



# *Still Alone? Social Capital in the United Kingdom 2005-2015*

*By James Prentice*

This book has been created to replicate Putnam's important book *Bowling Alone*, which found statistical evidence that outlined a long-term decline in social capital (SC). It highlighted that individuals were deciding to engage with community groups, networks and associations at a lower rate than previous generations had. This book aims to replicate this study, but in the context of the UK in the time period following the publication of Putnam's main work on social capital. Therefore, this book seeks to test the generalisability of Putnam's findings.

In summary, Social Capital is a theory that argues there is value in community networks, groups and associations that naturally exist in our societies. It states that this value can be measured in social benefits that materialise as a result of such social ties. This can produce social benefits, such as making societies easier to govern, which in turn increases government, and their institutions', performance. It is also said to produce other social benefits, such as creating improvements in the education and health of a population. Moreover, some research has produced evidence suggesting that social capital can help generate better economic outcomes. These benefits have been said to occur at a local and national level. This study utilises statistical techniques to test if SC does indeed have such a positive effect on such social outcomes.

Using survey data, this book firstly analyses trends in social capital levels to test if Putnam's theory about SC declining is accurate. It then goes on to test if social capital levels do indeed have positive effects on social variables, such as education and health outcomes. It then goes on to test if these positive effects extend to economic outcomes. The study then goes onto focus



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on how institutional performance may be affected by variations in social capital levels, whilst finally focusing on whether these effects are mirrored at a local level. The book then has a final chapter that discusses how this book's findings may affect social capital literature published up to the book's completion date, February 2017. If the reader is interested in this book's methodology then a chapter can be accessed by contacting the author of this book.

This book was created by James Prentice, who at the time of publication had graduated from the University of Kent, Canterbury Campus, with a History and Politics degree, and is shortly going to be attending the University of Essex to study a MA in Political Science.

### **Acknowledgments**

This book acknowledges the help provided by Kent University that helped the author greatly in improving their writing, research and academic skills needed to be able to complete this book. In particular, this book acknowledges the role Dr. A. Wroe and Dr M. Whiting had in helping the author develop ideas and statistical research methods within the field of social capital. These academics also provided much help in guiding the structure of this author's undergraduate dissertation, of which has helped frame the structure of this entire book.

This book also acknowledges the immense support provided by Chris Connelley in encouraging the author to continue academic research, which led to this book being published. This book started as a conversation with Chris Connelley on train rides home from work during some dark winter months. These discussions led to a realisation that the book envisaged during the final year of my undergraduate degree was feasible, and from this, the following research and book developed.

Also, this book expresses great thanks to its supportive parents, Ray & Christine Prentice, who over many years have provided me with much encourage and support that has given the author the time and ability to finish such work as this book.



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Lastly, this book is dedicated to the memory of former Cllr and Leader of Hastings Borough Council, Jeremy Birch who sadly passed away not long after the study's original dissertation was published. This book gives thanks to the help he gave in getting fellow councillors, and Hastings borough council in general, to help with important information that led to a better understanding of how social groups could help improve local councils' performance. It also gives thanks to other local councillors and community workers who provided information that allowed this author to produce research that resulted in this book.

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## ***Chapter 4: Social Capital and Education:***

Introduction: Do the connections in our society help or hinder our children's ability to achieve a good standard of education? Does this help or hinder their ability to achieve a good standard of attainment? Does the amount of trust and parental involvement in their child's education produce a better or worse education system with better or worse attainment levels? This study will look at the academic idea that a civic culture, otherwise known as social capital, positively affects the quality of education. This chapter's question asks "does the level of social capital affect the level of attainment: A British case study, 2000 -2010?"

This study question has originated from past research surrounding the idea that community networks, the concept of social capital, create a better education system. Putnam is widely associated with the idea that more social capital creates better education outcomes (Putnam 2000), but the idea was first employed by Hanifan in 1920 (Hanifan 1920). Hanifan was an educator in a poor state in Southern USA and made observations of how community networks could support students and create better outcomes. Schools became institutions for creating social capital and producing better outcomes, the idea that institutions like schools could create social capital and in turn help create better attainment levels is the idea this paper aims to test. Hanifan stated that this form of society created a social resource, which could be used to help improve the school and local area, known as social capital. Hanifan stated that this social capital was used in the West Virginia local community to improve the social, moral and economic conditions of their society (Hanifan 1920). Hanifan also showed that it produced an immediate and long-term positive effect, again something this chapter will aim to test.

Hanifan observed that social goods were created, like creating a sports field, building roads, more participation in evening classes and much more. This study will seek to try and identify if these observations are accurate or not.



Importantly, Hanifan also revealed that some who were less educated were put off getting involved due to the fear of appearing unintelligent towards local people they lived with and were friends with. This stopped some minorities from getting involved within networks, limiting the benefits these groups could bring. Furthermore, Bourdieu argued social connections are used to accumulate social value that is then used to invest in social power, keeping the disadvantaged in their place and isolated. These networks were used to keep information in the hands of those who already benefit most from current economic structures and these networks were a way of keeping the best opportunities within a select club, thus limiting better opportunities for the disadvantaged. This study will aim to test to see if social capital has this dark side.

James Coleman later also created a similar analysis that social capital could be created through institutions. He argue that social capital created associations, of which produced information channels and therefore allowed disadvantaged students to have more opportunities to succeed than they would have had otherwise. These associations also helped bridge the divide between disadvantaged students and the top universities and employers. It did this through creating large levels of obligations and trust between peoples as their position depends on them acting in others interests' within the group, resulting in disadvantaged students having talents recognised, and therefore, having more opportunities available to them. This again presents the idea that networks allow communities to pool resources together, create trust and in the end collaborate with people to produce a better education system with better outcomes and opportunities for all students.

Finally, Putnam has produced statistical evidence to show that education performance varies from state to state in a similar way to social capital. This again suggests that the more social capital a local area has, the more likely that area is to have better attainment and better opportunities for the students of that area.



This research provided results that have shown a possible link between social capital and academic success. Putnam and Coleman have shown this possible link through statistical analysis, whilst others like Hanifan has shown this through observations, recordings and showing a possible causal pathway between the two factors. There is a lack of evidence if these findings can be generalised outside the USA, and a causal link can be found as this has not yet been conclusively shown.

### So what?

Therefore, based on the past literature, the core purpose of this chapter is to test the claim that educational success is in some way dependent on the level of social capital. It is also attempting to show if these trends can be generalised to a wider area than the USA and to a more local level. This paper will seek to do this by using England as a case study and comparing the levels of social capital to various indicators of attainment throughout the English education system. Therefore, ultimately, this chapter seeks to add to current literature through testing past claims and testing if the theory can be made more generalizable.

This paper is also investigating this trend to see if social capital can be made to increase attainment, which in turn will show us if this is an overlooked aspect of education policy-making within England. If so, it may persuade policymakers that another intervention in education is needed to improve education outcomes, of which still needs improvement in some parts of the country. It may also identify common themes and trends in why certain areas do better in attainment than others, which may create more targeted and local policy-making, possibly producing better results in the long term. For example, some areas with low attainment may have more social capital problems than others, showing where governments attempting to increase social capital in order to improve education may have the most effect. Therefore, it may help identify the most effective places to trail and target possible future government policies that are generated from such studies.



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This study seeks to answer this question through using the case study of England between 2001 - 2010 and measuring two variables, social capital and education performance. The study will then compare these two variables to see if a pattern, a correlation and even a possible relationship may exist.

**My findings (summary of findings).** –

### **Methodology:**

#### **Variables and methods of measurement:**

**Social capital** in this study refers to the estimated measure of the amount of a given society's community networks and trust. Furthermore, it assesses the estimated strength of institutions, values and actions that support social cohesion and community activism; resulting in a society's ability to function and solve its problems (Putnam 2000). All this fosters norms, reciprocity and expectations that makeup part of the civic culture and forms the basis of a given society (Putnam 2000). This concept has several combined variables, of which cover the topic of associational membership, trust, citizen values and actions; and social capital institutions.

The social capital measure amounts to 89 variables, which can be seen in an appendix chapter that can be requested by contacting the author. The measurement will give the average value for 2001-'05, and 2006 –'10, and the two averages difference will be measured through the percentage change between the two figures; this is done for each variable. The total percentage change for each variable is added together to give a final figure, which will show a decrease or an increase in social capital. The figure for 2001-'05 is then added to the percentage change figure to give the trend from this point to the end of 2010. For example, the 2001-05 figure might be 1000, then when added to percentage change figure of -10% would lead to a figure for 2006-'10 of 900, thus showing a decrease in social capital over the decade, identifying a trend and helping to answer the question. This has been done in this way to avoid



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a simple comparison between 2001 and 2010, meaning it will include all the years from 2002-'09 to ensure all information across the decade is used in an accurate and fair manner. It has also been done in this way because these variables do not always have a value for every year, because of a lack of survey data as some surveys only were carried out every two or three years. This method will allow for a comparison of the two time periods with all the same variables, meaning that a full and accurate change can be measured.

Request the appendix chapter for more details on the methodology the book's findings.

**Educational attainment:** This study uses twenty national measures of educational based variables. It mainly uses government designed measures of attainment levels, such as GCSE success being if a pupil can achieve 5A\* - C, including English & Maths, GCSEs. All these measures, and their definitions, can be seen in Table 4.1. The data for all these variables have been gathered through the national census figures published on the neighbourhood statistics website, which is updated and owned by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is how the national average figures and the local figures for each selected area were produced. Averages have been taken between 2001 and 2010 where appropriate, and where the data is complete, so it can be compared with the social capital measure, recorded at the same time. The local areas are then split into the same two groups that were created for social capital. Both these groups have their averages recorded so the two groups can be more effectively and easily compared.

### **Comparing Social Capital to Educational attainment:**

Firstly, this study compares the two variables by creating a variable, Education Score, which is designed to take into account all the variables listed in table 4.1, and produce one measure that assesses the level of attainment in a local area. The way this variable is calculated can be viewed in Table 4.1. This is calculated this way so a basic comparison can be made, to identify any basic possible relationship.





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The study then compares the level of social capital to a range of different attainment assessments. It does this from early years education, KS2 level 4 primary school assessments, to middle-level education, Secondary school with GCSE assessments, to the higher level of A-Level & NVQ equivalents and finally to the degree level.

The study then goes on to compare social capital to the type of students within the locally selected areas. In order to assess if different levels of social capital visibly affect a student's ability to study well, or whether it may be another factor, like economic pressures. This then goes on to analyse if a comparison can be made between social capital and the highest level of qualification a student is likely to obtain.

Finally, the study investigates if there is a darker side to social capital, meaning does it exclude benefits from minority peoples who are outside these networks. It will do this by making a comparison between the same variable, but splitting the same measure into two groups, one where all pupils are included, and one where only Free School meal pupils are included. If this produces a different set of distribution and results, it may reveal that minority students, those on free school meals, are indeed excluded from the possible benefits that networks might provide.

### **Hypothesis**

H1. This study expects to find that social capital and attainment levels will correlate, with high social capital creating higher attainment levels and lower social capital the opposite. This is based on research carried out by Putnam (Putnam 2000).

H2. This study expects to find that social capital and attainment levels will correlate throughout a person's education, from early year's education to higher education later on in life.



H3. This study anticipates that it will find that there will be economic factors that will limit students' ability to succeed, rather than social capital being the only significant factor. This is based on other social capital research, such as Putnam's (Putnam 2000)

H4. This study projects that it will reveal a darker side to social capital, where areas high in social capital will show better attainment for all pupils but will see visible signs of these benefits being excluded from those who are most likely outside these networks.

H5. This study expects to find that different types of social capital will have different effects on attainment levels. The study specifically expects to find Bridging social capital will have more of an effect than other types of social capital, such as bonding. This is based on past social capital research, such as Putnam's (Putnam 2000).

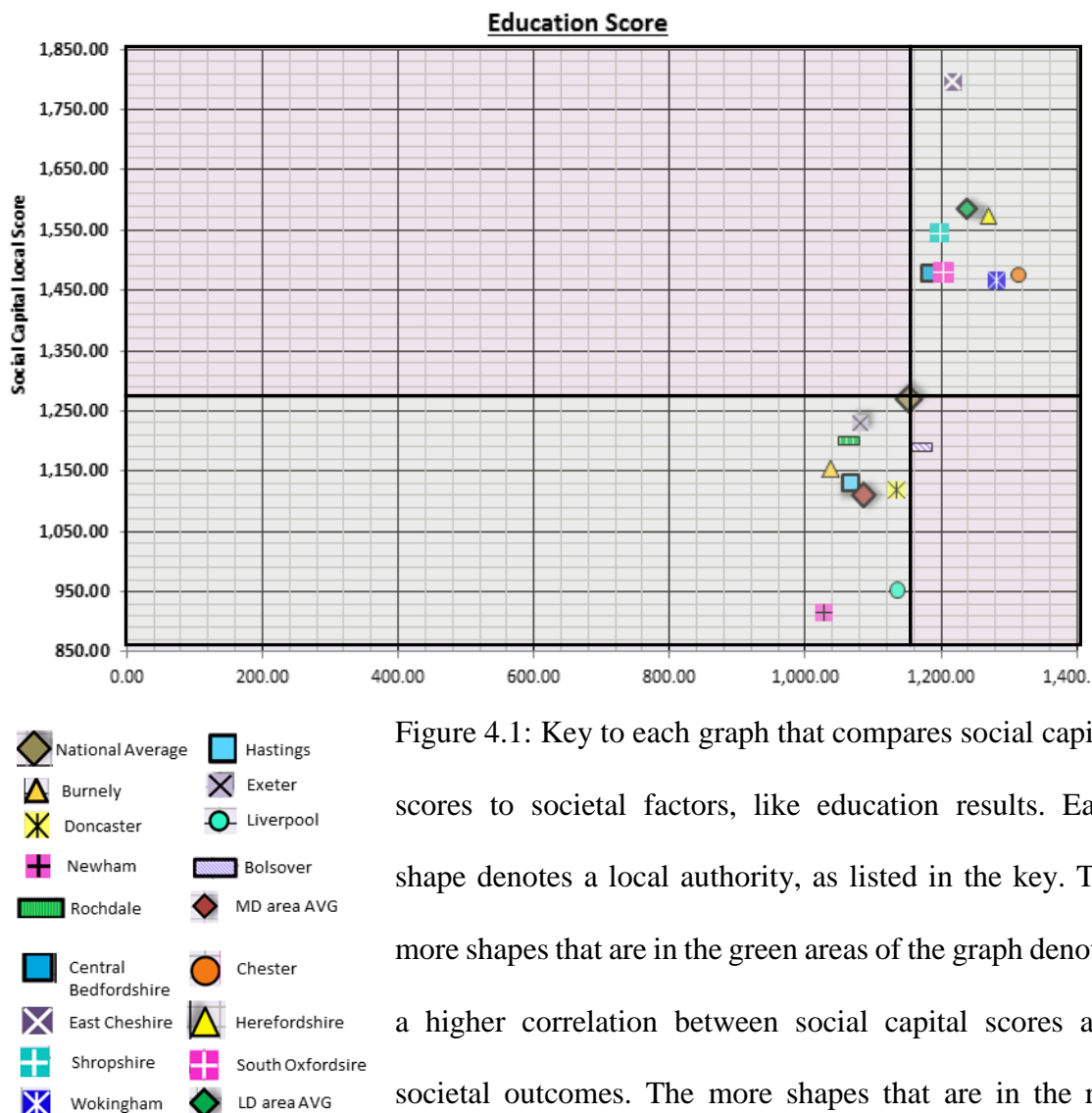


Figure 4.1: Key to each graph that compares social capital scores to societal factors, like education results. Each shape denotes a local authority, as listed in the key. The more shapes that are in the green areas of the graph denotes a higher correlation between social capital scores and societal outcomes. The more shapes that are in the red areas denote a weaker correlation.



This study strives to assess the possible correlation and causal link between social capital & education. This chapter has taken several different local areas across Britain, which has been broken into two board groups. The first group, see figure 4.1, are the towns that are listed amongst the more deprived areas of England (according to the multiple indices of deprivation). This measure takes several indicators of poverty, inequality and disadvantages and creates a rank from bottom to top which ranks places from most deprived to least deprived. The other group are towns which are ranked as the least deprived local committees, out of the ones picked for this study. Each group has mixed areas which display a mixture of both large deprivation and affluence. These places are Exeter & Hastings in the first group and Chester in the second group. This should help control for variation of deprivation in local areas that may affect this study, whilst also providing evidence for a broader range of factors that social capital may, or may not influence. It will also help generalise this study across various local areas of Britain as not all areas can be broken straight down into two different groups of deprived and non-deprived, due to some areas will of course fall into an average between the two definitions.

When using the overall measure of educational attainment, it was found that social capital highly correlates with educational success. The graph shows the higher the education score, the higher the social capital levels tend to be, a positive correlation between the two variables. The education score variable is calculated by adding the desirable variables, ones that show better educational attainment, whilst then subtracting the less desirable variables, ones that show lower education attainment. These variables can be seen in table 4.1. The higher a score means that the better attainment is within a local authority, and lower scores denote poorer attainment levels within a local authority. This shows that on average areas that have recorded good attainment tend to have better social capital levels, meaning at a first glance social capital does indeed have a positive relationship with attainment levels. This indicates that higher levels of social capital may help create better attainment levels within a society.



<b>V N</b>	<b>Variable Used:</b> (All measured at some point in time between 2001 – 2010). Averages have been taken between this time.	<b>Definition</b>
1	AVG Educational performance (5A* - C)	% of GCSE students who get 5A* - C grade, including English and Maths, at a GCSE-level.
2	Economically Active Student (% of 16-65 population).	% 16 -65 year old Students who have a job.
3	Economically Inactive Student (% of 16-65 population).	% 16 -65 year old students who don't have a job.
4	AVG point score per student (End of KS4/ End of GCSE)	Average score given to a student a GCSE-level, the higher the score the better result per student.
5	Level 4+ key stage 2 (end of Primary School) English, Reading, Writing & Maths (free school meal pupils).	% of KS2 students who get 5A* - C grade, including English & Maths, at a GCSE-level, who are on Free school meals (an indicator of deprivation)
6	Level 4+ key stage 2 English, Reading, Writing & Maths	% of KS2 students who get 5A* - C grade, including English & Maths, at a GCSE-level, all pupils.
7	AVG point score for a KS2 pupil	Average score given to a student at the end of KS2, the higher the score the better result per student.
8	GCSE equivalent for those with free school meals (Including English & Maths)	% of GCSE students who get 5A* - C grade, including English & Maths, at a GCSE-level, who are on Free school meals (an indicator of deprivation).
9	Persistent Pupil absence in schools	% students at Primary & Secondary school who are persistently absent from school (as defined by government)
10	No qualifications	% of 16+ population with no qualifications
11	Highest qualification - Level 2	% of 16+ population whose highest qualification is a level 2 – known as GCSE or equivalent level.
12	2 or more A levels (Or NVQ equivalent)	% 16+ population which have 2+ A levels or equivalents, known as NVQ's.
13	Have a Degree	% of 16+ population with a university degree qualification
14	Have a profession/ Professional qualification	% of 16+ who have professional Qualification
15	Full-time students 16-18 & 18+.	% of 16+ population who are Full-time students
16	% of population that has a level-3 as highest qualification	% 16+ population whose highest qualification level is a level-3 (known as A-levels or NVQ's).



17	AVG point score for a A-level Student	The average score given to a student at the end of their A-level's, the higher the score the more universities that can be applied for.
18	Persistent Pupil absence in school (On Free School Meal)	% students at Primary & Secondary school who are persistently absent from school (as defined by government) & on Free schools meals (an indicator of deprivation).
19	Free School meal pupils achieving the basics (GCSE level).	% of pupils achieving the basics they are expected to by the end of their studies (as defined by government) & on Free School Meals (an indicator of deprivation).
20	All Pupils (who achieve the basics at GCSE level).	% of pupils achieving the basics they are expected to by the end of their studies (as defined by government).
21	Education Score	A variable created in this study that adds up all the positive education measures listed in this table and minuses the negative variables measured, which gives an overall score listed to the right.
N/A	Education Score (Workings) (for the National average, which is the exact same method used for Woking out the local education attainment scores, which are displayed din the graph above).	Variable number - <b>1.</b> + 56.6% - <b>2.</b> 3.40% + <b>3.</b> 5.80% + <b>4.</b> 330.5 + <b>5.</b> 60.00% + <b>6.</b> 75.00% + <b>7.</b> 27.4 + <b>8.</b> 33.50% - <b>9.</b> 2.90% - <b>10.</b> 22.50% - <b>11.</b> 15.20% - <b>12.</b> 29.52% + <b>13.</b> 17.38% + <b>14.</b> 14.13% + <b>15.</b> 8.20% <b>16.</b> 12.30% + <b>17.</b> 696.30 + <b>18.</b> 6.40% + <b>19.</b> 36.3 + <b>20.</b> 58.9 = 21. Total of <b>1,152.25</b> , this calculation has been done for every local score with the exact same method, which is how the graph on the page above is produced.

#### A trend from early years to the highest level of qualifications.

Figure 4.3 shows that there is a potential link between social capital and educational performance at a lower age and skill level than the standard GCSE 5A\* - C measure. The measure for pupils leaving primary school at 11, instead of secondary school leavers at 16, is the ability to acquire a Level 4 in reading, writing and maths. These are tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2, at 11. Figure 4.2 shows that amongst the areas that have low social capital educational attainment at the early year's level is generally below the national average, and it is in a range of low attainment. Conversely, there is some variation amongst areas high in social capital, where half of these areas show high social capital correlates with high educational



attainment at a younger age. However, the other half stray away from the range and correlation expected and show higher attainment in some areas in England may not be fully dependent on social capital. This analysis and trend were broadly the same for the average score achieved by a Key Stage 2 (KS2) student in the same areas, reinforcing this graph's findings and analysis.

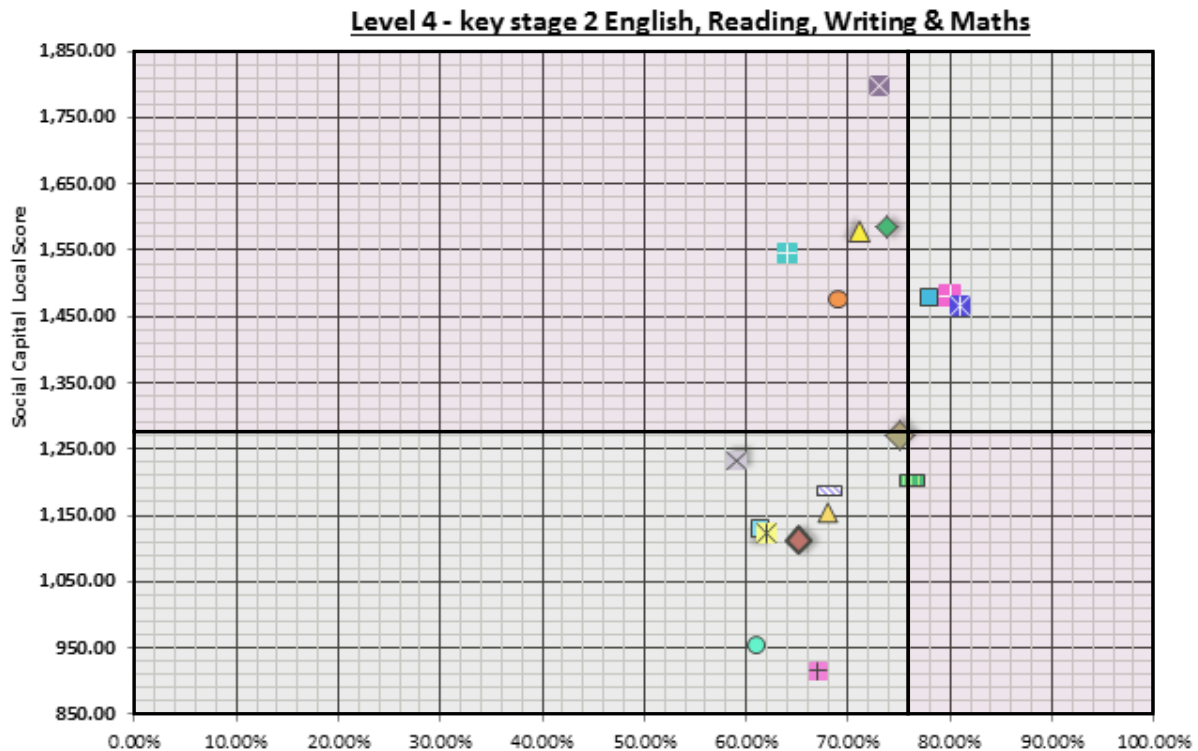


Figure 4.2: The proportion of children gaining Level 4 in key stage two by social capital levels.

This trend is carried onto the next level of education, the middle years educational level, Level 2 – GCSE's: Further research showed the potential link between social capital & Educational performance leads onto early year's education outcomes. It showed us this through areas that are stated to have low levels of social capital generally come off worse in attaining the desired outcomes in early year classes, and these children are also less likely to go onto gain 5A\* - C grades, including English and Maths, see figure 4.3. The Green areas show where you would expect the areas listed to fall given their levels of social capital, and the red where you would not. Generally, all the areas fall within the expected area, with some further out of the range than others. The only area which falls outside any estimated range of expectation is Exeter.



This, therefore, suggests that when establishing measures that track educational success throughout a child's education social capital does correlate with attainment in the majority of cases. This suggests a possible positive influence from social capital in determining educational outcomes in different areas across England.

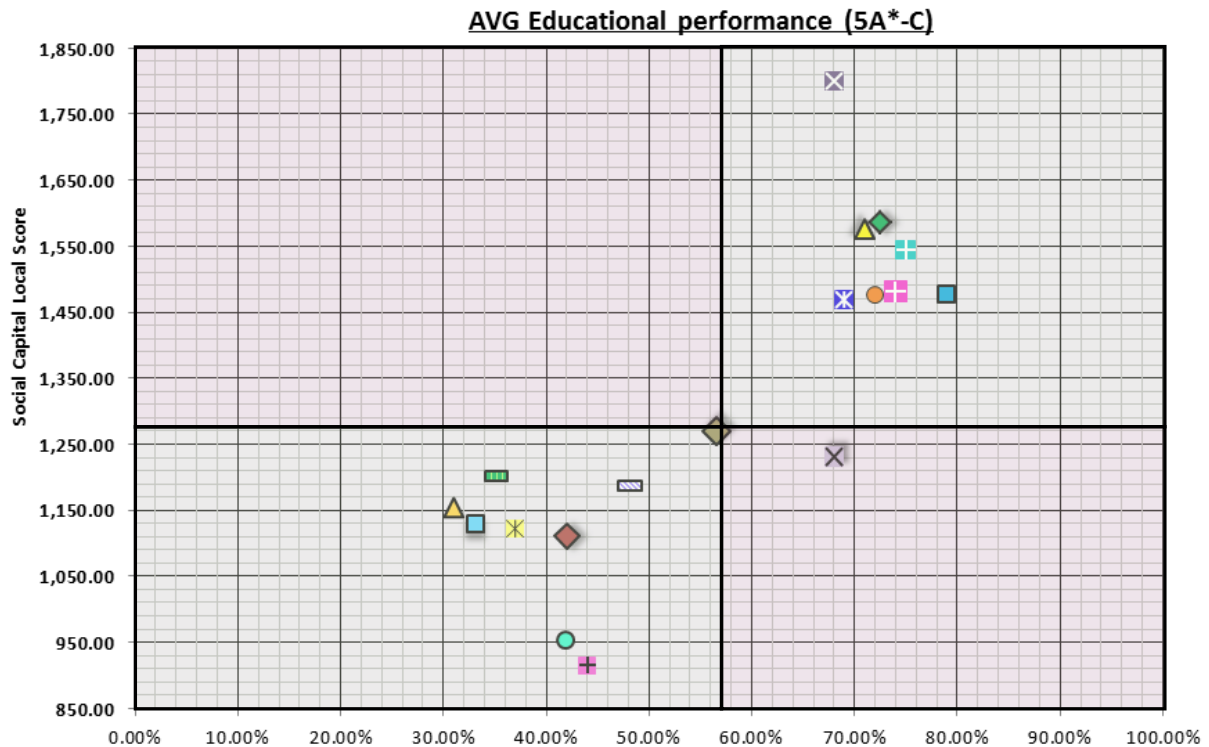


Figure 4.3: Average performance of pupils at a GCSE level in a local authority by social capital levels.

Again, this trend was mostly carried through onto higher education, Levels 3 – A levels and Equivalent NVQs, see figure 4.4. Once more, higher social capital areas were more likely to have more Level 3 qualifications and better grades. Figure 4.4 shows us the potential link between social capital & educational performance carries into a higher age and skill level than the standard GCSE 5A\* - C measure. This particular measure records the average point score, per A-level student in a given area. The higher the score, the better the grade is and the more likely the individual student is to secure a place at a higher-ranked university in any given field. Figure 4.4 shows us are areas with lower social capital tend to produce lower A-Level scores



than areas with higher social capital. The higher areas of social capital all fit the trend of higher A-level performance, and lower areas of social capital mostly fit into the opposite correlation as well. However, two areas did slightly stray away from the predicted range of correlation. These were Exeter and Bolsover, of which recorded higher levels of A-level performance, but lower levels of expected social capital.

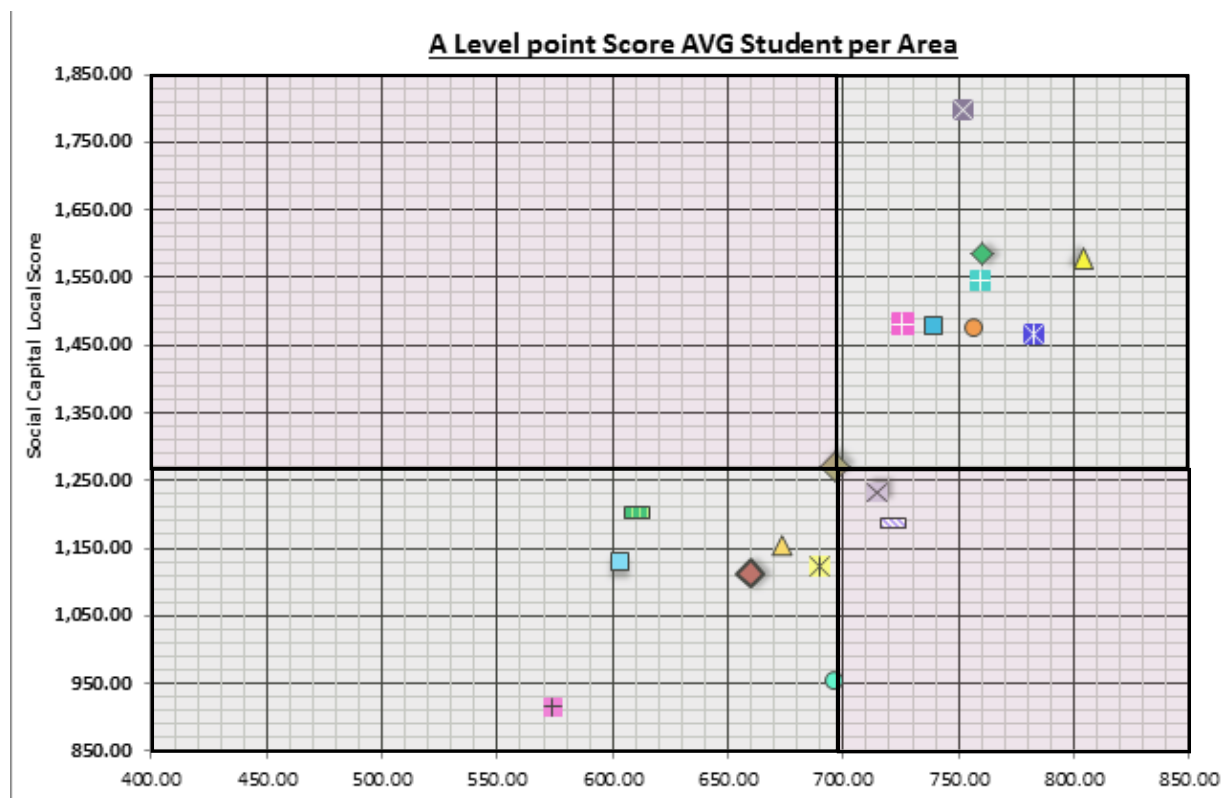


Figure 4.4: Average A-level score in a local authority by social capital levels.

So far, we have seen that a general trend between social capital and educational attainment can be described as a positive one, where the higher the social capital is within an area the better attainment tends to be. There are some outliers, such as inner city London and university areas like Exeter, Also, more remote countryside areas with varying levels of poverty do sometimes not fit this trend. Therefore, only some generalisations can be made, but largely areas outside these types of variations produce a trend that displays a correlation that shows more social capital creates better attainment from early years to higher education. Now let us look at further education to see if this is still the case.





Again, further Education repeats the pattern stated above where largely areas lower in social capital have fewer people with degree qualifications and areas greater in social capital generally have more degree qualifications. Figure 4.5 shows the same trend is reflected not just in further education, but in higher education as well. At a Degree level, the higher the social capital the more likely there are to be graduates. The opposite is true with areas with lower social capital levels. There are exceptions in areas of higher social capital, including Herefordshire, Shropshire and Central Bedfordshire as these slightly slip away from the expected range of correlation, but still have more graduates than the majority of lower social capital areas. Conversely, areas with lower social capital have the exceptions of Exeter and Newham, again producing Inner City Outliers and University City outliers. This relationship was also largely the same for those who have professional qualifications, again reinforcing the trend outlined so far.

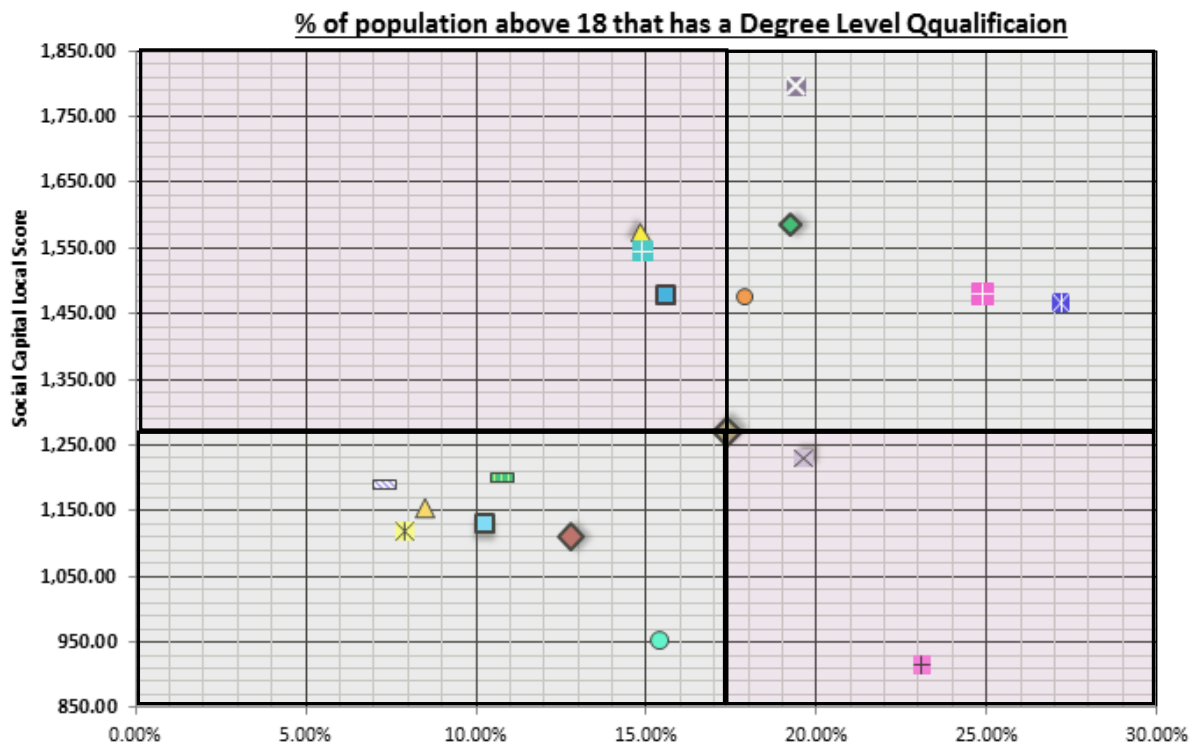


Figure 4.5: Percentage of the population who have a degree by social capital levels.

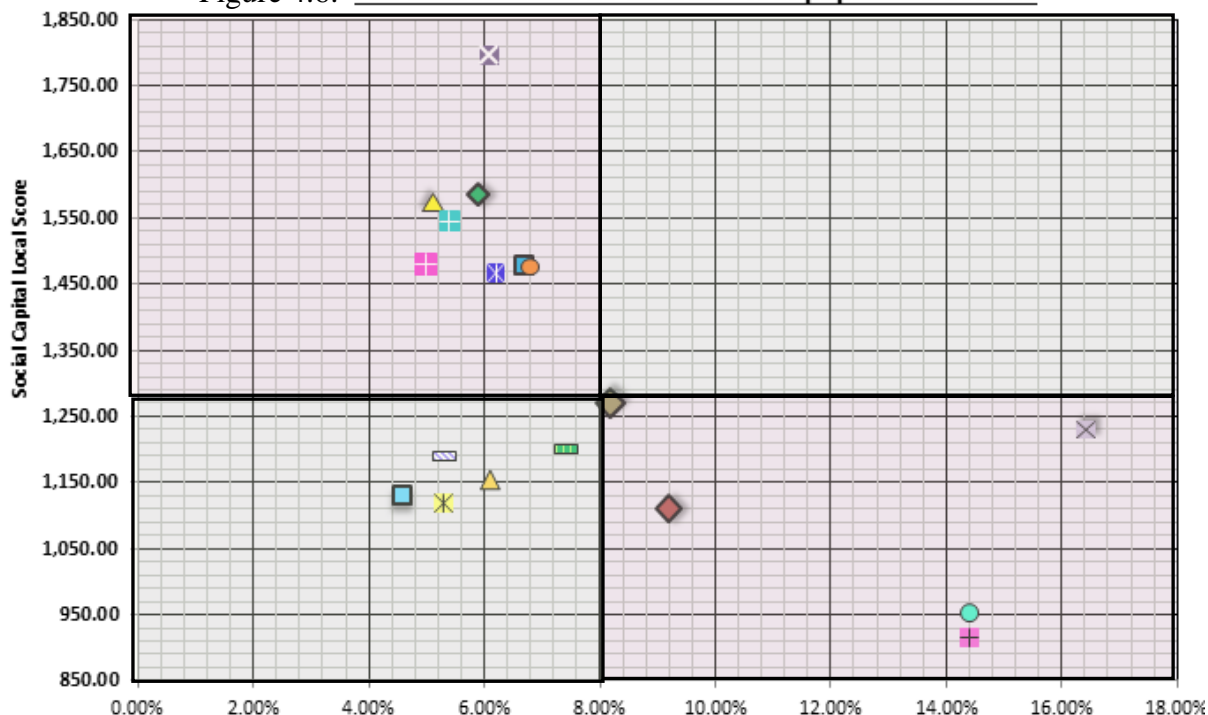
Therefore, we can see a general trend of more social capital leading to better educational outcomes over a long time, from early years to degree level studies. However, can this be said



for students who are studying now? Do current levels of social capital within a local authority affect the numbers of students and the way they study?

Figure 4.6 shows us that having more full-time students has no correlation to the amount of social capital, meaning that areas that in some cases have fewer full-time students actually produce more students with qualifications. For example, places that scored very highly in the percentage of people who have degrees, scored very low in the number of full-time students. This means that although they have fewer full-time students they produce more people with A-Level and degree qualifications, with better results. This shows that although social capital may not depend on the proportion of full-time students within a given area, it may be important in getting the most out of every full-time student. This means that areas with higher levels of social capital appear to be able to get the most out of students to a point where they can gain more qualifications with better results on average, despite having fewer full-time students than such areas as Liverpool, Newham and Exeter. In fact, on average, areas with more social capital have fewer full-time students than areas with more social capital, but as we saw earlier, have better attainment. This reinforces the idea that social capital enables the pooling of resources, which supports students to gain better results.

Figure 4.6: **Full-time students 16-18 & 18+ % of population over 16**





One cause of students doing less well, other than social capital, might be because of economic pressures. Do economic pressures affect students' ability to study more than social capital? One key indicator can be seen with the number of students who have to work shifts rather than study in their free time due to economic pressures. This can be seen with the number of students who are economically inactive, meaning most they do not engage in paid work. If we take a look at this factor, figure 4.7 shows that social capital does not appear to be dependent on the number of hours available or how economic pressures affect students, meaning that the economic argument may not be as strong as social capital arguments when determining educational success, which was a surprise finding.

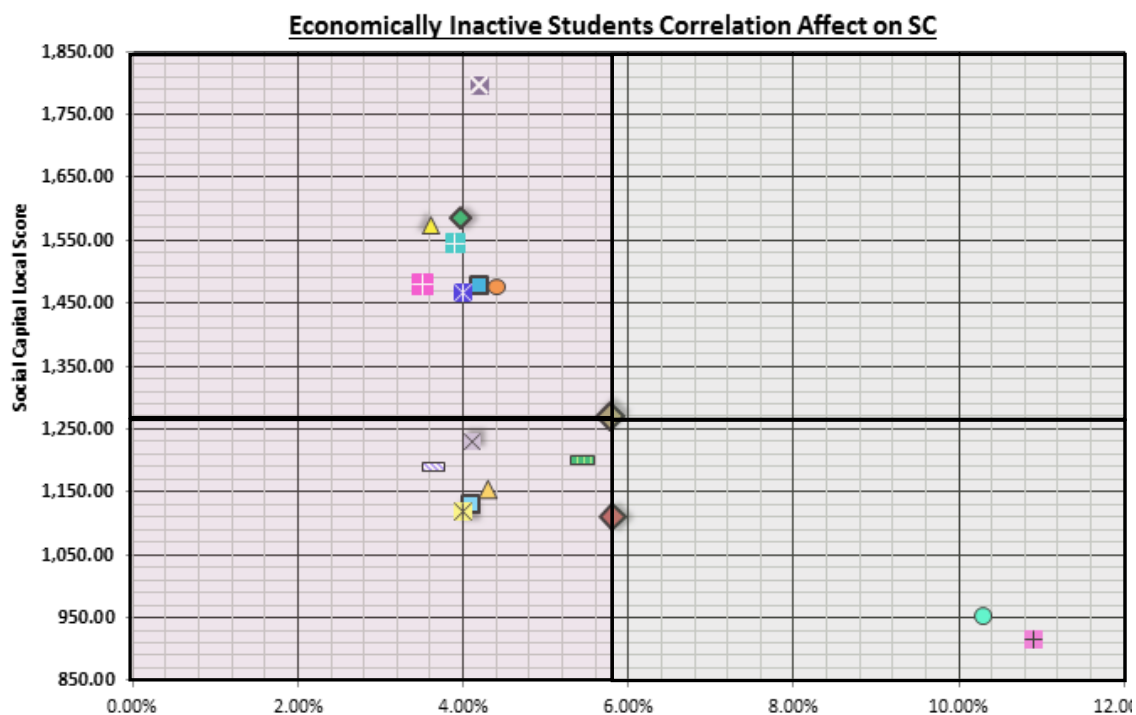


Figure 4.7: Proportion of economically inactive students by social capital levels.

One cause of areas having fewer students gaining these qualifications might be because of economic pressures, one such pressure being the need to work whilst studying. This idea is not supported as there appears to be no correlation between students who are inactive and educational performance. Figure 4.7 shows areas that have fewer students who are economically inactive, students who do not work and largely do not take part in the local



economy, tends not to affect the relationship. This is because in the areas that have fewer students not working has varied results. Areas that have most students working, and therefore have few students not working, have both high and low levels of educational attainment and both high and low levels of social capital. Therefore, there is no clear correlation that shows economic pressures impact upon educational outcomes or affect social capital levels, which may also have a causal relationship on educational outcomes. There are two interesting results, Newham and Liverpool. These results indicate a lot of students are economically inactive, but both areas have lower levels of social capital than most areas in this study. This essentially means students have a lot more free time, and in the case of Newham, don't have drastically worse results than other areas, but have less social capital. Therefore, this increased free time does not translate into more socialising, and therefore, more social capital. Again, this crucially shows the limited correlation between economic pressures, social capital and educational outcomes.

#### Long-term education and qualification picture

Let us now take a look at the variation in the highest qualification that is likely to be achieved within an area compared to the level of social capital.

Figure 4.8 indicates that a student achieving no qualifications is far more prevalent in areas of low social capital than in areas of high social capital. This means that although students are no more time pressured and no more in number in areas of low social capital they still are far more likely to come out of the education system with no real qualifications. Again, this would suggest that the ability to work together more often and to pool resources together, which is what social capital does best, is what might be helping these places with similar student circumstances achieve such varying results. There will of course be other variables in explaining the attainment gap, however, this chapter would suggest that due to the consistent level of



correlation between low attainment and low social capital, with exceptions, social capital should be included in a model that seeks to explain attainment gaps across Britain.

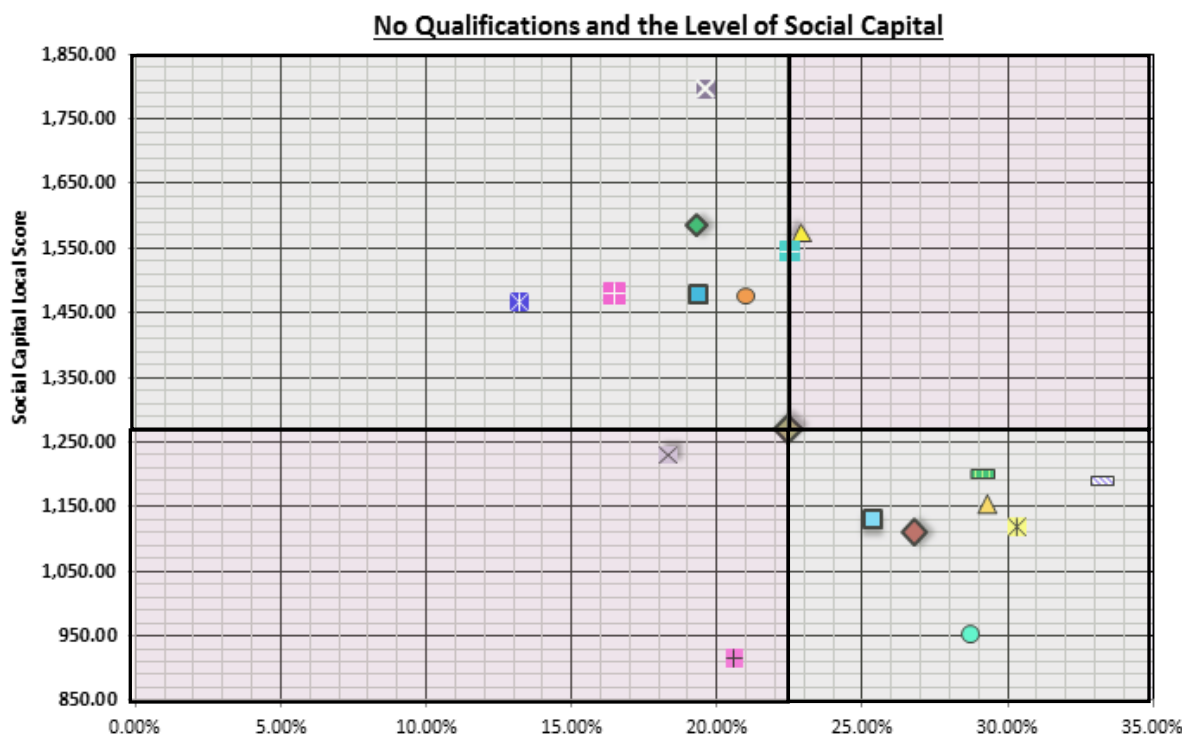


Figure 4.8: The proportion of the population gaining no qualifications by social capital levels.

Figure 4.9 reinforces the previous finding of low social capital correlates with fewer qualifications. This is because the chart shows that the less social capital an area has the less likely a student is able to gain a qualification, in this case, a Level 3 qualification. In fact, the higher the qualification gained, the less likely a student in a low social capital area is to achieve it. The trend above shows a very strong positive correlation between higher social capital and achieving higher qualifications, this is because all the places with higher social capital fitted into the expected range of achieving more Level 3 qualifications. This was a similar trend when selecting people with the highest qualification of level 2 (GCSE or equivalent level) and achieving a degree, as shown earlier, again reinforcing the trend previously outlined.





Figures 4.10: Social capital levels by the proportion of free school meal pupils within given local authorities.



We have seen how social capital can potentially have a restrictive effect on educational attainment at the early year's level for students on free school meals but is this the case right up through to the end of Secondary school?

If we take the standard basic skills the government requires students to have by the end of Secondary school, further research found that high social capital areas achieve far more pupils meeting this standard than low social capital areas. However, when we isolate this same test by just looking at free school meal pupils we can see the exact reverse trend that we saw in the early year's level of education. High social capital areas do worse than low social capital areas, and by a large margin. Could this potentially be caused by the dark side of social capital?

Therefore, it can be said that there is evidence that areas with large amounts of social capital correlate with minorities having a restricted ability to achieve the same attainment levels as those in majority groups, and by a far higher margin than areas low in social capital. The way the distribution of results completely reverses suggests that it is a possibility that areas high in social capital reap benefits for the majority, but those excluded it from the minority. Therefore, networks where people work together and pool resources together can sometimes cause minorities to be excluded and lose out. In the UK this occurs in early year's education and this trend then carries on until the end of Secondary school where the basic skills still are not achieved, thus limiting the average persons' life chances. This would suggest that there is a dark side to social capital.

So far, there is only an indirect observation that has been made that can show Social Capital may have a darker side which excludes minorities from educational benefits it may bring. To take a closer look if this is the case we need to see some form of evidence that there is an active exclusion, or lack of a serious attempt to include, pupils on free school meals, who are a minority of students.



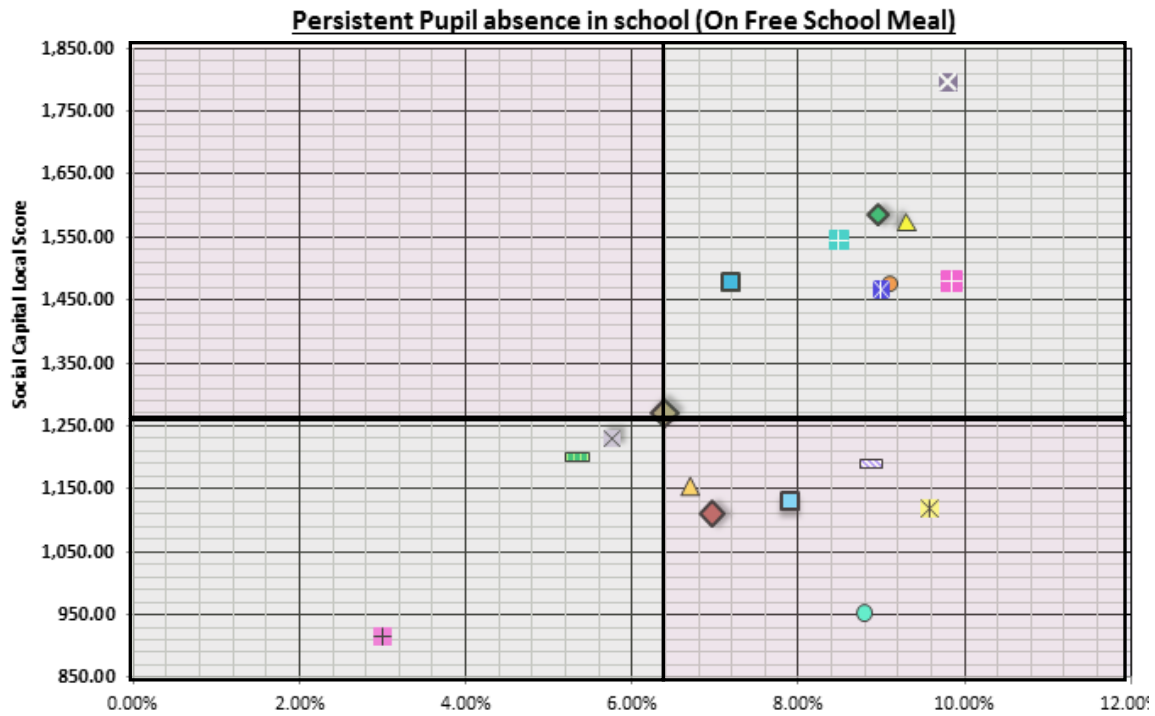


Figure 4.11: Persistent pupil absence amongst poorer pupils by social capital scores.

To further test this possibility, we can analyse the distribution of results showing the average amount of persistent pupil absence from schools within a local area. When doing this, figure 4.11 shows the same trend. Firstly, when all pupils are included high social capital areas do the best, but when only including free school meal pupils this trend mostly is reversed. Higher social capital areas do worse at keeping free school meal pupils in school than low social capital areas. In all the higher social capital areas they do worse with free school meal pupil's attendance than they do with other pupils. On the other hand, Lower social capital areas do better in most cases with free school meal pupil attendance than they do with non-free school meal pupil attendance. This means that higher social capital areas have fewer free school meal pupils on average, but struggle to keep them in school more often than lower social capital areas, despite having fewer attendance problems and children to manage. This would suggest that in high social capital areas rather there is a willingness to avoid using social capital and resource sharing to tackle problems that these minorities face in achieving better attainment levels at school. This would suggest that social capital may deliberately be used in a way that



keeps networks and reciprocity as an advantage for the majority, again indicating that social capital does have a dark side that can make inequalities, in this case, educational inequalities, worse.

**What possible pathways could there be to link these two factors?**

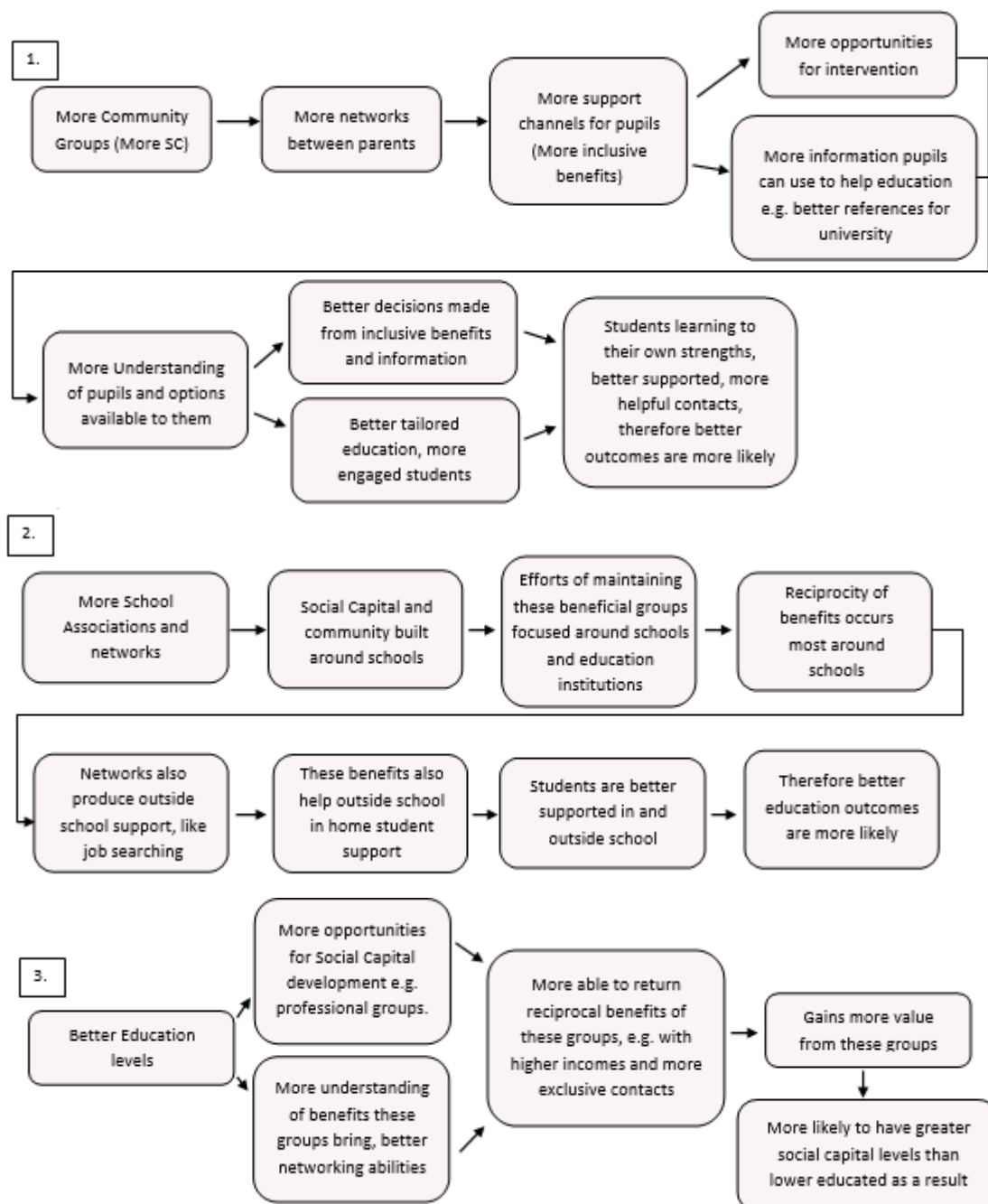


Diagram 4.1: Causal pathways between social capital and education outcomes.



Pathway 1. One way more community groups and social capital can create better education levels is through creating more networks that unintentionally help increase the chances of educational success. These networks can provide support channels to parents and pupils through the information and contacts networks can provide. For example, if a pupil is struggling to decide what school would be best suited to them, parents could use wider networks to gather information to help with this important decision. The greater the information levels the more chance the parent has of choosing the best school available for their child, resulting in a more tailored education system, and therefore an increased chance of achieving better attainment levels. Alternatively, if their child is struggling at school then networks can provide information on their positive methods of overcoming boundaries, such as good books to read, which may get their child more engaged with reading. Moreover, it can provide pupils with more contacts where education is valued, resulting in greater engagement and commitment to education. As these networks encourage better attitudes to educational development, they, in turn, increase the chance of better results at the end of a child's education. Furthermore, if social capital increases education levels, then higher social capital areas are more able to make better decisions with the information provided from their networks, resulting in better decisions surrounding education, creating a cycle where educational attainment is boosted, thus widening the gap between lower social capital and higher social capital areas in terms of attainment levels. Overall, these networks produce information that enables intervention, more engagement and information for parents and students, which in turn creates a more tailored engaging education system that is more likely to produce better results.

Pathway 2. Secondly, a more intentional way social capital can create better education levels is through social capital being created around institutions and schools. If social capital creation is focused around schools, for example, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), then most benefits shared will be distributed around these schools. Reciprocity and these groups benefits



being maintained relies on any benefits being shared and directed towards better outcomes for all in the group, therefore, the more groups and people involved in them creates better outcomes, simply because more benefits are being shared to more people, increasing the chances of educational success. For example, these groups might identify a problem within the school they feel is not being tackled, these groups can provide information to schools in order to express their concerns about the lack of action on problems, resulting in more action on more problems, creating a better environment for learning and increasing the chances of better results. Another benefit can be where parents can share advice with each other and give unique benefits, such as good references and work experience to pupils applying to a university or college of their choice. This increases the chance of attending better schools and also provides them with a course or school that is better suited to them, resulting in an increased chance of high educational results at the end of their education. Furthermore, the greater networks these parents have the more opportunities and abilities they will have to help students with projects and things they are struggling on, such as knowing other pupils who are good at certain subjects so they can help each other learn and improve on weaknesses. This pulling together of resources and skills enables people a greater chance of overcoming identified barriers to educational success, on average resulting in better grades, explaining why on average it appears that higher social capital areas tend to have better results than lower social capital areas.

Pathway 3. However, we must keep in mind that this relationship might be emerging from educational effects rather than social capital ones. Better education levels might enable individuals to understand the reciprocal benefits that these groups provide, resulting in a greater effort to create and maintain these networks, as it is within individuals' interests to be involved in groups that may one day benefit them. Furthermore, higher educational levels tend to create a greater number of higher paid and more exclusive jobs. With less well-known and accessible contacts, these people are more in a position to be able to be reciprocal and return benefits



gained by networks they are involved with, increasing incentives to be involved with these groups. Furthermore, this suggests that wider factors like inequality and education levels may be important in social capital's effect on society.

For these pathways to be tested, a case study using social capital methods in schools would have to be conducted, so to see if social capital does create better education results, through the three causal pathways stated above.

### Early year's development:

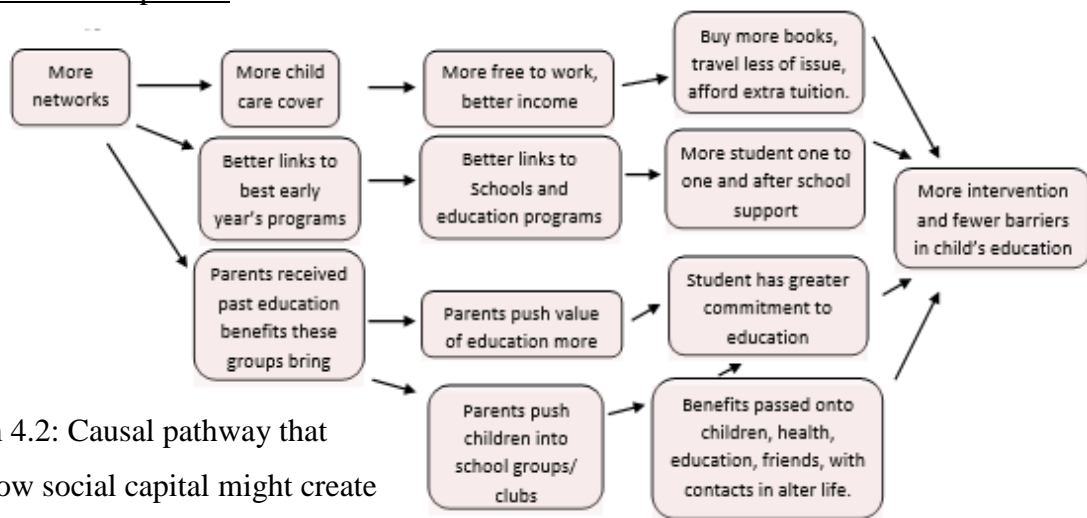


Diagram 4.2: Causal pathway that shows how social capital might create better early year's education results.

Social capital may facilitate early year's development through the use of links and benefits networks provide. Firstly, having more support networks allows children to be more easily supported if parents need to go out and work, which in turn can provide more income, and result, more learning resource materials. This can assist in early years learning away from the classroom and ultimately help a child get ahead in learning development, which results in them having higher grades at the end of primary school, giving them an advantage going into secondary school. This might be why we find that higher social capital areas tend to have better results from primary school upwards towards the end of Secondary school. Further, these networks may also help create more people that can assist with a child's learning, again helping a child with early year's development, which is likely to lead to better education results. An



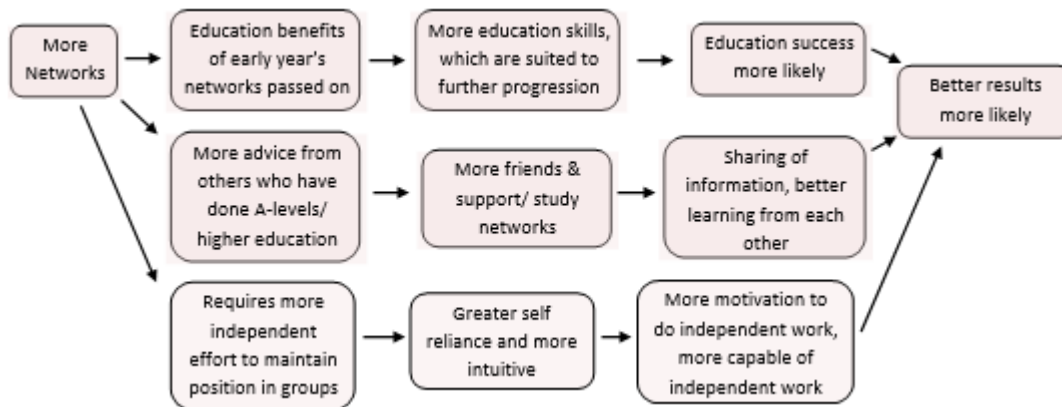
example of this can be found with grammar schools, which are selective English schools, where parents use links to help give their child extra tuition and a greater chance of being accepted into these schools, which are considered to be higher-performing schools by some parents within counties that have kept the Grammar school system.

Another way social capital may help a child's early year's development is through using networks to gather information that assists with a parent choosing the best nursery or starting school for their children, which helps with early year's development and better results on average. These education programs also may help with providing links to the best future schools for their child and also helps to create social capital, like extra-curricular groups, which, in turn, makes for a better-rounded student that on average achieves better results. These links will also help produce future benefits that will help in creating better results, which may be another way higher social capital may create better education results from early years' education onwards.

Finally, social capital may help develop a young person's education through parents' positive experience with education. Parents with more networks tend to live in areas with good education results, suggesting a more educated population. If networks have produced past benefits for them, then they will likely want to pass these benefits down to their children. These networks can pass down education benefits to their children, so parents focus on using these networks to do this, resulting in greater intervention in their child's education, resulting in parents pushing their children to value and commit to their education. Also, parents push their children to participate in extra-curricular groups, which also can produce education benefits. Therefore, this may be a reason behind why we see higher social capital areas tending to have better early years' education results.



A level and graduate success:



Firstly, if higher levels of social capital make it more likely early years education will be successful then it is only logical to assume that these skills will assist in progression with a person’s education, increasing the chances that they will achieve higher grades at higher levels of education. This may be one reason behind why we see that higher social capital areas have higher A-level results and more graduates.

Secondly, these networks might provide information and advice which can help students in their studies, increasing their chances of success. For example, there could be extra support with independent learning and thinking, whilst also there may be extra study groups that can help with revision before exams. Furthermore, these networks may help provide unique experiences that can be referenced when submitting university applications. Alternatively, contact could assist with writing university applications, which can be a key difference when so many students have the required grades universities are asking for.

Finally, these groups require students to be more independent and keep an effort to maintain their position in these groups so they can continue to gain benefits out of these groups. This forces students to be more active in doing things for themselves and this may help with independent learning, as they are more used to doing things independently. Independent learning can be a barrier to some students who fail to do this at higher levels, which can stop



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students from achieving higher grades at a higher level, meaning if these groups do help with independent learning they may produce skills that assist with achieving higher grades, making higher grades more likely, which might be why we see more level qualification in higher social capital areas.

#### Free school meal/ minority performance:

This focuses on the dark side of social capital theory where networks produce mainly inclusive benefits, meaning the majority benefits and a minority is excluded from such benefits. In this case, we are talking about free school meal pupils, who are in the minority of pupils across England. One reason why these pupils may do worse compared to the average pupil in higher social capital areas is that the benefits of greater attainment levels are mainly shared in more select groups where fewer free school meal pupils are present, resulting in non-free school meal pupils gaining a greater advantage than they otherwise would do in a lower social capital area. Therefore, in higher social capital areas the gap between free school meal pupils and non-free school meal pupils can be significantly greater as benefits are only shared with one group, resulting in most pupils getting a head start, with a minority being left behind. On top of this, useful contacts that can provide needed experiences and references for later education and opportunities remain in the hands of the majority, leaving the minority (free school meal pupils) left behind, which may be why they consistently do worse in higher social capital areas than compared to lower social capital areas.

#### Economic activity of students:

How could it possibly be that in higher social capital areas students are more economically active, meaning they are working and participating more in the local economy? Logically students working longer hours have less time to study, and therefore should have lower grades but we find the opposite of this in England. This might occur through the mechanism of social capital, as higher social capital may increase productivity by providing people with shortcuts





that allow them to get ahead of the competition, therefore allowing people to spend less time studying but get better results. For instance, knowing people that have gone through the education system before you and knowing people who know how the exams are marked, the exam framework, allows students to tailor their preparation for exams more directly, and therefore takes less preparation to get a good grade. This is because learning can be targeted towards achieving exam objectives, resulting in better grades with less study time, possibly explaining the finding in this paper.

Furthermore, the gains made from having access to networks from early on in life may increase the chances of gaining a good start to a child’s education, resulting in acquiring more of the necessary skills needed to pick up learning quicker, which allows these students to spend less time studying during A-levels and degree stages of education but achieve better results, again suggesting social capital may help with speeding up the learning process, meaning social capital increase productivity in learning, which tends to achieve better results.

**Statistical Relationship: Regression Analysis:**

**Model 4.1: Social Capital with Average Education performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828 <sup>a</sup>	.686	.667	150.43412

a. Predictors: (Constant), Education Score

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1515.334	482.319		-3.142	.006
	Education Score	2.460	.416	.828	5.917	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Capital

When assessing the nature of the relationship between education and social capital we can take the social capital scores for all the areas and then compare them to all the education scores, by running a regression test. The education score variable was the variable that gave a score based on all the other education variables used in the study. The higher the number the better the



ranking of education. After doing this, model 4.1 shows that social capital can help explain the variation in education scores by 66.7%. Furthermore, there is a Pearson's correlation of 0.828, which shows us that these two variables have a strong positive relationship. This reflects the trend discussed above where generally higher social capital equals better education results. Furthermore, the education independent variable is statistically significant, resulting in the indication that these findings are unlikely down to pure chance. Finally, the results show us that each time social capital increases a significant level it can help increase average education performance by 2.5%. Therefore, it is unsurprising that on average we find higher social capital areas produce better education outcomes than their lower social capital counterparts.

**Model 4.2: Social Capital with Qualifications.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862 <sup>a</sup>	.743	.635	157.32961

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Qualification, 5A\*-C GCSE, Lvl 4 KS2 Pass Rate, Has a Degree, No Qualification

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	966.481	1136.009		.851	.412
	5A*-C GCSE	11.725	3.739	.771	3.136	.009
	Lvl 4 KS2 Pass Rate	8.110	7.931	.210	1.023	.327
	No Qualification	-19.841	24.447	-.406	-.812	.433
	Has a Degree	28.708	19.506	-.641	-1.472	.167
	Professional Qualification	3.477	12.119	.064	.287	.779

a. Dependent Variable: Social Capital

Taking individual variables concerned with qualifications, model 4.2 shows that 63.5% of the variance between social capital and various qualifications can be explained, suggesting a possible relationship. Again, there is a Pearson's Correlation of 0.862, suggesting a strong positive relationship. Also, the results indicated the only negative relationship was the No qualifications variable, suggesting that gaining any qualification is helped when social capital



is increased. The only statistically significant variable was gaining 5A\*-C (including English & Maths) at GCSE level. This showed that when social capital was increased, to a high enough level, we can see that there is an 11.73% increase in the number of pupils gaining this qualification. This was significant enough to be not down to chance. There was an 8.1% increase for KS2 pass rates, 28.8% for degree and 3.4 for a professional qualification, but none of these was statistically significant and could be down to chance and may not explain why the model explains 63.5% of the relationship.

#### Model 4.4.2 Endogenous test – Qualifications.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828 <sup>a</sup>	.686	.667	50.66414

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Capital

#### Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	785.711	63.879		12.300	.000
	Social Capital	.279	.047	.828	5.917	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Education Score

Interestingly, when the dependent variable and independent variable are switched we get similar results, where around 65% of the variation can be explained and the variables are statistically significant towards each other. When the education score goes up 1 grade so does social capital, by around 27.9 points. Remembering that social capital can increase the education performance score by a statistically significant level means that social capital helps improve education and education helps create social capital, possibly creating an endogenous relationship, which is significant enough not to be down to random chance.

#### Model 4.3: Pupil absence, Basics and Free school meals.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
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1	.948 <sup>a</sup>	.898	.856	98.85484
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a. Predictors: (Constant), Free School Meal KS2 pupils achieving basics, KS2 pupils achieving Basics, Economically Active students, Persistent Pupil Absence, Free School Meal pupil absence

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		Beta	
(Constant)	1623.513	402.184		4.037	.002
Economically Active students	-1.893	23.262	-.011	-.081	.936
Persistent Pupil Absence	-188.103	63.881	-.496	-2.945	.012
Free School Meal pupil absence	26.353	23.698	.188	1.112	.288
KS2 pupils achieving Basics	17.099	5.959	.509	2.869	.014
Free School Meal KS2 pupils achieving basics	-27.947	5.383	-.702	-5.192	.000

a. Dependent : Social Capital

When taking into account other variables used in this study model 4.3 shows other variables are statistically significant concerning social capital. Firstly, we should deal with the one that is clearly not, economically active students. This is no surprise as we analysed earlier there was no clear pattern, and indeed higher social capital areas had more of these students, which is why it is no surprise that there is a negative relationship between these two variables. If we look at pupil absence (all students) we can see that there is a statistically significant relationship, where higher social capital means less pupil absence, and less social capital, in turn, mean more pupil absence. Each time social capital increases we can say that pupils persistently being absent from school decreases by -118%, meaning there is a large decrease in a pupil being absent when social capital is high and present in their lives. Free school meal pupil works the opposite way, meaning when social capital is increasing the chances of a free school meal pupil being persistently absent increase also. This is increased by 26.35% at each social capital increase. As social capital is mainly in higher social capital areas this may indicate that social capital can be used negatively, through excluding benefits to minorities, in this case helping free school pupils achieve in schools. However, this relationship was not



at statistically significant level, meaning it may be down to chance. Now, if we look at pupils achieving the basics we can see a similar result, where more social capital helps create more pupils achieving good results, this time KS2 results, whilst more social capital hinders children's development who are on schools meals. An increase in social capital at a large enough level will increase the chances of KS2 pupils achieving the basics by 17% at a statistically significant level. Whilst a Free school meal pupils will have their chances decreased by 27.9%. This again shows the potential dark side to social capital where those that are likely to have less of it are excluded from the benefits social capital produces, which, in turn, isolates and limits individuals. This follows the pattern outlined earlier to a significant level, suggesting findings discussed earlier are consistent with regression analysis.

**Model Summary: 4.3.2- Endogenous – No Qualification.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.554 <sup>a</sup>	.306	.263	4.58065

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Capital

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	38.298	5.775		6.631	.000
	Social Capital	-.011	.004	-.554	-2.658	.017

a. Dependent Variable: No Qualification

Again, if we switch the two variables around we can see that social capital helps determine the education outcomes, in this case, the chance of gaining no qualifications, but also the proportion of the population gaining no qualifications helps determine social capital levels. This again suggests an endogenous relationship. In this case, an increase in people having no qualifications results in a small decline in social capital of 0.11 points, resulting in evidence of an endogenous relationship, at a significantly significant level. The endogenous relationship can help to explain 26.3% of the variance, which produces a more confusing relationship.



### Model Summary: 4.3.3 - Endogenous – KS2 – basics.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.640 <sup>a</sup>	.409	.372	6.14115

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Capital

### Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	32.475	7.743		4.194	.001
	Social Capital	.019	.006	.640	3.327	.004

a. Dependent Variable: KS2 pupils achieving Basics

Again, model 4.3.3 shows the problem of an endogenous relationship, where when the variables are switched around there is still a significant relationship, meaning they affect each other in different ways, confusing the relationship. In this case, KS2 pupils achieving the basics affects social capital development, it helps explain social capital variation, by 37.2%. This means that social capital affects early education development, but also early education performance also impinges on social capital development. In this case, when early years' attainment increases social capital also does by 0.19. This means that they can affect each other, restricting the ability we can see the exact nature of the relationship. The correlation was quite high also, at 0.64, showing another strong trend between attainment and social capital development, again showing the endogenous problem. This finding was at a statistically significant level, which, in turn, reduces the chances that this endogenous relationship is due to random chance.



### Model 4.5: Summary of Education Variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.952 <sup>a</sup>	.907	.868	94.64855

a. Predictors: (Constant), Free School Meal pupil absence, Persistent Pupil Absence, Free School Meal KS2 pupils achieving basics, 5A\*-C GCSE, KS2 pupils achieving Basics

#### Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1498.990	398.553		3.761	.003
5A*-C GCSE	2.759	2.633	.181	1.048	.315
KS2 pupils achieving Basics	13.704	6.242	.408	2.196	.049
Free School Meal KS2 pupils achieving basics	-25.338	5.555	-.636	-4.561	.001
Persistent Pupil Absence	-157.468	62.412	-.415	-2.523	.027
Free School Meal pupil absence	24.192	19.090	.173	1.267	.229

a. Dependent Variable: Social Capital

Finally, when you add in all the significant variables model 4.5 shows that 86.8 of the variation between social capital and education can be explained. KS2 pupils achieving basics, free school meal pupils achieving the basics and persistent pupil absence appear significant. As not all the variation can be explained this means that there are probably more significant variables out there, meaning this outlines the limits of social capital explaining all education performance, and also educational attainment levels explaining social capital levels.

### **Conclusions on Education performance and Social Capital comparisons**

#### **(UK 2010):**

- Higher social capital areas tend to have higher education performance than lower social capital areas do. This supports Hypothesis 1, affirming previous findings like Hanifan's and Putnam's studies.
- This pattern is mostly repeated through the youngest ages to the latter stages of education, supporting Hypothesis 2, confirming past studies listed in this paper.



- Time and job pressures on students do not impact education performance and social capital does. This goes against Hypothesis 3, where economic factors were also expected to be impacting a student's ability to commit to their education and increase chances of success.
- The lack of social capital in some areas appears to have a long-term effect on the number of qualifications an individual is likely to achieve, creating more people with no qualifications and fewer professionals, both highly correlating with lower social capital.
- Social capital does not just produce inclusive benefits, it can be exclusive, where groups who are likely to be isolated and in a minority tend to produce much worse results, similar that to lower social capital areas. This is also known as the darker side of social capital, which confirms hypothesis 4 and Putnam's findings of how social capital can create negative effects, one being entrenching inequality.
- The causal pathways identified from the statistical patterns, see the previous pages, tend to be clearer than before and tend to reflect Hanifan's, Putnam's and Coleman's studies, where these networks provide support for students, social benefits, contacts and information that facilitates educational development, and as a result achieves better results.
- Different types of social capital do not appear to have radically different impacts on the level of educational performance, disproving hypothesis 5.
- The statistical relationship appears to be that the two variables are strongly related. They can explain roughly 65% of the variance with specific variables explaining how much social capital can affect specific learning outcomes. For example, GCSE outcomes increased 11.73% as social capital increased, whereas the opposite was true for the number of people obtaining no qualifications, where more social capital decreased the chances of poorer educational outcomes. These reflected the broad trends found in the bivariate analysis. Also,

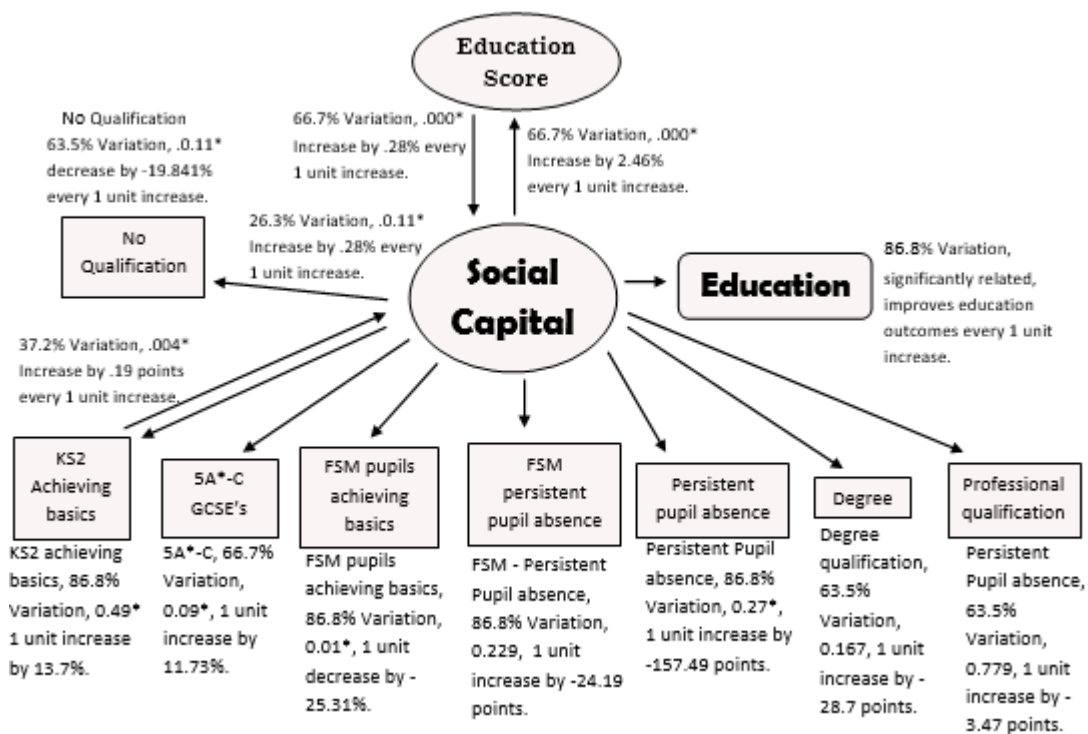




the issue of minorities being excluded was found in the regression results, backing up the trends outlined earlier in the chapter.

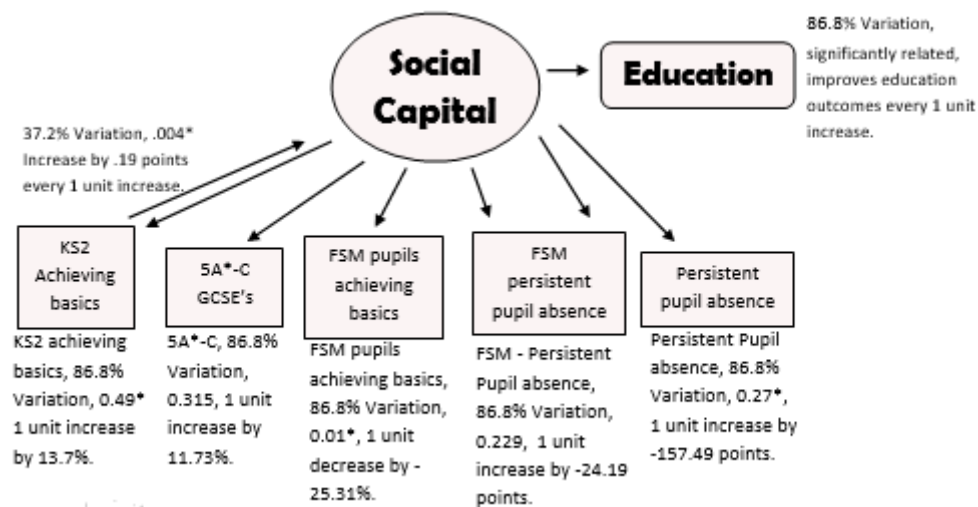
Overall, the evidence suggests that there is a consistent pattern involving education levels and social capital levels. Higher social capital tends to mean higher attainment areas, where areas low in social capital tend to have lower education levels. Mostly, social capital has inclusive benefits that tend to produce information, encourage students and bring together skills and resources that enable students to have a higher chance to perform better. The exception to this is when you have minorities who are likely to be excluded from these benefits in higher social capital areas, where they can have worse results than the average lower social capital area pupil. As better education results tend to create better social and economic situations, social capital may have a wider effect on other factors like having a healthier population. Therefore, this book now goes on to explore this.

**Summary Diagram** on the statistical relationship between social capital and education variables.





**Summary: Best model between Social Capital and education.**





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If you are interested in other research undertaken by this author you can use the following link to view other research and published findings. Website:

<https://www.capturepolitics.co.uk/coastal-action>