



ECSO4002: Who Are We?: Culture and Identity

Theme 6: What do we mean by Cultural Capital? (Part 2)



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Session Recap

What have we covered so far in this Theme?



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Economic Capital

Pierre Bourdieu has argued that material goods such as property, wealth and income are 'linked to lifestyle choices'

Bourdieu cited in Giddens (2006) p.322

This means that economic capital is also '**symbolic**' capital

He suggests that economic and symbolic capital are entwined through displays of one's material wealth, prestige is likely to bring in material profit, in a good-faith economy where good repute constitutes the best economic guarantee

(Bourdieu, 1990, p. 119)



Economic Capital



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Do you know how much this sold for?



Economic and Symbolic Capital

- This link between economic and symbolic consumption is also known as ‘conspicuous consumption’
- Conspicuous consumption is ‘Spending on goods and services primarily to display income or wealth, or to attain a certain social status’ Hashimzade *et al* (2012)
- Damien Hirst’s ‘For the Love of God’ can be seen as an example of a ‘positional good’
- A good whose value to a consumer depends on the ranking, or the position, of the good in desirability by other consumers, or on the quantity consumed of the good relative to its consumption by others. Social status, luxury holidays, or a degree from a prestigious university are considered to be examples of positional goods.

Hashimzade *et al* (2012)

Financial Capital

- It has been argued that financial capital is capital that is controlled by banks and used by industrialists to grow and expand their businesses
 - Therefore banks could be seen as 'Industrial Capitalists'
- Lenin (1916:2010)
- As industry grows and expands it concentrates production in the hands of a few huge companies which can lead to market domination or event the creation of monopolies



Financial Capital

- Examples of this financial domination;
- Each year [Forbes Business Magazine](#) publishes a list of the 2000 richest companies based on sales, profits, assets and market value
- Many of these companies are now 'richer' than many countries as measured by the [World Bank](#)
- Whilst a direct comparison is difficult, some have claimed that Apple is richer than the UK Forbes (Snowden Smith, 2022)



Human Capital

- The ‘resources’ in people, such as skills, education, health, job training and other non-monetary assets, that ‘influence future monetary and psychic (social-psychological functioning) income’
(Becker 1964 *cited in* Dillion, 2010, p. 248).
- Human capital is created by changing persons so as to give them skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways
(Coleman, 1990, p. 304 *cited in* Dillion, 2010, p. 248).

Human Capital

- In sociological terms 'human capital' relates not only to the 'human resources' that exist within a company
- It also relates to the way that these 'human resources' are converted by the 'labour' or work performed by people into economic value and eventually into profit
- As a concept it therefore combines the people who do the work, the skills that they have or develop 'on the job' and the profit that results from their work
- Therefore, if people are in unskilled jobs they have lower 'human capital' as well as lower financial capital



Social Capital

- Bourdieu (1992 *cited in* Giddens, 2006, p.322) defines Social Capital as:

‘The resources that individuals or groups gain ‘by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’.



Social Capital

- Putnam (1993a, p. 169 *cited in* Field, 2012, p. 4)

*‘features of social organisation,
such as trust, norms, and
networks, that can improve the
efficiency of society by
facilitating coordinated actions’.*



Social Capital

In small groups, discuss this important concept.

What does it mean?

Using the handout from the OECD as a guide, can you think of examples of social capital?



Handout: Social Capital – OECD Definition



Guided Study Activity: Social Capital

Feedback to your Tutor



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Social Capital

- Social networks contain value for individuals
- Relationships between individuals form social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness
- Allow participants to act together more effectively to reach collective goals
- May have links to civic virtue and political participation



Social Capital: Networks

In terms of social capital there are two types of network recognised by social scientists, namely;

Horizontal Networks

- Bring together people of the same status and power
- Facilitate communication and improved distribution of information about trustworthiness of individuals
- Improvement of reputation is directly linked to trust

Vertical Networks

- Join individuals that are different and located in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependency
- Vertical networks are not able to sustain social trust and cooperation
- Information flows are generally less reliable
- Subordinates hold information back as protection from exploitation

What examples of Vertical Networks can you think of?



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Both Horizontal and Vertical networks work alongside each other in society.

Religious Capital

- The amount of knowledge and practice pertaining to the religious 'cultus' one can bring to bear, and this knowledge and practice determine one's hierarchical status in the religious field
(Da Souza, 2009, p.173).
- Religious capital consists of the degree of mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture
(Stark, 2007).



Religious Capital

- The concept relates to the amount of time and effort (human capital) an individual is willing to commit to keep their religious standing in society (social capital)
- It also relates to the amount of 'investment' an individual makes in terms of the ideology, theology, rituals and associated behaviours
- Organised religion is also an example of a vertical network in that there is usually a hierarchy



Cultural Capital

- Objective knowledge of the arts and cultural practices and artefacts
- Cultural tastes and preferences
- Formal qualifications (e.g. University degrees, music exams)
- Cultural skills and know-how (e.g. the ability to play a musical instrument)
- The ability to be discriminating and to make distinctions between the 'good' and the 'bad'

(Bourdieu, 1984 *cited in* Smith & Riley, 2009)



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Cultural Capital

Bourdieu and Passeron talk of;

- Impact of culture on the class system and on the relationship between action and social structure
- Social reproduction through behaviour being institutionalised or 'taken-for-granted routines' of daily life.
- Bourdieu particularly sees cultural capital as 'an indicator and basis of class position' cultural attitudes, preferences and behaviours are conceptualised as 'tastes' and then used as a form of 'social selection'

(Bourdieu *cited in* Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 155).



Also . . .

Cultural capital can be seen as utilising 'power resources' such as;

- Technical power
- Scientific power
- Economic power
- Political power

Therefore if an individual is able to use these power resources then they can gain access to new and higher positions in society

(Bourdieu *cited in* Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156).



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So What does Cultural Capital Look Like?

An example of 'high status' cultural capital assumptions is;

Wine

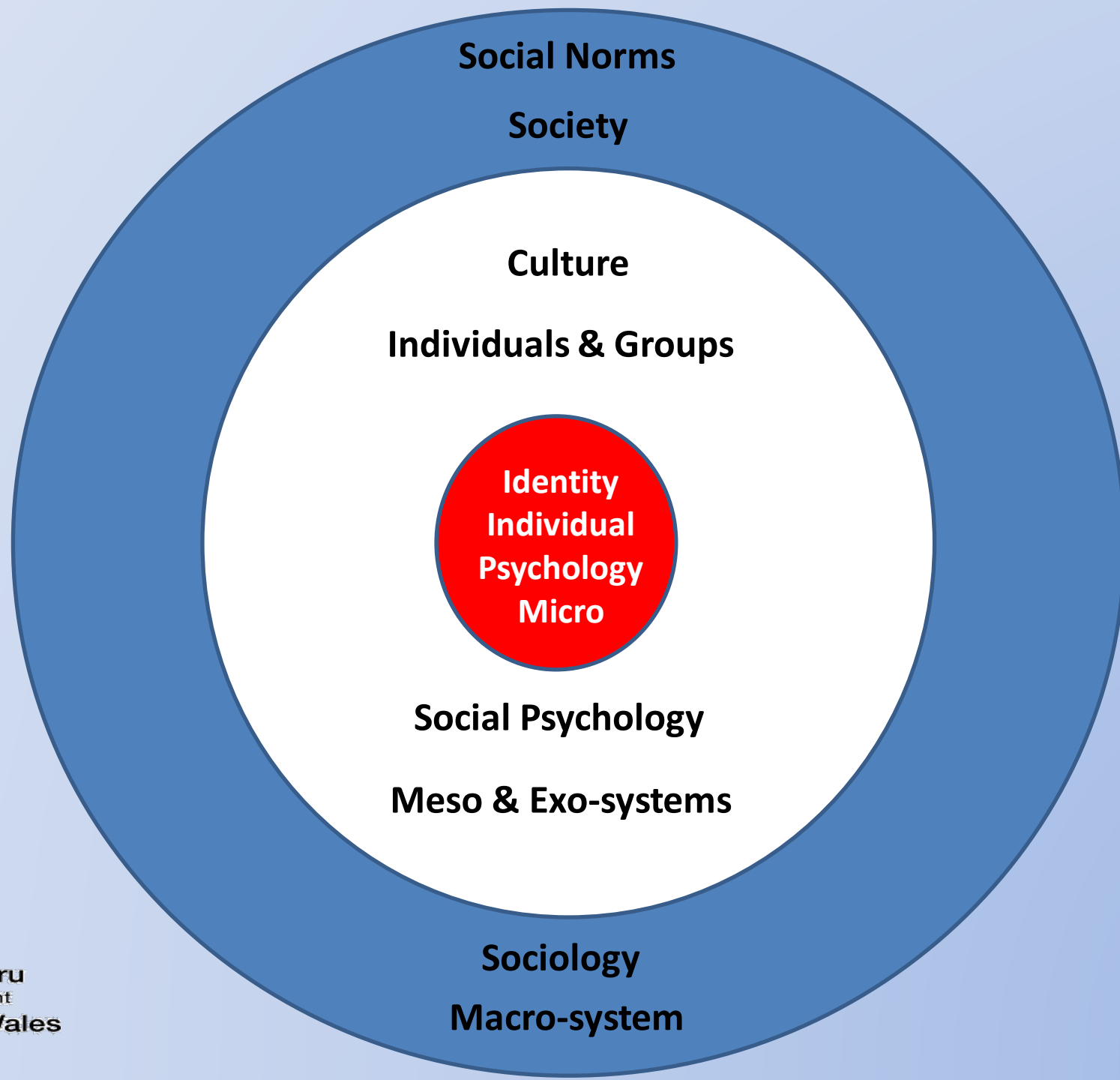
1. The **attitude** that knowing what wines are considered to be 'good' is important
2. The **formal knowledge** of how to consume and evaluate wine
3. Having the **confidence** to recognise a 'good' wine even if it is not a 'certified' good wine
4. Knowing the **behaviour** associated with the conspicuous consumption of good wine
5. Owning a wine cellar (**possession** of economic capital)



Cultural Capital

An important and original dimension of Bourdieu and Passeron's theory is that;

- The idea of cultural capital is used as a **basis for exclusion** from jobs, resources and high status groups
- The use of cultural capital in this way means that social exclusion is **institutionalised** in that high status cultural signals (attitudes, formal knowledge, confidence, behaviours and possession of goods) are used to define who is 'in' and who is not.



Bonding

- **Bonded Social capital** can be seen as the relationship experienced among family members, close friends, and neighbours
(Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2001).
- These networks are often less diverse and often not as open to the views of “others” outside of the network
(Dale & Sparkes, 2010).
- The ‘closed’ nature of these close personal relationships is also known as **bonding**
- **Bonding** is a term used in theories of child development to describe the formation of an effective ‘mutual identification’ between mother and child but is also used to describe other strong personal links



Bonding

- The 'glue' within these networks is a sense of deep trust held among the members of the group.
- This trust is often highly personalized and therefore there is a possibility of conflict when either trust or commonly held values or 'norms' break down.
- However, if trust is built between individuals over time, it is possible to engage in less personal exchanges based on 'reciprocity' (a mutual exchange of advantages and privileges – OED).
- This reciprocity creates social obligations between individuals and networks
(Dale & Sparkes, 2010).



Bridging

- **Bridging** is distinguished by its horizontally linked relationships between groups held together by bonding & social capital.
- These relationships tend to be more impersonal as the linkages are established for strategic reasons, (often to accomplish a task).
- **Bridging** occurs when one member of one network connects with a member of another network.
- Often, these bridges link networks within one community to more diverse resources normally unavailable (Woolcock, 2001).
- This often means that the trust between the bridging networks is often thinly held (Dales & Sparkes, 2010).



Linking

- **Linking** is defined as the connection between a community and the political and financial decision-makers.
- Linking social capital is also defined by weak and opportunistic ties (often communities do not have links to those with financial and political power)
- Effective **linking** is viewed as the capacity for a community to lever resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community

(Woolcock, 2001).

Bridging and Bonding

Bonding

- Connects people that are alike
- Is inward looking (we look after ourselves)
- Leads to 'exclusive' identities (us and them)
- Reinforces homogeneous groups (one of us)

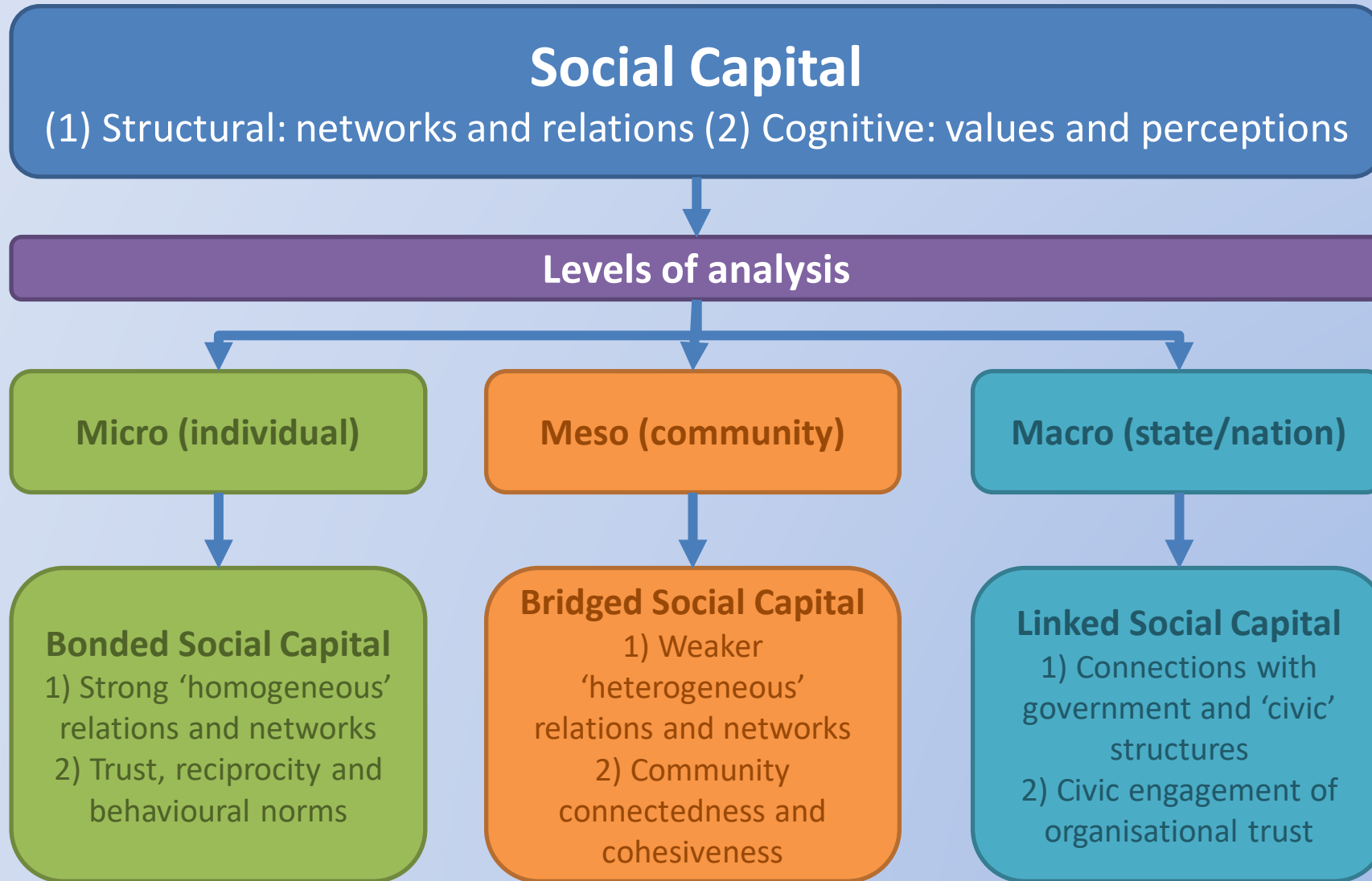
Bridging

- Brings together different people
- Is outward looking (who can help us)
- Leads to 'inclusive' identities (we are in this together)
- Bridges between people of different social groups

Bridging and Bonding

- Both can be positive and/or negative
- In reality we need a harmonious blend of bonding and bridging for a positive society

Bridging / Bonding / Linking



Identity Capital

- All of the types of 'capital' that we have looked at combine in an individual to create 'identity capital'
- Côté & Levine (2002) consider that identity capital is fundamental to identity formation.
- Identity capital consists of two types of 'resource'
 - Tangible Assets
 - Intangible Assets

Tangible Assets

- Tangible assets are 'socially visible'
- They often are the elements that we include in our CVs or job applications
 - E.g. degrees or other qualifications which can function as 'passports' to other 'social spheres'
 - Membership of professional bodies, clubs or associations
 - They indirectly contribute to character formation
 - E.g. This is who I am
 - And also to Role socialisation
 - E.g. This is what I do and with whom





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Intangible Assets

- Other identity capital is less easily identified
- It is more 'personal' and 'internal'
- It includes how we choose to speak,
- Our sense of 'self'
- How we choose to look
- How we choose to view society etc.



Intangible Assets

- Include 'ego strengths'
- Internal locus of control
- Appropriate levels of self-esteem
- A sense of purpose in life
- Ability to self-actualise
- Critical thinking abilities



See next slide

(Côté, 1997a; Schwartz, 2001 *cited in* Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 144).

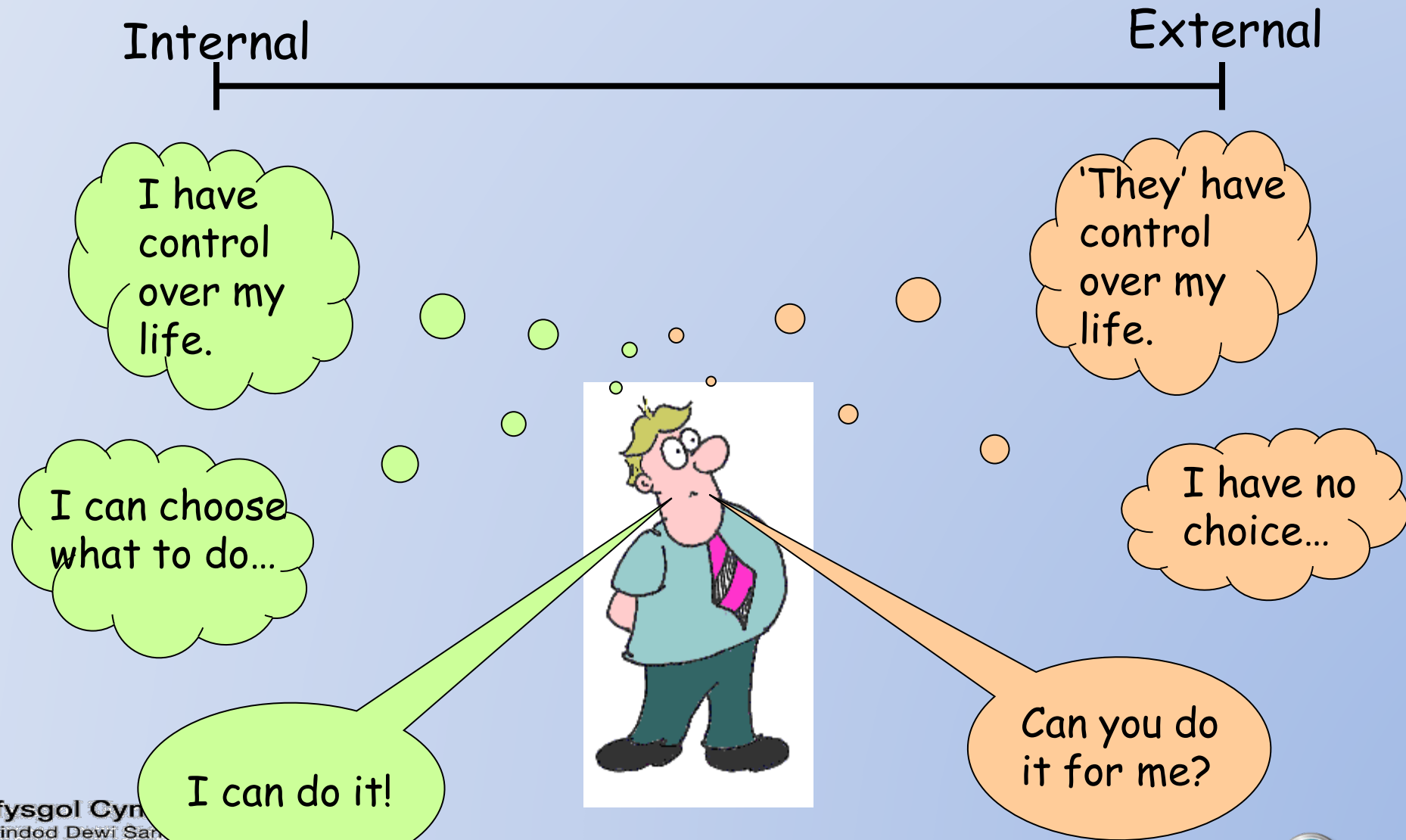


Guided Study Activity: What do these concepts mean?



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Locus of Control



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Careers Wales Mid Glamorgan and Powys

(Careers Wales , 2008)



Why Explore Identity Capital?

- It is a way of theorising 'agency' for persons confronted by the task of individualisation
- Agency:
 - The faculty for action
 - Humans have minds and selves
 - These together are the sources for action
 - Action is motivated but not caused by intentions
 - Intentions give actions meaning

Symbolic Capital

- All forms of capital can be converted into 'symbolic capital'
- Once they are either recognised or misrecognised as having the effects of power.
- Capital is also influenced by the 'trajectory' which shifts over time (things become more or less desirable)
- Also influenced by the volume and composition of their capital over their life time.
- This is also mediated through other social divisions e.g. gender, race etc.



Symbolic Capital:

So What does this Mean?

- This means that every type of capital can give the individual
- Power OR the illusion of power
- This power is wielded in society and over others



Power Depends Upon . . .

- . . . the type of capital
- . . . upon the amount of capital
- In turn this will impact upon the amount of agency an individual has:
 - e.g. choice and control over their life

How Can We Tell?

- Ultimately the acquisition of capital is related to your social economic status in society and your family/community/society within which you live
- Capital is represented in society through 'symbols'
 - E.g. education, clothes, speech, accent, skills, knowledge, associations, clubs etc.

Importance for Inclusion: Such Symbols May be Used to . . .

- Identify an individual/group
- Classify an individual/group
- Reproduce stereotypes in media, society's norms and values
- Include/exclude individuals/groups
- Identify whether they are high/low status
- Influence the ease or difficulty of obtaining goods and services
- May end up becoming owned by the individual/group and ultimately become self-reproducing

Symbolic Power through Capital

- The potential of all forms of power to be transformed into symbolic capital makes the latter the basis of symbolic power

‘a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself’

(Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170 cited in Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 2005, p. 102).

Type of Capital	The ability to support community development. <i>The capability to . . .</i>
Identity Capital	Create and evolve a distinctive and well-positioned urban personality
Intelligence Capital	Identify/foresee and adequately respond to significant agents and events
Financial Capital	Generate and sustain a healthy monetary base
Relational Capital	Develop quality interactions with all significant internal and external agents
Human Individual Capital	Create conditions for the full biological and psychological development of residents
Instrumental-material capital	Enhance the goal achievement potential of its constituent communities
Instrumental-knowledge capital	Take advantage of location and to build and renew a world-class physical infrastructure
	Transfer knowledge and foster innovation in all major areas of city life

Extension Activity

Richard Wilkinson: How Economic Inequality Harms Societies

- https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson_how_economic_inequality_harms_societies?language=en

What do you consider to be the key points of Wilkinson's argument?



Guided Study Activity: Economic Inequality



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