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Social composition of comprehensive schools and the production of differences in educational achievement

A paradox of schooling

Pierre Bourdieu considers education as a conservative force, which tends to reproduce the social power structure by using symbolic violence with the classed – but arbitrary – knowledge of the dominant and dominated. This is not, of course, usually done with conscious intentions to exclude the children with inferior *habitus* (Bourdieu 2005) but via social structures, dispositions and practices. The theory means that the everyday running of schools is thoroughly relativised in its concept of knowledge and the experiences of schools. “The students may not have been taught *propaganda*, but they have been taught by *methods* of propaganda, and so cannot realise their knowledge in the “right way” (Nash 2003b, 760).

Following the realist and critical analysis of Roy Nash and Michael Young (see Young 2008), we can ask how strong the enlightenment power of knowledge is. Is it stronger than the knowledge of the powerful? How

can we solve the following paradoxical situation: On the one hand we can consider “schools as classed institutions and, on the other hand, that the curriculum, which has been singled out, by Bourdieu, as being one element of the manifestation of class, nevertheless has potential, through the reasoning processes underlying the social and natural sciences, to emancipate” (Lauder 2010, 3)?

In this chapter I try to analyse the paradox by taking two positions: First, I like to emphasise that educational reproduction is also a process of production. It entails producers, tools and objects, i.e. contents. At school, the process of forming knowledge – and experiences – essentially produces contents for students’ life. We don’t do our life, we make it. Learning is impossible without a learner, it always involves agency. The question is, then, whether we can realise “universal pedagogy” in a concrete, individually divergent way. According to Nash (1990, 436), in “Bourdieu’s theory the school’s failure is located in its structured refusal to develop a ‘universal pedagogy’ – a pedagogy that takes nothing for granted – able to succeed with relatively unprepared working class pupils”.

Secondly, in schools there are always unofficial processes of students’ peer groups. In a country like Finland this part of the content of daily life in schools is fundamental: the whole generation of the neighbourhood starts their schooling at the same school, which in turn provides a setting for a social and cultural comparison of the habitus of students from different social backgrounds.

I will make the following excursions in this chapter: First, I will give a historical glimpse on the process of forming a comprehensive school in Lievestuore with a completely new social composition. Then I will briefly discuss some PISA results¹ of Finland to illuminate the role of social composition in the comprehensive schools nowadays. Thirdly, I will come back to Lievestuore to analyse a bit the status of students’ peer groups in one

¹ The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) organised by OECD is an internationally standardised assessment jointly developed by participating economies and administered to 15-year-olds in a representative sample of schools. Four assessments have so far been carried out (in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009). The tests are typically administered to between 4,500 and 10,000 students in each country. (See OECD 2010.)

comprehensive school. On this basis I then attempt to give an answer to the paradox set above. It seems that the enlightenmental force of a realist curriculum is not powerful enough without a universal pedagogy, but with the universal pedagogy we have to be able to break the generative vicious circle of structure/disposition/practice -chain and the *doxic* production of habitus. I will end my chapter by suggesting that to be able to constitute a model of universal pedagogy with a positive circle of individual development we have to develop a connective curriculum using craftwork as a methodological mirror for learning. In Finland this means overcoming the academic and handwork traditions of pedagogies associated with the names of J. V. Snellman and Uno Cygnaeus (Volanen 2007, 2008).

I use in my analysis three kinds of data: First the PISA 2006 results of Finland to find out some basic features of the social compositions in Finnish comprehensive schools. Secondly, I use our results of a survey of the 15–16 years old students at the comprehensive school of Lievestuore to find out their educational orientation for upper secondary education. Thirdly, I use Finnish postal codes as an indicator of population centres. SuomiCD (Statistics Finland 2008b) includes a large archive of social and economic statistics by postal code areas.

The new social composition of the comprehensive school²

The Board of Lievestuore Primary School made an initiative in 1946 so as to found a municipal middle school in Lievestuore. The Municipal Council of Laukaa pleaded difficulties in maintaining primary school, so the municipality saw no reason to assume responsibilities in educational provision other than prescribed by law. People in Lievestuore didn't remain waiting for the municipal economy to improve but called up a community meeting to discuss the issue of Lievestuore middle school. In

² This section is based almost solely on Pirjo Vuorenpää's (1999) book "Kylän koulusta kunnan kouluksi Lievestuoreen Yhteiskoulu, yläaste ja lukio 1948-1998" [From a community school to a municipal school: Lievestuore Co-educational, lower secondary and upper secondary school in 1948-1998].

the meeting they decided to establish an association to support Lievestuore Co-educational School. Straight away, they started a fund raising campaign. Besides several private persons, the campaign involved a sports club (Lievestuoreen Kisa), Lievestuore Workers' Association and Lievestuore Choir, for example. The people also got the municipality to guarantee a loan of 500,000 marks. Also Haarla Pulp Company gave a similar guarantee. The State Council granted the school license on July 22, 1948, and the school started in the autumn, at first in the former canteen of Haarla Factory. In the first year there were 120 applicants taking the entrance exam, but of them the school admitted only one starting group of 40 students; 31 girls and 9 boys.

In 1952 the school moved to a new building, which is in use still today. Financial support to this undertaking came not only from the state and the municipality but also through civic action: Mothers' sewing circle donated 62,000 marks to the building fund; parents and other friends of the school donated altogether about 200,000 marks. The community was above all bound to the Factory, however:

"Although the community had gained team spirit and neighbourly help activities, it was still clearly divided into social classes. Some people used to attend events at the society hall and support the sports club Kisa, while others favoured workers' events at the community hall and were active members of the sports club Toive. People usually visited each other only within the same social class."

"A strange thing with Lievestuore was that the whole place seemed to be owned by the Factory. Nature belonged to the Factory. The school seemed to depend on the Factory. Well, it was a private one. The sports field was owned by the Factory. Everything was owned by the Factory. We who lived in Hanakasalmi were somehow outsiders – like adopted children – in Lievestuore. But they raised us well, after all. The Lievestuore School prepared me excellently for the world." (Aimo Minkkinen, in Vuorenpää 1999, 56.)

The co-educational school operated first as a five-grade school, but was extended to comprise eight grades in 1962. Accreditation for the matriculation examination was granted in 1965. At largest, the total enrolment was over 400 students in the 1960s and -70s.

In 1974 the co-educational school became a municipal comprehensive school and also the upper secondary school continued as a municipal school, which had more than 100 students at the largest. At the turn of the millennium the upper secondary school faced problems due to a loss of students. There were attempts to organise closer co-operation with vocational education, but without any notable success (Volanen 1998). So the school was merged with the Laukaa upper secondary school in 2006.³

The introduction of comprehensive school in the 1970s brought all children of the community under the same type of school for nine year grades. People were widely puzzled. This concerned teachers and students as well as parents. Harri Tapper, a well-known author, who once worked as a teacher and vice-rector at the Lievestuore lower secondary school, commented the change as follows:

" ... For a teacher coming from middle school or lyceum it was a totally new experience that not all students were willing to learn: matters that are beyond us, those we do not want to learn. Sine and cosine, results calculation for proportional representation in elections, and 'should' and 'would' in English are too difficult to people in general. The misfortune of being too knowledgeable took teachers in the murky depths of mental depression for many years."

"Let's take another example: the teachers of practical subjects in the former primary school. A few years earlier technical work teachers had instructed students to make sets of rustic furniture, beds with mahogany ends, and even carpenter's benches. In metal work, students had made a snow pusher and a wheelbarrow, at least. In the comprehensive school the students were able to assemble some blocks of wood, and a yellow-painted stool was their greatest accomplishment in size."

"To balance the view, let's also take a look at what had happened to this student who earlier, in the end of his school year, might have been sitting on the edge of a rustic table and casually rocking a wheelbarrow at his feet and feeling enormously proud of his skill. A few years later this young man was

³ The support association for the Lievestuore Co-educational School is still active, working as a local tradition association.

standing helpless at the school yard, fingering a coat hanger in his hand. Its wooden part he had made in wood work and the metal part in metal work ... and he stated: ... So this school gives no chance for me to personal happiness, you know ... I can't see a slightest room for self-realisation, I mean as a guy ... Should I give this hanger to my old man or to my mom? 'Cause I have a headache, so I think I'm gonna have my hair cut and shaven clean high up on both temples. Like did you get it?" (Harri Tapper 1984, in Vuorenpää 1999, 63)

Bringing together the old primary school pedagogy that stressed everyday practical skills and general dexterity, on the one hand, and lyceum's academic learning where the emphasis was on languages, general knowledge and tradition, on the other hand, led to the domination of languages and academic education in the comprehensive school. Arts and practical subjects got less attention in the long run. Most importantly, no pedagogical solution about their relation was reached: the pedagogical limelight focused on "learning", while issues of education and personal development were considered external to the mainstream of educational science.

The comprehensive school constituted a new social composition for the education process (Nash 1977, 2003a). Students from all social groups were now learning in the same schools and classrooms. The above description by Harri Tapper aptly reveals how the social composition for learning outcomes did essentially change with the introduction of the comprehensive school. In the Nordic school system that aims at equality – i.e. comprehensive school – there is no other public and legitimate way to show differences than by learning achievement, and even this should not be too explicit: a certain basic standard of learning should be guaranteed for all. The price of this aim is – if Tapper is right – certain cultural neutrality, or even void, as somebody could say. While the comprehensive school cannot directly and publicly lean on the specific tradition of any particular group of people, it has to seek for a broad-based cultural orientation for its work. Then again, this may remain distant to rather many students coming from different social backgrounds.

The comprehensive school was introduced in Lievestuore in 1974. What is the situation now, three decades later? Has the new learning environment developed into a new culturally general overall context? Even if all the children in each district go to the same school, there are dif-

ferences between individual schools in terms of their social composition. Does this affect students' learning and educational orientation? And how is the development of a student's personal resources related to the school and further educational career?

I will address these questions, firstly, in the light of the Finnish national results of the PISA 2006 assessment and then separately on the basis of responses given by eighth- and ninth-graders at Lievestuore Laurinkylä School (2006). But first a few words about equality and differences in educational achievement.

Differential factors and equality

In the Nordic countries, the education policy aim has been, since the Second World War and at least until the 1980s, to keep the differences in educational achievement fairly small between individual compulsory schools. The equality of the education system has for long been based on the idea that all children within a particular region – school district – go to the same comprehensive school. Hence, the children represent the social spectrum of the whole district. It means internal diversity for individual schools, depending on the social composition of each school district. Further, there may be considerable variation in schools' social composition even within the same municipality or town, reflecting the local housing policy.

The spectrum of ideas, experiences, and habits brought from home do not constitute a legitimate ground for differentiated instruction even within schools, however. A legitimate thing, instead, is educational achievement with related assessment of individual differences. On the other hand, in equality-oriented basic education a pronounced aim is a "universal pedagogy" (Bourdieu, in Nash 1990, 436–438), i.e. pedagogic practices that take children's social differences into account. School should thus level rather than increase such differences in educational achievement that rise from children's social background.

Equality can refer to many different things, however: for example, to equal opportunities, in which case failing to seize them is considered the

person's own choice. By positive discrimination the opportunities can be made more equal for socially disadvantaged students. Equality can also refer to differences in learning achievement and their social toleration, e.g. between schools, regions, or even students. It is also possible to examine what actually produces these differences: Is school an institution that reproduces, as such, the hierarchy of habits and educational standard coming from homes – valid social praxis – or even an institution that produces new praxis? For instance, in Finland and Iceland the status of school bears no effect on students' mathematics performance. In international comparison this is very exceptional. In these two countries the effect of student's social background is attributable directly to home, without school's mediating effect (Väljjarvi 2007; see also PISA 2003⁴ in Kupari & Väljjarvi 2005 and Figure 3.1). It is thus rare that school keeps home-based differences *unchanged*, in other words it reproduces the social background as such. More commonly, school is actively involved in increasing the differences in educational achievement.

Besides teacher-student power relations, also student peer groups and friends are an integral part of school life. In fact, friends and peers are an important reason for attending school. In peer groups habits learnt at home and shaped by economic, social, and cultural capital are subjected to review and evaluation in terms and rules that are not always visible in the public image of school. On the contrary, people often wish to keep this process as informal and external to actual school work. The fact that the school or even the classroom representatively includes children from all social groups does have various implications for schooling. It is possible that children coming from working-class families become more inclined to accept and even develop interest in school's curriculum – educational achievement – when they see the lifestyle of middle-class or even upper middle-class people, including attitudes to school and life in general. And vice versa, middle-class students might gain confidence in schooling when seeing the more modest circumstances of some classmates. Of course, the effects may also work in the opposite direction.

⁴ In PISA 2006 Iceland is the only one in this category, while in Finland there was already evidence of schools' differentiative effects on learning achievements (cf. PISA 2007, Figure 4.12).

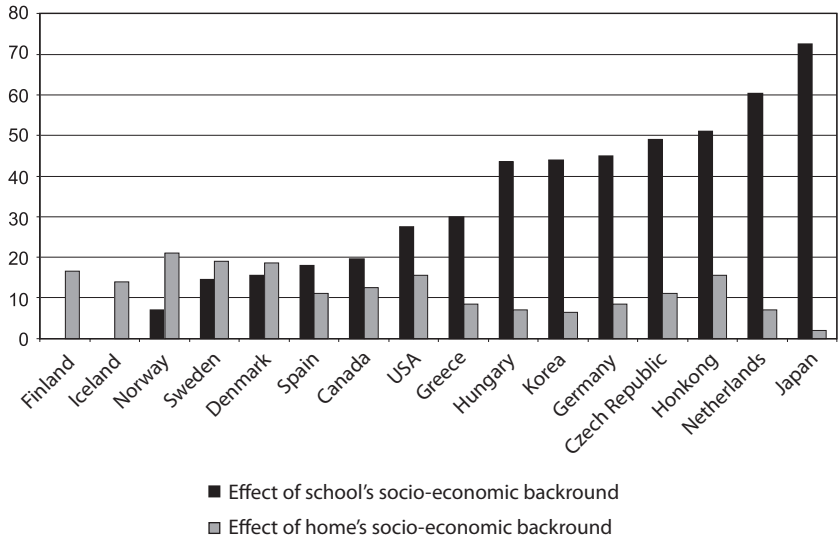


Figure 3.1 *The relation of school's and home's socioeconomic status to students' performance in mathematics*

Bourdieu speculates that when the share of working-class children in the classroom exceeds certain limit, the general atmosphere of the classroom alters, the forms of disorder change and also the relations to teachers change in type (Bourdieu, cited in Nash 2003).

When children meet at school, each with their individual background and habitus, characterised by their economic, social and cultural capital, this creates two spheres of activities: peer groups between friends and classmates on the one hand, while each student, leaning on his or her own habitual profile, is involved in the sphere of differential production systems pertaining to educational achievement, on the other hand. Schooling as a differential and reproductive system is not primarily concerned with the content, i.e. the curriculum, through which the schooling process takes place. For the student, then again, it is a key issue: whether this is an opening to a series of mutual small conscious deeds where social individualisation eventually becomes a part of school practices and the school community becomes more individual (case A in figure 3.2), or

whether school remains in the sphere of mere social and thus reproductive activity (D). It is also possible that students' peer groups, independently from the school's content, have a content of their own which form the students' individualities (C). On the other hand, the main function of the school institution may be the control of student activities (B). This all can be illustrated by a four-cell matrix as in Figure 3.2 (for more see Volanen 2007).

		Student	
		deeds	activities
School	deeds	A Mutual development	B Social control
	activities	C Student peergrouping	D Social reproduction

Figure 3.2 *Four models of interaction between students and school*

In the following I will discuss, first, whether the social composition of the comprehensive school bears any effects on differences in educational achievement. In this context, educational achievement refers not only to learning achievements (mathematics, science) and orientation to natural sciences but also to the students' occupational aspiration in terms of the status of the occupation they are aiming at. Then I will move on to discuss transition to upper secondary education throughout the country by population centres⁵: Could the distribution patterns of students' choices

⁵ I use Finnish postal codes as an indicator of population centres. In Finland there are about 3100 postal code areas, which have been formed historically for practical needs. They indicate population centres within municipalities. SuomiCD (Statistics Finland 2008b) includes a large archive of statistics by postal code areas.

between upper secondary school, vocational education and training, or dropping out of education be explained by school-specific PISA results (in terms of level and variation), the school's social composition or the social and economic structures pertaining to the population centre? Based on this setting I will conclude with an analysis of the relationships between students' resources, school achievement and educational orientation at Lievestuore Lower Secondary School.

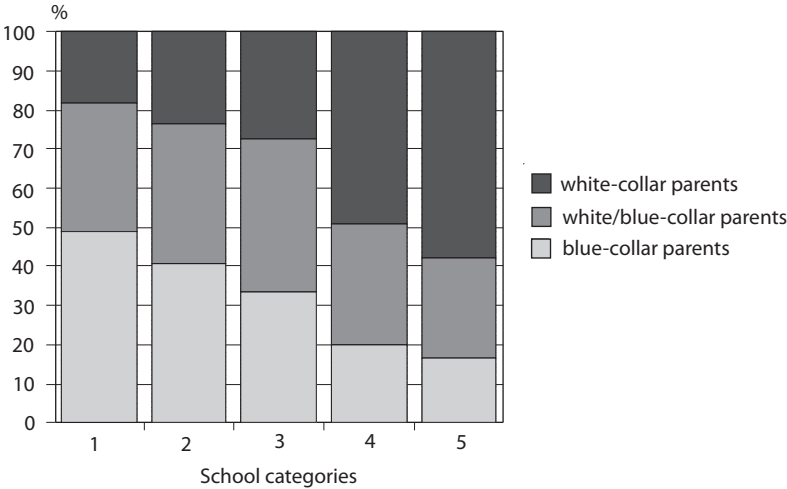
School's social composition and differences in educational achievement

Comprehensive school

In the light of international PISA studies, the Finnish comprehensive school is an exceptional school. Its student performance in science, mathematics and reading literacy has been consistently among the best in several measurements, often the best. In addition, differences between schools – like in other Nordic countries – have always been among the smallest. The variance between students is also clearly below the international average, though not the smallest. The good results have been obtained by keeping the differences between schools small enough: none of the countries succeeding in this was ranked low in PISA studies (Scheinin 2007). These findings should be borne in mind in the following, when I examine the relationship between school's social composition and learning achievements.

The following analysis is based on PISA 2006 data (PISA 2007). In Finland the assessment involved 4714 students. This makes it possible to examine statistically significant, yet relatively small differences. Firstly, I divide the participating schools (N=155) into five categories according to the school-specific average of parents' social, economic, and cultural status (PISA index). Secondly, I divide students' families into three groups according to the parents' occupational status: white-collar families, blue-collar families and mixed (both blue- and white-collar status). Figure 3.3

shows the distribution of parents' occupational status by school categories (K1–K5). We can see that the categories differ in terms of their social composition. In Category 1 blue-collar families form the largest group, while white-collar families dominate Category 5 schools.



The schools (N = 155) were divided into five groups of equal size according to the school-specific mean of the parents' socio-economic and cultural status (PISA index)

Figure 3.3 *Distribution of parents' occupational status by school categories in PISA 2006 data (PISA 2007)*

Next, I will look at student performance in science; more specifically how the 15-year-old boys and girls representing the three family groups perform at schools of the five categories (Figures 3.4 and 3.5; PISA score points, SD=100).

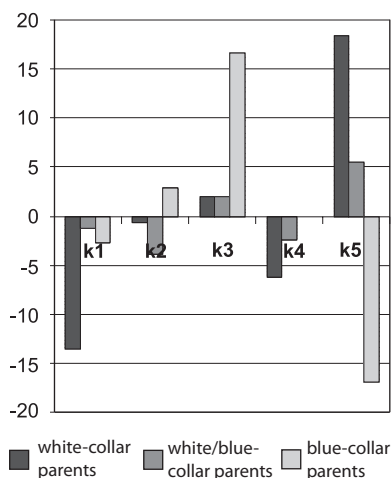


Figure 3.4 Boys' performance in science assessment, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

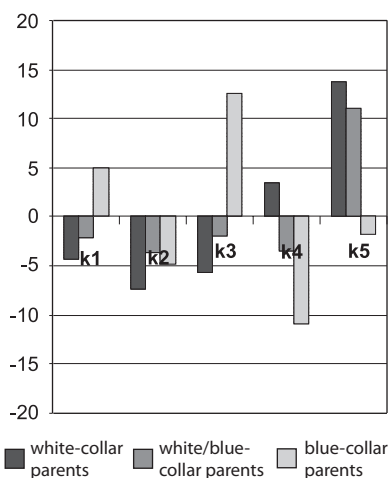


Figure 3.5 Girls' performance in science assessment, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

In relation to the overall average of the student's family group, the performance levels vary according to the school's social composition. School Category 3 appears to provide a favourable learning environment to children coming from blue-collar families. In contrast, for boys the Category 5 schools and for girls the Category 4 schools seem to have a negative effect. The differences are small, however. As far as mathematics is concerned the corresponding figures look like this (Figures 3.6 and 3.7):

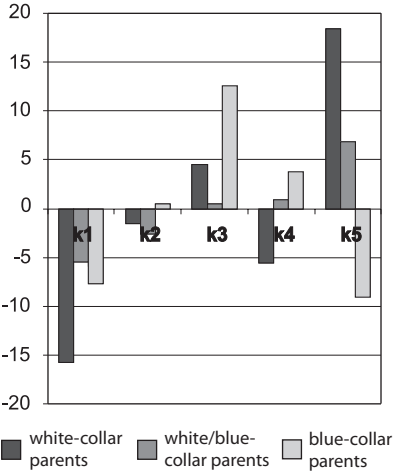


Figure 3.6 Boys' performance in mathematics assessment, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

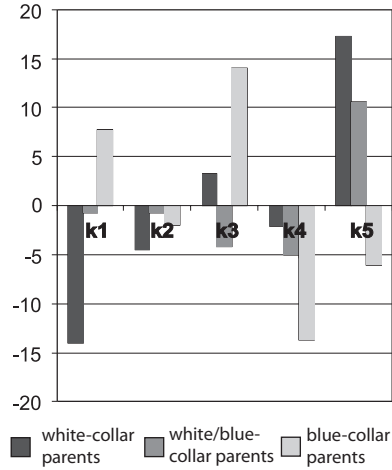


Figure 3.7 Girls' performance in mathematics assessment, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

In mathematics the performance level of children coming from white-collar families seems to depend on the school's social composition. Again, for blue-collar family girls School Category 4 appears challenging, whereas Category 3 is favourable.

As regards scientific orientation, the school categories seem to have just a discernible, very weak impact (see Figures 3.8 and 3.9; $SD=1$): In School Category 5 the personal relevance of science remains lower than average for children coming from blue-collar families.

The expected status of future occupation (ISEI index, see Ganzeboom et al. 1992) increases for girls coming from blue-collar families in School Category 4 and decreases in Category 5. For boys, no such effect can be detected. (Figures 3.10 and 3.11; $SD=1$.)

In the light of these initial findings, the school's social composition seems to bear a relationship to student achievement. The picture is partly fragmented, but it seems that belonging to a clear minority in the school community would hinder learning. On the other hand, parents' improved social status supports learning as well. In contrast, social com-

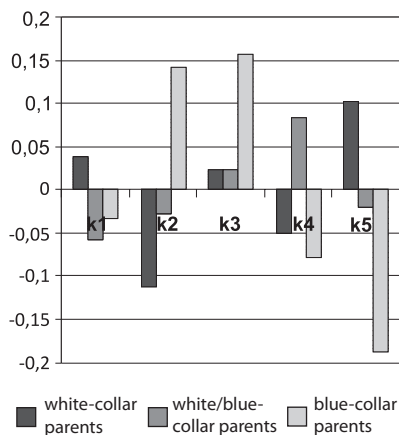


Figure 3.8 Personal relevance of science for boys, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

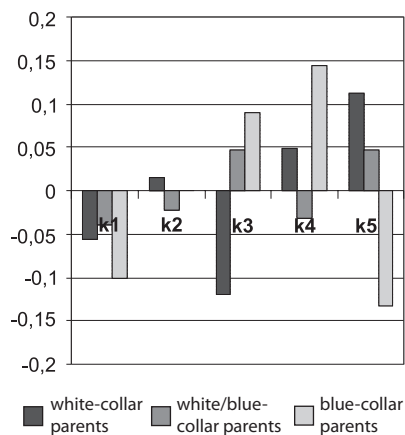


Figure 3.9 Personal relevance of science for girls, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

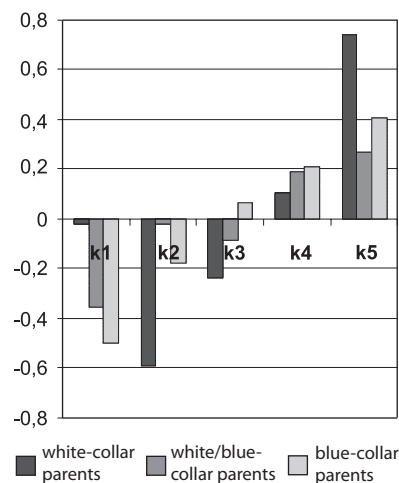


Figure 3.10 Status of future occupation for boys, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

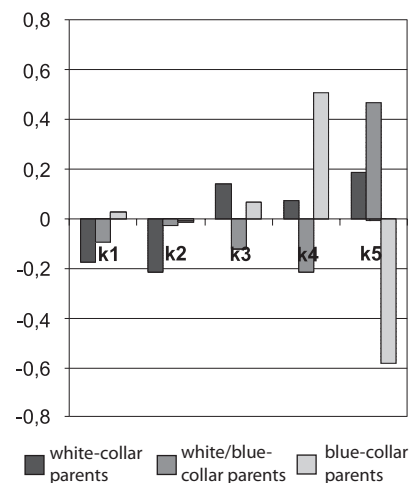


Figure 3.11 Status of future occupation for girls, by family groups and school categories (PISA 2007)

position does not appear to have any connection to perceived personal relevance of science. However, school's social composition is connected to the choice of future occupation: boys' tend to set their aims higher as the school's social status inclines. For girls coming from blue-collar families the connection to expected occupational level seems to get weaker, if there are too few students with similar background at the school.

The results are in some sense confusing: in a few decades the comprehensive school has become an institution producing highly similar educational outcomes – in international comparison – regardless of the individual schools in question. Student's home background bears an influence throughout the comprehensive school, but in different ways depending on the specific social composition of each school. If the composition is not in balance – that is, some social groups are under-represented – this may decrease the educational achievement of children belonging to an underrepresented group. It should be noted that PISA tests measure cognitive skills (*literacy*) only, even if in applied to everyday contexts rather than as traditional encyclopedic knowledge. As far as social and emotional learning is concerned, the findings have been almost sad in Finland (see Suutarinen 2002; Pietikäinen 2008).

.... but what happens after the comprehensive school, then?

The comprehensive school graduates are divided into three groups in terms of their further educational options: upper secondary school (gymnasium), vocational education and training, or dropping out of the education system – this third option often leads to marginalisation in society. National statistics show that of those finishing their comprehensive school in spring 2006, about 95% were enrolled in further education in the next autumn.⁶

There was considerable variation by schools and municipalities: The range for municipalities was 80–100%, and for schools 36–100% (see

⁶ Internationally this is a high percentage. However, many students drop out later, especially in the vocational sector, so that about 17% of young people at the age of 20 or more have not attained a secondary level qualification.

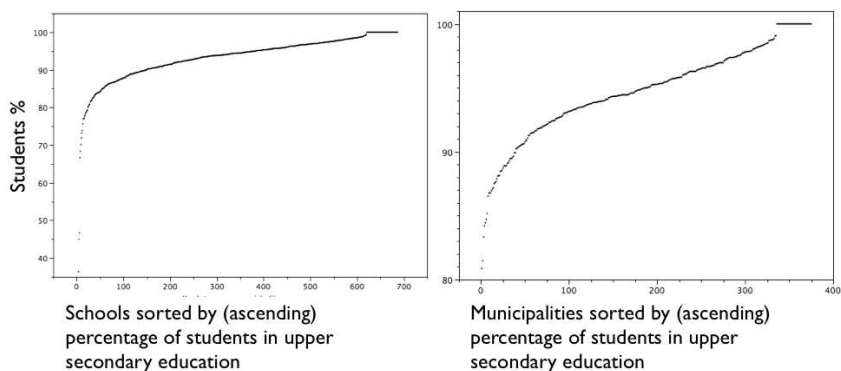


Figure 3.12 *The percentage of age cohort starting upper secondary education in 2006 by schools and municipalities*

Figures 3.12). Of those heading for further education the national percentage for general upper secondary school was 55% while 45% went to vocational education. Also this ratio varied very much by schools and municipalities: The municipal range for upper secondary school was 19–83%, and for vocational education 17–74%. By schools the range for both options was 0–100% (see Figure 3.13). The social composition of comprehensive schools has no effect on these distributions. The averages of different school categories are within just a few percentage points.

What underlying factors, then, do influence this division between educational options? The appendix 1 lists factors that seem to increase or decrease enrolment to gymnasium, upper secondary school, vocational education, or leaving the education system in population centres. Things that correlate positively with seeking to upper secondary school include higher education background among older population (55+), dominant agriculture and forestry, migration within the region and outward, and to some extent also mathematics achievement in PISA. In contrast, opposite correlations can be attributed to the number of young people with a vocational qualification as well as the unemployment rate in the population centre. These findings can be partly explained by the fact that in Finland many small upper secondary schools are located in small population

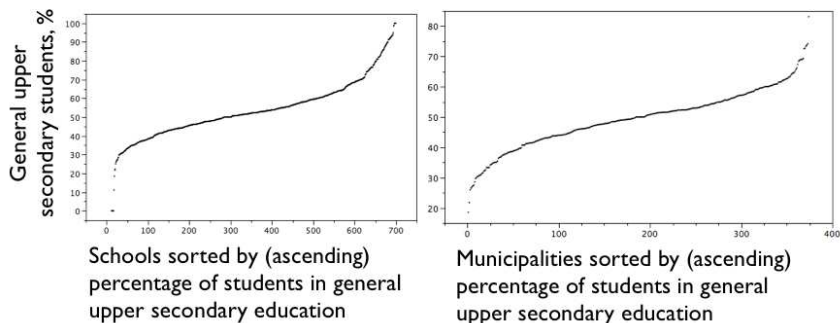


Figure 3.13 The percentage of age cohort starting general upper secondary education in 2006 by schools and municipalities

centres where no vocational education is available. People hold on to the upper secondary schools, even if they do not always have enough students. Currently, it is easier to get a place in an upper secondary school than in vocational education. An exception here is perhaps some upper secondary schools located in the centres of bigger cities – they can still select their students to some extent.

Factors that correlate positively with seeking to vocational education include the share of industrial work in the local economic structure, unemployment rate, middle-class and student households, short education careers of the age group of 25–34-year-olds. Factors with an opposite effect include migration away from the locality, low educational attainment among young adults as well as the percentage of upper secondary school graduates, higher education background among older people and to some extent also the comprehensive school's science achievement in PISA.

Dropping out of education is promoted by both the lack of education and higher education among 25–34-olds, low income of families as well as vocational qualifications among people of pensionable age. The share of executive households in the population centre bears a negative correlation to dropping out of education.

The division into three groups after compulsory school can thus be largely attributed to local circumstances in terms of educational attain-

ment in different age groups and economic structure, along with the economic status of families and local unemployment. In contrast, the internal composition and average learning achievement of the comprehensive school have no essential impact on the division. Educational attainment in the local population for different age groups seems to have even opposite effects. Hence, higher education background in older age groups appears to add the attraction of upper secondary schools, whereas higher education in the age group 25–34 seems to be connected with increased drop-out rates. This often concerns districts within bigger cities.

The local community is thus closely involved in directing comprehensive school graduates to different further study paths. It can be argued that aiming at educational equity has given way to reproduction of the structural elements of the local community through young people's choices. As far as upper secondary school is concerned, small rural schools still reflect traditional aspiration to education and the idea to improve the community's status through education. Upper secondary school has been, and still is, a touchstone for population centres. In many places the decrease in the number of young people and an increase in their interest in vocational education have broken this tradition.

Vocational institutes have merged and concentrated into bigger and bigger units in recent years. They have now much better possibilities for diverse development activities than in individual upper secondary schools. In many places they have also reduced the juxtaposition of the general and vocational sectors of secondary education by enabling dual qualifications.

How do these findings apply to individual population centres? Let's take a closer look at a small locality in Central Finland, the community of Lievestuore.

Lievestuore and Laurinkylä comprehensive school

The number of students at the 9th grade at Laurinkylä comprehensive school in Lievestuore has varied in recent years from slightly under 40 to nearly 60. In 2006 their number was 56. Of the 53 comprehensive school

graduates of that year, 46 were pursuing further studies in the autumn:⁷ 13 (28%) at upper secondary school and 33 (72%) in vocational education. The upper secondary schools concerned were mainly those of Jyväskylä Lyceum and Vaajakoski. The vocational students had chosen Jyväskylä Vocational Institute, especially technical branches. Some were studying in Jämsänkoski and in Tampere Vocational Institute. Of the Laurinkylä graduates of the year 2002, four years later, in 2006 about 10% were without a qualification and outside the education system, and about 16% were still studying for their first qualification. Upper secondary school graduates accounted for 39% while 35% had a vocational qualification (Statistics Finland 2008a).

The social composition of Laurinkylä Comprehensive School grades 8 and 9 in 2006 is characterised by the majority consisting of mixed, white/blue-collar families (see Figure 3.14). Most often in this group, it is the mother who represents white-collar occupations. Compared to other Finnish PISA schools located in population centres of similar size (less than 5000 inhabitants), on average, Laurinkylä has a larger proportion of mixed families and a smaller proportion of white-collar families, in particular.

Next I will examine the relationships between Laurinkylä 8th- and 9th-graders' educational and occupational orientation and their home-based and own resources as well as school achievement. I have an overall survey data with 105 students. I will discuss the topic separately for boys and girls (Figure 3.15⁸).

⁷ For seven persons this status was classified as "other or unknown".

⁸ I use structural equation model (AMOS software). The figures are regression coefficients. For example, when the family factor for girls increases by one unit, school achievement inclines by .51 units. *School* variable indicates school achievement, *Family* variables the parents' socioeconomic status, and *Own* variables student's own social resources. *Education* variable stands for desired education and *Intended occupation* variable the occupational goal. *After school* variable refers to planned choice immediately after school: work, vocational education or upper secondary school.

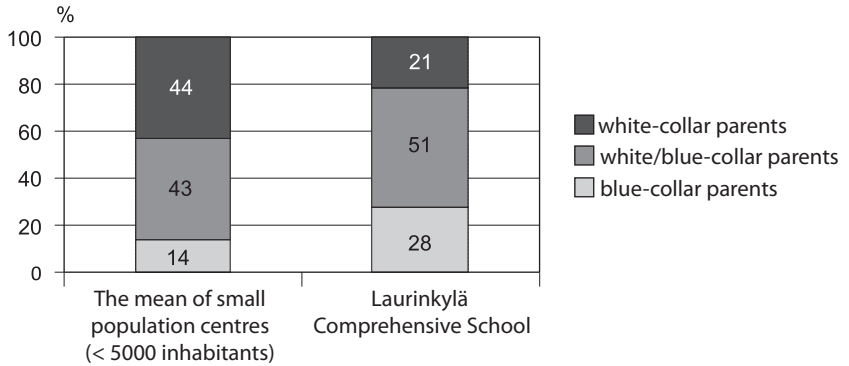


Figure 3.14 Social composition of Laurinkylä and other comprehensive schools in small population centres

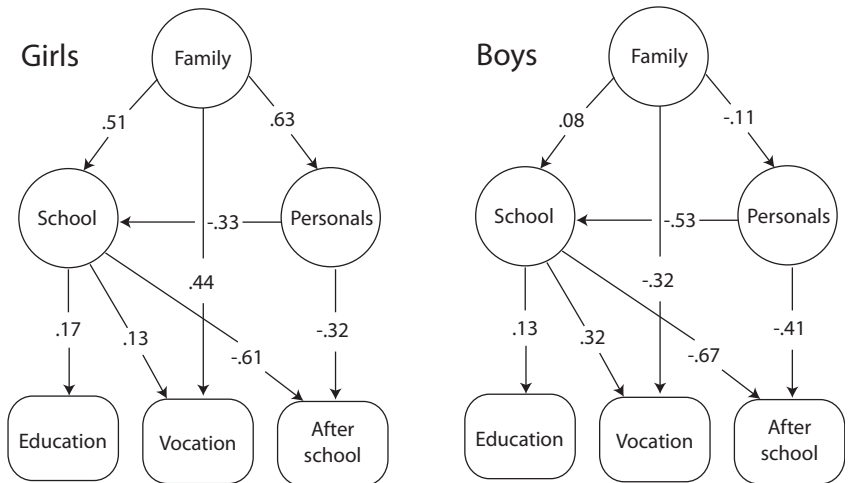


Figure 3.15 Laurinkylä 8th- and 9th-graders' (2006) educational orientation after comprehensive school

We can make the following observations:

1. School achievement directs young people to choose vocational education instead of upper secondary school.
2. Family resources bear a clear connection to girls', but not boys' school achievement.
3. For girls, family resources clearly support the development of own social resources, for boys this connection is weak.
4. The development of own social resources decreases school achievement, more for boys than for girls.
5. Family resources raise the occupational aim for girls, while for boys the effect is opposite but weaker.
6. Own social resources direct both genders to vocational education rather than to upper secondary school.
7. School achievement has a weak connection to the level of educational and occupational goals.

For boys, the development of one's own social resources contributes to a sphere of peer interaction (C, cf. the four-cell matrix in Figure 3.2). This sphere of peer interaction prevents school orientation: the school community does not seem to become a circle of mutual development (A). Girls have a stronger relation to their families, but for them, either, the development of own social resources does not promote school achievement. Neither does school achievement direct the students to education in the traditional academic sense. One reason for this is probably the uncertain situation of Lievestuore Upper Secondary School. The upper secondary and vocational students alike had to head for outside their local community. For girls the social reproduction of school (D) is clearer than for boys. Evidently, for boys the school's social control function (C) is more pronounced.

Laurinkylä students' perceptions of their own situation complement well the picture provided by the PISA data. Things outlined by Harri Tapper seem still to be valid in the daily life at the comprehensive school, but in a way that is unfortunate for the students. When acting on their own terms, boys do not lean on their families, neither on school. Girls'

own terms do lean on their families, but it does not bind them to school. From the students' point of view the "generic culture" of comprehensive school is therefore "non-culture". When the circle of mutual development (A) deteriorates – a circle that is essentially based on mutual meaning-making and approval – it will make cultural interpretations more difficult. Then we will be able to discuss various phenomena of life more or less only as *risks or chances of choice* – not as producing them. New phenomena pertaining to youth culture and life in general are reduced to threats or options, neither of which can be perceived as culturally – i.e. meaningfully – self-produced and therefore one's own.

The paradox

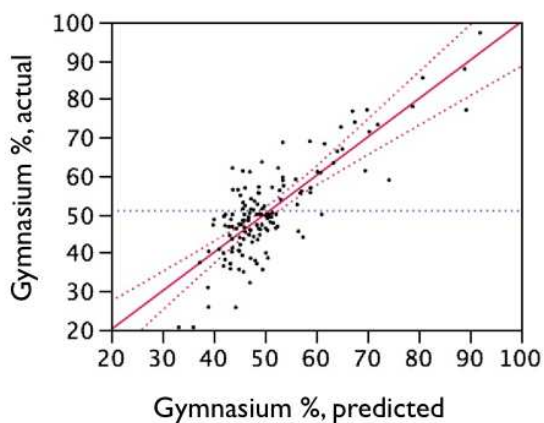
What can we say after these analyses about the paradox we set at the very beginning of the chapter? The Finnish comprehensive school has tried to solve the classed contents of earlier middle school via common cognitive habitus and general but thin cultural message. In a very exceptional way, for a while the comprehensive school did not compound the difference of educational achievements but froze it at the level mediated from social background. This situation is now changing as the Finnish PISA results in 2006 and 2009 indicate: the comprehensive schools have now an active role in the production of differences in educational achievements. The earlier potential window of opportunity to construct universal pedagogy seems to be closing down.

The enlightenmental force of a realist curriculum seems not to be powerful enough without universal pedagogy, but on the other hand, with the universal pedagogy we should be able to break the generative vicious circle of structure/disposition/practice -chain and the *doxic* production of habitus. Pierre Bourdieu gives only two possibilities to make this: It is possible to exceptional persons, to geniuses. The other one is craftwork: "The traditional aesthetics ... as *opus operatum* ... does not analyse ... 'the work in progress' ... the production of that work ... (as) *modus operandi*, the manner of acting, the art in the etymological sense, that the artist brings into 'met en oeuvre', as we say in French, that is literally,

brings into work art, this manner of doing, this *modus operandi*, this style, in his *métier*, his craftsmanship, that is a practical mastery without theoretical mastery of practical mastery. The notion *habitus*, the idea of practical mastery, practical logic ... necessitate and effect a radical break with the scholastic bias that threatens most of the analysts of art, as teachers that is lecturers, scholars ..." (Bourdieu 2005, 48). To be able to constitute a model of universal pedagogy with a circle of mutual development (A, see figure 3.2) and a realist curriculum, we must then – because we are not all geniuses – use craftwork as a methodological mirror for learning. In Finland this means overcoming the academic and handwork traditions of pedagogies associated with the names of J. V. Snellman and Uno Cygnaeus (Volanen 2007, 2008).

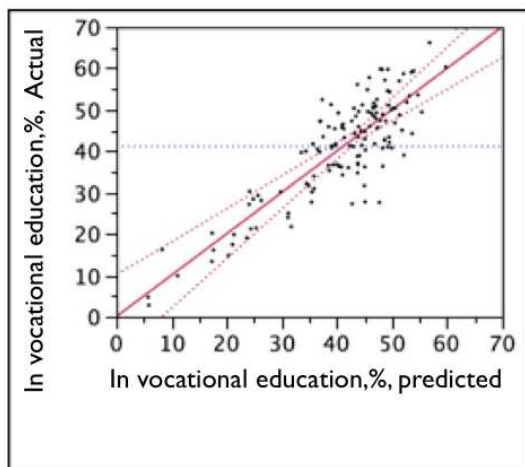
Appendix 1. Local explanations of the percentage of student in gymnasium, vocational education and drop-out after comprehensive school in Finland 2006

Gymnasium (explained (RSq) 67%)



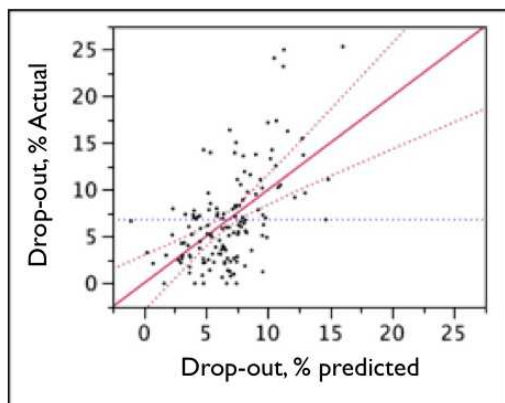
Term of community	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob> t
Mature age, university degree (%)	0,7510168	0,11635	6,45	<,0001*
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, workplace (%)	0,5847162	0,133759	4,37	<,0001*
Young adults, with vocational diploma (%)	-0,477283	0,125587	-3,80	0,0002*
In-migration/population in the municipality (%)	0,3539229	0,147995	2,39	0,0182*
Migration inside the municipality/population (%)	0,6609277	0,285625	2,31	0,0223*
Unemployment rate (%)	-0,333052	0,151541	-2,20	0,0298*
PISAmath	0,052163	0,024322	2,14	0,0339*

Vocational education (explained (RSq) 73%)



Term of community	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob> t
Out-migration, %	-1,250172	0,269621	-4,64	<,0001*
Manufacturing (%)	0,466749	0,111271	4,19	<,0001*
Unemployment rate (%)	0,7240454	0,180165	4,02	0,0001*
Young adults, with basic level studies (%)	-0,581907	0,159657	-3,64	0,0004*
Young adults, with matriculation certificate (%)	-0,455243	0,139122	-3,27	0,0014*
Mature age, university degree (%)	-0,402173	0,129406	-3,11	0,0023*
Migration inside the municipality/population (%)	-0,901429	0,2927	-3,08	0,0025*
Middle-class househ. (%)	0,4949161	0,161693	3,06	0,0027*
Settling down, basic level studies (%)	0,3982551	0,179023	2,22	0,0279*
Student househ. (%)	1,4159846	0,637699	2,22	0,0282*
PISAscience	-0,047781	0,022689	-2,11	0,0372*

Drop-out (explained (RSq) 32%)



Term of community	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob> t
Settled down, with basic level studies (%)	0,4562659	0,092586	4,93	<,0001*
Settling down, university degree (%)	0,2353002	0,057305	4,11	<,0001*
Third income bracket (%)	0,5734418	0,152998	3,75	0,0003*
Pensioners, vocational diploma (%)	0,2460587	0,096304	2,56	0,0118*
Executive househ. (%)	-0,344564	0,15055	-2,29	0,0237*