

# EDUCATIONAL CAPITAL AS A CONSTITUTIVE FACTOR OF THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-MORAL ORDER

**Joanna Juszczak-Rygallo**

Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa, Poland

**Abstract.** *Modern societies need mainly extensive educational resources for their development. The basic educational need in this area is the possibility of establishing contacts between groups of cooperating people and in this way building educational capital. Simultaneously, increasing role of education is accompanied by its crisis, which is said to be overcome by changing paradigms in social structure. In the face of formal education crisis, processes of building educational capital are transferred informally to social websites. The resource which is educational capital is one of the key factors determining the disposition of a given society for the development and maintenance of socio-moral order, based on democratic principles of social life. The cult of education begins to develop as a panacea for pains of the transforming society. Access to educational services becomes more and more important and even more significant than other human rights. As far as social development is concerned, role of technocracy (possession of knowledge) loses its significance and role of educracy - ideology of pervasive education - is growing (ability to make use of acquired knowledge). The conducted analysis attempts to answer the question of whether and to what extent educational capital is a constitutive resource of social and moral.*

**Keywords:** *education, educational capital, resources, society, social development, socio-moral order.*

## Introduction

Development of communication technologies still generates civilization changes that take place more quickly than ever before and are perceived by the society as a breakthrough. Contemporary man lives in the state that changes due to restructuring of the role of social capital resources. Some of the capitals become subject to degradation, they become less and less important and cease to develop, other ones are developed and become dominant in the new type of social, economic and political statehood that is created. Transforming structures of capital resources affect the processes of keeping social and moral order of the society that secures social coherence and ensures coordination of individual activities for the purpose of collective actions. It prevents conflicts that may destabilize social life and destroy social ties.

Nowadays, developing democratic states are commonly characterized as civil societies where the supreme principle is primacy of individual and his or her rights and freedoms, and common good is to be the sum of goods of the individuals who constitute particular community. Under the influence of this tendency, contemporary culture has been shaped, which has a tendency to emphasise excessively human rights to freedom without any limitations. Consequently, a transformation of social and moral order is inevitable.

Social and moral order means such an organization of personal and social life that is founded on a particular set of principles, norms and rules determined by common life conditions. They are stable and coherent in relation to one another and they are simultaneously, in longer perspective, susceptible to changes that cause a loss of balance of this state. Apart from the established social and moral order within the scope of particular axiological and normative system, there is also a social and moral order that really functions and results from actual way of behaving of individuals and institutions, which can be far from the intended one. Jan Szczepański (1972) defines these two forms of social and moral order as formal and informal. The first one is related to functioning of a state as a formal organization, which means codified system of regulations, positions, roles, sanctions and institutions established by the law and legally guaranteed. Whereas the second one results from spontaneous patterns of behaviour of mutually connected and socially involved members of informal groups, which organize life beyond formalized imperatives and norms. In the face of ongoing processes of individuation of values and lifestyles, the manning of informal social and moral order is increasing. However, the foundation of proper functioning of democratic society is appropriate correlation between formal and informal social-moral order, which is achieved by political and economic negotiations on the basis of the sphere of mutual social influence. The place for such negotiations in contemporary society is the network of educational involvement. Therefore, it is socially, economically and politically desired to build L<sup>3</sup> community, where individuals are focused on Life Long Learning. The basic educational need within this scope is the possibility to initiate contacts between groups of cooperating people to build educational capital in this way. Educational capital is a dense network of mutual, social influence, expanding self-awareness of social and civil collective behaviours that influence public and private perspectives.

The objective of this article is theoretical analysis of the hypothesis and practical issues related to development of social capital in new technological and social conditions. At the same time it will allow to answer following questions: first – Is there any relation between educational capital and social-moral order?, and second – To what extent educational capital is a constitutive factor in establishing social and moral order?

### **Environment for development of educational capital**

The processes of interpersonal communication underlie educational processes. Therefore, development of communication technologies does not pass over education, which is stronger and stronger based in the space of new media. Determinants of these educational changes are phenomena related to development of a new society, which is characterized by:

- change in personality of pupil,
- re-evaluation of educational priorities,
- longer education period,
- educational mobility.

These new conditions become stimulators that generate new needs determining efficiency of educational processes. Educational success is not any longer determined by the ability to collect knowledge, but by the ability to find it, verify and share it with others. Many researchers of social behaviours indicate that the basic need in the contemporary society is the possibility to initiate contacts between increasing groups of cooperating people in order to build in this way whole communities of learners.

Nowadays, Internet has become a basic medium for sharing information. New Internet applications has been developed, which allow even better functioning at interpersonal, group and social level. Popularity of Internet results from the fact that its use does not violate norms typical of young generation (Tapscott, 2010): freedom, credibility, cooperation, entertainment, fast pace, innovation. Simultaneously, it ensures constant self-control over the course of gaining knowledge and feeling of active participation in the process of education, which is a result of disappearing differences between the consumer and the producer of information, and often even combining these two roles. Therefore, availability of information which is ensured by the development of communication technologies and the development of media is a decisive factor in the development of education. On the other side, the process of exponential growth of available resources of information, which exceed perception possibilities of the individual, has established a new type of social dependence. The development of the individual as well as the whole society depends on the access to Internet and the ability to use information in all spheres of educational activity. Jerzy Jastrzębski (2011) after Konrad Paul Liessemann writes that constant learning become necessary, however nobody precisely knows which and what for one should learn.

Popularization of the access to unlimited information resources became paradoxically the reason for crisis of formal education, which we are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Overproduction of information causes problems for institutionalized

education. School in the present form lost its exclusivity for possessing knowledge. It is currently only one of many sources in the whole crowd of contents available everywhere. The excess of information, fast pace of its devaluation and, consequently, pressure of changes questioning current values became the reason for systemic insufficiency of education. John Holt underlines in his book *Zamiast edukacji* (Holt, 2007) that undertaken attempts to fix the system of education does not make sense and they are doomed to fail. He postulates also the necessity to shift educational paradigms, which is possible thanks to development of new technologies of education.

Nowadays an individual assumes responsibility for own education and looking for and constructing own social and moral order. This search is not rather directed towards school, where almost everything is standardized: knowledge, skills, competencies and patterns of behaviours (norms and values). Even though building the order is an educational problem, looking for it takes place in the system of references: are we the same and in which scope? what makes us different and what are the differences? Answers to these questions are found through participation in various social groups. In current conditions the field of such searching become Internet social networks, which have recently been more and more popular.

The use of social networks is a necessity for a young person, which results from natural willingness to look for friends. It is a need which is at the top of the hierarchy of goals because it supports achieving life satisfaction. Popularity of social networks in recent years is a consequence of psychological development of young generation. Internet is no longer a resourceful information library, but it becomes, above all, a place to meet other people. The basic advantage is communication openness and, on the other hand, comfortable and safe anonymity. In the web it is easier to initiate contacts also if somebody lack social competences. Hence, the use of social networks can be a way to improve communication functioning. Therefore, many young people (younger and younger – it refers even to children) transfer significant part of their activity to virtual space. These online activity has some specific features. Paul Levinson (2006) describes it as a market of ideas, where relations becomes less formal and more interactive thanks to specific feedback in the process of transferring ideas between users and creators of information in the network.

The majority of social networks is equipped with mechanisms of socializing their members. These are such tools as, for example, blogs, wiki, podcasts, discussion fora, chats. All of them aimed at activating participants in the process of contributing to creation of the service and combining them in self-educating groups. However, as underlined by Krzysztof Łuszczek (2011), participation in social networks is not educationally neutral. It can influence formation of particular attitudes and lifestyle.

### **Educational capital as a tool of social involvement**

From the point of view of constructivism, in particular connectivism, the process of education can be defined as time-space sequence of events (not always conscious) that can be characterized by three features (Pęczkowski, 2012):

- purpose of activities undertaken by participants;
- participants' activity in creating and developing own knowledge;
- interactivity ensuring mutual influences between participants.

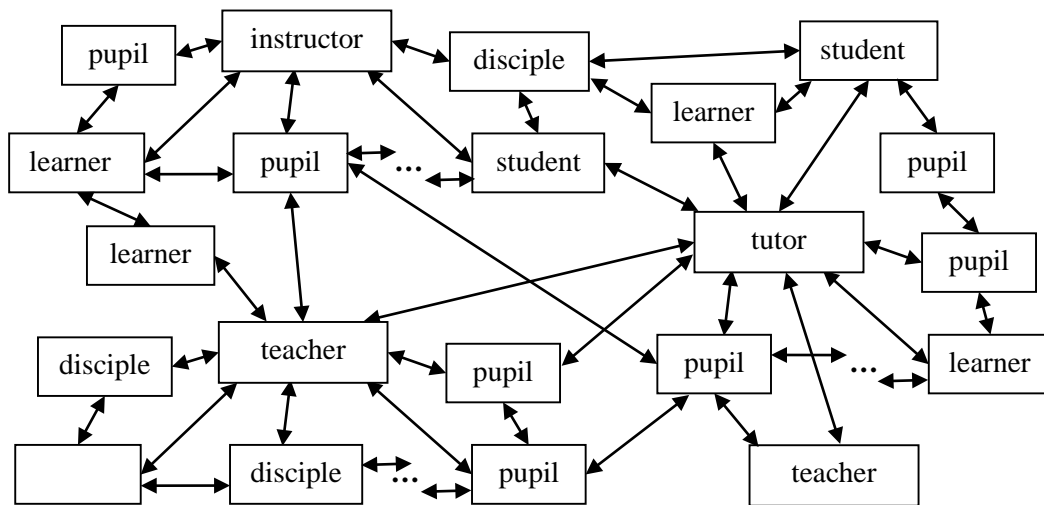
The process of learning characterized in this way adopts currently a form of open Internet space to share the content. Henry Jenkins (2007) calls this process the culture of participation because in the era of digital media and digital communication technology the recipients have a significant impact on the flow of the content. Interactive media are particularly useful in this process, as they are no longer only a didactic means, but become a means-method of developing educational capital.

The new approach to development of educational capital requires of course self-discipline and involvement of the community of learners. A new formula 3J is applied (just enough, just for me, just in time), that allows to realize the new approach to education (Hyla, 2003). A pupil learns as much as he or she needs at a given moment. New value of educational capital is also removing barriers of space and time. Education with the use of social networks becomes possible at any place and at any time with unlimited access to knowledge provided. This sense of decision-making (chance to access any information at any place and at any time) fulfils educational needs of youngest people. The point of gravity in social networks is shifting to accessibility of the knowledge base.

The resources of educational capital influence effectiveness of teaching through participation and ability to initiate communication with other participants of the process of education. Figure 1 shows example of the resources of educational capital in conditions of participation.

The diagram presents typical reciprocity, which can be characterized as obtaining content from other participants, combining new elements in a new whole, introducing changes and sharing results with others. All participant have equal positions and each one can to the same extent develop his or her own personality, realize own ideas and concepts and share them with other teachers and pupils. In this way the communities are created that are equipped with educational capital, where their members participate in the process of group learning in particular field, can help one another and motivate one another to work on a common problem. Everyone, without exception, can not only publish the material he or she has prepared, but also can comment the content placed by other members of the community. Thus, the cooperation in education in social networks

supports mutual development – dual-subjectivity of the process of education is created, which supports socialization of the participants.



*Figure 1 Educational resources in conditions of participation (Juszczuk-Rygallo, 2013)*

Appropriately managed social networks are a perfect tool to create space for educational capital. James Paul Gee (2005) defines such space as so called affinity space – place of informal education, which is much more attractive and effective than the formalized one. However, to allow such conditions to exist, the educational resources created in the social network must be characterized by freedom and optionality.

### **Educational capital as a constructor of social and moral values**

Social theories treat the state of modern society as a following stage of its development, where global information is an intangible good and has status equal to or even higher than tangible goods. Such a society has been called postmodern civil society. The basis for development of social capital resources in the civil state is educational capital. In this context Józef Zabielski (2009) mentioned following three social features as the most important: justice, solidarity and love. Catholic Social Teaching contains what is most significant for presented analysis, namely the idea of common good, which is realized in the form of capital resources both by an individual and by the community (Mariański, 2007). The order, as an arrangement of community relations, occurs in activities referring to social, political, economic and cultural life (Koperek, 1995). The activity within the field of the resources of educational capital models such elements of social features like trust, reciprocity, involvement, solidarity, honesty and justice, which are necessary to form social and moral order as a superstructure to social

resources. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century people started to use expression knowledge society instead of postmodern society, underlying in this way the importance of knowledge and creativity in the development of economy, for which education became a value-creative resource. In new economic realities it is said also about economy based on knowledge. The factors that characterize such knowledge-based economy are above all:

- development of new Internet technologies and knowledge management;
- increasing role of education, both formal and informal, supplementary and constant education (lifelong learning);
- closer relations between education, knowledge and economy (innovation).

In organizations of knowledge the educational capital of employees is the most important economic resource. Therefore, the community based on knowledge is a learning organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2000). A model of learning organization was created by Peter Senge. In this model learning of the organization is a process where employees are constantly adapting to changes and are sharing knowledge, which inspires them to build and manage educational capital of an organization and use it for self-development of each employee. In this way, each of them can increase personal intellectual capital, which is then brought to the community. The organization achieves its successes thanks to educational successes of its employees, therefore it requires their constant independent education, teaching others and learning from others. At the same time the hierarchy of features of the educational capital has changed. Competencies are the most important, then skills and knowledge is just at the end. Education is no longer a private matter of each person and self-esteem, which is a very important psychological need, becomes an urgent economic need – an indispensable feature to be able to adapt to more and more complex, provocative and competitive world.

It is assumed in ideology of the society of knowledge that knowledge should support development of social and moral order. However, we do not know which development it refers to and we cannot prevent its faster and faster devaluation and outdated. It refers mainly to formal education which aims at having everything described, intentional and examined at every stage of learning and, above all, coherent with formal regulations, which are called educational effects. This formalized approach does not give school education any chances in the race against the pace of multidirectional social changes. Only formation of social educational capital, which is not dependent on a fixed superior concept of its functioning, allows to identify and solve educational problems independently. In this way, education may finally become an activity that is more and more

attractive for pupils. They can locate their educational activity voluntarily and according to own preferences in the areas of personal social and moral order.

### **Educocracy versus technocracy**

In the society of knowledge educational capital is the crucial element of social transformations. The significance of education is subject to qualitative change – it ceases to be a complement to economy and receives a new central meaning. Education becomes a strategic activity and on this background market of educational services develops dynamically because they become more and more desired good, which is used to create appropriate social and moral structures where a learning person can develop. Thus, permanent access to educational services starts to have crucial importance, even greater than other human rights.

Among the most important features that characterize civil society, the following are currently listed:

- domination of services sector in economy,
- development of finance sector and insurance sector,
- development of health care, education and science,
- increasing role of specialists and scientists in occupational structure,
- growing importance of theoretical knowledge as a source of information,
- creation of so called intellectual technologies as a basis to make social and political decisions.

The above characteristics show the tendency of social changes that can be described as transition from technocracy to educocracy. The process takes place in the context of growing density and intensity of processes of social communication (mainly thanks to the Internet), which carries processes of development of educational capital in the situation, where individuals have theoretically unlimited access to knowledge resources. The ability to make strategic use of available educational resources materializes the impact on social and moral reality and actual control over it (Brzozowski, 2009). Thus, the role of educocracy increases with reference to the use of knowledge resources and the role of technocracy decreases as far as having knowledge is concerned. Technocracy – the term used for the first time by William Henry Smyth in 1919 – is a concept of social system, where high qualified technicians, experts and managers are in power. In technocracy, as written by Jerzy Jastrzębski (2011), individual's position and value resulted from his/her professional role, and knowledge was to be, above all, useful and ready to be used in practice, preferably in production. Education lost its autotelic value and was treated just like a tool. Fundamental assumption of technocracy was the thesis that knowledge in its glory was available only to small



group of people who had the right to establish social and moral order. Access to education, decisive for social status, was often dependent on wealth and social background. Educational activity stopped at the moment of acquiring knowledge resources necessary to realize a designated social role. On the contrary, in educracy, thanks to explosively developing communication technologies, the ideology of omnipresent education becomes dominant, which is related to distribution of social information resources. Knowledge is available for everyone. In changing world it is necessary that each individual manifests increased educational activity, which must last for the whole life. Thanks to educational capital, all the people can influence social changes. As written by Mirosław J. Szymański (2014) – indeed, education cannot reconstruct social and moral order on its own, but as a result of its impact on people’s education and their competencies, it can trigger particular changes, stimulate them and implement necessary corrections.

At the market of social relations the place of technocrats is now occupied by professional educators. Current labour market is dominated by following sectors: educational and technical, and they are the main door to power. Of course, this situation creates cultural tensions at the line technocracy – educracy. Ultimately, however, technocracy, which led to communication revolution, must give place to educracy, which makes use of communication achievements of technocracy. Hence, educracy is a superstructure of technocracy.

Danuta Walczak-Duraj (2012), after Aleksander Bard and Jan Söderqvist (2006), presents the change in social and moral structure as the process of paradigm shift. The process is clearly visible on the example of New Economics, where a set of social and economic factors, goods and means of production – which means “tangible economics” – is contrasted with new notions based on immeasurable values – “intangible economics”, such as for example social and moral order. Construction of these meanings one one’s own becomes more and more important because it is the tasks of an individual. In educracy the process is placed more and more within the field of possibilities of individual educational capital. However, it can be achieved only by the individual with high educational awareness, who is reflexive, active and wants to achieve personal fulfilment. Intensified life activity of an individual is necessary in the changing world. The individual must find own way, establish priorities, focus on selected objectives, perform tasks. The biography of contemporary human being is a consequence of his or her choices, overcoming difficulties, coping with risks, which is related to the choices and activities undertaken. Thus, it is necessary in educracy to look for and construct own educational capital constantly. While social educracy is developed, educational capitals of its participants become a common good, which is developed together and for which all of them are responsible.

## Conclusion

Nowadays, the Internet is basic space to establish educational capital. As set out in the article, this resource is one of crucial factors determining the disposition of particular society to social and moral development based on democratic principles of social life. A society without educational capital cannot build an organized social and moral space determined by such factors as solidarity, commitment and expectations. Such a society is inevitably aiming at passiveness and stagnation. Searching for answers to the questions raised in the introduction, it is possible to conclude that social and moral order is a state of delicate balance and it requires constant stabilization. In social life there are elements of changes that constitute some new forms of this order. Whereas developed educational capital increases the activity of individuals to form mutual relations in social community and stabilizes social and moral order. In this way, the society can exist as a whole, can achieve its objectives and can develop.

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