

## Closing Remarks

Scholars, health researchers, and ordinary people ask about the origin and gaining of social capital. If and when social capital is defined as a resource of the sociability emerged in groups and communities, it is really difficult to understand how an individual could gain social capital. Moreover, is it possible for an individual to gain social capital at adult age? The obvious negative answer, expressed more than tentatively, has been grounded scientifically in the preceding chapters. The negative answer is frustrating. However, social capital undoubtedly exists, so it must have its origin somewhere, but the question is how, when, and where does social capital emerge? Readers have already been implied of the suggested origin of social capital in [Chapter 10](#), revealing the significance of social capital for early childhood. The early affiliation between an infant and his or her mother (or other caring person) is essential for the development of interpersonal trust and the subsequent sociability. The idea of the importance of such affiliation is based on the psychoanalytic theories developed by Erik H. Erikson, Daniel Stern, and John Bowlby. Later on, Michael J. Meaney and coworkers conducted a series of animal and human experiments that proved affiliation theories. In [Chapter 14](#) above, I referred to the differences between the Swedish-speaking minor and Finnish-speaking major communities in Finland in their ways of caring for children. Starting from these different caring models, I have outlined a pathway from the basic culture to childhood sociability.

The theoretical view is distinct from the earlier visions about the origin of social capital. First, my theory is based entirely on the observed basic cultural aspects – and not on regional, structural, national, or other such aspects that seem to hide behind the other theories of social capital and its origin. As described earlier in this book, Swedish-speaking Finns are a minority living intermingled with their Finnish-speaking compatriots. Second, the Swedish-speaking Finns live in communities with abundant social capital. Third, a lot of observations, mostly subjective but some objective as well, seem to support the existence of differing child-caring models among the Swedish- and Finnish-speakers in Finland. Fourth, I base my theory on my personal experience. Namely, for over 20 years, during dozens of lectures and other presentations, I have asked the audience about how many of them have been physically disciplined by adults in childhood. For the sake of simplicity, I did not ask about mental mishandling, parents' alcoholism, or family problems. In the

Finnish-speaking adult audiences, four out of five replied that they had been disciplined in childhood, whereas only every fifth in the Swedish-speaking audiences replied positively to the question. Finally, such a fundamental difference in behavior and caring style must have deep roots in the background culture.

The consequences of the above theory are interesting. Social capital cannot be gained by learning, but rather, it emerges from the deeply rooted background culture of the community in question. This underlying culture dictates the ways our children develop and become trusting and social. Hence, we have to focus on the culture that favors a trustful atmosphere in early childhood. If we intend to create and build social capital, we have to invest in the background culture, in the humane way of living together. Western societies have plenty of institutions acting for the benefit of children, but as regards building social capital, their impact comes too late. If the society wants to invest in social capital, the investment must be made in the future generation. In other words, the social capital hungry society must affect the way the second generation – young parents – act and behave with their infants. The present generation and today's society can support the following generation philosophically, economically, structurally, behaviorally, mentally and in other relevant aspects. So, it seems that it will take more than one generation to create and build up social capital.

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