

# A RELATIONAL REALIST VISION FOR EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

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## 4. Social Capitalisation & the Making of Relational Goods

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In the previous chapter, I discussed the person's emergence through the *morphogenetic paradigm*. The aim of providing this account of personal identity's development was to advocate for a governance model grounded in the relational realist general approach that explains the constitution and development of the *latent reality* of the human. Furthermore, the idea of extending reflexivity — rethought as an emergent meaning-making mechanism — was proposed to include the properties and powers of collectives and networks and their impact on the operation of systems. In this chapter, the vital role of social reflexivity is investigated further. This means exploring the concept of social capital. Social capital names patterns of sociability that enable the generation of emergent relational properties and powers in the form of *relational goods*. It returns to the idea covered in Chapter One of moving beyond modernity's *symbolic code* and its system-based management of environmental contingencies.

Social capital is explored as a form of sociability that differentiates between the human and the social. This distinction is not circular, as it distinguishes between the referential acts (instituted in patterns of sociability) and their desired effect (referencing the *latent reality* of the human element). Notably, the enablement of the subject is central to after-modern formations — the aim is to give responsibility to participants to think and observe relationally to better understand the referent. These transformative patterns of sociability provide the basis for new forms of social capital and *civil society*. The chapter will explore the following two points:

1. Prevailing social capital models are inadequate. After establishing this, I advocate a realist approach that considers the dynamic

patterns of sociability (within morphogenetic cycles) as a dependent and independent variable. The dynamic interplay of social relations connects the agentic and structural elements of social life and, as such, their interaction shapes the outcome of morphogenetic processes (the dynamics of social relations are the object of sociological explanation as they connect the elements that constitute these relations). An emergent civil society is articulated within these processes to ensure patterns of sociability operate humanly.

2. Initiatives that start from the dynamics of the relation seek to transform social reality by exploring the normative connections between the different elements of the relation. Education should be responsive to the needs of individuals, but this can only exist in a morphogenetic relational order wherein identity is underpinned by the relational *symbolic code*. The relational symbolic code normatively guides the relation's orientation and the diverse ways participants respond to each other's needs. It is a relational order that encourages the contribution of participants to enhance its value by enriching the stock of sociability that, in turn, sustains *relational goods*.

## Civil Society Starts from the Internal Dynamics of the Social Relation

Genuine learning, I propose, is oriented to the development of the active learner. The activated learner, relationally constituted, develops into the collective subject with transformative properties and powers. This broader view of education means the 'I' is constituted into the 'We' and becomes a *Relational Subject* through properties and powers developed via their social relations:

The term 'Relational Subject' refers to individual and collective social subjects in that they are '*relationally constituted*', that is, *inasmuch as they generate emergent properties and powers through their social relations* (Donati & Archer 2015: 58, emphasis original).

Ascribing responsibility to participants to co-create their relations means orienting actions towards the configuration of the relation's elements and the effects they generate. The *Relational Subject* is relationally reflexive when the 'I' identifies as the 'collective subject' whose concerns extend to the relation's 'performance' in achieving its goals (Donati & Archer 2015).

A relation's capacity to facilitate civic values is defined by the system's openness to adapt its performance in reference to the concerns of individual and collective social subjects (the latent dimension of the social relation).<sup>1</sup> An adaptive relational system is one wherein the mode of integration is emergent from morphogenetic processes activated by social subjects within the dynamics of the society in which those subjects are embedded. To enable responsibility is to confer meaning to the relation from the point of view of the human subject that observes and thinks relationally about the latent dimension. *Civil society* is a vision of the 'society of the human' at every level — from system to immediate interactions — in which the reference is the potentiality of the human subject as a *Relational Subject* to produce their society according to the human/non-human distinction:

From the point of view of the human subject, who has to confer meaning on the relations in which he/she is immersed, this is a new horizon that opens up with the after-modern — the 'society of the human'. The society of the human is that of which it has to be asked, at every level, in every domain, how the latent dimension enters in every social relation and if social processes are operating in a human way or not, in relation to semantics quite different from traditional ones (Donati 2009). The 'society of the human' is not one of many possible worlds, but the distinct world of the human being: it is not a utopian vision of society, but it is the real society as produced according to the human/non-human distinction. To conceptualise this society depends on being able to observe and think relationally (Donati 2011: 166).

Oriented towards such a *civil society*, the proposal here is for an idea of social capital that acknowledges the latent dimension through the actions of those involved. The socio-cultural outcomes are effects of a morphogenetic *civil society* in which sociability is morphogenetically emergent from *relational goods* that produce *Added Social Value (ASV)*. To ascertain if social processes operate humanly, it is conceptually necessary

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1 The civic values of social relations are identified in sources of social capital, that is, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity (Donati 2011). When the properties of the relationship develop PEP, that is, are attuned to the relation's performance, then the system becomes adaptive to the concerns of those responsible for the management of its morphogenetic processes. Responsibility implicates better synergy between the civic values of social subjects and the properties of the relationships that they operate within.

to analytically disentangle outcomes (*relational goods*) from their mode of production (sociability) to avoid analytical closure. This necessity is demonstrated in the case of theories of social capital that are shown to evade the internal dynamics of social capitalisation. The implications of this debate are further explored (in the following chapters) in which the reciprocal dynamics of teaching and learning are connected to networked partnerships based on cooperation and trust.

## Social Capital Theories Negate the Internal Dynamics of the Social Relation

Prevailing social capital theories neglect the internal dynamics of the relation in different ways. To demonstrate this point, I will consider these three main approaches:

1. Putnam's collective view of social capital as features of social organisation that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit.
2. Coleman's view of social capital as social structures that facilitate individual action and transactions between individuals.
3. Bourdieu's view of social capital as structured modes of subjective regulation.

### Putnam's Collective View of Social Capital

Putnam's view of social capital emphasises the importance of a strong and active *civil society* that consolidates democracy (Putnam 1995). In this view, civic engagement, as found in organised reciprocity and civic solidarity networks, is a pre-condition for good governance that can tackle social problems effectively. Putnam thus uses social capital to refer to 'features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995: 67). Therefore, social outcomes and the features of social organisation become analytically tied. Dense networks of interaction (networks of civic engagement) replenish the stock of social capital that, in turn, helps cooperation for mutual benefit. For example, social problems are tackled through corporate action. Putnam cites considerable empirical evidence to argue that the efficacy of social

organisations is tied to civic engagement because this generates social trust. Social trust and social engagement are strongly correlated, and these two facets are indicative of social capital:

Across the 35 countries in this survey, social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens. Trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor — social capital (Putnam 1995: 73).

Hence, generating and expanding the density of associational ties is necessary to sustain social capital. The structure of these associational networks requires forms of social connectedness — restoring civic engagement and civic trust — that are organised horizontally.<sup>2</sup> The horizontally ordered organisation is better equipped to sustain norms of reciprocity that are important for collective action:

If horizontal networks of civic engagement help participants solve dilemmas of collective action, then the more horizontally structured an organisation, the more it should foster institutional success in the broader community. Membership in horizontally ordered groups (like sports clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and voluntary unions) should be positively associated with good government (Putnam 1993: 175).

### Social Capital as a Resource for both Individual and Collective Action

Coleman similarly highlights the importance of social capital as a resource for individual and collective action. The focus here, however, is on social capital as a background context that facilitates the actions of social actors (individual and corporate) within the social structure (Coleman 1990). The emergence of human capital — that is, the developing of skills and capabilities — depends on social capital being

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2 Putnam distinguishes between horizontal and vertical associations based on the power balance between agents within networks of interpersonal communication and exchange: 'Any society—modern or traditional, authoritarian or democratic, feudal or capitalist—is characterized by networks of interpersonal communication and exchange, both formal and informal. Some of these networks are primarily "horizontal," bringing together agents of equivalent status and power. Others are primarily "vertical," linking unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence.' (Putnam 1993: 173)

utilised in relations between individuals. Social capital is efficacious when it performs a function from the perspective of the individual's purposive action. It is a background resource and a public good that affects those participating in the social structure.

A tension arises between social capital as it benefits an individual and its broader role as a public good and shared resource. To resolve this, the organisational features of social capital become crucial in maintaining its social function as a public good. For example, norms and sanctions that motivate individuals to be self-invested also need shared obligations, expectations, and trust. If this resource is available to all members of a social structure, it is essential to connect individuals to relationships in which social capital is generated. Social capital exists in social structures, and simultaneously, the trustworthiness of social structures proliferates obligations and expectations when it operates effectively and inclusively. Ultimately, social capital is defined by its function — it is an organised social resource that facilitates the purposive action of actors within the social structure (Coleman 1975).

### Social Capital as Part of a Broader Field of Practices

Bourdieu views social capital as part of broader fields of practice. In these fields, social capital is a manifestation of power which relationally converges with other types of capital (capital operating as a social relation of power). Transmission of collectively owned capital is understood as membership in a group that provides its members with access to resources. Membership involves ownership of social capital that gives access to other types of capital (resources) through possession of a durable network of institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group — which provides each of its members within the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1986: 21).

In Bourdieu's understanding, social life has subjective and objective dimensions that are linked by the habitus. The social field — the



objective dimension — is the configuration of objective relations between positions. The position regulates the subjective dispositionality of its occupant (the habitus) and the reflexive enactment of the occupant's powers in relation to the distinction of 'species of power' (capital) and other occupants in the objective field of relations (Bourdieu 1986). To avoid an accusation of objective reductionism, Bourdieu emphasises that the subjective habitus is internally regulated (he terms this as a subjectively inculcated structuring structure) that makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks. Therefore, the objective field provides the occupant with schemes allowing the solution of similarly shaped problems — but it is the occupant that integrates these schemes and applies solutions. Thus, Bourdieu defines the habitus in the following way:

A system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems (Bourdieu 1977: 72)

As Lin notes, Bourdieu's theory of social capital falls within the broad category of neo-capital theories that stress the interplay of individual actions and structural positions in the capitalisation process (Lin 2004). Social capital, specifically, in Bourdieu's view, is a form of capital that is connected to group membership and the social networks accessed through this membership. The quality and volume of social capital is a resource that generates (relationally) gains in cultural and economic capital.

### Analytical Closure in Social Capital Theories

The theories noted above attempt to articulate an understanding of social capital considering the subjective and objective properties of social life. Each differently considers how, through analytical closure, the interaction between relational elements — whether subjective or objective — is negated. Firstly, Putnam starts from the pre-conditions of good governance and a prosperous economy. As a result, features of social capital, for example, social trust, social norms, and social networks

of civic engagement, generate pro-social outcomes in the form of good governance and a prosperous economy.

Starting from the effect to derive the pre-supposing inputs, Putnam's theory does not distinguish features and outcomes. Portes argues that it is circular to utilise the effect of civic virtue to formulate sweeping policy prescriptions. Observed differences are retroactively explained by the prime determinant of civic virtue:

Tautology in this definition of social capital results from two analytic decisions; first, starting with the effect (i.e., successful cities versus unsuccessful cities) and working retroactively to find out what distinguishes them: second, trying to explain all of the observed differences (Portes 1998: 20).

Lin (2004) and Portes (1998) both note that the objective features of social capital generate different outcomes, that is, the generation of public 'goods' or public 'bads' (Portes 1998: 18). Putnam's focus on the positive and integrative function of rich stocks of social capital neglects possible adverse outcomes caused by the inputs of social capital. For example, social reciprocity — increases in the levels of social capital — can be generated in ways that exclude outsiders and lead to closure and isolation rather than mutual benefit.

Putnam's theory of social capital, starting from outcomes and then working retroactively, bypasses interaction dynamics between the elements of the social relation. Attention to the dynamics is vital because the contingencies of interaction with its observed differences are distinguished from the features of social capital that are subsequently produced (trust, networks of civic engagement, and social norms). Consequently, due to making internal dynamics indistinguishable from outcomes, we have analytical closure as a result of focusing on the organisational features of social capital that regulate the social context of interaction. The objective characteristics of social capital are utilised to explain the observed differences in outcomes.

Hence, the integrative function of rich stocks of social capital (the objective features of social organisation) facilitates coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit and collective well-being. Starting from the inner dynamics of the relation resolves potential problems with tautological definitions of social capital. It does not work retroactively to find optimal regulatory determinants of a public good. We need to

account for what produces features of social capital, as I will clarify, in the process of social morphogenesis that explains the origins and development of organisational characteristics (whether transformative or reproductive).

Coleman, on the other hand, sought to emphasise the process of capitalisation for both individual and collective actors. As a social resource for purposive action, the social relations underpinning social capital are understood as an upward conflation from actors to the organisational structures. Social capital functions by supporting the creation of human capital (the development of skills and capabilities). As a result of the tendency to view social capital as a resource for action, Coleman further views it as a public good with obligations if it is to be sustained and used by others. A sense of individual responsibility to the resource used occurs when the social structure works for the user, resulting in mutual interest to support the action structure. Like Putnam, Coleman's theory of social capital renders it a social effect but one that is explained by the preferences of individual and collective actors: the actor uses the resource, and he or she reciprocates the obligation towards social capital as a public good when it fulfils its required (individual) function.

Lastly, Bourdieu views social capital in relation to other types of capital in a struggle to gain power in social fields. His theory's emphasis on the reproductive role of social capital leads to a view of it as a privileged good. Bourdieu acknowledges the necessity of a relational model that understands social reality to exist in things (social fields) and minds (*habitus*). Yet, he views the *habitus* as the product of the social world it encounters while taking this world for granted:

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in *habitus*, outside and inside of agents, and when *habitus* encounters a social world of which it is a product, it finds itself 'as a fish in water', it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted ... The structuring affinity of *habitus*es belonging to the same class is capable of generating practices that are convergent and objectively orchestrated outside of any collective 'conspiracy' or consciousness. In this fashion it explains many of those phenomenon of quasi-teleology which can be observed in the social world (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 127).

Finalism is ascribed to the collective social conditions of production of the habitus. Individuals strategise, but personal strategies are regulated in ways pre-given by the enviroing social world. Once again, like Putnam and Coleman, Bourdieu starts from the effect — in this case, the social constitution of the habitus — and then works backwards to ascertain ways individuals improvise and respond to changes in the same conditions of existence. Bourdieu's model views social practices from the conjuncture between the objective conditions of production of the habitus and the habitus's durable principles that reproduce these same objective conditions:

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective personalities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus (Bourdieu 1977: 78).

The result is that the habitus — social history internalized as a component of one's nature — links the objective structure to the social conditions it defines. Bourdieu further denies that the individual may exist in a way independent of the collective history of his or her group or class. An individual habitus is a structural variant of the collective group habitus:

Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his group or class, each individual system of dispositions may be seen as a structural variant of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions (Bourdieu 1977: 86).

To confirm ontological complicity between the social world that generates the habitus and the individual habitus, Bourdieu introduces the concept of the 'hysteresis effect'. It describes a disjuncture between habitus (in minds) and social context (in things). The disjuncture is caused by a change in a pre-existing context in which the habitus, in the creative enactment of its objective mode of generation, can no longer adapt to the demands of its new context. The interaction between field and habitus is no longer one of complementarity due to, in the words of Bourdieu, a structural lag:

The hysteresis of habitus, which is inherent in the social conditions of the reproduction of the structures in habitus, is doubtless one of the foundations of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past, albeit a revolutionary past (Bourdieu 1977: 83).

The hysteresis effect refers to a change in the field affecting the ability of the habitus to strategise and make decisions. The earlier habitus is no longer relevant, and the subject needs to adapt to new conditions that arise with changes in the social field. Consequently, the objective conjuncture that regulates the habitus does not fit the new conditions. Therefore, in a historical crisis, the habitus adapts to meet the demands of the new field and conditions of living as social history.

As the hysteresis effect is inherent in the social conditions of reproduction of the habitus structures, we start from these conditions to explain individual systems of dispositions. Subjective disjuncture is presented first from changes in social conditions. Missed opportunities are explained by the incapacity of the individual to generate practices that fit these different conditions:

Thus, as a result of the hysteresis effect necessarily implied in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that to which they are objectively fitted (Bourdieu 1977: 78).

Bourdieu starts from social capital effects. These, as part of a system of lasting, transposable dispositions integrating past experiences, mean that subjective relations are regulated to produce perception and thought that align with existing categories. Consequently, it is unclear how the collective is transmitted and inculcated to generate subjective alignment. Accordingly, social capital is conceived in his theory as an exchanged credit in relation to other forms of capital that are part of a broader field that regulates action. It is developed as part of an objective fit to a group or class habitus. What is missing from this conception is the singularity of the human person that actively deliberates on his or her social context. Bourdieu's sociology starts from the impersonal

properties of the environment that, in collaboration, generates the logic and constitution of the habitus.

The analytical shortcomings in Putnam's, Coleman's, and Bourdieu's approaches to social capital show the necessity of starting from the dynamics of the social relation. As noted in Chapter Three, relational realism is a general sociological approach (a *philosophical ontology*) that answers substantive questions in analytically inclusive terms, that is, all elements are acknowledged, and their relationality shapes the direction of sociability. Its explanatory potential is greater as it first articulates the internal properties of the relation and, after that, arrives at its effects. The inclusivity of relational realism answers all four sociological questions.<sup>3</sup> It explicitly addresses the fourth (normative) question in referential detachment to the human element. The question 'what is to be done?' necessitates an epistemic awareness — that is, reflexivity — about the trajectory of social relations and the outcomes they produce. The normative question judges the internal effects of the relation and the outcomes they produce (Donati & Archer 2015).

## A Morphogenetic View of Social Capital

In this section, I propose the idea of sociability as an irreducible process that impacts social capital renewal.<sup>4</sup> The approaches to social capital discussed above demonstrated temporal circularity and analytical closure when starting from an individualist or holistic starting point, whereas the morphogenetic notion of sociability denotes actions based on the relational reference and ties expressed in interactions (Donati 2011).<sup>5</sup> Directed by the relational *symbolic code*, the reciprocity of those in relation generates contextual resources (sources of social capital) in

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- 3 The four questions being: (1) where have we come from? (2) what is it like now (3) where is it going? And (4) what is to be done? (Donati & Archer 2015).
  - 4 The process of social capitalisation (generation of relational goods) is a morphogenetic one that analytically starts from existing relations of sociability and its reflexive mediation by *Relational Subjects*. From a relational realist perspective, social capitalisation enables social subjects to utilise existing sources of social capital to renew the fabric of sociability to produce future relational goods.
  - 5 In the theories noted before, there was a view of social capital as virtuous collective civic-mindedness (Putnam), a subjective public resource (Coleman), and a system-based form of capital that regulates the field of individual practices (Bourdieu).

the form of trust, cooperation, and reciprocity. As these are produced in reciprocal exchanges, contextual resources augment the fabric of sociability, building *relational goods*.

Sociability, considering its effects, is both a dependent and independent variable. First, the fabric of sociability configured to generate pro-social values — that is, a virtuous cycle producing *ASV* (*Added Social Value*) — activates *Relational Subjects* to produce *relational goods* cooperatively. As a result, in a relational mode of production, the *relational goods* produced are necessary for the re-generation of *ASV* that makes other *relational goods*.

In contrast to reductionist social capital explanations, to consider sociability as a dependent and independent variable yields a stratified and morphogenetic understanding of *relational goods* as both *explanans* and *explanandum* of sociability (Donati & Archer 2015). The sources of sociability (*ASV*) are emergent from relations of sociability, and these explain the origins and trajectory of *relational goods*. Whether outcomes are *explanans* or *explanandum* is dependent on the temporal phase of morphogenesis and the input of elements in particular phases:

The recursiveness between sociability (*SY*) and relational goods (*RG*) is only apparent in the sense that it can be resolved by introducing the morphogenetic scheme, which takes into account the temporal phases and the autonomous ('stratified') input of every element in the process's particular phases (Donati & Archer 2015: 308).

When outlining the dynamics of this process, the elements are posited as distinct kinds of emergent properties. They are, though ontologically distinct, encountered conjointly (Archer 2011). Sociability and *Relational Subjects* are two realities that are temporally generated and re-generated in dialogue with each other (see Figure 5).

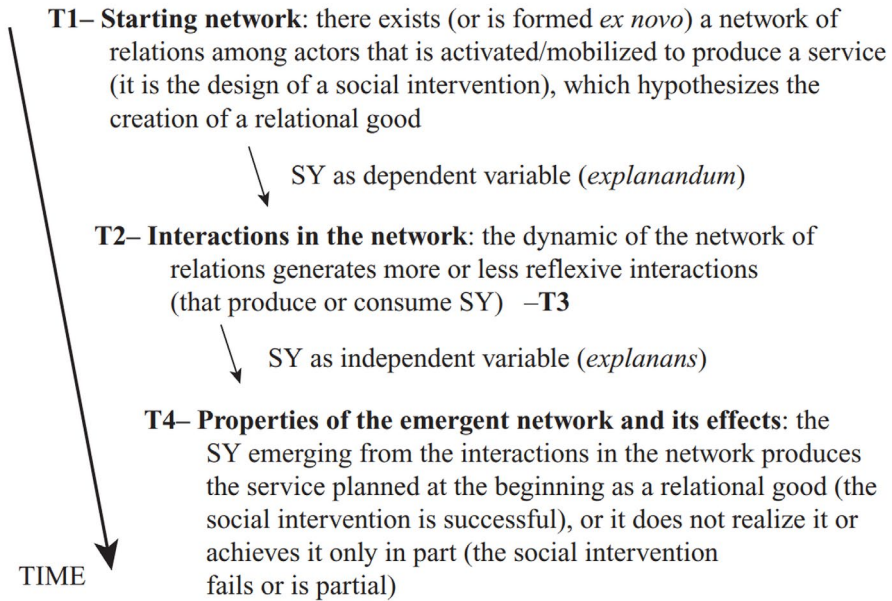


Fig. 5 Added social value of sociability (SY) as the re-generation of relational goods (RG) over time (cycle T1–T4), that is, as alteration of the order of relations through the order of interactions (Donati & Archer 2015: 309).

The morphogenetic scheme uncovers the origins of *relational goods* through the internal properties of relations of production and the autonomous (stratified) input of elements in these relations.

## Emergent Realities of Sociability

The interdependence between relations of production and the production of relational goods considers three emergent realities of sociability:

1. The subject as a person.
2. Structure/culture as objective realities.
3. The features of social relationships bind subjective and objective elements into enduring arrangements.

The interplay of these realities within the context of the social relation reveals the origin of the relation and *how* and *why* it was produced:



In practice, this means that specific accounts are required to explain how particular parts of the social order originated and came to stand in a given relationship to one another, *whose* actions were responsible for this, through which interactions, *when* and *where* and with *what* consequences. In all of this, the practising sociologist has to know a great deal about the historical origins and current operations of 'x' (Archer 2011: 59, emphasis original).

To make the morphogenetic processes tractable for investigation, Archer (2011) breaks up the flow of events into three phases: Structural conditioning (T1) → Social interaction (T2–T3) → Structural elaboration (T4). These phases aim to account for the origins of the structure by moving backwards from effects — the current operations of 'x' — to the activity of agents and the structural conditions they initially face. The activity dependence of social order produces diachronic or synchronic outcomes that are explained by the actions of those responsible for its operation and the effects of their social activity. Morphogenetic processes account for what happens in pursuing reproduction or transformation and *why* specific agents were motivated to adopt certain directions vis-à-vis the social relation (see Figure 6).

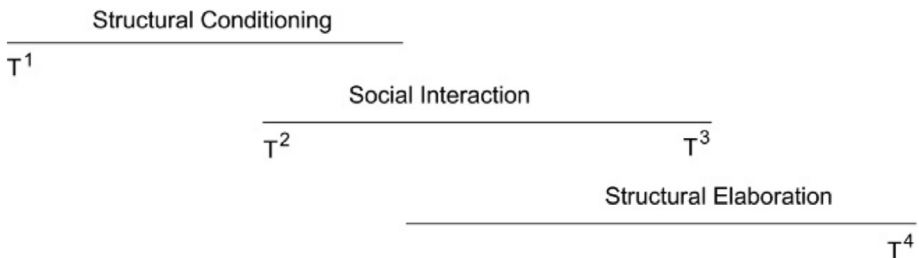


Fig. 6 The basic morphogenetic sequence (Archer 2011: 62).

In the morphogenetic explanatory framework, the effects of the social relation at T4 include the efficacious actions of Agency that potentially transcends the objective regulation of the subject (Chapter Three covered this process in the case of double and triple morphogenesis). Therefore, the emergence of corporate actors is part of a process defined within the dynamics and interplay of the social relation. The emergence of Agency's 'We' impacts personal identity and society's normativity, which underpins social identity.

Adopting a relational view on *how* and *why* sociability and *relational goods* are produced — depending on the morphogenetic stage analysed — leads to inclusive explanations about what can be done to generate ASV that creates future valuable *relational goods*. Hence, the fourth normative question of sociology cannot be adequately answered unless the origins of relations of production are considered. Only the *meta-reflexive* input of the corporate ‘We’ — the *Relational Subject* — can reflexively steer the different levels of sociability to generate innovative emergent properties and powers through their social relations. The emergent properties that are generated increase the parameters of sociability — growing the social value of those in relation — from which *relational goods* are produced. Against individualist and holist views of social capital, the relationality that produces sociability is the starting point of an emergent *civil society* beyond system-based governance models.

## The Morphogenetic Paradigm and Civil Society

A *civil society* that transcends modernity’s functionalist integration model affirms education service as a post hoc emergent function of the relation’s finalism.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the reference of the relation (the finalism that guides its renewal) is the shared orientation (‘We-ness’) that normatively regulates the relationality between its internal elements and their effects. The two characteristics that distinguish *civil society* are a relational ethicality and a *meta-reflexive* mode of reflexivity that extends to persons and social networks. I discuss each of these in turn.

Relational ethicality arises from the relational realist epistemological approach insofar as the latter starts from the processes of interaction to answer the fourth normative question, that is, how referential judgement on practices meet the needs of persons within their relationality. Relational realism, starting from the historical origins of relations (its social causes), embeds the reference of ethicality within pre-existing relational configurations and the outcomes they produce. Instead of the holism of impersonal structures or individual preferences, the

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6 The relation’s finalism is in its *symbolic reference* (its ‘We-ness’) shaped by the latent reality of the human-in-the-social.

outcomes sought are situated and relationally emergent. Accordingly, the *Relational Subject* is orientated towards the relational value of the good (Donati & Archer 2015). The relational nature of the good sought exists in the *ASV* generated that extends the parameters of sociability. The relations of production (an objective reality) establish the relational nature of the good sought.

*The meta-reflexive mode* of reflexivity extends to persons and social networks in relational realism. Because of the interdependence between sociability and relational goods, generation and re-generation of the latter requires *meta-reflexive* management of the relationship between *primary, secondary, and generalised sociability* (the relational mode of production). Specifically, the *meta-reflexive* management of relations requires *Relational Subjects* capable of assessing the capacity of networks to produce *relational goods* that expand the parameters of sociability synergistically. Rather than regulated reproduction, innovation necessitates *meta-reflexive* management of relations at all levels of society. In *civil society*, the *common good* is generated by outward-looking subjects that co-create an identity that exceeds the relation's aggregate elements. Synergistically integrating these elements is fundamental to producing a renewed fabric of sociability whose associational structures further the *common good*.

In relational ethicality, *judgemental rationality* (the normative question) enacts via *meta-reflexivity* the processes of social capitalisation that produce *ASV*. Each morphogenetic phase articulates social capitalisation in these processes by disentangling sociability from its outcomes.<sup>7</sup> In the temporal interplay of inputs, vis-à-vis double and triple morphogenesis, sociability is both the *explanans* and *explanandum* — it is the temporal phase that identifies which aspect of sociability is investigated.

Hence, expanding the horizons of sociability is an outcome of *meta-reflexive* inputs that effectively produce *ASV* by cyclically renewing relational goods. Relational goods are defined not only in the manner they are consumed but also sustained as transformative sources of future cycles of morphogenesis by those active in their formation. The following two chapters explore the notion of *civil society* in the context

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7 Each phase includes the relational inputs of personal, collective, and social reflexivity.

of teaching and learning. The *common good* that gives identity and direction to education is talent development, which, in turn, enables the generation of *Relational Subjects*. Practices are proposed and enacted in reciprocal connections between teachers and students. The situated nature of learning references the autonomous input point of students at the beginning of learning cycles. These evolving input points are then transformed within partnerships to produce relational goods that morphogenetically shift the horizons of sociability.

## Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I extended and applied a relational realist *philosophical ontology* (observing and thinking relationally, in a substantive sense) to the idea of *civil society*. *Civil society* starts from the perspective of the human subject, which entails a conferral of meaning to relations based on the human/non-human distinction. The human perspective becomes the *latent reality* of social relations whose parameters require *meta-reflexive* management that is inherently transformative. In turn, this *civil society* depends on civic values that are the source of *ASV* needed to sustain the transformative parameters of sociability through the actions of *Relational Subjects*.

In providing an account of a sustainable *civil society*, I presented an alternative theory of the process of social capitalisation (the making and re-making of the reality of sociability). The prevailing social capital theories reviewed in this chapter show analytical closure in different ways, analysing the dynamics of sociability through the prism of individual or holistic elements of relations. First, Putnam does not distinguish between organisational features and their outcomes. As a result, we are left with circularity with the integrative function of rich stocks of social capital — that is, the process of social capitalisation — made indistinguishable from the effects they produce.

Coleman understands the effects of social capital as relationally embedded utilitarian resources that are part of the preference schedule of individual and collective actors. In this form of utilitarian contractualism, social capital becomes a reciprocated investment in which the sharing of resources depends on trust developed from the cost/benefit experiences of actors (Coleman 1998). Coleman considers social capital to consist

of relations between persons, but how efficacious these relations are at maintaining public goods is referenced from the actor's perspective. He or she must first perceive the benefits of social capital as a good worthy of reciprocating, that is, bringing into being for others to use, too. Formal organisation is needed to overcome problems arising in the supply of public goods resulting from the possible disinterest of actors in collectively generating these goods. Forms of social capital — obligation and expectations (dependent on trustworthiness), the information-flow capability of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions — are embodied in social structures to achieve strong relationships. Again, the goal is to provide benefits from the perspective of actors:

Social relations and social structures facilitate some forms of social capital; actors establish relations purposefully and continue them when they continue to provide benefits (Coleman 1988: 105).

In Bourdieu's theory, which also posits a system perspective as the starting referent, social capital is understood to be in a struggle with other types of capital to gain power in social fields. There is a reproductive focus on social capital as a privileged good. The individual is inseparable from the collective history of her group or class (ontological complicity). Social capital, thus, is configured with other types of capital — in a field of practice — in which the habitus is a structural variant of the collective group habitus.

The limitations of these different theories of social capital demonstrate the need for an alternative approach capable of opening analytical pathways. It is vital to disentangle the process of social capitalisation to ensure that the relation is the analytical starting point. In relation, the human element is co-emergent as it is also active in conferring meaning to the patterns of sociability. The *Relational Subject*, in enabling responsibility to make and re-make the fabric of sociability, mediates between relational goods and the renewal of this same fabric. Depending on the morphogenetic stage — in which relational goods are both *explanans* and *explanandum* — the *ASV* produced by *Relational Subjects* sustains future cycles and the enhancement of their conditions of production. Sociability and relational goods are two realities that are temporally generated and re-generated in dialogue with each other (Archer 2011).

To explain the origins of the social capitalisation process, it is necessary to acknowledge the different input points of sociability, including subjective actors, socio-cultural realities, and the organisational features of relationships that bind the subjective and objective features. As mediators, the *Relational Subject* (individual or collective) is part of the *meta-reflexive* management of the relation within ties expressed through observing and thinking relationally. The *meta-reflexive* management of the social capitalisation process consists of facilitating synergy between personal, collective, and social reflexivity. The outcomes produced by this synergistic form of relational goods are continuously worked on through changing conditions that further enable the *Relational Subject*.

By disentangling the process of social capitalisation, the notion of *civil society* provides context to teaching and learning. The reference point, when starting from the human perspective, is the student's development that is constituted in personal morphogenetic inputs points at the beginning of each learning cycle. It is necessary to think of the student as an autonomous learner but also as a potential *Relational Subject* who takes part in the noted synergistic process that underlies all levels of society. In *civil society*, the mission of education is the development of both of these facets of the individual in the broader context of relational ethicality. This relational ethicality is emergent from the morphogenetic dialogue between sociability and relational goods. Between sociability and relational goods, the aim is to continuously enable potential personal capabilities that confer meaning to relations through a relational mode of observation enacted by *Relational Subjects*.