

2. Social outcomes of education.

Concept and measurement

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2.1 Socialization

The concept of socialization refers to the process by which the individual acquires modes of behaviour and is integrated into society and its social systems. This takes place through the internalization of the dominant systems of norms, values, symbols, customs and patterns of interpretation (see Fend 1974). Thus socialization can be understood as the means and process through which the individual develops emotional, cognitive and social needs and competences, while at the same time, social and cultural continuity in society is being maintained and reproduced in a way that leads to individual and social outcomes according to the dominant culture.

The family is regarded to be the foundation of socialization, and primary socialization typically takes place in the child's immediate environment, mainly at home (see Cronlund 1996). However, in most Western countries nowadays, the process of socialization already in the years of early childhood is more and more often located in at least two parallel contexts, the home and the school (including preschool or nursery), but may include other social and cultural contexts that the individual is a part of, and where he or she interacts with human beings and the social environment. Consequently, values, norms and behavioural patterns may be transmitted to the child by a number of 'socializing agents' other than the parents, e.g. the school, peer groups, parents' working life, and the social and mass media. The importance of external socializing agents increases during the continuing (secondary) socialization that goes on throughout youth and the rest of the individual's life. At the same time, primary socialization processes will be pursued through adulthood, involving a closer type of relationships. The distinction between primary and secondary socialization processes is thus not merely chronological, but also concerns the degree of proximity and intimacy experienced in different social spaces, as well as the intensity of interpersonal interaction.

These general considerations concerning socialization processes form the foundation for Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory of human development (1979), a model of four interrelated systems from *micro* through

meso and *exo* to *macro* level. The micro level involves face-to-face communication and direct interaction with other people, for example at home, at school or in peer groups. The meso level includes several micro systems and focus on relationships and linkages that exist between different micro systems, for example home and school. Exo systems are environments that the individual has a connection to without being a part of, which means that they nevertheless indirectly may influence the child in his or her home environment, for example parent's work environments. Macro systems, finally, refer to the overall patterns in a culture or other social context and become visible in traditions, norms, values, legislation, politics and ideologies etc., thus including the micro, meso as well as exo systems.

Over the last decades, the conditions underlying the process of socialization have changed due to global changes concerning identification, relations, migration and communication, as being described by, among others, Giddens (1990), Beck (1992) and Castells (1996, 1997). These changes include a transformation over time, from a situation where the process of socialization originally was dependent on human contact in physical contexts to a situation where the socialization process has become increasingly disembedded and may take place regardless of differences in time and space, also through dominant, global cultural orientations channelled through social and mass media such as the internet and television. The outcome of this transformation concerns new forms and expressions of individual and group identities (and boundaries) as well as new family constructions and other social patterns. Widespread migration and other social patterns also raise new questions about the role of education.

Socialization as social (re)construction

Socialization as well as identification can be understood as a more or less (un)conscious lifelong process that lay the foundations for individual development as well as social and societal change. Social and cultural patterns are transmitted through such processes, and a reproduction of existing structures takes place. At the same time, individual development may lead to new knowledge, values, routines and innovations that bring about individual as well as social change. The model of human development shows how the child's development consists of more or less conscious – both socially controlled and self-regulated – processes through which the individual learns what roles, expectations and behaviours are connected to different social contexts. According to Bronfenbrenner's model, family, school, neighbourhoods and peer groups on the one hand act as agents of socialization that contribute to the development of young people's knowl-

edge and understanding, and young persons themselves on the other hand play important roles in shaping their development through the ways they let the environments affect and regulate their socialization process.

As theories of human, cultural and social capital point out (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988), socialization and young people's learning outcomes are related to the family and its contexts as well as the different resources available in these contexts. Social and cultural capital theories explain how cultural and social resources strengthen the development of human capital, such as skills, knowledge and qualifications, the acquisition of cultural capital, such as 'understanding the system' and behavioural repertoires, and the acquisition of social capital, i.e. the resources available in the social network (see Dijkstra & Peschar 2003). Consequently, this perspective highlights the relevance of socio-economic and socio-cultural background, at the same time as it emphasizes resources available through interactions with other people, also influencing the social capital and civic outcomes of learning.

A difference between social and other forms of capital and outcomes according to Coleman (1988) is its "public good aspect; the actor or actors who generate social capital ordinarily capture only a small part of its benefits", offering resources to the wider community around families and schools (Coleman & Hoffer 1987). This means that social capital may either facilitate or, if lacking, inhibit the individual realization of goals like social and other learning outcomes (see Section 2.2). Contexts like socio-economic, socio-cultural, ethnic or religious milieus, as well as schools, differ in the resources and constraints for learning. Other contextual factors directly related to the learning process (such as classroom instruction and student activities) also influence student development. Through these mechanisms, both social communities and schools might compensate for a lack of resources available in the family, allowing emancipation from possible limitations of the home environment.

These remarks illustrate the way in which the process of socialization and its outcomes should be regarded as shaped in interplay between individuals in interaction with other human beings and their environments, influenced by contextual characteristics (see Hacking 1999; Berger & Luckmann 1991; Wertsch 1985). This also concerns the social outcomes of schools and the outcomes of school inspection (see also Section 10.2).

Family and school in multiple contexts

Childhood socialization can be understood as taking place in 'multiple contexts' or different interrelated spheres. These might include the child's friends and peer groups, sports and other leisure activities, social media,

the school, one or more nuclear families (e.g. two divorced families in which the child lives) as well as grandparents and other relatives, sometimes with different cultures and speaking different languages (see Tallberg Broman et al. 2009, 2011). These contexts might be characterized by diverse rules, norms, values and behaviours, at the same time that the child is interacting with an increasing number of persons. The child learns and practices how to behave, and learns what is considered right, wrong or 'normal' through social interaction in such varying contexts. Sometimes the concept 'double socialization' is used to describe the fact that different kinds of socialization takes place in different spheres. Where earlier home and school were often the dominant socializing agents, socialization has increasingly become a multiple contextual process in which culture and language play an important role. Culture both (re)produces and is (re)produced by a common language and by common knowledge, values, norms and behavioural patterns, altogether creating a Durkheimian 'collective consciousness'.

Being socialized into and becoming part of an increasing number of heterogeneous social contexts, situations and relations means that national projects or shared cultural heritage become difficult to maintain in their present form, due to processes of fragmentation. These developments underline the importance of the school as an 'inclusive institution', perhaps more than ever. To produce and maintain a base of common knowledge, fundamental values and norms, today's schools need to be places where diversity and fragmented mosaics of experiences could be (re-)included into a collective consciousness, including narratives of past and present, basic democratic values, norms and social trust. The social outcomes of schools could be seen as the various abilities needed to live and act as citizens in democratic and heterogeneous societies of the present and the future world.

2.2 The concept of social outcomes

The outcomes of education do not consist of academic achievement only. In addition to qualification, socialization is a major task assigned to schools. The social outcomes of education are important in the form of individual social development as well as their value to the economy and society at large. Before presenting a framework for the description of the social benefits of education, we will describe the main categories of social outcomes that can be distinguished: *social returns*, *social cohesion and social capital* and *social competences* (see Dijkstra 2012).

Social returns

The positive effect of education on the social domain manifests itself in many forms. Examples are the advantages of school success for the next generation, such as better school results of children and a lower chance of risky behaviour. Education is also associated with physical and mental health later in life, well-being and higher life expectancy. Positive effects are also illustrated by a decrease in crime rate. The relationship between education and lower levels of deviant behaviour also illustrates the relevance of such social outcomes for society. There is broad consensus about the significance of the social returns of education in economic terms. These returns increase even more when the spillover effects – the benefits they have for others (both individually and collectively) – are taken into account. One example of such an effect is the decrease in deviant behaviour mentioned above, which leads to a reduction of the collective costs of prevention, surveillance and enforcement.

Social cohesion and social capital

However, the social outcomes of education include more than just these *social returns*. On the one hand, they include the knowledge and skills that benefit people's personal functioning and have an effect at the individual level; on the other hand, they include outcomes at the level of society, which have both collective and individual value.

Important collective benefits of education are *social cohesion* and the *social capital* available to a society. Although different definitions of social cohesion have been put forward, in essence they may be summarized as 'keeping things together'. These definitions often focus on the bond between the individual and the social context: social cohesion as the glue that holds society together. Cohesion is also a two-sided coin and comprises both 'keeping things together' and allowing room for variation. This conception of cohesion as a state of equilibrium underlines the importance of cohesion as a mechanism for regulating the conflicting demands that are a characteristic of society, such as differences in values and interests. In a peaceful, strong and vibrant society, differences can only exist if there is sufficient common ground. From this, it follows that norms are one of the building blocks of social cohesion, and that these norms are not accidental but develop in a process of socialization, of which education is an important element.

The effect of schooling on social participation and social trust is one example of the contribution of education towards social cohesion. Social participation refers to the many ways in which people are involved with groups, organizations and society at large, striving to realize collective

goals, such as membership of organizations, participation in volunteer work and donations to charities. Social participation is a measure of people's commitment to collective interests and their willingness to contribute to those interests. Social trust refers to the bonds that people feel exist between themselves and others. A high level of social trust contributes to the expectation that other people will not behave opportunistically and to the assumption of a shared willingness to cooperate. The reduction of transaction costs makes social trust one of the building blocks for the effective production of collective goods.

Social participation and social trust are important elements of the social capital available to a society (Putnam 2000). Despite its somewhat diffuse nature, the concept of social capital has proven to be seminal, for example for its contribution towards an essential social issue: how does social order and lasting social cohesion develop? Social capital is an important means to resist problems of collective action and opportunism. It refers to characteristics of the social structure that enable effective coordination and the realization of public interests (Putnam 1993). Social capital consists of the resources available within the social network that help individuals and groups to realize goals that could not be realized in other ways or only at higher costs (see Portes 1998). Some of the forms that social capital takes include trust, norms of reciprocity about mutual expectations and obligations, effective social sanctions and access to information. This social capital offers important advantages. In communities where people can assume that trust is worthwhile and will not lead to abuse, it will be easier to achieve exchange and cooperation, to restrain opportunism more effectively, and to solve problems of collective action at lower transaction costs (Putnam 1993). Education plays an important role in the formation of social capital. A meta-analysis of international studies shows that participation in education has a substantial positive effect on social trust and social participation (Huang et al. 2010). Researchers have pointed out that the social capital available to societies has been eroding since the 1990s (see Coleman 1993; Putnam 2000).

Social outcomes thus assume various forms, and more examples than the ones given above can easily be found. In the political dimension, they include, for example, knowledge of and trust in politics, keeping abreast of political developments, and participation in political activities. Social participation and involvement manifest themselves, *inter alia*, in membership of organizations, involvement in social issues, trust in public institutions (e.g. the judiciary, the government and the media), participation in protest movements, or dedication to sustainability and the environment. Values

relevant to the way people live together also play a role, for example tolerance, nonviolence, equal rights for women and minority groups, respect for the rule of law, democratic values and human rights. Knowledge – e.g. of citizenship, democracy, national and international history – is also among these outcomes. Research into many of these social outcomes has already been conducted; generally speaking, the results point to a positive influence of education in these areas (e.g. OECD 2007, 2010; Schulz et al. 2010).

Social and civic competences

A third category of social outcomes consists of people's knowledge, attitudes, skills, beliefs and values in the social domain that contribute to the realization of individual goals and that have an impact on the way people live together. The term used in this study for this category of outcomes is *social competence*. Although various definitions are given, in essence social competences refer to an individual's ability to successfully fulfil a wide range of social roles. A distinction can be made between interpersonal competences aimed at interacting with other people and more general civic competences that are important for moving within social contexts (see Ten Dam & Volman 2007).

Social competences. The acquisition of social competences is important from the perspective of social development in terms of, inter alia, affective and moral development and cultural literacy.

In the light of the changing competences required in the current knowledge economy, lately various authors have also pointed out the relevance of complex skills (e.g. advanced skills or '21st century skills'). Many of such competences have an important social component and include skills such as the ability to collaborate, critical thinking, the use of information technology, and social and cultural skills. According to Voogt and Pareja Roblin, such complex skills require both cognitive and social competences (2010).

Social development as a goal of education is not only intrinsically relevant; social competences also contribute to school success. A meta analysis by Durlak et al. (2011) led to the conclusion that good socio-emotional development contributes to better school performance.

Citizenship competences. In addition to the social competences required to successfully interact with others, the acquisition of civic competences is another key social outcome of education. Civic competences are necessary for people to participate in society and comprise, for instance, productively dealing with diversity and difference, making contributions to the public in-

terest, making responsible choices that do justice to personal and collective goals, understanding the way in which society and democracy function, and values such as tolerance and a democratic spirit. We refer to such aspects as *citizenship competences*. As we have seen, civic competences are not only relevant at the individual level; they also represent a collective interest and constitute an explicitly formulated goal of education.

Although it is not easy to measure competences that contribute to successful participation in society, in recent years useful and important steps have been made in this respect, for example the conceptual and methodological development of research instruments. International comparative analyses show differences between countries in, inter alia, interest in politics, participation in volunteer work, social trust and differences in the relationship between these measures and the level of education within countries. For instance, fourteen-year-old students who have better developed civic competences (e.g. an understanding of aspects of citizenship) more often report that they intend to vote once they reach voting age. They also show higher levels of support for equal rights for ethnic minorities. Incidentally, more knowledge does not always coincide with higher trust in institutions of society, which could be seen as a positive effect of education (OECD 2011, 2012).

2.3 A conceptual framework

Social outcomes thus manifest themselves in various forms at different levels and in diverse social domains. Some of the social outcomes described above concern intentional and actively pursued results; others are more in the nature of side effects. Outcomes in the latter category are not explicit goals but form additional benefits resulting from education. To systematically reflect on social outcomes and to distinguish the various types of outcomes in this study, they must be classified in more detail, to avoid the risk of conceptual confusion and to illustrate where they are related (see Figure 2.1). Building on Dijkstra (2012), such a framework will enable a coherent description, a comparison between assessment schemes, and an evaluation of the current state of affairs within the countries studied in this book.

Qualification and socialization

A good starting point for the classification of the various types of social outcomes is the goals and functions of education. Usually, three categories

of goals are distinguished: 1) to contribute to personal development, 2) to contribute to people's social and cultural development, and 3) to prepare them for their future jobs and participation in the labour market. In addition to explicit goals, education also pursues goals that are more implicit. Also unintentional effects of education must be taken into account. It is therefore useful to take not only the intended goals (explicitly formulated or not) as a starting point but also the effects that can be attributed to education. Such an approach focuses on the functions of education: the impact of education on the individual and society.

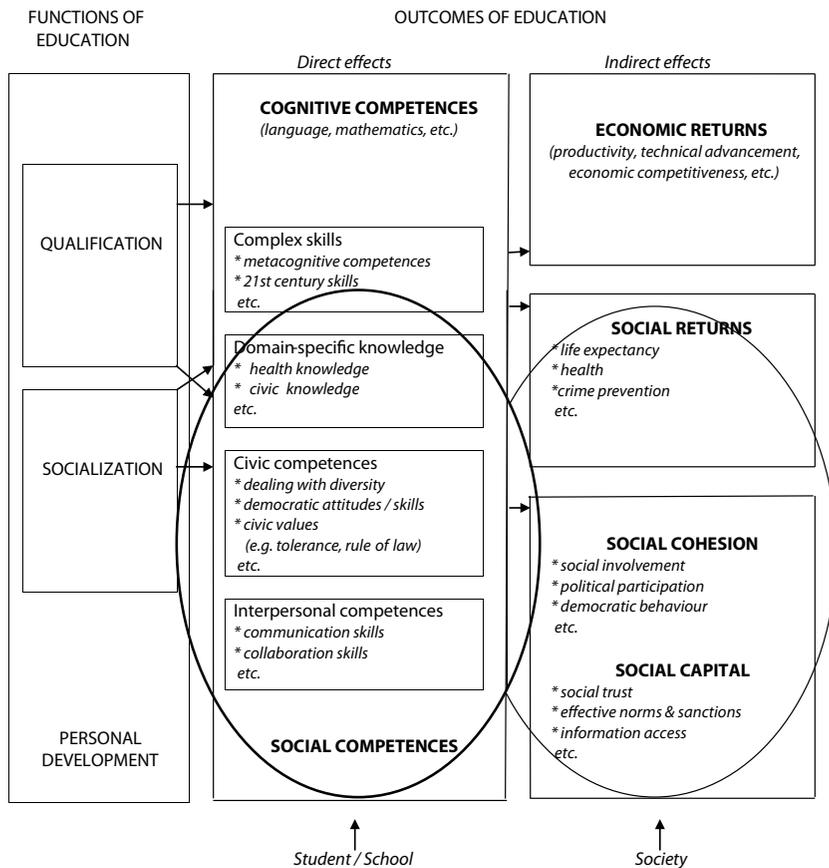
A commonly used perspective is the distinction between qualification and socialization as the primary functions of education. *Qualification* concerns the acquisition of competences that help people to live independent lives, particularly by preparing them for the labour market. *Socialization* concerns the transfer of culture required to successfully participate in society. Both qualification and socialization are part of a more general process of personal development, which consists of identity formation and broad individual self-development and expression. It is a two-way process, which also includes the formation of an autonomous individual and the way in which he or she wants to relate to the dominant culture (see Section 2.2).

The qualification function refers to the qualifications acquired by learners, with cognitive competences as the major constituent. The acquisition of competences also depends on the differentiation mechanism operating in education, which determines which qualifications will be offered to which learners. The socialization function of education refers to its contribution towards the transfer of culture. Integration within the group and within society is closely related to the degree to which individuals identify themselves with generally accepted norms and values. It is an important prerequisite for social continuity and cohesion. The acquisition of social competences is one of its main components. The above description of social competences as the ability to fulfil various and different roles can thus be formulated more specifically: it does not only include an action dimension but also a normative component – how things ought to be. Consistently fulfilling one's roles pre-supposes the acceptance of the structure and internalization of the prescribed role behaviour.

Social outcomes

For a large part, the school's qualification function thus focuses on the transfer of cognitive competences such as general cognitive skills (language, arithmetic) and more complex skills such as metacognitive competences. In addition, it transfers domain-specific knowledge, for example about healthy behaviour.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework: Social outcomes of education



The previously described social returns of education are produced by way of the effects of education on the acquisition of cognitive competences: apart from individual and collective economic benefits, the acquisition of cognitive qualifications also leads to social benefits, for example in the domains of safety and health. School performance is also important because it relates to social capital and social and political participation.

In addition to cognitive competences, social competences also play an important role in fulfilling the socialization function in the form of participation in society and being able to maintain beneficial relationships with other individuals. Education contributes to the acquisition of interpersonal and civic competences as direct individual social outcomes of education.

Besides these direct effects, the contribution of education towards social competences also has indirect effects at both the individual and the collective level. This concerns the outcomes described above in the areas of society, citizenship and democracy in the form of social cohesion and social capital (Section 2.2).

Social outcomes include individually acquired characteristics (e.g. knowledge and skills) and effects at the individual level (e.g. participation in political activities). There are also social outcomes at the collective level: the sum total of individual attitudes and actions (e.g. effective social norms). This study centres on the primary social outcomes of education: its direct effects in the form of social and civic competences and its indirect effects in the form of the various types of social capital, social participation and social inclusion.

The categories of social outcomes of education distinguished in this study are outlined in Figure 2.1 (derived from Dijkstra 2012). This conceptualization of social outcomes of education will be the point of departure for fleshing out the concept of ‘outcomes’ as used in this study and will be defined more rigorously in the next section.

2.4 Social outcomes of schools

In the light of this conceptualization, this study will define *social outcomes of education* as its individual and collective benefits for interpersonal interaction in the non-economic spheres of life. This concerns direct outcomes in the form of competences acquired through education and indirect outcomes produced by the effect on other domains (Dijkstra 2012). More specifically, we will use the following concepts.

Student competences

The concepts of social and civic competences refer to the combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills and the ability to use these adequately in light of the characteristics of a task and the situation in which this task must be completed. A distinction can be made here between the intra-personal, inter-personal and civic dimensions.

Social competence and civic competences. The inter-personal dimension (*social competence*) refers to the competences that are relevant to interactions with other individuals and concerns competences that help individuals to interact adequately with others and to achieve their goals in all kinds

of situations. The more general *civic competences* are relevant for moving within social contexts, for example the competences required to contribute to society, democracy and the groups people live in.

Conclusions about the social and civic competences of students are based on observations at the individual level. After aggregation, conclusions can be drawn about means and distributions at the school level.

Social participation. In addition to the previously discussed direct outcomes in the form of competences acquired through education, we will also distinguish indirect outcomes in the form of social participation and social inclusion. This concerns active participation in social activities at various levels (e.g. neighbourhood, associations and volunteer work) and social involvement in all kinds of forms, including behavioural intentions. Unlike civic competences, which reflect the students' ability to engage in the intended behaviour, social participation reflects its results as manifested in social activities and involvement. Although an advantage of studying social outcomes from this indirect perspective lies in the validity of the measurement (the intended goal is measured directly), the effect of education cannot always be distinguished easily since actual participation is a consequence of the situational characteristics, the students' opportunities for participation and the competences necessary to participate. The latter are a result of education, which means that the various factors will have to be distinguished unambiguously before conclusions can be drawn about the social outcomes of education. This restriction is less of an obstacle in approaches that do not focus on the outcomes of education but rather on the curriculum or the teaching and learning process as indicators of educational quality (see section 2.5).

Measuring social outcomes in school inspections

The supervision of school quality focuses on the assessment of the characteristics of schools and the results of the teaching that can be measured in the form of student achievement. At the level of the school, the social outcomes of education concern the competences that people need to live with others and, more precisely, the degree to which these competences have been successfully obtained.

This concerns the *social competences* that people need to realize their goals and to relate to others in all kinds of situations, at work and in other areas of life. It also concerns the *civic competences* required to make contributions to society, democracy and the social networks in which people live. Although the distinction between these two types of

competences is relevant, we will refer to both as ‘social competences’ for the sake of brevity.

The extent to which students show these competences is determined by measuring them in tests or real-life situations. Conclusions about social competences are thus based on observations at the student level. After aggregation, conclusions can be drawn at the school level. Such aggregated conclusions give us an impression of the average level of social competence of the student population of a school.

Social quality

In line with this, the *social quality of a school* can then be simply defined as all aspects of quality of the school that contribute to the acquisition of social competences by its students. Based on the input-throughput-output model of educational quality, these aspects will be summarized in Section 2.5 as provision, process and product, in conjunction with the constraints influencing these aspects.

Student care

A third important dimension of social competences besides the interpersonal and civic dimensions discussed in Section 2.3 is the intra-personal dimension, which includes traits such as self-confidence and the regulation of emotions. The intra-personal dimension is important, for example in situations where schools have to deal with the developmental problems of students. In such cases, schools will often pay most attention to individual students with behavioural, social or emotional development deficits, which it will try to resolve through problem-focused interventions. Because of the importance of good social and civic development of all students, we regard this category as supplementary. We will therefore focus on the interpersonal and civic dimensions in the form of competence development relevant to all students.

Well-being and social safety

Social competences can be explored in various ways, for example questionnaires completed by the students to measure their knowledge and attitudes as well as their (self-observed) behaviour. Observation instruments (e.g. to measure competence as seen by teachers) and peer assessments can also be used for this purpose.

Well-being and social safety as indicators of social competences. In view of the nature of social competences, measurements in real-life situations

may increase the validity of the measurement since – other than with paper-and-pencil tests – fewer assumptions are required about the relationship between the measurement in the test situation and the real situation in which the competence is relevant. However, because of the need for inter-rater reliability and the practical difficulties involved in realizing observation-based measurements, such designs will hardly be used for repeated large-scale surveys.

Nevertheless, measurements of the well-being and safety perception of students in and around the school do indicate these competences. Such measurements show how students perceive their social environment. The mean social competences of the students as manifested at school are expressed in the way they perceive the school's social climate. Although other elements (e.g. personal traits or factors in the student's home setting) also play a role, measurements of the mean well-being and safety perception of students give an impression of the characteristics of the social context at school as created by the attitudes and behaviours of other students. The assumption here is that (if necessary after correcting for specific characteristics of the student population) such additional factors are distributed randomly at the aggregate level, which means that if adequate instruments are used, the mean differences between schools can be attributed to school-related factors. Measurements of the perception of social safety and well-being – as a proxy of the social competences of students as reflected in the social climate at school – can be regarded as an indicator of the mean social competences of the students at that school.

Aspects such as well-being and safety perception thus have a double relevance. On the one hand, they provide an insight into the school climate and the extent to which the students perceive it as positive and safe. Social outcomes are thus a condition for learning and conducive to school performance. On the other hand, well-being and perception of social safety reflect the mean social competences of the students in the school, for example positive mutual relationships, acceptance and safety. Thus, information about the students' well-being at school also provides an insight into the mean social competences of students at the level of the school.

Measurement of social outcomes of schools

With respect to the measurement of students' social competences, this implies that at least two approaches are possible. The first is the measurement of social competences with standardized instruments such as knowledge tests, attitude questionnaires or skills tests. The advantage of

such measurements is that they are relatively simple to organize, even when conducted repeatedly and on a large scale. The limitations of these instruments mainly lies in the assumptions that must be made regarding their concept validity. Other types of measurement, for example using portfolio instruments, could offer an alternative but must be developed further, particularly with respect to their ability to provide a standardized assessment of what is being measured.

The second approach involves measuring the students' well-being and their sense of social safety as indicators of social competences. Although the instruments applied to measure these aspects are mainly used to measure, for example, school climate, they can also – as we have explained before – give an impression of the social competences of students at the level of the school. Such instruments are often used to counteract bullying, for example, or to gain an understanding of the school's social atmosphere, but they can also be used at the school level to measure social competences. Frequency of use and relatively easy standardization are two advantages of using such instruments to measure social competences. Measurements in concrete contexts, in which the actual behaviour of students is made visible, is another of their advantages. The disadvantage is their indirect nature, because they measure competences reflected in perceived behaviour, as observed by fellow students.

For the moment, both approaches to the measurement of social competences of students as a social outcome of education appear to be productive for evaluating the outcomes of education.

Net school effects?

Learning takes place outside as well as within schools. This is particularly relevant in the social domain and implies that the social outcomes of education are partially dependent on factors outside the school. Where social outcomes as indicators of quality are concerned, it is therefore important to determine the net effect of education, that is, the effect that can be attributed to the school. International empirical research shows different effects and effect sizes, ranging from small or medium to substantial, depending on the variables indicating social or civic competences (see Geboers et al. 2012). Differences in student outcomes are largely explained by student characteristics, while differences between schools account for approximately 25 percent of the variance found (Schulz et al. 2010; see Isac 2013; see also Chapter 4).

Separating the school effect from other factors is not an easy task. Possible approaches could be school means models, cohort comparisons

or, preferably, learning gains models. It is as yet unclear, however, whether this is feasible in the short term. Solutions may lie in the use of approaches based on benchmarking, in which the results of schools are compared with those of other, comparable schools or with results measured in the past.

2.5 Characteristics of schools

As we have seen in the previous section, the *social quality* of a school concerns all aspects of quality contributing to the acquisition of social competences by students. We will briefly describe these aspects based on the input-throughput-output model of educational quality. The model presented in Figure 2.2 offers a global conceptual framework, indicating the main school factors related to the social outcomes of schooling. As a result of the modest empirical status of the knowledge about effective schooling in the social domain, the model – based on assumptions taken from general effective school models and comparable to citizenship models suggested before (see Maslowski et al. 2009; Scheerens 2011; Isac et al. 2013) – should primarily be understood as a heuristic device.

Output

Outcomes are a primary indication of quality in the social domain and have been discussed above. The underlying philosophy is that, in the end, education is not about how ‘nice’ it is but whether teaching and learning lead to the results pursued: students achieving the intended learning objectives in the form of acquired knowledge, attitudes and skills. From this perspective, the quality of education is, in essence, made visible by the educational outcomes. Depending on one’s vision of the contribution that is expected of education, conditions may be imposed, for example the possibility of distinguishing the contribution of the school from the influence of other factors. As mentioned before, students also learn outside the school and grow up in environments in which learning is stimulated to varying degrees. Neither is it realistic to expect education to solve social problems. Although schools are undoubtedly confronted with such problems and strive to promote student development – aslo (or perhaps especially) in the face of disadvantages and risks – their capability to do so is not unlimited. Because of the significance of the successful acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills, outcomes are nevertheless a primary indication of quality.

Measurement. For measuring the schools' output (social outcomes), different kinds of indicators could be used (see Section 2.4). Social competences are measured through tests, by measuring students' competences or competence-components such as knowledge, skills or attitudes in the social and civic domain and aggregated to the school level. At the aggregate level, well-being and school safety indicators also indicate the level of social competence. Although not offering a direct measure of competences, behavioural intentions can be seen as indications of (later) social outcomes, and the activities of students might indicate actual outcomes, such as pro-social or anti-social behaviour inside school, or community service or social and civic participation outside school.

Input and throughput: The quality of teaching and learning

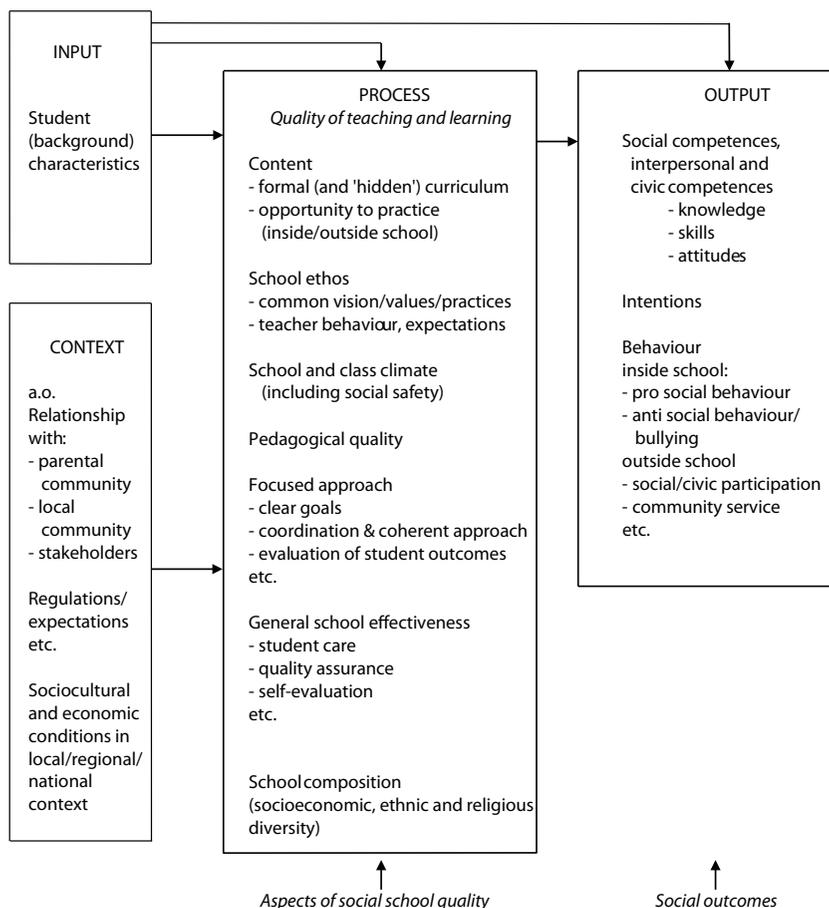
Next to the focus on educational quality assessed on the basis of outcomes, other approaches based on evaluations of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching and learning process are also relevant.

Paying attention to the quality of curriculum content and the teaching processes is relevant, because of its intrinsic importance. Social safety and a positive school climate, for example, are in themselves goals to be pursued and criteria for assessing quality. Another example of intrinsic values is the pedagogical quality of the school (school ethos), as manifested, for example, in teachers exhibiting desirable behaviour and the school community being a 'just society' illustrating 'the good life'. This is also true for the quality of the curriculum content, which is also valuable – for example in the form of subject matter introducing the students to aspects of history, heritage and culture – even where student learning is less than satisfactory.

High-quality provision and processes also have a functional value because they contribute to better student performance or effective ways of achieving it. The constraints also play an important role in this respect, as they determine the efforts necessary to reach the desired situation from the actual situation.

Subject matter. The quality of curriculum content concerns the subject matter and the materials available for its transfer, in terms of their correspondence with the goals stipulated by the government and the school and their appropriateness to the students' capabilities. Statutory demands concerning subject matter and curriculum content play a role in this respect but also the vision of the school and student needs. Its position within the curriculum and the assessment of mastery of the subject matter are also important, as shown by research into the acquisition of citizenship

Figure 2.2 School effectiveness model of social quality and outcomes



competences (see Amado et al. 2002; Kerr et al. 2007; Keating et al. 2010). Other relevant aspects are opportunities to practice, offering meaningful situations, and inviting students to reflect on what they have learned, for example in forms of service learning (see Van Goethem 2014).

Educational process. The educational process as it relates to the social quality of education concerns, inter alia, pedagogical behaviour, didactic approaches and pedagogical climate. As mentioned above, the goals pursued by the school in the social and civic domain are manifested in the day-to-day interaction of students and teachers and can be taught by exhibiting example behaviour and creating opportunities for students to

learn and practice social competences. Research shows that an open and 'democratic' school culture in which students are taken seriously and multiple perspectives are discussed contributes in particular to the acquisition of citizenship competences by students (see Hahn 1998; Niemi & Junn 1998; Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Schuitema et al. 2008; Schulz et al. 2010; Geboers et al. 2012; Barrett & Brunton-Smith 2014).

Quality assurance and school self-evaluation. Another element of quality is its assurance, for example in the extent to which the school succeeds in systematically tuning the teaching to the goals it wants to achieve. Elements of this tuning include systems of school self-evaluation and quality assurance, giving the school an insight into its functioning and helping it to make improvements, intimate links with the environment, and involve parents and other stakeholders.

Conditions

To realize the social goals of education, the composition of the student population is an important condition. Another is diversity, which involves the 'distance' between the socio-cultural setting in which students grow up and the goals pursued by the school. Correspondence between the home environment and the school also play a role, most notably where the school's goals in the social domain are not supported by the parents or the community around the school.

In addition to general factors, such as the available resources or the quality of the teachers and school leaders, the school's 'ethos' plays an important role. Effective teaching becomes possible particularly where there is a fit between the goals of education in the social and civic domain – what is the 'just society' that the school is pursuing? – and the resources available to achieve these goals. One of the factors determining the extent to which this fit can be achieved is the opinions and beliefs of the school staff, which can only be influenced by the school up to a certain point.

Although the above is by no means an exhaustive overview, it does give an impression of the factors playing a role in the assessment of those aspects of quality that contribute to the acquisition of social competences by students (see Kerr, 2010). As we have seen, empirical knowledge about the influence of such aspects of quality on the acquisition of social competences is still scarce, which means that, for the time being, educational supervision will mainly be based on a more general understanding of school quality and school improvement (see Chapter 3).

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