

WIDER BENEFITS OF LEARNING RESEARCH REPORT No. 9

*The Macro-Social
Benefits of Education, Training and
Skills in Comparative Perspective*

John Preston
Andy Green

Centre for Research
on the Wider
Benefits of Learning



**THE MACRO-SOCIAL BENEFITS OF
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS IN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

John Preston and Andy Green

August 2003

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The Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL) was established in 1999 by the then Department for Education and Employment, now the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The Centre's task is to investigate the social benefits that learning brings to individual learners and to society as a whole. The Centre is a joint initiative between the Institute of Education and Birkbeck College, University of London.

The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department for Education and Skills. All errors and omissions are those of the authors.

Executive Summary

1. This report is the second from the Centre's comparative strand of research. It compliments the first comparative report (Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003) which foregrounds the literature on social capital and social cohesion in comparative perspective. This earlier research report also provides preliminary tests of various hypotheses concerning educational inequality, income inequality and social cohesion.
2. The origins of this report are in work originally conducted for CEDEFOP (Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle) by WBL (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning) in 2002. We extend our earlier work by focusing on the benefits of learning at a societal level reviewing literature which uses a cross-national comparative approach. We also examine the implications for methodology of this approach and the policy implications of our findings.

The Macro-Social Benefits of Education

3. We define the macro-social as distinct from but related to the micro-social. There are three elements of macro-societal benefits. They possess 'depth' (not necessarily being observable within a single country context), cannot necessarily be attached to individuals or communities and are system level or social integration benefits.
4. Macro-social effects such as social cohesion, crime and trust complement individual attitudes and behaviours. For example, that education leads to an increase in civic participation (Putnam, 2000) for individuals is a micro-social relationship. Whether civic participation in the aggregate leads to an increase in social cohesion requires an examination of societal contexts (Green & Preston, 2001).

Researching the macro-social benefits of education, vocational education and training

5. In researching the macro-social benefits of various educational systems or interventions it is difficult to employ techniques of evaluation in the strict sense of the term (Plewis & Preston, 2001). Rather, through the identification of differences and similarities between countries and their systems, one may make macro-causal comparisons. These should be complemented by comparative studies of micro-social data, preferably those which are longitudinal.
6. Questions involving the macro-social benefits of education are hence of a hybrid type between modelling and evaluation. Countries are historically produced, open systems and it is not possible to subject education systems or nation states to

experiment. However, modelling is possible as we have shown in our earlier report (Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003) and this enables us to understand historical processes and to evaluate the performance of education systems.

Social cohesion

7. Social cohesion is a concept which has a long and complex history from classical sociology through theories which implicate: welfare states (Mortensen, 2000); governance (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000); equity (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000; Heynman, 2001); opportunity structures (Mann, 1999); value formation (Parsons, 1951); gender relations (Sim, 1999); crime and corruption (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000) and industrial conflict (Mouzelis, 1999) in social solidarity.
8. Trust at a societal level is potentially an important value for social cohesion. There is tentative evidence from discursive accounts that contemporary education systems appear to be effective in promoting ‘thin trust’ meaning abstract notions of general trust, fairness and universalism. However, given large cross-national variation between education and types of trust it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.
9. Tolerance is also important for social cohesion. Education potentially impacts upon tolerance as it is implicated both in value formation and the cognitive skills which enable individuals to question their attitudes. It is also implicated in status although we question evidence that racism is a strongly class based phenomenon which can be resolved through increased social mobility. Given the focus on the cross-national and historical focus of our review we remind and warn readers that racism and intolerance have thrived in some of the most educationally advanced societies of their time.
10. As an illustration of the ways in which education may impact upon social cohesion, we examine VET (Vocational Education and Training) in a European context. There is much variation in the emphasis of different systems of VET on social cohesion and integration as an objective and also much variation in the ability of various systems to deliver on these policy objectives.

Active citizenship and political participation

11. Although there is strong evidence for a relationship between education and various forms of participation at an individual level, evidence is less strong at a societal level. That is, educated societies do not always possess an active citizenry. Historical contexts are important and education does have a role to play in the development of systems amenable to the development of citizenship.

Crime in comparative context

12. Education systems, and the links between these and labour markets, play an important role in the development of criminality across nations. In particular, there is a clear relationship between unemployment, social-disorganisation, inequality and crime.

Conclusions

13. Evaluation of the macro-social benefits of education calls for a hybrid approach somewhere between modelling and formative evaluation. Various levels of aggregation – individual, regional and national are necessary in arriving at policy prescriptions concerning macro-social benefits.
14. Distributions of outcomes and culture are ways in which education systems can impact upon the macro-social benefits outlined in this report. Societal norms and inequalities are hard to change but not intractable. Policies which aim to reduce inequalities of outcomes and increase social mixing within education are ones which potentially could have a positive impact on benefits at a societal level.

Preface

This report is developed from research originally conducted for CEDEFOP by the Centre for Research on Wider Benefits of Learning in 2002 for its periodic Research Report on vocational education and training. The brief for that research was to review the international and comparative evidence on the macro-social benefits of education, training and skills, with particular reference to the EU states. The work consisted largely of reviewing the existing literature, with some additional quantitative testing of hypotheses generated from the literature regarding the relations between inequality of educational outcomes and social cohesion characteristics of EU countries. The focus was explicitly on societal rather than on individual level benefits and consequently the approaches used were those of cross-national comparison.

This report benefits from additional work carried out within WBL in the intervening period which extends the literature under review and further clarifies the theoretical arguments derived from the analysis of this literature. The quantitative analyses which formed part of the earlier work do not appear here and are published elsewhere (Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003). The report, however, maintains its original focus on the social benefits of learning at the societal level and, as appropriate to this, uses the methods of cross-national comparative analysis. We have substantially re-organised and re-written the original material to present here a concise review and theoretical analysis of the international comparative evidence on social benefits at the societal level. The study explores the differences between individual level and societal approaches to the question of social benefits and highlights the areas where adopting the comparative societal approach can yield additional insights for theory and policy.

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1. The Macro-Social Benefits of Education

1.1 What are the macro-social benefits of education?

In order to introduce this report it is necessary to first define what is meant by the macro-social benefits of education. Many of the benefits of education such as improvements in health and increases in individual civic participation are micro-social. They impact upon individuals, and perhaps communities, but cannot necessarily be said to aggregate to a societal level. Although improvements in health may (in the aggregate) reduce expenditure on the National Health Service and increases in civic participation may (in the aggregate) increase community cohesion, they do not necessarily impact upon society as a whole. The macro-social benefits of education are, therefore, those which occur at a societal level as construed separately from the aggregate of micro-social effects. There are three qualities of macro-social benefits – they have *depth*, are strictly *non-attributable* to individuals / communities and are *systemic*.

The characteristic of *depth* is derived from the realist conception of the term (Baert, 1998). This ‘deep’ level of social phenomena is “...*not necessarily accessible to observation, but nevertheless it exists*” (Baert, 1998, my emboldening). The word *necessarily* is important here and, as we will explain, certain deep phenomena are open to empirical observation although they are simply not evident in certain representations of social life. For example when using country micro-social data the effects of *national* income inequality on social benefits cannot be assessed. There is no individual variance in national income inequality. However, by using other techniques of analysis such as qualitative enquiry or cross-country comparisons these deep phenomena becomes accessible to observation.

Many micro-social benefits of education, such as improved health or crime reduction, are actual or empirical in that they can be attached to an individual, or a community. Macro-social benefits do not have strict properties of this type in that they can not necessarily be attached to a person, or community at lower than the national level (although their impact may be felt at this level). For example, social cohesion may be measurable, or at least proxied, but it is not possible to quantify the social cohesiveness of an individual.

Thirdly, they are *system level or social integration* benefits (Mortensen, 1999). Macro-social benefits are not necessarily aggregable from other social indicators, although their properties may well be related to micro-social indicators. In relation to general trust, for instance, individuals’ answers to the general trust question in the World Values Survey (WVS)¹ do not necessarily represent societal trust, although they can be used as a rough proxy for it. Obviously, there will be measurement error as individual perceptions of trust are not the same as the actual societal level of trust. This third feature of macro-social benefits is related to the issue of depth, but makes

¹ “Do you trust people in general?”

more explicit the level at which these benefits operate rather than their nature. Macro-social effects are, in the main, regional or national phenomena.

As can be seen from our definition of macro-social benefits there are important differences between them and the micro-social. Micro-social benefits exist at the level of individuals, families or communities; they are attachable to these units and they are of a system level only in as much as they are aggregable. However, the two levels of benefits complement each other in that the macro-social provides an important way of understanding the micro-social (and vice versa). For example, that education leads to increased civic participation is a finding repeated across many countries (Putnam, 2000) but whether such participation is beneficial to societies or not requires an engagement with some of the macro-social effects of education (Green and Preston, 2001). Therefore we believe that all levels of analysis – micro, macro (and meso) are necessary in understanding the effects of education on social outcomes.

1.2 Structure of this report

In this report, we begin by examining how far quantitative and qualitative techniques can be used to investigate the impact of education on the macro-social benefits of learning. We will critically overview literatures related to the comparative method, econometric techniques (such as the social rate of return) and evaluation methodologies. We will then outline how different methodologies (aggregate analysis and micro-social analysis within a comparative context) can be used to ascertain the impact of education on macro-social benefits.

In the main body of the report, we then examine the macro-social benefits of vocational education and training (VET), and education and training (ET) more generally, through examining two related literatures. We are hence examining both the broadly pro-social (social cohesion, citizenship, trust and tolerance) and the anti-social (crime and delinquency) aspects of social cohesion (although even the normative terms pro and anti-social are culturally and historically specific. Teenage delinquency in one culture can be seen as a normal part of the transition to adulthood. Civic participation in another can be seen as socially divisive and exclusionary).

We examine the literature related to education, social cohesion and the formation of values such as social trust and tolerance. This is a diverse literature. In particular, work relating to the influence of education on social cohesion is often qualitative of nature. It is therefore often difficult to operationalise and test hypotheses related to learning and social cohesion within a positivist framework which results from the deep nature of the concept. We then move to consider the impact of education on the formation of an active citizenry in terms of their civic and political life. There is more empirical work here, although perhaps there is too much emphasis on the role of learning in producing individual citizen activity rather than in examining its role in more aggregated political and civic action.

Next, we review the literature related to education, crime and the formation of delinquent attitudes. Crime can be considered to be an important element in social cohesion. In particular, certain types of crimes such as hate crime may be considered to be particularly relevant for social cohesion and integration. Although for the reasons given above crime is most normally conceptualised as an individual behaviour, we will aim to identify studies which examine the role of VET and ET on the general crime level. Additionally, we will assess how area and national level effects such as inequality, culture and welfare regime impact upon crime levels.

It should be noted that in conducting this literature review certain criteria were used in the selection and use of literature. The literature used is comparative in the true sense of the word in that studies selected address the issues in more than one country. Sometimes single country studies are identified where there is an issue of particular importance to be discussed, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Inevitably, there is a focus on the UK, Western Europe and to a lesser extent North America. However, macro-social issues of social cohesion, an active citizenry and crime levels are equally important for developing and Pacific Rim countries. Given the diversity of regional and national issues relating to state formation and development in these countries (Heyneman & Todoric-Bebic, 2000) we will not directly address those countries in this report although there is clearly room for other literature reviews related to those regions.

In line with our original brief from CEDEFOP we focus on the effects of VET where possible. However, we also cover literature which relates to education in general, especially where there is discussion of education systems.

Finally we relate the findings of this study to the UK policy context. Throughout recent UK policy literature related to education there have been concerns both with equity and macro-social benefits and we discuss how the findings of this review may relate to current policy concerns.

2. Researching the Macro-Social Benefits of Education, Vocational Education and Training

2.1 Examining the macro-social

In examining the impact of education and training on macro-social benefits there are obvious limits to how far any single technique can hope to capture the range of benefits, their qualitative dimension and the historical and cultural context in which they are embedded. In this report, we make reference to various techniques for ascertaining the macro-social benefits of learning involving qualitative and quantitative techniques. It seems in reviewing this literature that a mixed methods approach to examining these benefits is required. For example, Eisner (2001) incorporates both statistical analysis and historical studies in examining trends in

European homicide rates over time. Here statistical data is used descriptively in the analysis of trends. Eisner's approach enables us to explain the trends involved with reference to factors other than variation between individuals – differences between education systems and other associated entities involved in the formation of nation states. Although such an approach is probably optimal, in this report we draw mainly on quantitative or qualitative studies in the discussion of macro-social benefits. However, in future work in WBL we will develop the inter-relationships between quantitative and qualitative techniques and further evaluate mixed methods techniques.

2.2 Modelling, measuring and evaluating

In relation to policy-orientated evaluations there are limits to how far evaluation of macro-social outcomes can be used, at least in its summative sense. It is perhaps helpful to distinguish between three types of activity (Plewis & Preston, 2001), measuring, modelling and evaluation.

2.2.1 Measuring

Measuring macro-social outcomes is an activity engaged in by many international bodies such as the EU, OECD and the World Bank. Accurate measurement is central to any evaluation but measuring alone tells us little concerning the relationship between educational activities or systems and these benefits. For example, we cannot assume post-hoc that an increase in life expectancy in a country arises due to increasing levels of education. To make such statements requires some preliminary form of modelling. At its most basic, this may involve descriptive comparison of aggregates through scatterplots or correlations. More advanced techniques such as multi-level modelling (MLM) or structural equation modelling (SEM) are also employed, although the extent to which these represent analysis of actual macro-social aggregates rather than contextualisation of micro-social relationships is a matter for debate.

2.2.2 Modelling

One method of modelling would be to examine macro-social and macro-educational aggregates. Using time series data on educational levels, educational distributions, macro-social aggregates and appropriate controls one would model relationships over time. This would allow one to speculate regarding causality – whether changes in education variables cause changes in social cohesion variables independently of other influences. Time series data on macro-social and educational indicators over time is difficult to obtain, although McMahon (2000) constructs time series for a number of countries. In the EU, for example, measures of skill distribution (derived from IALS) or values (derived from the World Values Survey) are only available over short time periods, where causality would be difficult to determine.

The ecological fallacy is often referred to as a reason why such macro-social analysis is inappropriate. The ecological fallacy holds when the wrong units of analysis are considered in making an interpretation of data. For example, that both the mean level of education and the mean level of tolerance are high in a country does not indicate that there is a relationship between education and tolerance for all individuals in that country.

We consider that although it is important to be aware of the ecological fallacy, it is equally important to understand that the fallacy operates both ways. It is the importance of choosing an appropriate unit of analysis, not the automatic acceptance of individual level analysis, which is implied by the fallacy. The aggregate level of trust elicited through individual trust levels may be meaningful in itself, and useful in analytical work. There are also some indicators which it is impossible to express at an individual level such as skill distributions, income distributions, ethnic conflict, industrial disputes or government corruption.

To date, there have been some attempts to utilise macro-social data to model the impact of the distribution of skills on social outcomes. For example, Green, Preston and Sabates (2003) analyse macro-social data from a range of sources including IALS, WVS, World Bank and Interpol statistics for a sample of thirteen countries. Using OLS regression we find a relationship between educational inequality and a factor representing social cohesion.

Another technique would be to use micro-social data to model the relationships between education and social outcomes in various countries and then to compare effect sizes. There are various approaches which could be utilised here such as regression analysis or multiple comparison of groups using SEM. The interpretation of such findings is a matter of some difficulty, though. That education has a bigger effect on social outcomes in one country than another does not necessarily mean that the education system of that country is better, or that conditions in that country are more adequate in facilitating the effects of education. Differences in the absolute levels of education and the social outcome may mean that education has a greater effect in those countries where general educational levels or levels of the social outcome are lower. It would also be possible to use MLM to examine interactions between countries, regions (where possible) and individual effects. Data considerations are very important when attempting to use MLM, for example a sufficient number of sampling units are required. This means that MLM is not necessarily an efficient technique when making comparisons amongst a small number of countries.

If robust estimates of effect sizes are obtained it may also be possible to monetarise these benefits in order to calculate a social rate of return. The social rate of return to education is an expression of the relative benefits and costs of an educational input. More precisely, it is the rate of discount at which the current and future stream of educational benefits for an individual and society are equal to the current and future stream of educational costs. Although many calculations of social rates of return in

the literature are actually fiscal, concentrating only on the costs and benefits of education in terms of government expenditure and tax revenue, there has been significant progress by economists towards monetarising other social benefits such as intergenerational transfers, health and crime (Haverman & Wolfe, 1984; McMahon, 2000).

How far social rates of return can be used as an indicator of the macro-economic, or macro, rather than micro, social benefits of education is a matter for debate. Even if such an indicator were to be calculated, the difficulty of making international comparisons using the social rate of return is well documented (Bennell, 1998). As the social rate of return shows the marginal rate of return to education within a country, it makes little sense to aggregate or compare these marginal rates. If country A has a social rate of return to education of 8% and country B a social rate of return of 6% it does not make sense to say that country A is more (or less) efficient at producing social outcomes of education than country B unless human capital assets are fully mobile between the two countries. Moreover, as the social rate of return is a marginal indicator, we cannot be sure how far additional investment in education will depress this rate. Clearly economic rates of return to learning are not necessarily macro-social in that consequences for the individual taxpayer do not necessarily have an impact on social structures and the organisation of social life in general.

As social rates of return cannot specifically be considered a macro-social property of education, we have not discussed them at length in this report. In bringing together both the social costs and social benefits of educational investment (and in reconciling the social and economic) they become a powerful micro-economic tool. This potential has only been partially realised at present as those studies which do exist tend to focus on monetarising one, or at most two, social benefits of education (McMahon, 2000).

It is therefore difficult to see how the calculation of a full social rate of return, using all social benefits, could be achieved. Many of the macro-social effects of education such as social cohesion and changes in attitudes and values which we have identified in this report could not be easily incorporated within a social rate of return (although this does not rule out other forms of economic modelling). Moreover, as the macro-social effects arising from ET take effect over long periods of time the social rate of return would need to be calculated with reference to inter-generational considerations.

2.2.3 Evaluating

Modelling, whether in terms of regression, SEM, MLM or calculation of the social rate of return, does not represent the same sort of activity as evaluation. Evaluation implies a systematic analysis of the effects of a particular programme or activity which should usually be built into the programme design. Modelling is not normally built into the programme design and does not usually involve an analysis of the effects of a particular programme. For example, modelling may examine the effects of educational level on social outcomes, whereas evaluation may involve the effect of a specific social programme on targeted social outcomes.

Comparatively, summative evaluation seems to be a poor model for research of this type. National education systems are of a different order to educational qualifications and certainly do not represent targeted programmes. This is not to say that specific programmes or policies cannot be evaluated in a summative sense. However, the evolution of education systems over time and their contested nature make us skeptical about claims that they are designed in order to meet discrete social objectives (although there may be general aims underlying education systems). Moreover, the embeddedness of education systems within national cultures and institutional structures means that it is difficult to separate out the effects of education from other effects. It may even be counter-intuitive to do so given that the functions of education are so tightly embedded within other national systems such as the welfare state.

However, the identification of differences and similarities between countries and their systems is a staple of comparative research. For example Ragin (1981) explains how by systematically stating similarities and differences between countries one may arrive at a series of logical statements regarding country properties. This enables us to test hypotheses, or at least answer research questions, comparatively. The most powerful, macro-causal forms of comparison (Skocpol & Somers, 1980) involve the logical analysis of multiple instances of a particular phenomenon. This involves identifying what is unique about countries with a given social outcome. This is tested by comparison with other countries with similar features but without the given social outcome. The procedure is, as with quantitative methods, open to the charge that there are possible causes which remained unobserved, but the logical comparative method has the distinct advantage that it treats each case as a totality, seeking to explain causal processes in the real context. This procedure is not totally contrary to evaluation. Moreover, the criteria of summative (final) evaluation is probably too strict a criteria for comparative work. Evaluation can be formative and examine development, rather than targets.

2.3 Conclusion

Hence it is probably best to consider research questions involving the macro-social benefits of education as a hybrid somewhere between modelling and evaluation. Comparative research of this type cannot be evaluative in its summative sense as the targets to be met (the macro-social benefits) cannot be modeled in such a way as to remove confounding influences. Countries are historically produced, open systems, and it is not possible to subject education systems of democratic nation states to control or experiment. It is possible, though, to gain understanding of developmental processes and to identify similarities and differences between countries. In this way, a hybrid representing modelling and formative judgments may represent the closest which comparative research of this type can get to evaluation.

In this literature review we examine studies from various disciplinary traditions including economics, psychology, sociology and history. We also take a broad view of the methodologies which are appropriate for comparative analysis of this type. As a

hybrid between modelling and formative judgements is believed to be the best strategy, we examine not only those studies which attempt to model relations between education and outcomes, but also those which employ critical theory or a more discursive approach to these questions.

3. Social Cohesion: Values, Trust and Tolerance

3.1 Defining social cohesion

Social cohesion is a concept with a long and complex history. All societies have been concerned with problems of social order and their philosophers have written extensively about them from Aristotle in Antiquity down to Hobbes in the 17th century. During the nineteenth century an explicitly sociological approach to the problem was developed which examined the forces, institutions and values which hold – or fail to hold – society together. In fact it might be said that social order and social cohesion represented the defining problematic of the new discipline of sociology developed by Comte, Saint-Simon, Durkheim, Spencer, Weber and Tönnies in nineteenth century Europe. The founding fathers of the new ‘science of society’ (or ‘secular religion’ as detractors were likely to call it) concerned themselves with social cohesion because they were aware that they lived in an era of rapid transition when traditional bonds and ties were being rapidly eroded and where the centrifugal forces of industrialisation and democracy could rip apart all previous social connections. As Marx, contemplating the whirlwind of capitalism, famously wrote: “All that’s solid melts into air.” We are currently living in a similarly transformative age and ask similar questions.

The answers provided by the nineteenth century social thinkers to the problem of social cohesion were varied, as they are today. All noted that industrialisation and the division of labour were transforming social and spacial relations from societies based on proximate face to face community (what Durkheim terms ‘mechanical solidarity’) to some new form of order with more diverse and distributed social connections. To Durkheim this meant the erosion of the collective conscience and close binding values of traditional society and their replacement by new forms of ‘organic solidarity’ based on the functional mutual interdependencies created by the division of labour. To Tönnies it meant the shift from society based on community (Gemeinschaft) to society based on contract (Gesellschaft). Such changes were seen to be inevitable, but they did not guarantee that social cohesion and order would prevail. For Spencer unfettered market relations were enough to hold society together, but for the continental thinkers no such benevolent ‘hidden hand’ existed. For Comte and Tönnies it was ultimately only the state that could hold society together. For Durkheim, who criticised Comte’s insistence on moral consensus and both Comte’s and Tönnies reliance on the state, there had to be other forces, beyond market and state, which maintained cohesion, although he recognised that the state had an important role to play in promoting core values of morality and meritocracy. In times

of rapid transition, and particularly when technological change outran society's moral capacities for adaptation, pathological social disorders arose which required new remedies. Primary amongst Durkheim's candidates for this were the new intermediary associations of civil society that stood between the state and the market – most notably professional associations (Lukes, 1973). Education also had a key role, and Durkheim became a key advocate of the Third Republic's characteristic educational policy of promoting social solidarity through schooling. "*Society*" he wrote, "*can only exist if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity. Education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands*" (Durkheim, 1977).

Durkheim wrote as a liberal socialist republican in late 19th century France (Lukes, 1973), but his theories left a complex legacy informing both Left and Right notions of social order and social cohesion. In the American liberal tradition, a particular strand of Durkheim's thought was appropriated by the school of structural functionalist sociology developed by Parsons and Merton (Parson, 1951). This stressed the idea of the market division of labour and functional interdependence in complex modern societies as a source of self replicating order but failed to address processes of change. Continental social democratic traditions, on the other hand, have placed more stress on the role of state and organised intermediary associations as the basis of cohesion in modern societies. Indeed, it is hard to separate the idea of the modern welfare state and social partnership from continental conceptions of social cohesion.

Both traditions of functionalist theory have stressed in their different ways the importance of education to social cohesion. In Parsonian theory, schools have the vital role of ensuring efficient allocation of skills in the labour market as well as being a major socialisation agency for children into the key normative values of society, not least by promoting loyalty to a meritocratic belief system which is taken to be the main ideological cement of society. Social democracy on the other hand, particularly the Nordic variety, has placed more stress on the role of education in fostering social solidarity through common experience and learning (Boucher, 1982).

3.2 Social cohesion as policy objective

Social cohesion, in terms of both values and macro-social outcomes continues to be a national objective of both general education and ET. According to Henyeman and Todoric-Bebic (2000) the social cohesion function of education is at the heart of each countries' education system: "*at the end of the twentieth century, public schools are asked to perform more or less the same task as they were at the beginning of the seventeenth century – or trying, anyway*". They state that the meaning of social cohesion as an objective of national education systems is not uniform. In some countries, such as the newly independent ex-Soviet states, reducing public corruption and fostering civil society may be seen as primary social cohesion objectives. In others, such as Europe and the United States, ethnic and supra-national identity may be concerns (Hepburn, 1992).

In the traditional sociological accounts of social cohesion, and in more current work, it is fair to say that education has been given a major role. However, it should be stressed that most theories accord equal importance to issues like full employment, welfare, crime, industrial relations, community relations, national identity and citizenship. There are relevant literatures for instance on: the welfare state (Mortensen, 2000); governance (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000); equity (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000; Heynman, 2001); opportunity structures (Mann, 1999); value formation (Parsons, 1951); gender relations (Simm, 1999); crime and corruption (Ritzen, Easterly & Woolcock, 2000) and industrial conflict (Mouzelis, 1999).

Classical sociological accounts clearly construe social cohesion as a macro-societal issue. However, current policy debates rarely refer to classical conceptions and theories and freely conflate societal aspects of cohesion with micro and meso conceptions of social capital and community. The Canadian Policy Research Institute (1997), for instance, define social cohesion as *“the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity amongst all Canadians”*, whereas Ritzen, Easterly and Woolcock (2000) write of *“a state of affairs in which a group of people (delineated by a geographical reason, like a country) demonstrate an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change”*.

The use of terms such as trust, reciprocity and collaboration provide a parallel with writings on social capital. For some theorists, social cohesion is little more than a special case of social capital, whereby ‘linking’ rather than ‘bridging’ social capital ties groups into the nation state. Implicit in the definition is the importance of a sense of consensus, shared values and shared challenges in the formation of social cohesion. Indeed, in recent writings on global civil society (Anheier, 2001), the social capital metaphor has been applied to a (trans) national dimension (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2000).

The applicability of social capital theory or a general sense of community to this level of aggregation may be questioned as themes of structural inequalities or how shared values such as trust and reciprocity come to be arrived at in society are not tackled. For example, even in a neo-liberal perspective on social cohesion Ritzen (2000) finds it necessary to incorporate a macro-political component. We consider questions of macro relationships, equity and hegemony are central to an analysis of the impact of education on social cohesion. Social cohesion requires more than neighbourhood or regional stability (community cohesion). Neither are communitarian ideals sufficient for national social cohesion.

Therefore education can only be seen to be part of the sub-system of various other agencies of government, including other parts of the welfare state, which are implicated in societal cohesion. As we have discussed in earlier work (Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003) there is a strong relationship between educational inequality, income inequality and indicators of societal cohesion. One of the ways, then, in which education impacts upon societal cohesion is therefore in reducing (or exacerbating)

these inequalities. It cannot, though, be seen as a sole causal factor. However, there is also a possible impact of education through socialisation (Durkheim, 1977) which we did not discuss in any depth. Potentially, there are many social values which could be associated with social cohesion. In this report, we examine just two variables which are thought to be key in various policy literatures – trust and tolerance.

3.3 Trust

Trust is a notion which is frequently associated with both social capital and social cohesion. Social capital theory treats trust as a key constituent of social capital, seeing it as the product of iterated face to face interactions between individuals engaged in common pursuits within associations and networks. In Putnam's account, at least, trust is the outcome of association (Putnam, 2000), rather than the cause, although little evidence is cited to justify this interpretation (Green & Preston, 2001). Putnam also assumes for the most part that trust within bounded associative groups spills out into a wider trust throughout society as a whole. However, this more diffuse form of societal trust may be better thought of as a qualitatively distinct characteristic. A 'thinner trust' which Newton (1999) refers to as 'abstract trust' may be a more appropriate analytical concept than general trust in investigating macro-social benefits such as social cohesion. Abstract trust is not necessarily based upon repeated face to face interactions, but often on the limited and sporadic contacts which take place continuously within modern industrial societies. It also reflects trust in imagined, or empathic communities, such as trust with other Europeans, and therefore connects with notions of identity.

The basis of this abstract trust, according to Newton, may lie in education. He writes:

“education which teaches the young to understand and operate the abstract principles of such things as trust, fairness, equality and universalism...Education also provides the disparate citizens of modern society with a common set of cultural references without which daily understanding would be impossible...Education, it is said, is what is left after people have forgotten what they have been taught. A willingness to trust and reciprocate may be among the things which stick when all else has been forgotten.” (Newton, 1999)

This socialisation and value formation function of education is somewhat contrary to the resource based function of education supposed by Putnam (2000), although it is central to both Durkheimian and Parsonian conceptions of the functions of education (Morrow & Torres, 1995). Rather than education enhancing personal resources, which in turn are the antecedents of organisational membership and eventually generalised trust, education in this conception acts directly on higher order trust in abstract systems rather than on people in general. We discuss the socialisation functions of education and training later in this section.

It may be additionally argued that in many countries, and in certain areas of industrialised countries, 'thick trust', as defined in terms of intensive, daily contacts with community or family members is of greater significance than thin trust. This concept of thick trust is proximate to what Durkheim's mechanical solidarity (as opposed to organic solidarity, which is analogous to thin trust). Although thick trust can probably not be used as an explanatory variable for macro-social outcomes in advanced, industrial, societies, pockets of thick trust will exist amongst isolated, tightly knit urban and regional communities and ethnic enclaves within countries.

In addition to the various kinds of interpersonal or general trust discussed above, there are also further measures of trust in institutions (institutional trust) and in democratic processes (democratic trust).

Trust is generally considered an important property for social capital, social cohesion and the health of civil society generally (Almond & Verba, 1963). Consequently it has been measured over a number of years across many countries, generally through the questions asking respondents if they generally trust other people and in specified institutions. There has been some debate about whether the first question is construed by respondents in terms of trusting in close friends and family or, alternatively in people more widely, but it seems likely that most people understand it in the second sense as intended since trust levels are so low in some countries (10% in Brazil on WVS figures) that it hardly seems likely that it could be the first. Aggregate responses do change over time within countries, but slowly and there is a remarkable consistency in the country levels in different surveys (Inglehart, 1990), so it would appear that the measure is reasonably robust. In WVS and other surveys there is also a striking difference in levels between countries – from 70% plus trusting in Nordic countries to single figure levels in the lowest countries. This suggests that the question is measuring a fairly central and durable feature of cultural life in different countries.

There is some debate about how closely these various concepts of trust relate to each other. Social capital theorists claim that generalised trust is the basis for other forms of trust, particularly abstract trust in systems, national and supra-national entities, but there is little comparative evidence that types of trust are correlated within or across countries (Prakesh & Selle, 2001; Norris, 2000). Even where correlations are found to exist for example between general and democratic trust (Green & Preston, 2002), it is not necessarily the case that organisational memberships are the cause of higher levels of trust in both cases as Putnam contends – there is an equally valid argument for claiming that the causation runs from trust to associational membership, rather than from membership to trust. Trust is seen as an important factor contributing to other desirable socio-economic outcomes such as economic growth and strength of democracy (Norris, 2000). However, despite the strength of these relationships in contemporary advanced societies (Norris, 2000), when looked over the longer historical term, more complex relationships emerge. It may be, for instance, that distrust and conflict between various interest groups may have been instrumental in the production of both European democracy and economic dynamism at various periods (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). There is clearly an historical and institutional

element to trust which cannot necessarily be identified within one country or through short term statistical analysis.

3.3.1 Trends in trust and education effects

Evidence on the trends in levels of trust in modern societies produces a mixed picture. Putnam provides substantial evidence that general trust is eroding for various different groups in the USA (Putnam, 2000). Hall's analysis of data for the UK between 1959 and 1990 shows likewise that levels of trust have declined for all groups defined by age, gender, class and education, although the decline within working class groups has been greater than amongst middle class groups (Hall, 1999). Other studies however, have found more mixed effects in different European countries (De Hart and Dekker, 1999).

We have little evidence on the relationships between education and training and trust at the macro level, and it may well be that this depends very much on what type of trust is being considered. Education and training may be particularly effective, for instance, in promoting thin trust in terms of abstract notions of general trust, fairness and universalism, but to substantiate this would clearly require more research. As we show later in this report there is no significant correlation cross-nationally between levels of education and levels of trust, although there is a strong correlation between distributional of educational outcomes and trust. Given that levels of trust vary hugely between countries, and rather more than levels of education, we may assume that other factors are involved in generating trust as well as education.

3.4 Tolerance

Another commonly assumed component of social cohesion is tolerance. Like trust this is also a highly contested concept. Tolerance may be understood, for instance, as acceptance of intra-group lifestyle differences (permissiveness) or it may be understood as openness towards other cultures (as in ethnic tolerance). These propensities may not necessarily coincide. Equally there may be libertarian conceptions of tolerance as acceptance of all values, no matter how abhorrent, which are quite different from liberal notions which accept value differences but only where they do not transgress certain core values. Libertarian attitudes may involve a general permissiveness towards deviant majority group behaviour but not necessarily include attitudes conducive to ethnic or racial tolerance. Research evidence suggests that at the individual level in certain social contexts education is associated both with more permissive attitudes and greater acceptance of other cultures (Putnam, 2000; Inglehart, 1990). However, effects at the societal/national level may be much more complicated.

3.4.1 Trends in tolerance

Halman (1994) reports on the results of Eurobarometer surveys across EU member states which seek to gauge attitudes towards 'foreigners'. In the 1988 survey, 37% of those surveyed thought that there were too many people of a foreign nationality living in their country whilst 33% thought there were too many of another race, and 29% too many of another religion. There were substantial differences in responses across countries, but with responses relating to foreign nationals and other races co-varying. Most likely to believe there were too many foreign nationals in their country were respondents from (in descending order) Belgium, the UK, France, West Germany and Denmark. Least likely (in ascending order) were those from Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands. Most likely to believe that there were too many from other races were respondents from (in descending order) West Germany, UK, France and Belgium and least likely from (in ascending order) Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands. The Danish respondents were most likely to be concerned about the numbers from other religions and cultures, but least likely to be concerned about the numbers from different social classes. In the 1988 data there is a close correspondence between the proportion in each country believing that there are too many foreigners and the proportion saying that their lives were disturbed by their presence, although it was the other races which were perceived as most disturbing rather than the foreign nationals.

The 1993 survey shows considerable changes in levels of intolerance in a number of countries, with declines in West Germany but an overall increase in most countries. Most marked were the increases in Denmark where the proportions finding the presence of foreigners disturbing rose in respect of other nationals (from 10 to 21%), other races (from 13 to 20%) and other religions (from 15 to 19%). By 1993 the Danish respondents were far more likely than those in other countries to be disturbed by those of another religion (39% as against 19% in the next highest country – Belgium) and most likely overall to be bothered by people of different nationalities, races or religions. However, The European Values Survey (EVS), which asks respondents whether they dislike having different category people as neighbours, shows Danes to be the most tolerant as regards such groups as drinkers, drug addicts and political extremists, suggesting that it is quite possible to combine intra-group permissiveness with closure towards foreign cultures. The EVS data for 1981 and 1990 show increases in levels of tolerance in the UK, West Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland, and decreases in Belgium, Denmark France and Italy.

Although these data suggest interesting regional variations in attitudes, with southern Europe coming off apparently better in relation to tolerance than northern Europe, they may not tell us much about how far different national groups are inherently or culturally prone to intolerance. Levels of discomfort with foreigners appear to be quite situational as they correspond closely to actual levels of immigration and to perceptions of difficulties arising out of the presence of immigrants. They also change rapidly from one period to another (presumably in response to actual circumstantial events – such as unification in Germany, which initially at least seems to have had a

positive effect – or to political climate shifts). They may therefore tell us very little for instance about whether one national population will respond more intolerantly than another to the presence of a given proportion of immigrants and under otherwise similar circumstances. It should also be noted that although the proportions feeling discomforted by immigrants have risen across EU countries, the vast majority still say that they are not disturbed by the presence. In as much as intolerance appears to have risen, and during a period of rising levels of education, we may conclude from this analysis that it is wise to be cautious about assuming any direct effect of average education levels on aggregate levels of tolerance. If there are such effects they may be overwhelmed by other more powerful contextual effects.

3.4.2 Education and tolerance: possible mechanisms

In a wide ranging review comprising research from several European countries, Hagendoorn and Nekuee (1999) collect evidence concerning ET and racial tolerance based largely on micro-data in individual countries. According to Hagendoorn (1999) there are two main causal mechanisms by which education may lead to increased racial tolerance.

Firstly, education leads to increased cognitive skills involving enhanced abilities to categorise, understand causal relationships and perceive states of the world. Hence individuals will be increasingly able to understand that potentially racist statements, for example blaming immigrants for unemployment, are based on faulty reasoning. The second mechanism is through the formation of racially tolerant values as part of socialisation through schooling. There is much research evidence that years and levels of schooling have a large impact upon the stating of racist views and although there is little evidence to suggest that particular interventions or types of curriculum lead to a reduction in racism (Hagendoorn, 1999) there is some evidence that courses which stress individuals critical capacities seem to have a greater effect than other courses (Hagendoorn, 1999).

Given the quantity of research evidence, Hagendoorn (1999) admits that there are a number of paradoxes in the education and racism literature. For example, despite rising education levels in the US and many education interventions aimed at increasing racial tolerance there is some evidence that US youth are as racist as they were after the Second World War. Hagendoorn explains that rising levels of education may simply moderate the expression of racism. Although educated individuals may not wish to state racist views in public (or in a survey) they may be racist in their private lives and in informally supporting discriminatory practices. Pettigrew and Meerens (1995) refer to this as a difference between blatant and subtle forms of racism amongst those of different social classes and educational levels. From a longitudinal survey of evidence from the Netherlands, Verbeck and Scheepers (1999) show that those with intermediate education are not likely to be blatantly racist but are more likely to be subtly racist than those with lower levels of education.

The effects of education are also dependent on other factors, not least socio-economic context. For example, those with low relative levels of education may face actual (or at least perceived) competition for unskilled jobs (Cox, 1970; Roediger, 1991; Hagendorn, 1999) or in housing and community politics (Rex & Tomlinson, 1979). In an analysis of pooled European data (European Values Survey), Jasinska-Kania (1999) shows that the impact of education on racial tolerance is greater in those countries with greater levels of immigration, whereas in countries with small proportions of immigrants in the population the impact of education on racism is much smaller. One may speculate that this is because where there is more circumstantially driven racism there is more room for educational attenuation of this, whilst hard core (under any circumstances) type racism is impervious to educational mitigation.

Given the impact of actual or perceived competition for economic resources on racism, we suggest that aside from values and cognitive resources there is a third possible pathway through which ET may effect racism – what Verbeek and Scheepers (1999) refer to as realistic conflict theory. As they argue: “*A central assumption of realistic conflict theory is that socio-economic competition for scarce resources between groups such as ethnic groups leads to the formation of negative attitudes of the other groups. The competition may be concrete such as housing or labour, or abstract such as culture, power and status*” (Verbeek & Scheepers, 1999). Cognitive resources may be implicated in this mechanism in that the source of resource conflict (unequal distribution of resources by the state or businesses) may be wrongly attributed to migrants rather than state or business interests themselves.

Although little attention has been paid to realistic conflict theory in the mainstream research literature, it has been a current of Marxist and neo-Marxist thought for some decades, at least in fact since the black American Marxist Oliver Cromwell Cox developed these ideas in the 1940s (Cox, 1970). In terms of ET, realistic conflict theory provides us with a theoretical framework for examining racism in terms of structural inequalities (in which education is implicated) rather than in terms of individual moral and cognitive deficits. However, the theory clearly has limitations. Historically, racism has often developed amongst the most affluent and powerful groups. These groups had limited reason to feel competition over scarce resources with immigrant or ethnic minority groups. However they may, of course, have been in exploitative relations in their positions as slave owners, colonial administrators or employers, in which it may have been expedient to form racist ideologies. Moreover, it is important to note that working class groups in potential material conflict with immigrants and minorities will not always develop hostile views. Within education in contemporary England, for instance, working class students frequently resist, rather than accept, racist doctrines (Gillborn, 1995). This leads us to be critical of left realist perspectives which cite racism within the working class aside from a more dialectical view of class and race relations.

3.4.3 Empirical evidence from comparative research

Given the three possible mechanisms by which ET may influence racial tolerance – value formation, cognitive and realistic conflict – we now turn to examine the empirical literatures on education and tolerance.

In terms of the influence of ET on values conducive to racial tolerance there are a number of cross-national differences. In some countries (such as Italy) the influence of education on tolerant values has been found to be small and indirect (Peri, 1999) whereas in others (France, Germany) large effects have been identified (Haegel, 1999; Winkler, 1999). Moreover, the relationship between racial intolerance and other personality characteristics (namely authoritarianism) differs from country to country.

Peri (1999) finds that in Italy the direct impact of education is small. Rather, the influence of education on tolerance is indirect, operating through channels of conformism, traditional values and professional employment. However, Peri's study is both correlational and cross-sectional so strict claims of causality cannot be made. We do not know, for example, if it was education or the family which was implicated in developing conformism and traditional values. In a French study, Haegel (1999) examines the influence of education on both authoritarian values and racial tolerance. She finds a positive association of education on tolerance, although the effects are weaker for those with vocational qualifications. Interestingly, there are different levels of ideological consistency depending on the individual's level of education. For those individuals with low levels of education, there is little relationship between authoritarianism and racial tolerance although those in this position are likely to feel insecure about the future. Although individuals with higher levels of academic education are more likely to be tolerant, those who are racially intolerant are highly likely to hold authoritarian attitudes.

As Haegel (1999) shows, individuals with different levels of education may exhibit different clusters of values. She relates this to the French education system and sees the 'coercive flip-side' of the French model of assimilation as being the rejection of certain other ethnic differences (Haegel, 1999). Similarly, for Germany, Winkler (1999) shows that there are alternative pathways for racism between individuals with different levels of education, although he arrives at different conclusions from Haegel concerning the relevance of authoritarianism. Through structural equation modelling, Winkler (1999) demonstrates that there are different pathways explaining racism for highly and less highly educated people. He suggests that socio-cultural insecurity, comprising right wing views, national pride and authoritarianism, is a powerful predictor of racism for those with lower levels of education, whereas for those with higher levels of education authoritarianism is not significantly related to racism. Winkler's (1999) study additionally provides some support for realistic conflict theory as socio-cultural insecurity is a particular predictor of racism of those with lower levels of education.

There is a difference in the role which authoritarianism plays in the formation of racism amongst those with low levels of education in the two countries. In France, Haegel (1999) shows that authoritarianism does not correlate with racist values, whereas in Germany Winkler (1999) shows that it is a strong correlate. The relevance of this factor may be due to the historical development of racism in the two countries.

In terms of the cognitive mechanism by which education influences racism, De Witte (1999) distinguishes between various forms of racism. He refers to these as general racism (negative attitudes towards migrants), biological racism (a belief in the hereditary superiority of one's own race) and cultural and economic racism (a belief that the cultural habits of migrants differ and that they expose nationals to resource competition). It is this last form that De Witte refers to as 'everyday racism' as it is the least ideologically developed and most prevalent form. Although everyday racism has shown little change in Belgium over time, it is at a higher level than in other European countries. De Witte (1999) contends that cognitive capacity is a strong mechanism in the reduction of everyday racism. He argues that research in Belgium (Gavaert, 1993) and the Netherlands (Raajmakers, 1993) has shown that those following vocational courses are more likely to exhibit everyday racism and that this may be due to the greater attention paid to cognitive skills in Belgian academic education, although it might also be argued that this is a class effect, since those following vocational courses are likely to come from less affluent social groups and thus more likely to perceive competition over scarce resources. However, De Witte (1999) does not necessarily reject the socialisation function of education and believes that there is a difference in the emphasis placed on values in the academic track (De Witte, 1999).

In the debate concerning the influence of education on tolerance, there may be little to choose between whether education influences values or cognitive skills. Values are obviously important, as are national characteristics and the nature of the education system in each country. So too is the role of the curriculum in building individual resources. It may be helpful, then, to see values and cognitive resources as jointly part of a process of formation of racial tolerance. Sniderman and Gould (1999) see the process of racial tolerance as the interaction of values acquired through socialisation, values invoked at the moment of choice, and cognitive sophistication. Education has an influence not only on long term value formation but also on the exercise of values at the moment of choosing whether to express a racist opinion or action. In addition, reasoning is involved in both the long term formation and short term exercising of values.

To processes of cognitive and value change, we would add that the formation of values takes place within a historical and cultural context. As Halman (1994) shows, rising education levels have not led to an increase in racial tolerance. Education does not remove the individual from society – individual values are embedded in a social context. For example, the role of authoritarianism in the formation of racist values may differ from one culture to another. We must also remember that under certain historical conditions there may be a perverse relationship between education and

tolerance, at least in terms of support for intolerant regimes. As Abramson and Inglehart remind us:

“the assertion that education has some inherent tendency to instill democratic values does not stand up in historical perspective. In Germany during the Weimar era, for example, the National Socialists won student elections in eight universities, at a time when the Nazis won only 18% of the vote in national elections... Today, higher education does tend to support democratic values, but this relationship reflects specific historical conditions and is not an automatic consequence of education.”
(Abramson and Inglehart, 1994)

3.5 Social Cohesion and VET: a thematic illustration

In this discussion we have shown that social cohesion is historically derived and culturally specific, involving equity, values and macro-social actors such as the welfare state. The specific role of education in bringing about social cohesion in a society depends not only on the level of educational qualifications, but potentially on the distribution of skills and opportunities as well as the transmission of values. We have shown how education might (or might not) contribute to various varieties of trust and tolerance. Moreover, the role of education systems is both historically and culturally situated (Abramson & Inglehart, 1994). Given the multiple and embedded functions of education there is a limit to which we can make generalisations concerning its role across countries. However, as a thematic illustration of the ways in which education might contribute towards social cohesion, we will examine the role of VET in social integration across the EU.

As Aldrich (1999) explains, the nature of apprenticeship has historically involved the social and legal integration of youth into society. However, this occurs in quite nationally specific ways. For example, in the UK, the apprenticeship is now largely considered to be part of vocational training whereas in France and Germany the route to a Beruf or profession involves a more structured process of social and legal transition, at least in theory. Young (2000) refers to these distinctions in terms of differences in assessment regimes. In the UK, an outcomes based system of assessment does not involve the same type of integration into adult life as the institutional approach favoured by Germany.

3.5.1 The Dual System

The German dual system of apprenticeship is often held up as an ideal type model of the relationship between training and economic and social integration. As Green and Sakamoto (2001) explain, the embedding of the dual system within a neo-corporatist system involving workplace codetermination, sectoral agreements and other aspects of social partner regulation of work and training, has delivered not only high skills but an upgrading of skills and jobs throughout the economy. In terms of citizenship in the

wider social sense, the system also enables wider community acceptance of youth, aiding their transition into adult life (Evans, 1998).

This emphasis in the dual system on integration into both economic and social spheres is philosophically underpinned by the work of the late 19th century Bavarian writer Georg Kerschensteiner who was concerned with orientating education systems around both civic responsibility and work. In Kerschensteiner's theory, 'work schools' are required to develop both manual and intellectual skills. Students would learn within 'work groups' which would develop the basic rules for civic co-operation and communal life (Röhrs, 1993). Although Kerschensteiner placed an emphasis on the duties (rather than rights) of citizens, the practice of those duties within the work school would be through independent, responsible work.

The contemporary German dual system still manifests this concern with civic responsibility in its broad curriculum concerns encompassing preparation for both work and citizenship and in the way in which it seeks to provide a structured transition for young people into the highly regulated German labour market (Brown, Green & Lauder, 2001). The school (Berufsschule) component of the apprentice has a particularly broad mission including general education and occupational theory. According to the general 1991 framework agreement for vocational schools set out by the Land Minister and the BIBB Berufsschulen have amongst their objectives: "*to provide the ability and willingness to act responsibly in terms of the individual shaping of one's own life and in the public sphere*" (quoted in Brown, Green & Lauder, 2001).

This accent on the public sphere is indicative of a concern with active citizenship. However, despite these foundations, the dual system may also have certain characteristics which can also have negative consequences for social cohesion.

In a comparative study, Evans and Heinz (1994) consider youth transitions through a comparative study of vocational preparation in England and Germany. They use the term 'active-individualisation' to describe an ideal type transition which would involve a process of active career planning. This is opposed to 'passive-individualisation' which would involve weak specification of goals. On these grounds one would expect the German system of vocational preparation to be superior in its social integration function as routes are clearly specified, with clear links between employment and citizenship. Indeed, in the UK youth entered the labour market two years before their German counterparts and progression routes were poorly defined. This led to some individuals in the UK reporting a lack of integration and a sense of powerlessness in attempting to gain employment or citizenship. However, although in Germany progression routes were much clearer, for those individuals who experienced difficulties or dropped out, the lack of flexibility meant that it was difficult for these individuals to re-integrate into society. The Evans and Heinz study (1994) indicates the difficulty of equating an historically well functioning system of vocational preparation with one which delivers social integration.

Moreover, even in those systems of vocational preparation which appear to deliver a smooth transition into adult roles and citizenship, we need to be aware of the latent functions of those systems in delivering income and social equality. For example, the German apprenticeship system may perpetuate labour market inequalities, with girls and immigrant children typically finding places – and hence later jobs – in only the lower status routes (Bynner, 1994; Brown, Green & Lauder, 2001). The role of education (particularly vocational preparation) in maintaining inequalities in terms of economic and cultural reproduction is rarely referred to in policy discourses on social cohesion, although it is central to current educational theory (Morrow & Torres, 1995).

3.5.2 VET and citizenship

In a review of the European literature on the role of social class in the reproduction of educational inequalities, Hatcher (1998) cites evidence that in only two EU countries (Sweden and the Netherlands) did social class inequalities in education decline between the First and Second World Wars with only limited improvement for some countries since the Second World War. Moreover, even in a country often cited as an exemplar of egalitarian educational and welfare policy – Sweden – there has been very little movement in the pattern of class inequality. The pattern of educational inequality remained reasonably constant in Sweden from 1970 to 1990. However, although inequality of social opportunity in Sweden is roughly the same as that of other EU countries, welfare provision means that there is lower inequality in terms of standards of living (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a & 1996b, cited in Hatcher, 1998). This evidence points to the intractability of class inequalities and the difficulties of educational or VET reform more generally to address these inequalities. This represents the counterpoint to educational reform which seeks to address social cohesion as an issue purely of increasing educational access.

However, even if we should not expect VET to address class inequalities, there are opportunities for such education to lead to active or critical citizenship. As shown by the ETGACE project (Education and Training for Governance and Active Citizenship in Europe) work related education and training may open up critical spaces for discussion and dissemination of ideas. Through a number of case studies, the project shows the close links between lifelong learning and various inter-locking areas of civic life. This includes VET and the workplace. For example, in Belgium a case is provided of a workers co-operative (De Wrikker) where the relationship between VET and citizenship occurs in terms of making choices concerning alternative conceptions and practice of work (ETGACE, 2002). This particular notion of active citizenship as solidaristic and socially transformative differs substantially from that offered by many contemporary theorists, as we shall see in the next section.

4. Active Citizenship, Civic and Political Participation

From a discussion of social cohesion and the formation of values conducive to cohesion we now move to consider behavioural antecedents of participation at a societal level. Again, as in the discussion of social cohesion, there is not necessarily a clear causal relationship between education and participation, at least when examined at the societal level. Moreover, nor does education necessarily bring about a culture of involvement in political life. Even on the most negligible level of political participation – voting – falling participation in national elections has coincided with rising aggregate levels of education.

Indeed, an active citizenry is most commonly considered to be a micro rather than macro-social benefit of education in the empirical literature. Although there are a plethora of studies which indicate that education is associated with various civic and political behaviours (Emler and Fraser, 1999, provide a useful summary of this literature) it is not clear how ET is expected to impact on these behaviours in the aggregate. Most studies assume that education has a role in increasing individual resources independently of those of others and that this resource leads to an increase in various forms of participation.

However, some studies at least are concerned with the positional aspects of education (Nie et al, 1996). They examine the positional nature of political participation in the US. Through OLS regressions over time they find that it is the relative, rather than absolute, level of education that is important in determining access to network central positions and political influence. As the general level of education increases, the value of each qualification level in gaining network centrality and political influence declines. They use preliminary evidence from the European Values Survey to indicate that the results of their study may be generalised beyond countries other than the US. Although this study at least takes into account context in terms of educational level; there are few other studies which examine education for citizenship comparatively. In particular, emphasis on micro-social or institutional case studies has meant that there are relatively few studies concerned with the influence of national education systems or contexts on citizenship outcomes. Those studies which do exist are mainly historical, concerning the development of education and the nation state (Green, 1990).

4.1 The IEA civic education study

One contemporary study that does take into account the impact of national systems of education on citizenship is the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) civic education study of 28 countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001). This cross-national study of 90,000 14 year olds attempted to ascertain processes and outcomes of citizenship formation through qualitative and quantitative data from students, teachers and schools.

Across all countries surveyed, students did demonstrate a basic knowledge of democratic processes, although their understanding was often at a superficial level. A positive relationship between civic knowledge at 14 and future preference for voting was identified. Many students also rejected conventional political routes in favour of non-violent political action and collecting money for charities or environmental causes. Schools with democratic processes and an open climate were found to be particularly effective in inculcating civic knowledge and activity in all countries.

The distribution of civic knowledge within countries was not as unequal as the distribution of other educational outcomes such as mathematics or literacy. Although this could be due to the nature of civic knowledge (that there is naturally less variation than in other types of knowledge) it could also signify that civic knowledge is not necessarily a process in which schooling plays a major part. However, despite the narrow distribution of civic knowledge between countries significant differences were found between both knowledge and activity. Although in general transition countries and older democracies scored more highly on civic knowledge, there are some interesting contradictions within the results.

In terms of civic knowledge, Finland, Norway, Greece, Italy, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Czech republics were significantly above the international mean. Many, although not all, of these countries have in common a high level of reading literacy (Torney-Purta et al, 2001), and this may indicate a relationship between civic knowledge and general cognitive skill. Belgium and Portugal were significantly below the international civic knowledge mean. However, there is not necessarily a relationship between civic knowledge and civic engagement, at least at the national level. For example, Portugal was significantly above the mean in terms of belief that conventional forms of civic engagement are important (despite being below the country mean for civic knowledge) whereas the Czech Republic was below the country mean in terms of belief that non-conventional forms of civic engagement are important (despite being above the country mean for civic knowledge). This may reflect the respective histories of the two countries. For example, in the Czech Republic transition to a market economy and democracy may mean that there is less need to support unconventional forms of political engagement in order to effect change. Interestingly, many of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden, but not Norway) also scored below the mean in terms of support for all forms of political participation, which may indicate preferences for more consensual or institutionalised forms of political action or a perception that there are not so many injustices to contest.

The data also show that there is not necessarily a relationship between country levels of literacy, civic knowledge and support for rights for women and ethnic minorities. The Slovak Republic, for example, scored significantly above the international mean in terms of civic knowledge, but in terms of support for rights for women and ethnic minorities was significantly below the international mean alongside other transition economies (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania). This result is not

necessarily surprising given the conservative forms of nationalism which currently predominate in these countries (Brubaker, 1996).

There are various messages from the IEA civic participation study, but one which resonates with this report is the importance of national context in examining and critiquing micro-social relationships. The individual level relationship between civic knowledge and civic activity, for example, is well established in various studies (Emler & Fraser, 1999). This relationship does not necessarily hold at a national level, however. For example, those countries with high levels of civic and reading literacy do not necessarily have high levels of support for political activity. This seems to imply that a resource, or cognitively based model of political participation, is inadequate in explaining variations in the level of political activity (rather than the relationship between learning and political activity) internationally. It seems that regional patterns of civic knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are important.

4.2 The importance of national context

When examining the effect of education on civic participation in other studies the importance of comparative research becomes clear. In particular, national differences in the causes of civic participation, in forms of civic participation and in the relationships between civic participation and other values, such as trust, become clear. There are different causes and consequences of civic participation – education being only one possible route. The Putnamesque² model of social capital may be seen to be particularly narrow when applied to countries outside of the USA (Prakash & Selle, 2001).

That education has an impact on a *unitary* factor (social capital) is problematic when examined in comparative context. When examining the comparative evidence, it becomes clear that there are very different combinations of civic participation, trust and solidarity and potentially different mechanisms by which education may have an effect on each of them. Indeed, the sub-elements of what has come to be called social capital, both structural (social networks and civic participations) and cultural (localised and generalised trust), are not necessarily correlated at the national level (Prakash & Selle, 2001). Norris (2000) provides evidence for the lack of correlation between associational memberships and general trust across 47 countries using evidence from the World Values Survey. She finds that there is no necessary correlation between general trust³ and levels of associational membership in the

² For Putnam (2000) civic associations are the root of social capital formation. Individuals participate in associational life which leads to the development of localised trust (in other associational members) and then to more generalised trust (in people as a whole). Hence general trust (and more universal social benefits such as democratisation) develop as a result of civic life. Although this somewhat simplifies Putnam's (2000) argument the emphasis on civic association as the key to general trust and a stream of social benefits is, we believe, the core of 'Putnamesque' social capital.

³ As measured by the percentage of individuals answering positively to the question "Generally speaking would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"

countries surveyed.⁴ Moreover, there is a strong tendency for the distribution of trust and associational memberships in countries to follow patterns which might reflect underlying cultural values of the countries concerned, rather than a random distribution of social capital. In terms of the distribution of associational memberships and trust Norris categorises countries as belonging to one of four typologies (see Table 1).

Table 1: Structural and cultural dimensions of social capital

Social capital – mid 1990s		Structural dimension (Associational Activism)	
		Weak	Strong
Cultural dimension (Social Trust)	Strong	MIXED (e.g. East Asian countries including Japan, Taiwan, China)	RICH SOCIAL CAPITAL (e.g. Nordic countries including Norway, Sweden, Finland also West Germany)
	Weak	POOR SOCIAL CAPITAL (e.g. Ascendent EU countries including the Czech republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria also Spain and Turkey)	MIXED (e.g. Latin American countries including Brazil, Chile and Mexico, also perhaps UK and US)

NOTE: adapted from Norris (2000)

As can be seen in Table 1, countries do not necessarily have either ‘rich’ or ‘poor’ social capital. Many groups of countries fall into the ‘mixed’ category with no positive correlation between trust and associational membership. Moreover, we may have reason to suspect that the distribution of countries is non-random – countries within each quadrant follow clear geographical groupings. A Putnamesque explanation for this distribution would involve theorising distributions of social capital in terms of similarities in social and generational trends in each country. For example, by explaining low levels of trust in Latin America on the basis of increased television viewing. However, this would not explain the co-existence of low levels of social trust in Latin American countries with relatively high levels of associational membership – as revealed by Table 1. The two should comprise part of a coherent syndrome (Putnam, 1993; 2000) and there is no reason to expect disequilibria between the two to persist, particularly across a range of Latin American countries. In the

⁴ As measured by the percentage of individuals in each country who were a member of at least one voluntary association including church and religious organisations, sports or other recreational associations, labour unions, professional associations, charitable organizations and any other voluntary associations.

absence of the ability of social capital to explain this phenomenon, we may pursue alternative explanations such as income inequalities, national culture or differential impacts of supra-national phenomena, such as globalisation. We may also speculate on the historical (rather than immediate) role of national education systems in fostering these types of relationship – a point to which we will return in our conclusion.

In Chile, for example, superior explanation of thriving civil society with low trust could be based upon the recent history of a corrupt and dictatorial regime. As in former Eastern Bloc countries in Europe (such as the former GDR) associational membership in terms of political groups may have been an uncomfortable necessity for many citizens in securing a basic standard of living. The role of education in such countries may well have been to increase civic participation through membership of various youth and party organisations. However, the aggregate effects of such memberships on these societies as a whole may not necessarily have been positive.

In common with other authors (Knack & Keefer, 1997; La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer & Vishny 1997), Norris (2000) also finds little correlation between the associational membership component of social capital and macro-social outcomes. Rather, it appears that any apparent relationships are driven by general trust. For example, although there are strong and significant correlations between social trust and various macro-social benefits such as educational enrolments, life expectancy, the human development index, per capita GDP, economic growth, democratisation, political involvement, ownership of televisions, newspaper readership and use of the internet, only per capita GDP and internet usage are correlated with membership of voluntary associations (although interestingly, tolerance is also significantly correlated with organisational membership rather than trust).

4.2.1 Associational memberships across cultures

Aside from the difficulty in identifying coherent patterns of relationship between associational membership, trust and macro-social outcomes as would be expected by Putnam, there are also issues concerning the meaning of these terms in comparative context, or even when they are investigated within a national context, such as the US.

A point explored in part by Putnam (2000) is that different types of membership and association may result in different macro-social outcomes. Like any form of capital, social capital can be used for malign purposes – whether to exclude others, practice intolerance or for criminal or terrorist purposes – what Putnam refers to as its ‘dark side’ (Putnam, 2000, although we would wish to consider the loaded nature of this term – see Preston, 2002). However, Putnam also states that social capital without social mixing is better than no social capital at all as a second-best solution. Hence, separate schools, churches and associations are seen as beneficial in building a fraternal society (Putnam, 2000), although these institutional divides have been widely accepted as contributing to lack of community cohesion (Home Office, 2001) and even institutional racism (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000) in the UK. Such a binary

division between useful (i.e. most) social capital and its dark side is not necessarily helpful in understanding the relationship between associational membership and social outcomes (Preston, 2003). Possible conflicts between social capital and what we might refer to as social cohesion are clear.

Prakash and Selle (2001) suggest that a more subtle characterisation of associational groupings is more helpful in attempting to ascertain the types of benefits produced. For example, in distinguishing between those groups with a political as opposed to a social purpose, between those who are deliberative and interest based, between those with a hierarchical and egalitarian structure and between those associations where membership is voluntary, ascribed or a hybrid of the two. Fukuyama (2000), on the other hand, makes a primary distinction between forms of association on the basis of their degrees of moral authority and ideological reach. In a recent study of social cohesion and fragmentation in modern societies, he considers the changing nature of associational life and the apparent paradox, in America, of the coexistence of relatively high levels of association and growing levels of distrust and social fragmentation. The answer, he says: *“has to do with moral miniaturisation: while people continue to participate in group life, the groups themselves are less authoritative and produce a smaller radius of trust. As a whole, then, there are fewer common values shared by societies and more competition amongst groups.”* Whether or not one shares Fukuyama’s socially conservative analysis of the causes of societal fragmentation, he has certainly pointed to a dilemma at the heart of social capital theory and one which underlines the importance of societal explanations of social cohesion.

However, even if we distinguish between types of association, their embeddedness in the national socio-political and cultural context means that we cannot necessarily ever directly compare their purposes or outcomes. As Prakash and Selle (2000) explain, associations and their aims evolve in relation to the development of political institutions, societal change and mobility. This means that organisations which may seem to represent a sub-optimal form of social capital in one social context – such as chequebook memberships in the United States – may lead to social benefits in others, such as the United Kingdom (Maloney, 1999). In particular, informal networks and associations have been shown to result in specific macro-social outcomes. For example, Gundelach and Torpe (1996) find that informal, network type associations have a greater impact on Danish attitudes than classical, formal political associations of the de Toquevillian model. Additionally, Parry, Moyser and Day (1992) show that ad hoc, rather than formally constituted, political groups are important in producing further political involvement and altering attitudes in the UK.

In general, then, the mechanisms by which education impacts upon an active civic or political culture cannot be abstracted from their national context. Across a range of countries different historical importance is attached to political parties, trade unions and formal/informal civic sites as arenas for participation. Moreover, outside of the work of Marxists (Gramsci, 1971) and social democratic theorists little attention has been paid to the role which education plays in mobilising collectivities, rather than in

individual levels of participation. However, cross-national studies (such as the IEA citizenship study) can show the specific role of education in fostering various kinds of active citizenship.

4.3 Conclusion

It seems, then, that there are problems in applying models which at the individual level imply a relationship between education, training and skills and social cohesion/citizenship benefits in comparative context. Firstly, as shown by exhaustive comparative studies (Torney-Purta et al, 2001) there are no necessary relationships at the national level between skills, knowledge and civic outcomes. There is considerable variation in civic outcomes between countries, with those nations scoring most highly on civic knowledge not necessarily being favoured with high levels of civic engagement. Indeed, there appear to be clear regional groupings with a different group of countries with high levels of civic knowledge (the Nordics and transition countries) as compared to those with high levels of civic activity (a range of EU countries, excluding the Nordics). There is also considerable variation in the relationships between civic activity and other values, such as levels of trust. Again, the story seems to indicate that simple causality between education and macro-social outcomes is somewhat misplaced.

Our conclusions to this section are therefore inevitably cautious. In signaling the role of specific historical conditions on the relationship between ET, trust, tolerance and social cohesion more generally, we would call for a re-appraisal not only of the importance of historical contexts but also of the relationship between structural relationships and social cohesion outcomes. Education may have important effects on many of the outcomes under consideration under certain conditions. However, many of the effects are indirect and conditional on other – often more powerful – contextual determinants. To study these effects therefore requires attention to time and place and the exhaustive analysis of a range of factors and variables operating at the macro-level. Quantitative comparative analysis at the macro-level is of value here if the variables are sufficiently carefully specified. However, much of the work of explaining complex interactions will require more in depth comparative qualitative analysis.

5. Crime in Comparative Context

5.1 Introduction

We now consider the impact of ET on what Putnam (2000) might consider to be a particular manifestation of the dark side of social capital and cohesion – crime. As with all macro-social indicators, comparisons of crime statistics are troublesome in comparative context. Differences in legislation, recording and even cultural

differences in the perception of criminal activity mean that cross-national comparisons should be made with caution.

5.1.1 Statistical and measurement issues

There is little evidence that the collection of cross-national crime statistics has improved over time (Jousten, 1998). One frequently cited example of a measurement problem is that there is less cross-country variation in victimisation rates (self reported crime) than in police data due to differences in how the police define, handle and count offenses (Killias & Aebi, 2000). Particular problems occur in researching criminal sub-populations such as drug users where there are “*rare and hidden sub-populations....hard drug users are difficult to reach and not very willing to cooperate*” (Ødegård, 1998).

Measurement problems are of a cultural as well as a legalistic nature. Even given differences between actual crime, reported crime, police records and judicial interventions there is a social dimension to perceptions of crime (Jousten, 1999) which can be seen as a driver of national policies, including those concerning education or re-socialisation of offenders. Garland (2000) identifies what he calls a culture of ‘high crime societies’ in the UK and the US and also potentially in other Northern European countries such as Germany. This is not necessarily a recent phenomenon. Historically public perceptions of crime have partly driven crime policy (Walton, Blinkhoen, Pooley, Tidswell & Winstanley, 1999).

Competing definitions and interpretations of crime are hence rife in the literature which, given its multi-disciplinary nature, makes a generalised assessment of the effects of ET on crime difficult. Internationally there have been attempts to collect crime statistics with cross-cultural differences in mind. For example, the ‘European Sourcebook on National Crime’, the ‘International Crime Victimization Survey’ and to a lesser extent Interpol statistics provide a basis for international comparisons. Moreover, qualitative work or that which examines trends (rather than absolute levels of crime) enable us to gain some purchase on the effects of ET on crime at an aggregate level.

Given these qualifications concerning measurement and interpretation we now turn to the research evidence connecting ET to crime. We have identified two broad areas of research: individual explanations of the ET crime relationship and cultural, ecological and grand theories of crime.

5.2 Individual theories of crime: 'the rediscovery of the offender'

There has recently been a return to individual explanations of crime phenomena or a 'rediscovery of the offender' (Kaiser, 1997). These approaches eschew grand theories of crime and theories which emphasise cultural rather than situational factors.

5.2.1 Control theory

Most influential in the current criminological literature is Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) 'general theory of crime'. This uses a single explanatory mechanism called control theory to explain the individual's propensity to commit crime. They argue that: "*cultural variability is not important in the causation of crime, [and] that we should look for constancy rather than variability in the definition of and causation of crime, and that a single theory of crime can encompass the reality of cross-cultural differences in crime rates*" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, quoted in Vazsonyi, Pickering, Junger & Hessing, 2001). This might be called a culture free perspective as personality rather than society is implicated as the cause of crime.

Individuals who are inadequately socialised in early life and fail to bond with their parents through lack of adequate family structures are believed to lack self control as adults. This lack of self control is thought to result in anti-social behaviour and crime across all categories. As self control is formed in early childhood there is little role for formal education in influencing this, except where educational interventions may be applied later after identification of supposedly inadequate family structures. Other developmental approaches to criminology, such as criminal careers research, are similarly skeptical regarding the role of later education in addressing bio-social and early childhood antecedents of crime.

Although there are a substantial number of national studies which support the tenets of control theory (Lainer & Henry, 1998), there has been little cross-cultural validation or testing of the concept, and most of what there has been has involved studies of youth and delinquency or crime analogous behaviours such as deviance rather than more serious adult crimes. However, in a four country study of adolescents in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary and the United States (Vazsonyi, Pickering, Junger & Hessing, 2001) the reliability of self control and a scale for deviance (the Normative Deviance Scale, NDS) is shown to be within acceptable limits for all countries. Moreover, self control is the most powerful predictor of deviance, with cross-country differences accounting for only 0.6% of the variance. This implies that most variation is intra-national rather than cross-national (although the outcomes are crime analogous behaviours rather than crime as legally recorded).

5.2.2 Routine activities theory

Whilst control theory and other developmental perspectives emphasise the role of individual difference as a cause of crime, routine activities theory (Felson, 1999) stresses the supply of opportunities for crime. Routine activities theory is an economic theory of crime which argues that criminal decisions are part of the category of more general economic behaviour based on rational perceptions of the costs and benefits of criminal activity (Becker, 1968), although strict assumptions regarding the degree of individual rationality are not necessarily supported in contemporary economic criminology (see Lanier & Henry, 1998). A lowering of the costs of crime, in terms of a greater availability of criminal opportunities or reduced punishments, produces a greater amount of criminal behaviour. The recent surge in mobile phone theft in the UK could be seen to be explained by such a theory given the increased use of these phones and hence opportunities of theft.

A routine activities approach is employed by Killias and Aebi (2000) in an analysis of European crime trends from 1990-1996. Compared with the United States experience, there has not been a significant decline in European crime trends in recent years although aggregate levels for most crimes are still higher in the US. Despite having demographic trends similar to those in the US, most EU countries saw a rise in crime of all types, with a particularly sharp rise in property crimes and drug offenses. According to Killias and Aebi (2000) there is no need to utilise grand theory, involving concepts of anomie or demography (which in any case are reasonably convergent across the EU, and not substantially different to those in the US) to explain these trends. Rather, the opening up of markets across Europe and wealth inequalities between East and Western Europe have offered new markets for stolen goods and new supply lines for drugs. Killias and Aebi (2000) do not regard education to have a major role in this recent increase in crime. However, they mention that a lack of educational and labour market opportunities for migrants in the EU and Eastern European youth in general may have facilitated this process. This signals a possible role for targeted ET.

5.2.3 Review and critique

The lack of emphasis which both developmental (namely control theory) and economic (namely routine activities) theories of crime place upon the formal education system is borne out in the national empirical literature where there is little evidence that educational level has an independent influence on crime (Witte, 1997). However, level of education does, of course, have a powerful effect on other factors, such as income. Other educational outcome measures do show a direct correlation. Time spent in education (Witte, 1997) is associated with crime (but note that time spent in education is strongly correlated with social class), as is early childhood education (Rutter, 1994). Educational failure (dropping out) is also related to crime (Lochner & Moretti, 2001 reviewed in Feinstein, 2002).

On the other hand, there is a plethora of evidence that delinquency is linked with poor performance at school or early school leaving (Friday, 1980). However, there is little evidence that delinquency necessarily leads to crime except for those individuals already at risk of criminal behaviour through poor early socialisation (Farrington & Loeber, 1999).

This relative neglect of ET or educational level is not, of course, true of all individual theories of crime. In the life course approach, such as that adopted in the Tübingen studies (Kerner, Weitekamp & Stelly, 1995) ET is one possible road out of criminality (Kaiser, 1997). Laub and Sampson (1993) perceive training and work as possible turning points in the criminal life course through social control and the creation of informal social bonds. The life course approach has also been used to assess the impact of education on victimisation – the probability of being a victim, rather than a perpetrator of crime. Using reconstructed longitudinal data from the Netherlands, Witterbrood and Nieubeerta (1999) find that those who are of higher education and status are more likely to be victims of violent victimisation, particularly robbery and property crime. As they are less likely to commit crime, though, this has some effect on reducing their chances of being a victim.

In general, individualistic criminological theories have little to say (either theoretically or empirically) about the role of ET as opposed to early and targeted interventions (Witte, 1997). At the extremes, they have even been attacked for their methodology and socially authoritarian potential. Haines (1999) criticises criminal careers research as being based on small, unselective samples which quickly become less relevant for policy concerns as respondents age. However, although these criticisms may be correct for small scale one shot studies, the birth cohort studies in the UK (which have been used in other research by this Centre) are not vulnerable to these objections. These studies follow large scale (17,000-20,000 individual) samples and have tracked individuals of various birth years (1958, 1970 and most recently 2000) over time. The value of these studies in understanding the impact of historical change on individual lives has been shown across many fields of behaviour, including citizenship and crime (Ferri, Bynner & Wadsworth, 2003).

In addition Haines (1999) follows Garland's (2000) contention regarding the manner in which cultural perceptions of crime are reified as social fact. There is little in individualistic theories of crime, other than in the life course approach, about rehabilitation in adulthood. Policy makers have capitalised on the more authoritarian aspects of these theories with an emphasis on early identification (youth crime policies, identification of potential juvenile offenders by teachers in primary schools in the UK) and incarceration (zero tolerance in the UK, three strikes policy in the US).

Therefore, the role of ET in mitigating criminal activity is seldom identified in individual theories of crime. As we have shown, there is little research evidence linking ET to individual propensity to commit crime, independent of its indirect effects (although there is more evidence on delinquency and crime analogous behaviour). Moreover, the emphasis in these theories on the early formation of

criminality seems to rule out the efficacy of later interventions. However, this is not true of all theories of this nature. Life course theories do offer some space where we may at least theorise a role for ET and there is some evidence that increased training may (given the availability of labour market positions) offer a route out of criminality (Laub & Sampson, 1993). Here, though, evidence is tentative.

5.3 Cultural, ecological and grand theories of crime

Unlike in individualistic theories of crime, in cultural, ecological and ‘grand’ theories the role of education systems and national educational strategies is more apparent, and indeed necessary. Although studies of this nature tend to be based on a small number of cases – if nations or regions are the unit of analysis – they do enable us to move beyond context free examination of simple causality between education and crime. As Ødegård (1998) states with regard to drug use: *“For two different nations one and the same characteristic can generate opposite effects in the same way that some people can become alcoholics because of their milieu, while others can become total abstainers because of the same milieu”*.

We will begin this section by examining the evidence relating national cultures and ET systems to crime. We will then move on to discuss the role of ET in the formation of certain criminal sub-cultures, namely those which perpetrate hate crimes and football hooliganism. Finally, we will examine the indirect effects of education on crime through meso and macro-level mediators such as community, employment levels and income equality.

5.3.1 Culture and institutions

The importance of culture and institutions in understanding relationships between crime and other variables, such as education, is explored by Junger-Tas (2001) in her report of the preliminary results from the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD) which involves surveys of youth aged 14-21 in thirteen countries including eleven EU states. Although there is similarity in the relationship between self control and delinquency in different countries, there are also important cross-national differences. For example, in countries such as England and Germany father absence was associated with higher delinquency, whereas in Nordic countries this was not the case. This is possibly due to different welfare arrangements between countries whereby single parent families receive more support in Nordic states (Junger-Tas, 2000). Similarly, whereas there was a relation between large peer groups and delinquency in some countries, this was not the case in southern Europe where, arguably, these are more common. This reveals, again, the importance of different social and cultural contexts. With regard to education, Junger-Tas (2000) reports from an ongoing survey of Dutch youth that shows that school achievement and parental supervision are important factors in reducing juvenile delinquency. However, for ethnic minority youth, parental support is greater and they are more likely to be victims of physical abuse than Dutch youth.

In another example, Eisner and Wikstrom (1999) compare violent crime in Stockholm and Basel. They find that the temporal and spatial patterns of crime are similar in both cities with crime occurring more frequently in the evenings and early mornings, particularly in areas with high social-disorganisation resulting from poverty, unemployment and transient populations. However, there are differences in the levels and types of crime, with violent crime particularly high on weekend nights in Stockholm. Eisner and Wikstrom (1999) suggest that this is due to the cultural norms amongst young men in Stockholm. However, they find that education has a perverse effect on the rate of violent crime in Basel, with the percentage of university students in each district being positively correlated with the rate of violent crime (an effect which may be due to the nature of undergraduate fraternities there?). This effect persists even when controlling for indicators of local deprivation, although other educational controls (such as the number of educational establishments in a district) are not used.

The relationship of European ET systems to juvenile crime is further discussed by Estrada (1999). Estrada distinguishes between two models of post-war juvenile crime – one in which the trend has been a general and continuing increase in post-war crime (in England, Finland, Germany⁵) and one in which juvenile crime leveled off in the 1970s (in Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland). Given these differential trends, Estrada does not consider that either routine activities or control theory are suitable explanations. The availability of crime opportunities did not necessarily differ from country to country. Indeed, most countries adopted a punitive approach to juvenile crime prevention which would not explain the divergent trends in England, Finland and Germany, on the one hand, and the remaining countries on the other (Estrada, 1999). In addition, those factors which would suggest a deterioration in family functioning, such as increases in the divorce rate, are located mainly in the period 1965-1975 which is not consistent with the increases in crime from 1950-1965 nor with the leveling off in juvenile crime which occurred in most countries thereafter.

Estrada argues against an individually based explanation of crime and in favour of one based mainly on the social control functions of education and training. According to him, the segregation of young people from adult society through: “*the increasing length of educational careers, a later and later entrance into the labour market and the growth of a youth focused popular culture*” have been responsible (Estrada, 1999). This process has occurred at various times and with variable rates of consistency across Europe and this, he argues, explains the variation in crime trends. For example, the crime trend in Sweden can, he argues, be explained by the fact that post-compulsory education and late entry into the labour market increased dramatically from 1950 to 1960, peaking in the late 1960s and stabilising thereafter. Estrada cites self report evidence from both Sweden and Denmark which suggests that youth are actually more disciplined now than in the 1970s to support this point (Estrada, 1999).

⁵ To construct a German time series, Estrada (1999) uses crime statistics for that part of the country known as West Germany up to 1989.

The fact that juvenile crime trends have not leveled off in some countries can be explained by the continuing extension of education and youthful separation from the labour market, according to Estrada (1999). However, this is somewhat belied by the rise in youth crime in Germany where the ET system is generally believed to provide a highly structured entry into adult life (Brown, Green & Lauder, 2000). In addition, it would be interesting to know whether changes in the segregation of youth correspond with changes in other social indicators such as the distribution of skills or income inequality.

In his long range socio-historical study of European homicide rates, Eisner examines the determining role of education systems in the light of Norbert Elias' (1978) theory about the effects of modernisation in engendering self control (Eisner, 2001). From a variety of historical records, Eisner constructs a time series dataset for England, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries from around 1200 to the present day. Although cautious of measurement issues, he is able to identify a downward secular trend in homicide rates where the: *"phases of accelerated decline....often seem to coincide with periods of rapid expansion and stabilisation of state structures"* (Eisner, 2001). For example, the decline in Swedish rates coincides with the establishment of centralised bureaucratic structures and the decline in Italian rates with national unification in the 1870s. Eisner uses Oestreich's (1968, 1982) concept of social disciplining resulting from a period of state intrusion into everyday life in order to explain these phenomena (Eisner, 2001). In particular, he argues that: *"the expansion of literacy and schooling and early capitalist expansion of work constitute independent sources of the disciplining process in the early modern age....Their effects on the structures of the self were both rigidly to enforce self-control and to provide the social and cultural resources for a more orderly conduct of life"* (Eisner, 2001). Education did not act independently of context but: *"these effects may have been particularly penetrating among those groups and areas where intensified moral control by the church, expanded schooling, pervasive state structures, and work discipline intertwined into mutually reinforcing power structures"* (Eisner, 2001). At the same time he sees the rises in homicide rates which occurred at the end of the 16th century and in the period around 1800 as reflecting social and cultural transformation in European societies. Similarly, the rise in homicide rates since the 1960s may reflect the transition from modern to post-modern society (Eisner, 2001).

These studies show, therefore, how general theories of crime are limited by their blindness to cultural differences. As we can see, different cultural antecedents of delinquency operate not only for national populations (Estrada, 1999; Eisner, 2001; Junger-Tas, 2001), but also for sub-populations (Junger-Tas, 2001; Eisner & Wikstrom, 1999). We also see the influence of distinct national cultural contexts when examining criminal subcultures.

5.3.2 Criminal sub-cultures

The role of educational arrangements and institutions within national cultural contexts is apparent in cross-national work on criminal subcultures. For example, there has been recent policy and research interest in what are called hate crimes in the European Union. These are crimes involving violence against a specifically targeted racial or national group which have specific implications for social cohesion. According to Levin and Rabrenovic (2001) various commentators argue that hate crimes are “*more harmful to the social fabric of society than comparable crimes without a bias motive*”. This is due to victim interchangeability (victims are chosen because of their membership of a specific group, not because of prior actions or opportunity), secondary victimisation (that attacks against the victim’s family and community escalate due to hate crimes) and escalation (that hate crimes may escalate into large scale social conflict).

There are obvious cultural differences in terms of legal definitions, types and targets of hate crime. In a study of aggressive youth cultures and hate crime in Germany, Watts (2001) contrasts hate crime in Germany and the United States. He argues that although the historical routes of hate crime are different in both countries, the structural antecedents of right wing violence amongst the skinhead subcultures are similar across cultures. These antecedents are status anxiety, decline of working class culture and unemployment due to marginalised positions in education, labour and housing markets (Watts, 2001).

Similarly, Dunning (2000), in an analysis of football hooliganism as a world phenomenon, identifies cultural differences between the nature of hooliganism but identifies similarities in structural antecedents. In Belgium, for example, Van Limbergen, Colaers and Walgrave (1987) cite unemployment and a short and frustrating school career as responsible, whereas in Holland typical Dutch hooligans “*tend to resent and resist formal education*” (Van der Brug, 1986, cited in Dunning, 2000). Dunning states that hooliganism in each country is situated around fault lines in each country – “*in England, that means social class and regional inequalities...in Italy city particularism...in Germany the relations between East and West*” (Dunning, 2000).

In all cases economic (and educational) inequalities are realised and expressed in different cultural forms of hooliganism. Although the role of education in hate crimes and hooliganism is not direct, educational inequality (particularly in terms of lack of access to labour markets) can be seen as one part of various inter-related inequalities.

However, explanations of sub-cultures of crime which are orientated around working class or underclass social and economic disadvantage are problematic. Crime statistics tend to over represent working class crime. Moran (2000) with reference to UK and US data demonstrates how the criminal justice systems over represent the number of working class men as perpetrators of homophobic violence (see also Lees, 1996 for a feminist critique of the construction of rape and domestic violence as a predominantly

working class crime). Additionally, working class crimes are often perceived to be a greater social problem than so called white collar crimes. Robson (2000) examines how football hooliganism has been situated as a problem amongst the white working classes (at least in the UK) whereas statistics demonstrate a range of social classes amongst the perpetrators of hooliganism (as conceded by Dunning, 2000). Such studies may cause us to treat direct causal relationships between economic and social disadvantage and crime with due caution although there is *some* evidence for these effects, as we will discuss in the next section.

5.3.3 Indirect effects of ET on crime: unemployment, community effects and inequality

What we have seen is that the influence of education on crime is not direct and that cultural factors and institutional arrangements are important. However, there is some evidence that there are indirect effects of education on crime. The labour market advantages associated with a higher level of education, namely a lower probability of unemployment and a higher salary, may be mechanisms through which ET has an impact. We have already explained how unemployment is part of the social exclusion involved in hate crimes and hooliganism. Indeed, at a micro-social level of analysis, longitudinal studies reveal an association between early school leaving, unemployment and crime (Farrington et al, 1986) although crime may paradoxically rise in times of high employment. Dunning (2000) shows that football hooliganism in the UK was much higher in the 1960s when there was virtually full employment when compared to the economic depression of the 1930s when hooliganism was virtually non-existent.

Such paradoxes may be resolved by reference to macro-analysis. At an aggregate level, the influence of unemployment on crime operates in two opposing directions (Beri, Zeelenberg & Montfort, 1999). Firstly, unemployment reduces general economic activity and reduces the value of goods to be stolen. This suggests an opportunity effect which would lead to a negative relationship between unemployment and crime. As low levels of economic activity are credibly associated with lower levels of conspicuous consumption and business activity, the opportunity and temptation for crime falls. Secondly, unemployed individuals may have more incentive to steal as they have lower absolute and relative incomes. Through a time series analysis of the Netherlands from 1950-93, Beri, Zeelenberg and Montfort (1999) show that unemployment has a negative effect on the aggregates for most theft crimes including burglary (the opportunity effect). The only positive relationship between unemployment and crime is in terms of fraud where there may be an unsurprising motivation effect.

Possible area, or ecological, effects of education are also indirect. Social-disorganisation theories examine the influence on crime of variables such as poverty, ethnic heterogeneity and residential mobility. In practice, proxy measures for these variables such as indexes of deprivation, ethnic mix and unemployment are used (Mesch & Fishman, 1999). The use of these area proxies has led to some debate in the

literature as to whether social-disorganisation is a single characteristic of areas, or rather a cluster of unrelated variables. Mesch and Fishman (1999) dispute that a latent variable for social-disorganisation fully accounts for the direct effects of urbanisation and family disruption on crime whereas Glaeser, Sacerdote and Scheikman (1996) contend that the quality and quantity of social interactions are more important than social-disorganisation. In terms of ET, social-disorganisation theory may be criticised as neglecting the indirect effects of education on values, as opposed to their labour market functions. For example, in socially disorganised areas the weak socialisation capacity of education and training institutions are rarely examined explicitly (Bursik 1998). Indeed, there is some evidence that peer group effects are predictors of juvenile delinquency (Gaviria & Raphael, 2001), although again whether this leads to subsequent criminal activity is questionable.

Rather than examine the intrinsic characteristics of communities in order to identify criminogenic elements, another strand of research involves analysing the relative standing of countries and communities in terms of income inequality. Using cross-national data, Braithwaite and Braithwaite (1980) show a statistically significant correlation between greater inequality of earnings and higher homicide rates across countries. Messner (1982) found that the extent of income inequality accounted for 35% of the differences in homicide rates among the 39 countries for which he had data.

Research based on US state level data also suggests a link between inequality and crime. Kelly (2000) shows that even controlling for other factors such as poverty, race and family composition, there are strong associations between economic segregation and crime. Lee (2000) shows how the spatial isolation of poor individuals from the wealthy is a more powerful predictor of crime than the intrinsic properties of individuals and communities. He uses this finding to criticise researchers who attempt to identify essentialist explanations of crime among African Americans, rather than examine relative inequalities. Kelly (2000) also indicates the potential for replication of inequality and crime studies using European data. Indeed, examining inequalities and the relative position of individuals and groups may enable us to investigate how far social-disorganisation theories of crime have validity.

Income and educational inequality are shown to be strongly associated in the econometric literature (Nickel & Layard, 1998). Countries with wider dispersion of skills and qualifications, as we will show later, also tend to have greater inequality of income. If income inequality is related to higher levels of certain types of crime at regional and national levels, it may be that societal levels of crime are indirectly affected by educational inequality.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is relatively little quantitative evidence at the individual level to support a *direct* relationship between ET (or even post-compulsory education) and crime when other factors such as social class are controlled for. However, clearly there are indirect effects.

In comparative context, the effects of education systems (and particularly the relationship between education and labour markets) are more apparent and probably derive as much from the content and distribution of educational outcomes, as from the average levels in any given country. The effects of education on crime are highly mediated by their national context. Indeed, to a certain degree how we perceive crime is constructed differently between nations (Garland, 2000). The macro-social effects of education on crime are perhaps best perceived in terms of long periods of time (Eisner, 2001) and there has been relatively little research conducted into long duration relationships. However, we may make a number of tentative generalisations.

Firstly, the marginalisation of individuals from labour markets and the norms of society is one of the features of criminal sub-cultures across European societies, although the form of this marginalisation differs between countries. Secondly, although there are distinct cultural realisations of crime, there are identifiable common structural antecedents of crime. Although the relationship between unemployment, social-disorganisation and crime is unclear, there is emerging evidence that income inequality, and by implication educational inequality, is an antecedent of some types of crime.

6. Conclusions and Policy Implications

In this paper we have explored the effects of education, training and skills on a wide range of macro-social outcomes including crime, social cohesion, citizenship, civic and political participation. Through a review of the literature and statistical modelling we have mapped out both the problematics of individual (micro) level analysis as well as the comparative approach. In particular, the possibility for summative evaluation (rather than measuring or modelling) of education systems appears to be limited, although the component parts of national education systems are open to evaluation. We suggest instead that evaluation of macro-social benefits requires a hybrid approach to evaluation involving both modelling and formative evaluation. The procedures advanced by Ragin (1981) appear to be helpful in this respect as they enable us through the method of similarity and difference to construct workable research questions concerning the outcomes of education.

6.1 Models of education and social outcomes – the importance of macro-analysis

In terms of the status of various models of the relationship between education and social outcomes, we are troubled that many of these models are specified at the individual level. Whilst many micro-social impacts of education within countries are best specified as relations involving individual resources, when comparing between countries, context matters. Moreover, country context is more than another variable – it is not ecological in a simple sense – rather there are expressions of national context such as distributions of skills and income, education systems and culture which cannot be specified except in comparison to other countries.

What we are not arguing for, though, is a methodological approach which considers only one level of aggregation. Individual level analysis is extremely important in mapping out the mechanisms through which education may have its effects. As we have shown in other work, both biographical interview and longitudinal analysis of individuals in cohort studies reveal much concerning the types of interventions through which education has an effect. However, we would argue that these studies need to be contextualised by comparative work. The impact of education on social cohesion, national levels of crime and an active citizenry needs to be grounded in an approach which examines education systems as historically constituted and the role of these systems in reducing or exacerbating inequalities. In addition, the role of education systems in supporting or resisting various levels of ideology requires examination.

6.2 Policy conclusions

With regard to macro-social benefits of education, training and skills there are a few generalisations which can be made across all EU countries.

Firstly, that for some macro-social benefits (or costs) there are common structural antecedents. Particularly with reference to crime, various forms of criminal activity can be regarded as local manifestation of structural phenomena. For example, with regard to work on football hooliganism (Dunning, 2000), juvenile delinquency and hate crime (Watts, 2001) and possibly tolerance, similar structural antecedents (unemployment and alienation) related to education are implicated. The relevance of income distribution (and by implication the distribution of skills) and the spatial characteristics of high crime areas are also potentially similar structural antecedents of crime (Kelly, 2000; Lee, 2000). As shown by our work using macro-social aggregates there are clearly relationships between educational inequality, income inequality and outcomes such as general trust, crime and feelings of community safety (Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003).

Secondly, the clustering of social benefits and educational level which one may see at the micro-level does not necessarily hold at the macro. Educational level and social

benefits such as general (and other forms of) trust, associational memberships and crime are not necessarily related at the national level as evidenced by our literature review and our modelling of macro-social outcomes. Macro-social outcomes are not related at the country level and do not form a coherent syndrome. The implications for education systems are that generalisations concerning the role of education in the rebuilding of civil society (social capital investment) or in fostering widespread political involvement through civic-education are not applicable across nation states. Whilst such policies are not necessarily misguided in that some individuals may indeed benefit, the effect on national levels of social outcomes may be small or non-existent. As our literature review has shown, there is much evidence where rises in the general level of education has not had any effect on national levels of tolerance, crime or social cohesion. Evidence from Wilkinson supports this general conclusion with respect to health:

“In effect, the extent of the variation around a society’s norms is fixed so that the proportion of people with bad diets, who are heavy drinkers, who have high blood pressure etc. is a reflection of where the society’s norms are...it was easier to change the societal norms than to leave them unchanged while trying to reduce the proportion of the population over some level of risk.” (Wilkinson, 1996)

However, that societal norms and inequalities are hard to change does not mean that there is no role for education or training. As Eisner’s work (2001) explains, the effects of various institutions implicated in state formation (such as education) may only be seen to have effects over a long period of time. Moreover, we may speculate as to the role of education systems in various regional groupings on the formation of values and the construction of inequalities.

To illustrate this point, it is clear that the Nordic countries form a group of high trust, mainly low crime countries where the general levels of civic participation are also moderate. In the Danish case, this is combined with high levels of lifestyle permissiveness but rather low levels of tolerance towards foreigners (at least on Halman’s evidence). The high levels of trust may be associated with various non-education macro-factors such as the strongly solidaristic welfare states and historically relatively high levels of ethnic/cultural homogeneity (see Knack & Keefer, 1997), although we have not examined these factors here. They may also relate to relatively high levels of income equality. Lower levels of ethnic tolerance in Denmark may be associated, paradoxically, with that same emphasis on cultural homogeneity that may be conducive towards high trust in this case (although we do not suggest that these relations would hold in all national contexts). In terms of education effects, we may hypothesise that relative equality of educational outcomes promotes trust and lower crime through its impact on income equality. The strong effect in Sweden of education on trust in institutions and in democracy may be attributable to the strongly solidaristic principles enshrined in curricula and in the exceptionally universalistic nature of the all through primary secondary school systems which remain comprehensive and non-selective up to the end of upper

secondary schooling (gymnasieskola). On the other hand the rather lower levels of civic association (compared at least to other – mostly European – countries in our small sample) may be due to the historically prominent role of the state within Nordic social democracy in promoting equity and inclusion and to the success of this in promoting social equity, which may seem to obviate the need for taking political actions outside the mainstream channels.

As a counter example, the UK has high levels of crime and low scores relative to the other countries on both trust and association, whilst also being low on tolerance according to Halman's evidence (1994). Non-education macro-factors associated with higher crime and lower trust may include the high rates of income inequality (amongst the highest in the EU) and higher levels of intolerance may relate in part to historically high levels of immigration over the past 40 years (Halman, 1994). Education may play a part in generating lower levels of trust and higher crime through its impact on income inequality. A highly marketised system, relative to the rest of Europe, with high levels of inequality in outcomes between schools and regions, and consequently wide distributions of educational outcomes, may be significant in generating income inequality and lower trust, the latter both through its effect on income inequality and more directly through the competitive values it promotes, which are not counteracted by any Nordic style emphasis on social solidarity in the school curriculum. To the extent that differences between schools in education reflect intra-ethnic differences, given the tendency for increasing ethnic concentration/segregation in schools in a quasi-market system, this may also play a part in both decreasing trust and increasing intolerance (the latter because of the reduction in inter-ethnic mixing). The low to moderate UK level of association relative to the rest of the countries in our reduced sample is harder to explain given Britain's history of valuing civil society and intermediate associations (Gramsci, 1971), although the reduction in trade union membership and activity following the restrictive laws brought in by the Thatcher government after 1979 may have had some effect.

These are obvious generalisations and somewhat stereotypical depictions of these countries' education systems. We do contend, though, that the macro-social benefits of ET are routed both in the distribution of educational outcomes and in the values transmitted through education systems. They are also contingent on the relation between education and the labour market and other parts of the welfare state. Although there are cultural limits to the extent to which 'policy-borrowing' is appropriate with regard to education systems, there are clear lessons for policy makers, in particular that raising educational, skills and training levels is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of promoting macro-social benefits. However, improving the distribution of educational outcomes may be one way in which education and training can make some contribution to more general economic and social redistribution.

6.2.1 Implications for current UK policy

The issues raised in this report provide an important contextualisation for discussing current UK policy concerns which are aimed at reducing inequality and increasing social cohesion through increasing access to qualifications. For example, in the area of current policy on Higher Education (HE) (DfES, 2003a) there are issues concerning expansion, equity and the macro-social which are of concern to policy makers. Although not perhaps the defining theme of ‘The Future of Higher Education’ there are many references to the macro-social benefits of HE. For example, it is described as having a role in the formation of a “*...more enlightened and socially just society*” (DfES, 2003a) and in increasing equity through narrowing access differences by social class (DfES, 2003a) a “*...state of affairs that can cannot be tolerated in a civilised society...it is inherently socially unjust.*” (DfES, 2003a). The role of HE in creating a tolerant and socially just society, alongside economic benefits is part of the rationale in increasing the participation target for HE to 50% for young people aged from 18-30. Aside from more traditional forms of HE, this expansion will probably involve “*...new and employer responsive types of degree*” (DfES, 2003a).

Similar arguments apply to other sectors of education, such as in the recently announced skills strategy (DfES, 2003b). Again, reference is made to the benefits of a more equitable distribution of educational resources : “*We will not achieve a fairer, more inclusive society, if we fail to narrow the gap between the skills-rich and the skills-poor.*” (DfES, 2003b). This will potentially involve a guarantee of free tuition to level 2 for any adult without employability skills. It may also involve further financial incentives to achieve level 3 qualifications (DfES, 2003b).

For policy makers, then, issues concerning the distribution, as well as the uptake of skills, are part of the current debate. As we have shown above, there is evidence that this is one of the motivations behind current education policy. However, an issue for policy makers which has not been resolved in this report is the more intangible aspects of education on macro-social benefits. If educational expansion involves mainly vocational, employer responsive courses, then the impact of these courses on the values and behaviours of such students needs to be considered. As has been seen, compared to other countries, the UK has a poor recent historical record in using vocational courses to foster labour market transition, citizen formation and tolerance. The nature of the mechanisms by which vocational courses may lead to micro and macro-social benefits is an issue for continuing and further research by the Centre.

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The Macro-Social Benefits of Education, Training and Skills in Comparative Perspective

This report, the second from the Centre's strand of comparative research, complements an earlier WBL research report (Education, Equity and Social Cohesion: A Distributional Model) in exploring further themes of societal comparison and the distributional effects of education systems.

Despite generally high levels of educational attainment there is huge diversity amongst Western Societies in terms of crime, tolerance, trust and social cohesion. In this report, we take a comparative approach to investigating relationships between education and these outcomes at a societal level. Through an interdisciplinary review of literatures from sociology, history, economics and psychology we examine the role of education systems from a number of countries in influencing trends in, and levels of, these variables. Whilst the importance of country and historical context is stressed throughout we arrive at some general conclusions concerning the role of education systems in the development of various forms of social cohesion.

This report will be of interest to policy makers, researchers and practitioners who are interested in the social impact of education systems. In particular, we examine implications for current UK policy targeted at increasing national educational attainment.

John Preston is a Research Officer in the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning. He is Strand Manager for the Centre's research strand on social capital and social cohesion.

Professor Andy Green is Co-Director of the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning and Professor of Education in the School of Lifelong Learning, Education and International Development in the Institute of Education.