology, the bulk of resilience studies are empirical research investigating and identifying the traits of individuals and protective factors that are related to the successful adaptation of people who experience risks and adversities. The shift of approach of resilience research from psychopathology is neither guided nor accompanied by its theoretical developments.

The asymmetric development of resilience in terms of theory and empirical research has hindered resilience from becoming a fully fledged research field. The problem of lack of solid theory in the context of accumulating new and redundant data has been regarded as a vulnerability to research stagnation by Rigsby (1994), who calls for attention to theory-building in order to shed light on the causal structures and processes.

Connections Between the Concept of Social Capital and Resilience

Although social capital and resilience are separate concepts, they converge at certain points. Both concepts assert the crucial role of human and social relations in the personal development of competence. In the context of education, the convergence is even more evident. For example, resilience research has unanimously identified caring relationships and high expectations as important protective factors that help a child surmount environmental adversities (Cyrlnick, 2001; Masten, 1994; Nettles & Pleck, 1993; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1994); and social capital has regarded strong relations and high expectations as indicators of high social capital, a valuable resource for the education of a child (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Crosnoe, 2004; Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998; Putnam 1995; Woolcock, 2001).

Social Capital in the Context of Education

The conceptual framework of social capital and the relationship between social capital and human capital by Coleman (1988) is one of the most cited references in the education literature. Social capital has been used as an explanatory variable in educational research (Dika & Singh, 2002). Although social capital has recently become a popular topic in the field of education, its measurement remains underdeveloped. The family-based indicators used by Coleman continue to be the major measurement of social capital in most of the related educational research (Dyk & Wilson, 1999; Lopez, 1996; Smith, Beaulieu, & Israel, 1992). These family-based indicators are parent-child discussion, intergenerational closure (i.e., social ties among parents whose children are friends or peer associates), moving, religious participation, parent involvement, parent expectations, and family structure.

It is true that some other measures of social capital merge: teachers' or counselors' expectations and influence (Lopez, 1996); school climate, teacher-student ratio (Parcel & Dufur, 2001); interactions with adults outside the family (Dyk & Wilson, 1999); and friendship and interactions with peers (Pribesh & Downey, 1999). These measures are sparsely used by educational researchers. The normative dimension evident in almost all social capital conceptual frame-

works is rarely researched in education except in a few recent qualitative studies (Dika & Singh, 2002).

In educational research related to social capital, the following indicators are used to measure outcomes: grade point average (Lopez, 1996); achievement test scores such as math, reading, and science scores (Morgan & Sorensen, 1999); dropping out of or staying in school (Coleman, 1988); high school completion (Lopez, 1996); educational aspirations (Pribesh & Downey, 1999); college enrolment (Hofferth, Boisjoly, & Duncan, 1998); and labor force participation (White & Glick, 2000). Among these indicators, in-school measures are more often used.

Resilience in the Context of Education

The definition of and the research in resilience in the context of education is not much different from those in other fields except that the focus is on school-children and the immediate environments around them. Wang et al. (1994) define educational resilience as “the heightened likelihood of success in school and in other life accomplishments, despite environmental adversaries, brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences” (p. 46). Research attentions and efforts in educational resilience are directed toward conditions in schools and classrooms, peer groups, homes, and communities.

Resilience research in education has pointed out the following environmental conditions of the school, the home, and the community as protective factors for at-risk children: (a) good and caring relationships; (b) interpersonal support; (c) friendship with other students who value education; (d) social networks of peers; (e) connections to other competent adults; (f) order, supervision, and discipline; (g) educational expectation; (h) security and harmony; (i) task accomplishment; (j) positive experiences; (k) opportunities; and (l) meaningful interactions (Cyrulnick, 2001; Masten, 1994; Nettles & Pleck, 1993; Rutter, 1987; Wang et al., 1994; Werner, 1994, 1995; Zhang, 2004). The factors are not necessarily restricted to one particular context. Most of these factors cross the contextual boundaries. For example, good and caring relationships include those between students and teachers, children and parents, and children and other adults in the family or community. Positive experiences can occur in the school, at home, or in the community. Educational expectations may come from parents, from teachers, or from friends. However, the boundary-crossing of these protective factors is not a given either. Some students may go to a disciplined and ordered school, but return to a disrupted family or vice versa. The uncertainty and variation of boundary-crossing opens another area of efforts for educators who are interested in working on alterable factors to improve student learning and competence.

The Convergences and Complementarities of the Two Concepts

At first sight, social capital and resilience seem to be two totally different concepts with different origins and research orientations. However, when we look at their applications in educational research, we begin to see their convergences and complementarities. First, they share similar assumptions about school attainments and achievements. Social capital begins with the resources and seeks out their benefits, whereas resilience starts with outcomes and sear-

ches for their causes. Their respective empirical research has shown that relational and interactive factors contribute to school achievement and attainment.

Second, resilience research supports Coleman's (1988, 1990) approach, which has been favored by many other educational researchers as well. The most influential conceptual frameworks of social capital in education are those of Coleman and Bourdieu (1995), which are sometimes seen as conflicting. For example, Coleman's approach emphasizes the contribution of social capital to equity and justice (Hoffer, Greeley, & Coleman, 1985), whereas Bourdieu's emphasizes the function of social capital in reinforcing social hierarchies and creating inequality (Schuller et al., 2000). However, resilience research empirically supports the underlying assumption of the belief that social capital as public goods can compensate disadvantaged children for lack of sufficient financial or material means at home and facilitate their human capital formation (Coleman, 1988).

Third, resilience research allows the setting up of clearer boundaries for a conceptual framework of success for disadvantaged children in the big and often vague territory of social capital. With these boundaries, the aspects of interest are focused on social capital elements that function as protective factors, from resilience perspective, pivoting on the relation of social capital with human capital development of a child.

Fourth, resilience research directs research attention to the quality of social capital. For example, the physical presence of parents at home, an indicator of family-based social capital, cannot sufficiently guarantee that it facilitates children's human capital formation. But resilience research informs us that "good and caring relationships" can help children succeed in school and other areas.

Finally, resilience research sheds light on some of the relevant measures absent in social capital research. From earlier discussion about the applications of social capital in educational research, we realize that measurement of social capital is underdeveloped, particularly in the normative dimension of social capital. For example, resilience research suggests that discipline at home and school is a protective factor for at-risk children. This factor is evidently related to the norms and sanctions in social capital concept, but is unfortunately missing in social capital research in education.

The Emergence of a New Conceptual Framework

From the above discussion of social capital and resilience, we see that both social capital and resilience concepts in education emphasize relationships in the contexts of schools, homes, and communities. Social capital in education perceives these relationships as resources for producing human capital in children, whereas resilience considers them as supportive and protective factors that help children overcome adversities and difficulties and achieve success in school and other life accomplishments.

However, social capital provides a wider umbrella to cover other relations and interactions. For example, opportunities to participate identified by resilience research can be seen as one of the indicators of social capital. Social capital can cover all protective factors related to relations and interactions. On the other hand, a resilience approach to social capital delineates a more realistic territory and defines more focused interests for a given research project in

educational research. The emerging theoretical framework is, therefore, based on that of social capital theory and scaffolded through the approach of resilience research.

Reconceptualization of Social Capital

The causal relationship between social capital and human capital postulated by Coleman (1988, 1990) remains the core of this reconceptualization of social capital in education. Like Coleman, we look at the function of social capital in generating human capital. However, the framework we are proposing is more focused and elaborated. The concept of social capital is extended to include multiple dimensions, but contextualized in the immediate social environment of a child. As a result, *social capital for a school child* is defined as relations and interactions that a child has with his or her parents, other adults, and his or her friends in the family, the community, the school, and the networks where certain norms and values regulate and shape these relations and interactions. *Human capital of a school child* refers to skills, competence, and other attributes embodied in a school child that are relevant to future economic activity. The relationship between social capital for the school child and his or her human capital in the light of protective factors of his or her immediate social environments is illustrated in Figure 1.

Social capital for a child consists of multiple dimensions that cross the boundaries of the three immediate environments: family, community, and school. The present conceptualization analytically divided social capital into three major dimensions: structural, normative, and active. The structural social capital is the social structure to which a child has access and that provides a platform where interactions happen. For example, the family, the school, and peer groups allow a child to have relationships with parents, teachers, and friends, which make possible the interactions between the child and others. Normative social capital consists of the norms and values embedded in the social structure that regulate the interactions and transactions between members who share the same social structure. This dimension includes norms of obligation, expectation, and trustworthiness espoused and shared by members of the family, the community, and the school. For example, good grades or behavior are highly expected by certain parents of their child, who may act accordingly and who in turn expects rewards (e.g., praise and gifts) from the parents. The active dimension consists of activities and interactions that happen on the structural platform regulated by the norms. The active dimension registers the use of the social resources by the actor, that is, the child. The existence of certain relations is the necessary condition for the use of social capital. However, it does not guarantee the productivity of social capital if the active dimension remains void. Coleman (1988) claims that even if parents or adults are physically present, there is a lack of social capital in the family if there are no strong relational interactions between the child and his or her parents. The physical presence of parents at home allows the child to have access to the potential of information, that is, their human capital. But it is the interactions between the parents and the child (e.g., the parents helping their child with his or her homework or discussing with him or her about his or her interests and thoughts) that facilitate children's benefiting in terms of knowledge and social skills from their parents.

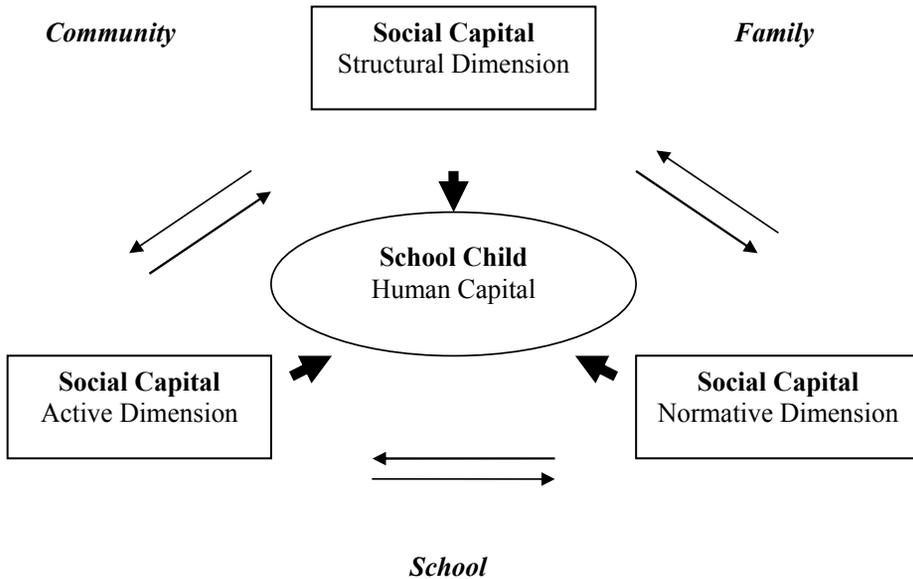


Figure 1. Social capital for a school child and human capital of the school child.

Creation of Child Human Capital through Social Capital

If we place the child in the center of three immediate environments (family, community, and school) and regard the human capital of the child as the output of the interactions of other capitals, the relationships of other capitals are illustrated in the following Model: Generation of Child Human Capital through Social Capital (see Figure 2). According to social capital theory, human capital, social capital, and other capitals are interrelated. Human capital in the environment can generate social capital, which in turn facilitates the production of more human capital. The existing human capital of a child can facilitate the child in using other capitals available, which in turn helps the child engender more human capital.

According to this Model of Social Capital's Generation of Child Human Capital, social capital along with human capital and financial capital in the family, the community, and the school facilitate the production of human capital of a child. Social capital within and between the family, the community, and the school gives the child access to the human capital of the parents, the adults in the community, the teachers at school, and friends in and out of school and facilitates the child to make use of the financial capital and other people's human capital for the purpose of producing his or her own human capital.

Creation of Human Capital in Disadvantaged Children through Social Capital

Social capital theory asserts that human capital and financial capital of the family, community, and school together with social capital add human capital to a child's human capital repertoire. When human capital and financial capital of the family or community are weaker for socioeconomic disadvantaged children, to generate the same amount of human capital for these children as for socioeconomic advantaged children, social capital and school financial and human capital should be more prominent for disadvantaged children than for

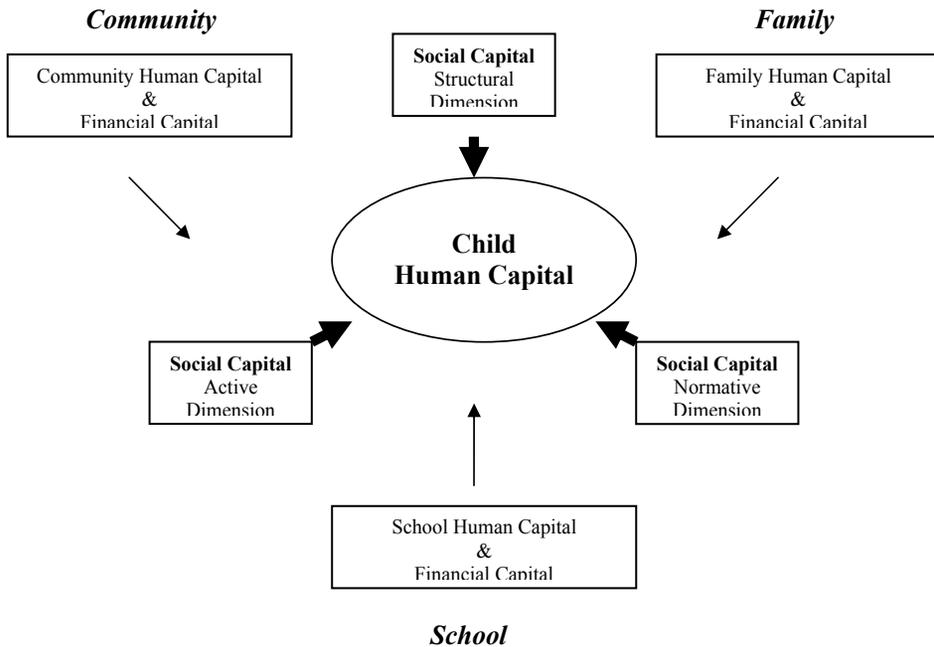


Figure 2. Generation of child human capital through social capital.

other children. Accordingly, a new model surfaces to contextualize child human capital in an environment where family and community human capital and financial capitals are weak (which is indicated in the shaded areas in Figure 3) and where social capital permits disadvantaged children access to school human capital (e.g., teachers and counselors) and school financial capital (e.g., facilities) providing them with the necessary conditions and resources for their successful development. Functioning as safety nets and resources of information, which are the equivalent protective factors from resilience perspective, social capital together with school human capital and financial capital buffer the negative effects of low family and community human and financial capitals and help the children achieve healthy development and build up their human capital in spite of the unfavorable environment. Consequently, the human capital of disadvantaged children becomes an important measure of resilience.

Conclusion

Several assumptions underlie the theory represented by the newly constructed framework. First, the current theory claims that social capital consists of many protective factors. Research on resilience has shown that certain factors can help disadvantaged children prevail against the difficulties and potential negative effects of an adverse environment. Thus it is hypothesized that successful children from disadvantaged families should have greater social capital to compensate for their disadvantaged family background than other children. Second, the present framework assumes that among the three dimensions of social capital, the active is the most dynamic, where use of social capital to generate human capital is occurring through actions and interactions of the actors supported by such social structures as family relations and peer net-

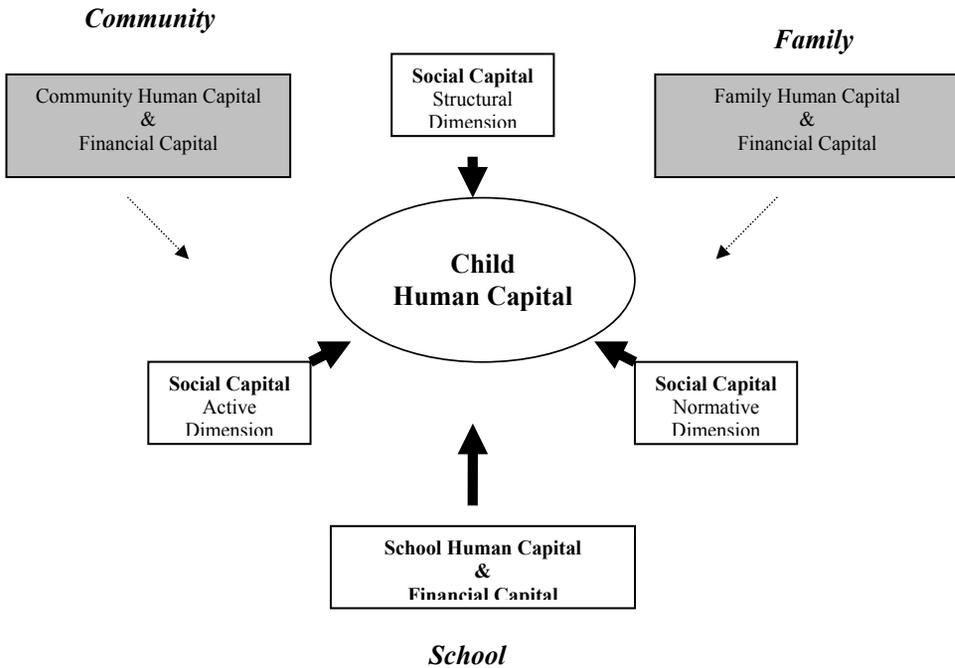


Figure 3. Creation of human capital in disadvantaged children through social capital.

works and so forth and regulated by norms and values. It is, therefore, hypothesized that the active dimension of social capital should be more prominent in its relation to school child human capital. Third, the current theory hypothesizes that school financial capital and school human capital as public goods are helpful resources for disadvantaged children to draw on and can contribute to their building of human capital.

The proposed new theory that supports the achievement of success for disadvantaged children is based on earlier studies in social capital and resilience. It is oriented to addressing risk factors (e.g., poverty) encountered by school children by promoting and reinforcing certain qualities and contextual factors that help children to achieve successful adaptation and transformation. It aims to reveal the contributions of social capital and school resources to facilitating disadvantaged children in overcoming the adversities and thriving amid hardships. By doing so, it hopes to offer some guidance for some of our educational research and to add to our knowledge base that can inform policymakers, educators, community leaders, and parents about investing and prioritizing their efforts and intervention in the areas where disadvantaged children as well as other children can most benefit.

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