Children’s embodied social capital and (dis)ability: connecting micro- and macro- scales of exclusion/inclusion ESRC End of Award Report, RES-062-23-1073-A

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Additional Information:

- This is an end of award report for the ESRC for the project Children’s embodied social capital and (dis)ability: connecting micro- and macro-scales of exclusion/inclusion.

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ESRC End of Award Report

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the grant reference as the email subject, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. We reserve the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

| Grant Reference | RES-062-23-1073 and RES-062-23-1073-A |
| Grant Title | Children’s embodied social capital and (dis)ability: connecting micro- and macro- scales of exclusion/inclusion |
| Grant Start Date | 01/07/2009 | Total Amount Expended: | £238,234.18 |
| Grant End Date | 31/07/2013 |
| Grant holding Institution | Loughborough University |
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| Co-Investigators (as per project application): | Institution |
| Dr Sophia Bowlby | University of Reading |

1. Non-technical summary

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by us to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. [Max 250 words]

1
The research explored the social relationships of young people with and without diagnoses of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in different school spaces, and links with home and leisure spaces. By contrast to much research about inclusion and education, young people themselves were the key participants. Children/youth with a range of diagnoses of SEN took part, including: ‘Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties’ (BESD), ‘learning difficulties’, and ‘Autistic Spectrum Disorder’ (ASD). (Our preferred terms socio-emotional/learning differences express both the embodied experience of difference and that norms of competence against which young people are compared are socio-spatially specific). These groups have been neglected in previous research and often have negative experiences of school.

How young people’s social relationships connect to, reflect, or challenge, broader scale, enduring, socio-spatial inequalities was a key focus, in relation to: SEN/disability; socio-economic background/’class’; gender; ethnicity. The difference that space makes to: school and Local Authority (LA) policies/practices, level of SEN and whether rural/urban, was examined.

In-depth qualitative research was conducted in nine schools: one primary, one secondary and one special school in three different LAs. 104 young people and 65 adults participated. The findings were disseminated to all participants and nationally via workshops, a final conference and a website.

Findings indicate that young people’s sociality is of central importance to their experience of school, and formal aspects of the school (e.g. spatial arrangements of classrooms or special units/schools) influence young people’s sociality. Young people often, but do not always, (re)produce broader lines of exclusion around disability/SEN.

2. Project overview

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to us. [Max 200 words]

**Aim**

To investigate how the socio-spatial construction of embodied social capital via children’s everyday practices (re)produces disability as a (de)valued identifier that intersects with other ‘axes of power’ to reproduce (transform) enduring broader-scale material inequalities within school, home and leisure spaces.

**Objectives**

1. The (re)production of embodied social capital by ‘(dis)abled’ children’s informal cultures in school, home and leisure spaces:
   1.i How do children’s inter-subjective relationships (re)produce embodied social capital within school, home and leisure spaces?
1.ii How do these performances of embodied social capital (re)produce (dis)ability as a (de)valued identity characteristic?
1.iii Do these performances differ according to other ‘axes of power’ including: type of mind-body-emotional difference; gender/sex; sexuality; socio-economic background; race/ethnicity; and religion?

2. The spatiality of children’s reproduction of embodied social capital at micro and macro scales:
2.i How does children’s embodied social capital vary between socio-spatial contexts?
2.ii What are the points of commonality/difference between the experiences of children in various spatial contexts?
2.iii Which processes or factors produce these similarities/differences?
2.iv How do the various social networks to which children belong influence their inter-subjective relationships in other contexts?
2.v Does the (re)production of children’s embodied social capital reproduce/transform enduring inequalities at intersecting spatial scales?

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with us. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder’s institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. [Max 200 words]

No changes were made to the aims and objectives.

Staffing changes:
- The Institutional Affiliation of the grant holder Dr Holt and the research associate, Dr Lea changed from Reading to Loughborough University 1/4/10. The grant was subsequently administered by Loughborough University.
- The grant was subject to two cost-free extensions to accommodate two maternity leaves for Dr Holt and one maternity leave for Dr Lea. In total, the grant was extended by 18 months.
- On returning from maternity leave in June 2012, Dr Lea requested a fractional appointment (0.6fte).
- To accommodate Dr Lea’s maternity leave and fractional appointment and yet fulfil the remit of the project, an additional research assistant Ms Gudbjorg Ottosdottir was appointed on an hourly paid contract from 24.4.12 – 31.12.12. Ms Ottosdottir completed one school case-study and some administration.
- The extensions facilitated completing all the research in-depth and to a high level of quality, despite the necessary disruptions caused by three maternity leaves. Two positive consequences of the extensions are: i) That the project duration covered a period of significant political and policy change and project findings can inform current debates; ii) A high number of good quality outputs have already emerged.
c) Methodology
Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max 500 words]

1. Secondary analyses to identify and contextualise case-study LAs and schools
Quantitative analyses of the School Census and textual analysis of official documents (e.g. Ofsted Reports) were undertaken. Take-up of free-school-meals provided an indicator of socio-economic hardship at the individual level for the entire population (cf. the national census).

2. In-depth qualitative research in school and leisure spaces

2.1. Semi-structured interviews with key institutional actors (total 61, target 40)
National-level interviewees included key members of national organisations for supporting and raising the profile of (young) people with disabilities. LA actors included educational psychologists, heads of SEN and CEOs of charities supporting young people with SEN. School-level actors included teachers, lunch-time supervisors, before- and after-school club organisers and classroom assistants.

2.2. Participant Observation of school and leisure spaces (approximately 30 days per case-study school)
More extensive and intensive in-depth observation was conducted, in a greater variety of within-school time-spaces, than envisaged in the proposal (e.g. classrooms, lunch rooms, playgrounds, special units, and before- and after-school clubs), as formal and informal aspects of the school were identified as closely interwoven. Leisure spaces (e.g. parks, sports and homework clubs) and school trips were also observed.

2.3. Innovative, semi-participatory research with young people (total 104, target 108)
Direct research was undertaken with young people, aged between 7 and 16. Our sample included many young people diagnosed with BESD, ASD and moderate learning difficulties, who have been marginalised in schools and previous studies. A diversity of data was generated: e.g. drawings, photographs and an urban street dance. The majority of participants conducted self-directed photography, informing photo-interviews. All young people also participated in individual, paired interviews and/or focus groups, with most engaging in repeat interviews or focus groups.

Interviews and focus groups had a duration of 25-40 minutes. Discussion was organised around the themes of: social relationships, inclusions and exclusions, and feelings towards school, home and leisure spaces. Debate in focus groups was more generalised; care was taken not to stigmatise young people via the research.

3. Semi-structured interviews with parents/carers (14, target 30)
Despite repeated attempts, we experienced difficulty recruiting parents/carers, although 14 were interviewed, yielding interesting findings about social and emotional capital of children...
and parents/carers, and parents'/carers' interpretations of inclusions/exclusions faced by children. Since we over-recruited LA and school actors, overall more adults participated than was envisaged, generating in-depth insight into school and LA policy and practice (Bowlby et al., forthcoming).

Ethical Issues

As expected, a key ethical issue arose as some young people with diagnoses of SEN who wanted to participate in the research found it difficult to organise returning consent forms. To address this, multiple opportunities were provided for the return of consent forms.

It became evident that individual schools could be identified via their characteristics by individuals who know the LA well, therefore LAs have been given pseudonyms.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on the ESRC website. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

1. Young people’s embodied social capital

- Social relationships with peers are central to young people’s experiences of school. Formal and informal aspects of schools are inter-related. Social capital influences young people’s cultural capital, via perceptions of, and participation in formal curricula. Formal aspects of school (e.g. curricula, spatiality of classrooms/units, (de)value practices) affect young people’s sociality.

- Emotional capital underpins social capital (Holt et al., 2013); young people’s sociality is largely based on emotional recognition, not rational attempts to gain advantage.

- Young people’s social relationships are complex; simultaneously but variously nurturing and conflictual, with inclusions, exclusions and subtle messages about relative value reproduced along a variety of grounds.

- Different geographies of socio-cultural expression exist, tied to factors including: age, social class, gender, and broader socio-spatial contexts of schools and homes. E.g. in some schools more conflictual expressions of sociality are typical, whereas in others exclusions and marginalisations are more subtle.

- Those with SEN, especially BESD, are often excluded and devalued, especially those also from socio-economically disadvantaged homes (Holt et al., in prep).

2. Different spaces

- Geographical differences exist at variety of scales; within/between schools and LAs are specific sites where policies and practices are interpreted (Lea et al., in prep).

- LA and within-school geographies of: inclusion/inclusiveness; level of support for SEN; transport; voluntary sector involvement; availability of inclusive or segregated leisure activities; rurality/urbanity, influence young people’s sociality.
Context matters in converting social to other capitals; e.g. social ‘capital’ in special schools or units does not convert to cultural capital as readily, given constraints on accessing mainstream curricula/qualifications (Holt et al., 2012).

Most young people value special schools or units. However, previous experiences of exclusion in/from mainstream schools often leads to moving to these spaces, which are also sites of exclusion/marginalisation for some.

Relationships and associated ‘cultures’ move between spaces via individual/collective bodies as ‘habitus’; e.g. social relationships outside school provide social and emotional capital to young people in school.

Friendships are more readily forged around shared interests than direct adult interventions, such as buddy schemes (Holt et al., 2013).

3. Connecting different scales and types of inclusion/exclusion

A disproportionate number of young people with specific diagnoses of SEN (BESD and moderate learning difficulties) come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Bowlby et al., forthcoming).

However, certain SEN are normalised in particular contexts; e.g. children with socio-emotional differences are more often diagnosed with BESD in socio-economically mixed or advantaged areas than in disadvantaged contexts where some level of socio-emotional differences is viewed as the norm (Lea et al., in prep.).

Young people’s social relationships often, although not always, reproduce broader social exclusions, based on SEN and socio-economic disadvantage.

Lacking the social, economic and/or cultural capital to participate in leisure activities exacerbates exclusion – these types of capital are not always associated.

Future research agendas:

Assessing how recent changes in national policy towards SEN (Children and Families Bill, 2013) affect the experiences of young people with socio-emotional differences.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative’s objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]
This project was not part of a wider ESRC initiative.

However, networks were established with other ESRC funded grants and networks. For instance, one of the principal investigators of the project ‘Does Every Child Matter post Blair: The interconnections of disabled childhoods?’, Professor Dan Goodley (Manchester Metropolitan University) was a member of the Advisory Group of this project.

Our findings were presented at two conferences organised by the research team of ‘Does Every Child Matter post Blair: The interconnections of disabled childhoods?’.

Dr Holt was appointed as a member of the advisory group of Embodied Selves in Transition: Disabled Young Bodies (PI Professor Janice McLaughlin, Newcastle University).

Researchers on these projects and other ESRC-funded initiatives participated in our end of award conference.

Dr Holt was invited to give a presentation at the Disabled Children’s Research Network, which, although currently unfunded, was established with support from ESRC.

These connections facilitated sharing ideas, particularly in relation to dissemination and impact.

3. Early and anticipated impacts

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on the Research Outcomes System (ROS). This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

Scientific

International Peer-Reviewed Papers

Published

Ready to submit

Books/Chapters:
Books

Chapters in Edited books
- Lea, J., Bowlby, S., Holt, L. (in prep.) for Young People’s Emotional Geographies: international contexts for policy and practice;

International, Interdisciplinary Conference papers
- 10 (e.g. International Conference of the RGS/IBG; Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers; Critical Disability Studies Conference; International Conferences on Geographies of Education).

Seminar Presentations
- Placing emotional, social and behavioural norms, School of Environment and Technology, University of Brighton, 16/2/10.

Other
- Themed session of the RGS/IBG: Geographies of (dis)ability, (ill) health, emotion and affect, RGS/IBG London, 02-03/09/10.
- Panellist - Geographies of (dis)ability, (ill) health, emotion and affect, RGS/IBG London 02-03/09/10.
- Discussant - Disability in Education, AAG, Las Vegas, 22/04/10.

Economical/Societal
Advisory Group
- Actors from a variety of academic disciplines and sectors (e.g. public, NGOs). Three meetings throughout project.

End of Award Conference
- Workshops, presentations, keynote speakers and panellists. 52 delegates from heterogeneous sectors and disciplines registered, Loughborough University, 8/7/2013.

Keynote Presentations
- To The Disabled Children’s Research Network, University of Bristol, 16/06/11.
- To New Geographies of Disability and Wellbeing, University of Dundee, 16/10/13.
These two events were attended by a variety of professionals, academics and researchers.

LA Workshops – One per LA, total Three
- Presentations of findings and workshops for LA and school personnel, youth and parents/carers November 2012-January 2013.

Website:
http://socialcapital.lboro.ac.uk.webhost1.lboro.ac.uk/home/

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts
Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

Scientific
- The two working papers will be submitted to international, peer-reviewed journals by January 2014.
- The two book chapters will be submitted.
- Dr Holt will co-edit Volume Two of the Springer Reference work the Handbook of Geographies of Children and Young People, with Ruth Evans (editor-in-chief Prof Tracey Skelton, National University of Singapore).

Societal
We aim to influence policy about the inclusion of young people with SEN at a national, local and school scale. In addition to the activities already conducted, we will provide:
- Two summary reports, targeting adults and young people, outlining the findings and recommendations of the research. The appropriate report will be sent to all participants along with MPs, ministers, civil servants, NGOs and journalists with a responsibility for or interest in school education. This activity replaces the research monograph set-out in the proposal, as it has greater potential to generate Impact.
- An article for QA Education; a magazine for Head Teachers and school managers.
- A press release to correspond with submitting this End of Award report, sent to national, local and special interest (e.g. TES) media.
- Data for UK Data Archive.
You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. Declarations

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed. Please note hard copies are not required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick one statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section (this should be an image of your actual signature).

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

ii) Submissions to the Research Outcomes System (ROS)

Output and impact information has been submitted to the Research Outcomes System. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.

or

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to the Research Outcomes System as soon as they become available.

iii) Submission of Data

Data arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the UK Data Service.

or

Data that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the UK Data Service has been notified.

or

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.