Cultural Capital and Educational Outcomes in Croatia: A Contextual Approach

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Cultural Capital and Educational Outcomes in Croatia: A Contextual Approach. This paper examines the relationship between different types of cultural capital and educational outcomes. The authors operationalised highbrow cultural capital, two additional formal competencies from CNFC, and parental cultural capital, in order to ascertain whether these cultural capital types are associated with secondary school enrolment and school grades. Data was collected by the authors in a survey that was conducted in five Croatian secondary schools. The results broadly show that highbrow cultural capital is connected with both measured educational outcomes. The authors conclude that the dominant interpretation of cultural capital still has its merits and argue for a broader contextual approach to cultural capital in future research.
Sociológia 2016, Vol. 48 (No. 6: 601-621)

Key words: *cultural capital; education; educational outcomes; schooling attainment; Croatia*

Introduction

Educational credentials represent an important basis for social ranking, while social origins still have significant bearing on educational success. Explanations of the latter association are very diverse, ranging from those that emphasise economic capital (financial resources), social capital (social networks), human capital (e.g., shared intelligence), rational choice (risk aversion towards downward mobility), and cultural capital. The last explanation, which stems from Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1973; Bourdieu – Passeron 1977), puts an emphasis on the differential exposure to cultural resources (attitudes, knowledge, behaviour, modes of appreciation) that can be used to obtain access to other valued social resources. These cultural resources indicate familiarity with the dominant culture. Bourdieu (1986) differentiates between three forms of cultural capital: embodied, institutionalized, and objectified. Embodied cultural capital references cultural knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that are inscripted in a person's habitus. Institutionalized cultural capital is manifested in educational credentials, whilst cultural artefacts compose objectified cultural capital. Since higher social classes (upper and middle class) are more familiar with the dominant culture than the lower ones (working class), the members of these classes endow their children with higher

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levels of cultural capital in a process of intergenerational transfer (cultural socialization). In other words, Bourdieu claims that, in addition to higher levels of financial and social capital, higher social classes also possess higher levels of cultural capital. Since dominant culture is taught, and familiarity with it is rewarded in schools, the cultural stratification leads to different educational outcomes. Even though it is usually claimed that different educational outcomes are based on ability and merit, Bourdieu claims that they are essentially non-meritocratic. It can be argued (Bennett – Silva 2011) that Bourdieu introduced the concept of cultural capital in a specific socio-historical moment in which policies aimed at equalizing the opportunity of access to education and cultural participation, as the vehicles of social mobility and democratic civic entitlement, were developed. Bourdie's pessimistic view was that unequal distribution of cultural resources clashes with these policies, and serves as a distinct mechanism that enables the reproduction of social inequalities.

Another important concept of Bourdieu's theory is *habitus*. Habitus represents the internalized structure of values, attitudes, behaviours, and expectations that are based on individuals' explicit or implicit understanding of their place/roles in the social structure. Habitus is composed of the cultural knowledge, as well as from fine nuances of personal style and behaviour. In addition, habitus is comprised of the expectations of what is real and achievable for a person of a specific standing/origin. E.g., a working class child can see manual jobs as a natural and self-evident choice for their future career, whereas middle class children can aspire towards higher education and professional careers. Habitus can also act in a more subtle way, influencing the choices made in tertiary education. (Lehmann 2009; Devas 2011) As shall be seen later in this paper, parental habitus can also act as a constraint, or a facilitator with regard to educational careers of their children.

Given the vagueness of the term and subtle changes in meaning that can be found in Bourdieu's writings (for an overview, see Lamont – Lareau 1988), it is not surprising that the concept has come to assume a great number of diverse meanings, and that it has been operationalised in widely different fashions. Winkle-Wagner (2010) divided the studies of cultural capital in educational context into four distinct groups: (1) cultural capital as high-status knowledge and competence; (2) cultural knowledge or competence that is rewarded in a particular social setting („contextually-valued cultural capital“); (3) cultural capital employed in relation to marginalized social groups and (4) cultural capital as a part of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction.

Studies that conceptualized and operationalised cultural capital as high-status knowledge and competence are the most numerous ones, and have become known as the *dominant interpretation* of cultural capital. However,

even this group of studies is highly divergent in operationalisation of independent variables (cultural capital measurements), and dependent variables (educational outcomes). As pointed out by Dumais (2002), cultural capital has been operationalised as (1) cultural participation and possession of artwork, (2) participation in art classes in school, and (3) personal style (e.g., rich vocabulary). Having this in mind, it is understandable that empirical studies yielded vastly different results and conclusions. In a seminal study, DiMaggio (1982) established that students' abilities, father's education and cultural capital explain only 12% variance of male students', and only 18% variance of female students' secondary school grades in the USA. However, independently of father's education and abilities, cultural capital explained only 3% of the variance. Similarly, Dumais (2002) established that cultural capital has almost negligible influence on students' elementary school grades in the USA. The same author (Dumais 2006) established a very small interactive influence of SES and cultural participation on teachers' evaluations of students' reading and mathematical skills, thus disproving Bourdieu's hypothesis of cultural reproduction. By contrast, several studies confirmed more tangible associations of highbrow cultural capital and educational success. E.g., Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman's (2008) analyses of the PISA and TIMSS datasets in nine selected Western countries ascertained partial confirmation of the importance of cultural capital, even though cultural capital proved to be largely dissociated from the educational level of parents. However, aside from the fact that these datasets do not include measurement of students' abilities, cultural capital showed a positive relation to students' literacy in different fields (reading, science and mathematics), but also showed a negative association with curriculum-based mathematics achievement. Similarly, Flere et al. (2010) ascertained that cultural capital, measured as parental educational level and children's cultural participation, explained 13-14% of scholastic achievement and scholastic transition of Slovenian secondary school students. In a group of studies, cultural participation was separately operationalised and disentangled from reading habits and reading behaviour. E.g., Sullivan (2001) found that cultural participation doesn't exert an independent influence on students' grades, whereas reading habits do, probably by improving students' cognitive skills, or by acquiring knowledge and competences that are rewarded in schools. In a related vein, De Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp (2000) acertained that parental reading behaviour, not highbrow cultural participation, influences children's educational attainment.

Here is also noteworthy that even studies that confirmed the importance of highbrow cultural capital often showed that this influence is largely independent of parental SES. E.g., DiMaggio (1982) established that educational returns from cultural capital are higher for students of lower SES,

naming this model *cultural mobility*, as opposed to Bourdieu's *cultural reproduction* model. Cultural mobility model is also confirmed in a several subsequent studies. (e.g., De Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp 2000; Flere et al. 2010); Noble – Davies 2009) Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) established that cultural capital of parents and children are indeed associated with children's educational success. However, this association was additive, i.e. both sorts of cultural capital had independent impacts.

It can also be argued, as John Goldthorpe (2007) does, that most research that can be included into the dominant interpretation of cultural capital substantially diverge from Bourdieu's original ideas. As Goldthorpe emphasizes, Bourdieu's intention was to embed the cultural capital theory into a more general framework of the social reproduction process. Notwithstanding the persisting differences in *relative* educational chances of children from different social backgrounds, a massive educational expansion and educational upward mobility that took place in developed countries refutes the omnipotence and durability of the family-related habitus. Thus, Goldthorpe concludes that the original parts of Bourdieu's work are not empirically sound, whereas theoretically sound parts are not original, since they are in line with the existing sociological explanations that draw from subcultural differences and their influence on educational outcomes.

A entirely different strand of research draws more heavily on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, with a special emphasis of various understandings of parental cultural capital. This strand of research is especially present in British sociological studies, since in the last couple of decades educational policy there has put a strong emphasis on school-family partnership, and more active involvement of parents in their children's education. A series of qualitative studies (Ball et al. 1995; Reay 1998; Reay – Lucey 2003) revealed that the influence of parents' cultural capital manifests itself in knowledge and competencies that enable parents to take a more active role, to assist in their children's school activities, and to take more informed choice when making educational decisions. Additionally, these studies also showed that middle-class parents more often than working class parents have wider time-space horizons, more pronounced sense of self-worthiness, self-confidence and entitlement when making educational choices or interacting with teachers. This sort of disposition, which can be described as habitus in Bourdieuian sense (Lareau – McNamara Horvat 1999), enables them to be more assertive when trying to enrol their children into more selective schools, to counter the viewpoints of the teachers in situations where the interests of their children are involved, and hence to negotiate their way through the educational system. Lower cultural capital of working class parents, reinforced with lower economic capital that makes impossible to choose other exit strategies, often leads to worse

educational outcomes of working class children. Similar conclusions follow from a number of American studies as well (e.g., Lareau 1987, Lareau – Mc Namara Horvat 1999), even though some studies found only weak effect of parents' habitus on children's attainment. (Dumais 2006)

Contextual approach to cultural capital

Thus, it is our contention that the dominant interpretation of the cultural capital in educational context has only partial empirical support, and that it has some serious theoretical weaknesses. Firstly, it is widely acknowledged that cultural participation in contemporary societies cannot be simply divided along the axis high culture/low culture. Postmodern dehierchization and social mobility have led to the appearance of 'cultural omnivores' (e.g., Peterson 1992; Peterson – Kern 1996), i.e. individuals who simultaneously participate in lowbrow, middlebrow, and highbrow cultural forms. It can be argued that cultural omnivorism now offers social advantages previously offered by the elite culture competence. Secondly, several studies (e.g., DiMaggio – Mukhtar 2004; Kraaykamp – van Eijck 2010) showed that high culture participation is declining in all social classes, thus casting an additional doubt on the role high culture cultural capital may play in schools. Wildhagen (2009) contended that there are two mechanisms that convert cultural capital into educational success. Firstly, teachers tend to have more affirmative evaluations of students with higher cultural capital, giving them better grades regardless of students' knowledge and cognitive abilities (the „teacher-selection“ effect). Secondly, students with lower cultural capital often define school as culturally distant and menacing place, which leads to lower motivation, poorer results, and withdrawal from the educational process (the „self-selection“ effect). However, if teachers are becoming cultural omnivores with decreasing levels of participation in highbrow culture, it is hard to imagine how they could reward high culture competence in a significant degree. Indeed, it seems that research (for a review, see Tzanakis 2011) doesn't support the idea that teachers reward the possession of cultural capital in Bourdieu's sense. Namely, teachers do reward non-cognitive habits, but these habits are not related to highbrow culture (e.g. effort, commitment, and involvement).

Therefore, we believe that a more fruitful approach to cultural capital in education could be a contextual one. Our definition of cultural capital is therefore as follows: cultural capital is composed of cultural resources (attitudes, knowledge, behaviours and modes of appropriation) that enable individuals to comply with particular formal and informal cultural standards, and consequently receive other valued resources (educational success, prestige, money, jobs, and the like). As Winkle-Wagner (2010) noted, contextually-valued cultural capital can provide more nuanced approaches to cultural

capital, which allow for multiple types of cultural capital that are changeable and differently valued depending on the particular social and educational setting. For example, Anderson (2005) demonstrates how the inclusion of multicultural and diversity-related texts and courses in American universities can lead to their appropriation as a particular form of cultural capital by the White students. In this way, a new type of knowledge and attitudes became cultural capital that can be used to maintain social reproduction of racial inequality through education in the American social context. In a similar vein, Goldstein (2003) investigated how minority students in Canada convert their bilingual competencies into a specific form of cultural capital, albeit not consistently legitimated by the school, which can be ultimately transposed into educational success. Andersen and Jæger (2015) explored the influence of institutional settings on cultural capital, and found that the returns from cultural capital are significantly lower in high-achieving contexts where there is more competition with regard to teacher's attention.

Given the generic nature of this definition, its specification and empirical content has to be obtained through the contextualization. In our case, we turn to specific formal competencies in Croatian educational system, defined as desired goals in the so-called National Framework Curriculum. This document represents a basis for the elementary and secondary school curricula and syllabi in Croatia, as well as for the learning outcomes. Thus, the NFK serves as a starting point for the development of the obligatory and elective school subjects, as well as for inter-curricular teaching themes. In other words, the NFK defines competences that are valued in the Croatian educational setting, i.e. should be achieved through the content present in the school courses.

The NFK delineates eight desired competencies in accordance with 'Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December for lifelong learning' (2006/962/EC). Out of these eight competencies, we have decided to operationalise three of them that have stronger cultural rather than cognitive quality. These competencies are listed as follows: (1) social and civic competencies (positive and tolerant attitudes toward others, interpersonal and intercultural cooperation[2] positive attitudes towards diversity and democracy, etc.), (2) initiative and entrepreneurship (ability to turn ideas into action, creativity, inovation, risk-taking, and ability to plan and lead projects in order to achieve goals, etc.), (3) cultural conscience and expression (appreciation of importance of creative expression of ideas, experience and emotions in various arts and media, including music, dancing, theater, literary and visual arts, etc.). To sum it up, in the current study, we

[2] As noted by Puzić (2009), this, typical Europan approach to multiculturalism has been often criticized beacuse of its culturalistic bias, i.e. normative approach that ignores (1) socio-structural framework of majority-minority relations, and (2) an imperative of improving educational results of minority children.

have endeavoured to explore competencies that are formally declared as the essential ones in the Croatian educational system, i.e. we have tested the assumption that the appropriation of these competencies serves as a particular form of cultural capital in Croatia, in contrast with the so-called dominant interpretation.

In addition to the aforementioned formal competencies, in the current study we deal with parental cultural capital as well. When doing so, we explicitly follow the strand of research that we touched upon in the introductory chapter. Namely, as components of parental cultural capital we include all those cultural resources that enable parents to take a more active role in their children's education, and thus to improve their educational success.

Therefore, our definition of cultural capital considerably diverges from a classical Bourdieuian definition, which stresses that valued cultural signals should be arbitrary in order to be counted as cultural capital. (Kingston 2001) Even though the issue of arbitrariness is not always clear-cut, arbitrary cultural signals are those which cannot be convincingly shown to contribute to productive performance in the roles of a worker, or a citizen. In our research, parental cultural capital and students' proactive behaviour can be connected to academic success (in case of the proactive behaviour, even to a better job performance) in a non-arbitrary way, whereas it can be argued that social and civic competencies are part of a good citizen's role in a liberal-democratic society. As Kingston (2001) noted, all cultural signals that are rewarded in education are *ultima ratio* arbitrary, but some cultural signals are connected to proclaimed societal goals, whereas others are not. Thus, we diverge from the so-called dominant interpretation of the concept, and follow the route more consistent with Lareau and Weininger's (2003: 569) understanding of the cultural capital, which emphasizes „micro-interactional processes whereby individuals' strategic use of knowledge, skills, and competence comes into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation“. However, we disagree with these authors in that we do not think that these evaluative standards necessarily need to be imposed upon the lower classes. Evaluative standards can also be composed of general cultural criteria, which can be based on important social values and goals. E.g., Lamont (1992) showed that members of the American upper middle class emphasise moral (e.g., work ethics and honesty) and socioeconomic boundaries (money and success), while cultural boundaries are deemed as much less important.

Our conceptualization of cultural capital also diverges from Bourdieu's in that it primarily emphasises embodied cultural capital. Namely, his distinction between three forms of capital is best suited to the dominant (highbrow culture) interpretation, since the objectified form includes possession of artefacts. It can be also noted that embodied cultural capital can be seen as a primary

component of cultural capital, since it is crucial for other two components. (Kraaykamp – van Eijck 2010) It influences institutionalized cultural capital, since it can be translated to educational success. On the other hand, the possession of embodied cultural capital enables an individual to fully appreciate cultural artefacts. Therefore, objectified cultural capital is put into full use only by possession of embodied cultural capital. As pointed out by van de Werfhorst (2010), institutionalized cultural capital proved very hard to measure, since its operationalisation as educational certificates leads to the tautological validity of the cultural capital theory.

Having in mind that in our operationalisation cultural capital is composed of cultural knowledge and competencies of mostly non-cognitive nature that are rewarded in an educational context, our approach could be counted into Winkle-Wagner's (2010) first and second groups of studies. That is to say, we believe that elite cultural capital is worth of examining and testing, but only as one of the possible types of cultural resources that are important in the educational process. Specifically, our approach to cultural capital is much wider, including competencies that are rewarded in a specific social setting, and a specific understanding of parental cultural capital as well. Since it was reasonably expected that minority students would comprise only a small portion of our sample, our theoretical framework and research are not interpreted in this way. In addition, even though our results are interpreted in the framework of social reproduction of class inequalities, we didn't explicitly use Bourdieu's theoretical framework.

Research questions and methodology

The main goal of our research was to establish whether cultural capital has any influence on the educational outcomes in Croatia, and what type of cultural capital exerts this influence. For this purpose, the analyses reported in this paper were undertaken with data from a sample of Croatian secondary school students (N=500). A convenience sample of five secondary schools in towns of Osijek, Valpovo and Orahovica[3] was utilised. Despite the fact that the sample was a convenient one, proportional representation of students from different secondary school types/programmes was achieved. In other words, ratios of students from secondary school types were proportional to the ratios in the total secondary school population in Croatia in 2012[4]. (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2013) Therefore, total of 152 students from grammar schools, 220 students from technical and related schools, 93 students from industrial and crafts

[3] Electrotechnical and transportation school Osijek Osijek (43 students), The 2nd grammar school Osijek (92 students), School of aplied arts and design Osijek (35 students), Secondary school Valpovo (224 students), and Secondary school 'Stjepan Ivšić' Orahovica (106 students).

[4] Latest available data.

schools, and 35 students from arts schools participated in the survey. Even though a random sample of all Croatian secondary school students would be best-suited for this research, it can be argued that the processes of linking cultural capital to educational success should operate in the same manner across the educational system. (Sullivan 2001) Therefore, as internal validity of the research should not be endangered by using a convenience sample, this type of sample is not uncommon in cultural capital research in the educational field. (e.g., Sullivan 2001; Noble – Davies 2009)

In the aforementioned schools, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students participated in the survey research. Classes in which the survey was to be deployed were randomly chosen. Even though the completion of the survey was anonymous, students could have asked for clarifications. The questionnaire was pretested in the Secondary school Valpovo.

As independent variables, various measures of student's cultural capital, parental cultural capital, and demographic characteristics of parents and students were used. We have divided cultural capital in accordance with competencies listed in the Croatian National Framework Curriculum (NFC), and operationalised it in the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire included several Likert-type questions, and the students were asked to express their degree of agreement with them on a scale ranging from 1 („completely disagree“) to 5 („completely agree“). In order to avoid the response acquiescence set bias, approximately a half of the statements was phrased in a negative manner, and the other half of the statements was phrased in a positive manner with regard to the attitude objects.

The first group of statements was intended to measure highbrow cultural capital, which matches „cultural conscience and expression„ from the NFC. The students were asked to express their attitudes toward reading, visiting museums and art galleries, works of great painters, classical music, and they were also asked about the possession of books at home[5]. These statements didn't include measurement of highbrow cultural participation, since a significant number of students from our sample come from small places where highbrow activities, such as attending classical music concerts, or visiting museums and art galleries, are not widely present/available. In addition, our measurement of highbrow cultural capital has made a distinction between two diverse aspects of cultural capital: possession of high-culture signals, and possession of socialized cognitive cultural skills, such as reading habits. (De Graff et al. 2000) However, since factor analysis of these statements[6] gave a one-factor solution, it seems that these two aspects are not distinguishable in

[5] Some of the items were taken from Zabihi and Pordel (2011).

[6] Principal components' analysis, eigenvalues larger than 1 as the criterion of extraction, and varimax rotation of the initial solution.

our population. Therefore, the sum of agreement with these statements, with the appropriate reversal of negatively-phrased items, was used as a measure of high-culture capital (Cronbach's alpha=0,72).

The measurement of the second type of cultural capital was comprised of several statements that match social and civic competencies from the NFC. However, factor analysis revealed two separate components, which we named „ethnocentrism“ and „liberalism“. Ethnocentrism component was comprised of three items relating to majority-minority relation, and the relations with other nations and religions (Cronbach's alpha=0,66). Liberalism component included four items which measured attitudes towards free choice of lifestyle, respects of other people's opinion, and democracy (Cronbach's alpha=0,68).

The third type of students' cultural capital included statements about students proactive behaviour (doing new things, stating one's opinion even if it is different than teacher's opinions, choosing interesting over well-payed boring job, doing things on one's own way). These statements broadly match initiative and entrepreneurship competence from the NFC. These statements were also factor-analyzed, and the analysis brought a one-factor solution (Cronbach's alpha=0,67).

Parental cultural capital was measured with four statements that included students' estimate of parental involvement with school, ability to help with the homework, and protecting students' interests when interacting with teachers. The factor analysis also gave one-factor solution (Cronbach's alpha=0,70).

As demographic variables, student's gender, and educational level of his/her mother and father were included. When it comes to gender, total of 262 female students (52,6%), and 236 male students (47,4%) took part in the research[7]. About 8,0% of students' fathers has finished only primary school, 66.9% secondary school, and 25.1% have college/university degree. When it comes to mothers, 13.9% of them have only primary education, 63.5% secondary education, and 22.7% has college/university degree.

As dependent variables, two types of educational outcomes were used. As the first outcome, attendance of a specific secondary school programme was measured. The Croatian school system includes two important scholastic transitions: a transition from elementary school to secondary school, and a transition from secondary school to tertiary education. Former transition is very important, since the attendance of industrial and crafts secondary schools, with the duration of only three years, severely limits the possibilities of attending tertiary education. To be specific, students from these schools should complete the fourth year of secondary schooling in some other type of secondary schools (grammar schools, technical and related schools, or art schools) in order to be

[7] Two of the students didn't reveal their gender.

given a chance to take secondary school exit exams (the so-called „državna matura"), and to continue their education in college/universities. The second outcome was school grades in the previous year. Self-reported GPA and self-reported final grades in the previous school-year in Croatian language/literature, and mathematics were used. The average GPA of the students from the sample was 3.67, while the average of grades in Croatian language/literature was 3.26, and the average of mathematics' grades was 2.81.

Croatian language/literature and mathematics were chosen under the assumption that cultural capital might have different influence on these school subjects. Namely, Croatian language/literature grades could be under heavier influence of teachers' judgements and perceptions of students' cultural capital, whereas mathematics grades could be more objectively measured. Some previous researches (e.g. DiMaggio 1982) give credit to this assumption.

Results

Descriptive statistics of items that measured various kinds of cultural capital are presented in Table 1. The kind of cultural capital that an item measures is denoted in the parentheses next to the item (some items are reversed when calculating the total score).

In order to check whether various types of cultural capital are associated with the type of secondary school that the students are enrolled in, cultural capital variables, as well as demographic variables are entered into the multinomial regression analysis as independent variables. Multinomial regression was chosen due to the fact that the dependent variable was categorical (nominal), and independent variables were either categorical or metric. Gender, father's education, and mother's education are entered as categorical variables, with male gender and university degree as reference categories. Industrial and crafts school was the dependent variable reference category.

The results of the multinomial regression (Table 2) showed that the probability of the model chi-square (209.12) was below the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the existence of a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was supported. The size of pseudo R square measures (Cox & Snell R Square=0.35; Nagelkerke R Square=0.39) indicates medium relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. Since none of the independent variables in the model has a standard error greater than 2.0, multicollinearity among the independent variables was not detected.

Table 1: **Descriptive statistics of items measuring cultural capital**

Item	Min.	Max.	M	S.d.
I don't like reading books (highbrow cultural capital - negative)	1	5	3.03	1.27
I wouldn't visit museums and galleries more often even if I had more chance (highbrow cultural capital - negative)	1	5	3.05	1.22
I enjoy works of great painters (highbrow cultural capital - positive)	1	5	2.44	1.20
We have lots of books at home (highbrow cultural capital - positive)	1	5	3.30	1.30
I wouldn't read most of books from school list even if I had less other school obligations (highbrow cultural capital - negative)	1	5	3.06	1.44
I enjoy listening to clasical music (highbrow cultural capital)	1	5	2.86	1.40
Highbrow cultural capital - total	6	30	17.46	5.08
My parents have enough knowledge about school curricula, so that they can help me with homework and other school assignments (parental cultural capital - positive)	1	5	3.11	1.17
My parents ask me about school events very rarely (parental cultural capital - negative)	1	5	2.12	1.20
When communicating with teachers, my parents will always try to do everyting in my best interest (parental cultural capital - positive)	1	5	3.50	1.09
My parents are very well informed about how things go in my school (parental cultural capital - positive)	1	5	3.68	1.15
Parental cultural capital - total	4	20	14.19	2.85
Some nations are better than the others (ethnocentrism - positive)	1	5	2.64	1.28
Minorities are over-protected in our society ethnocentrism - positive)	1	5	2.98	1.06
You can very rarely learn something good from other religions or nations (ethnocentrism - positive)	1	5	2.30	1.21
Ethnocentrism - total	3	15	7.92	2.67
Everybody should freely choose his/her own lifestyle (liberalism - positive)	1	5	4.45	0,80
Democracy is the best political system (liberalism - positive)	1	5	3.44	1.05
I respect the opinions of others even if I disagree with them (liberalism - positive)	1	5	3.74	1.01
Majority shouldn't dictate minority how to live (liberalism - positive)	1	5	3.90	1.10
Liberalism - total	4	20	15.53	2.71
I would rather choose boring and well-paid job, than the interesting and less-paid job (proactive behaviour - negative)	1	5	2.79	1.18
I always like doing things in my own way (proactive behaviour - positive)	1	5	4.13	0.88
I don't like joining new activites and try new things (proactive behaviour - negative)	1	5	2.12	1.05
I am always prepared to state my opinion even if it is different from the teacher's opinion (proactive behaviour - positive)	1	5	3.86	1.06
Proactive behaviour - total	6	20	15.09	2.96

Table 2: **Summary of multinomial logistic regression of variables predicting** secondary school type

School type	Predictor	B	SE B	e^b	CI (95%)
Technical and related school	Gender (1)	.12	.29	1.13	.88 - 1.10
	Father's educational level				
	Elementary school	-.83	.55	.44	.15- 1.28
	Secondary school	.11	.38	1.11	0.53 - 2.36
	Mother's educational level				
	Elementary school	-1.07*	.54	.34	.12-.99
	Secondary school	-.32	.44	.72	.30-1.73
	Parental cultural capital	-.06	.04	.95	.87-1.03
	Highbrow cultural capital	.03	.03	1.03	.96-1.09
	Ethnocentrism	-.11**	.06	.90	.81-.99
	Liberalism	0,15**	.05	1.16	1.05-1.28
	Proactive behaviour	-.03	.05	.97	.89-1.07
Grammar school	Gender (1)	1.26***	.34	3.52	1.81-6.84
	Father's educational level				
	Elementary school	-3.09**	1.15	0.05	.01-.43
	Secondary school	-.19	.42	.83	.36-1.90
	Mother's educational level				
	Elementary school	-2.91***	.70	.06	.01-.22
	Secondary school	-1.04*	.47	.35	.14-.89
	Parental cultural capital	-.09	.05	.92	.83.-1.01
	Highbrow cultural capital	.18***	.04	1.20	1.11-1.29
	Ethnocentrism	-.20**	.07	.82	.73 - .94
	Liberalism	.09	0,07	1,10	0,96-1.25
	Proactive behaviour	-.03	.06	.97	.87-1.08
Art school	Gender (1)	.77	.47	2.16	.85-5.47
	Father's educational level				
	Elementary school	-.61	.91	.55	.09-3.23
	Secondary school	-.34	.59	.71	.23-2.25
	Mother's educational level				
	Elementary school	-1.33	.82	.26	.05-1.32
	Secondary school	-1.33*	.64	.27	.08-.92
	Parental cultural capital	-.01	.07	.99	.87-1.14
	Highbrow cultural capital	.20***	.05	1.22	1.10-1.35
	Ethnocentrism	-.25**	.09	.78	.65-.94
	Liberalism	-.06	.09	0,94	.79-1.13
	Proactive behaviour	.18	.09	1.19	.99-1.43

Cox & Snell R Square=0.35; Nagelkerke R Square=0.39; *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
Notes: Male gender and university degree are independent variables reference categories. Industrial and crafts school is the dependent variable reference category.

The data show that highbrow cultural capital predicts secondary school enrolment only in the case of grammar schools and art schools. To be more specific, students from these schools possess higher levels of highbrow cultural capital in comparison with industrial and crafts' schools students. However, this association is modest (odds ratio equals 1.20 and 1.22, respectively). Similar level of association can be found between ethnocentrism and secondary school enrolment. Namely, industrial and crafts schools' students have higher levels of ethnocentrism in comparison to the students from the other three school types. When compared to students from industrial and crafts schools, lowest level of ethnocentrism is to be found in art schools (OR= 0.78), followed by grammar schools (OR= 0.82), and technical and related schools (OR= 0.90). Other types of cultural capital (parental cultural capital, proactive behaviour, and liberalism) do not distinguish between the secondary school type enrolment, with the exception of liberalism, which distinguishes between technical and related schools and industrial and crafts schools (OR= 1.16).

Table 3: **OLS regression with students' GPA as the dependent variable**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Constant	.51	-	-.08	-
Gender	-.29**	-.15	-.24**	-.12
Father's education				
University	.16	.07	.16	.07
Secondary school	.07	.03	.09	.04
Mother's education				
University	-.27	-.12	-.37	-.16
Secondary school	-.18	-.09	-.22	-.11
Parental cultural capital			.02	.06
Highbrow cultural capital			.03**	.12
Ethnocentrism			.02	.04
Liberalism			.00	.01
Proactive behaviour			-.01	-.02
	R=0,17 R^2=0,03 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,02		R=0,23 $R^{2=}$0,05 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,03 ΔR^2=0,03*	

Note: * p≤0,05; ** p≤0,01

In order to test whether independent variables predict school grades, three hierarchical OLS were conducted. In these analyses, GPA, and grades in Croatian language/literature and mathematics, were used as dependent variables. All grades are converted and entered into the equation as standardized

values, in order to cancel out the impact of grade levels in different secondary schools. Gender and parental education are entered into the equation as dummy variables.The independent variables are entered into equation in two steps, in order to test the possible mediating role of cultural capital when it comes to the association between parental education and grades. The results of regression analysis with GPA as the dependent variable is shown in Table 3. It can be concluded that amongst all independent variables only gender and highbrow cultural capital significantly predict GPA. Specifically, female students and students with higher levels of highbrow cultural capital have better grades. Additionally, the impact of gender on GPA is partially mediated by the cultural capital variables. However, it should be noted that the model as a whole explains only around 3% of the GPA variance.

Similar results are to be found in Table 4, where OLS with Croatian language/literature grades as the dependent variable is presented. It can also be noted that highbrow cultural capital more strongly predicts Croatian language/literature grades than GPA.

Table 4: **OLS regression with grades in Croatian language/literature as the** dependent variable

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Constant	.70	-	-.21	-
Gender	-.26**	-.15	-.24**	-.12
Father's education				
University	-.13	-.06	-.10	-.05
Secondary school	-.22	-.11	-.16	-.08
Mother's education				
University	-.22	-.09	-.33	-.14
Secondary school	-.13	-.06	-.18	-.09
Parental cultural capital			.01	.03
Highbrow cultural capital			.04*	.17
Ethnocentrism			.01	.03
Liberalism			-.00	-.01
Proactive behaviour			-.01	-.04
	R=0,17 R^2=0,03 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,02		R=0,21 $R^{2=}$0,04 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,03 ΔR^2=0,02*	

Note: * p≤0,05; ** p≤0,01

On the other hand, cultural capital does not predict mathematics grades, and neither does gender. (Table 5) The only significant predictor was mother's

education, with children of university educated mothers having lower grades in mathematics.

Table 5: **OLS regression with grades in mathematics as the dependent variable**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Constant	.70	-	-.21	-
Gender	-.06	-.03	-.05	-.03
Father's education				
University	.36	.16	.32	.14
Secondary school	.21	.10	.18	.08
Mother's education				
University	-.42*	-.18	-.40*	-.17
Secondary school	-.19	-.09	-.18	-.09
Parental cultural capital			.01	.02
Highbrow cultural capital			.-.01	-.04
Ethnocentrism			-.02	-.06
Liberalism			.02	.04
Proactivity			-.00	-.01
	R=0,12 R^2=0,01 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,01		R=0,15 $R^{2=}$0,02 Adjusted $R^{2=}$0,00 ΔR^2=0,01	

Note: * p≤0,05; ** p≤0,01

Discussion and conclusions

Several sociological studies (e.g., Babarović et al. 2009; Pavić – Vukelić 2009; Burušić and Babarović 2010) determined that parental formal education is strongly associated with educational success of children in Croatia. However, possible causes of this association haven't been closely examined up to this moment. Thus, the impact of social origins on educational success still remains a „dark spot“ of Croatian sociology. In this study, we have attempted to shed more light on this issue by investigating a possible role of cultural capital in this association. Having in mind the features of the Croatian educational system that limits the influence of financial capital (free schooling, and underdeveloped educational markets), it could have been expected that cultural capital could have some role in this respect.

We set out to explore this role by defining and operationalising cultural capital in a contextual manner, taking the cultural competencies from the Croatian National Framework Curriculum, and adding parental cultural capital

into the picture. The results revealed the connection between highbrow cultural capital (a positive one) and ethnocentrism (a negative one), on the one side, and the secondary school enrolment, on the other side. The explanation of this connection might be twofold. First, it is possible that these kinds of cultural capital lead to better educational success in elementary school (through teachers' selection, or self-selection), and to the enrolment to academically advanced types of secondary schools (especially grammar schools and art schools). The validity of this argument is substantiated by the association between highbrow cultural capital and school grades (GPA and Croatian language/literature grades) that is established in our research. On the other hand, bearing in mind that our research design doesn't have a time dimension, it is also possible that these secondary school types develop these types of cultural capital more strongly than industrial and crafts school. The same line of argument can be applied when trying to explain the established connection between ethnocentrism and secondary school types. The fact that ethnocentrism is not a significant predictor of the school grades might be explained by the homogenization effect, i.e. by the similarity of students' cultural capital in different types of secondary schools. This effect, in a slightly different context, is confirmed in Pavić and Vukelić's (2009) study, where students from the same types of secondary schools showed similar levels of educational aspirations, independently of parental educational level. The homogenization effect could also present an explanation of the finding that in our study parental educational level, by and large, has a strong influence on secondary school type enrolment, while it virtually has no influence on school grades.

Our study also revealed a mediating effect of highbrow cultural capital regarding the correlation between gender and school grades, with exception to grades in mathematics where neither gender neither highbrow cultural capital were significant predictors. It follows that the better grades that girls receive at school can be partially explained by the higher levels of highbrow cultural capital that they possess. In some studies a mediating effect of cultural capital on differential gender outcomes was established (e.g., Dumais 2006), while in others this was not the case. (e.g. De Graff et al. 2000) It can be noted that most empirical studies have concentrated on the potential *interaction* effect between gender and cultural capital, exploring whether the returns from cultural capital are gender-specific. Thus, the mediating effect was not often explicitly modelled and tested.

To sum up, the results of our study implicate that highbrow cultural capital still exerts some, even though modest influence on educational outcomes. As explained earlier, studies of the empirical relation between highbrow cultural capital and educational outcomes have provided us with mixed results. Our

results are in line with those aforementioned studies that ascertained a positive correlation.

Dehierarchization of cultural spheres and the decline of arts participation could be interpreted as signs of a diminishing place of arts in a role of cultural capital. However, DiMaggio and Mukhtar's (2004) analysis of arts participation in the USA showed that this might not be the case, i.e. that declining rates might be better explained by the rise of home-entertainment options, and changes in population composition and family structure. Even though their findings are also consistent with 'culture omnivorism' thesis (Peterson 1992; Peterson – Kern 1996), DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004: 191) thus argue that declines in arts participation probably do not represent 'specific deligitimation of the arts as cultural capital'. In their opinion, high culture arts still represent the most general form of prestigious culture, at least in the West. The results of our study give some credit to this interpretation. For causal inferences to be made, longitudinal datasets and more detailed studies are warranted. As Kingston (2001) pointed out, cultural capital research often cannot convincingly demonstrate a causal link that translates cultural capital into educational attainment. The possession of highbrow cultural signals can be associated with parenting styles or personality characteristics, thus rendering the association between cultural capital and educational success spurious. For example, higher levels of cultural capital can be correlated with curiosity/higher appreciation of knowledge of any kind or with more parental encouragement when pursuing academic interests.

The results of our study also revealed that the possession of the other two explicitly proclaimed cultural competencies from the Croatian National Framework Curriculum (initiative and entrepreneurship, and social and civic competencies) wasn't associated with school grades. However, it should be acknowledged that our operationalisation of these competencies had some limitations (small number of items that led to lower reliability of the measurements). On the other hand, ethnocentrism (a negative counterpart of the social and civic competencies) was associated with the secondary school programme enrolment. Therefore, it seems that Croatian secondary schools do not explicitly reward the possession of these competencies. The association between ethnocentrism and the secondary school programme enrolment might be attributed to some unmeasured background variables. For example, Holland's (1997) theory of vocational personalities asserts that industrial and crafts' occupations are more suited to the realistic personality type, which is marked by conventional values and closed belief systems. This findings might have been expected, since the NFC has been operative only in the last couple of years (it was enacted in 2010). Therefore, the influence of these competencies on scholastic outcomes shall have to be examined in future research.

A contextual approach to cultural capital, in Croatia and elsewhere, should also be broadened to include informal standards of evaluation, such as obedience and work habits.

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