

DELVING INTO THE DEPTHS OF EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY (BOOK REVIEW)

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Abstract: This book review offers a perceptive synopsis of a book that investigates the connection between higher education in Central Eastern Europe and social capital. It addresses the use of social theories to data interpretation and student achievement understanding, emphasizing the impact of students' social resources on educational outcomes. The review contributes to a better knowledge of the relationship between social capital and higher education in the area by summarizing the study subjects, outlining the book's perspective and argument, and critically evaluating its substance.

Keywords: Social Capital, Higher Education, Central Eastern Europe, Student Success, Social Theories, Critical Assessment.

Introduction

This anthology, presented by Prof. Dr. Gabriella Pusztai and published by the University of Debrecen, exhibits the culmination of fifteen prominent authors' intellectual endeavors, consisting of eighteen precisely constructed research pieces. These papers, which are the result of collaborative research at the Doctoral School of Human Sciences, dig into the field of educational sociology. The book is divided into three sections: the first explores the maze of educational sociology ideas, the second delves into the complicated web of socioeconomic communities engaged in individual development, and the third examines diverse macro-level contexts. Each study follows a clear trajectory, commencing with elucidating key concepts pertinent to the research, culminating in a concise summary and conclusion, and supplemented by thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter to facilitate reader comprehension and engagement.

Review

The first study in the unit dives into the diverse area of socialization, contrasting the reconstruction and construction perspectives. While the former supports the premise of copying societal patterns, the latter sees individuals as active actors in influencing society. The following study explores the landscape of capitals, drawing on economic theory to elaborate on the various assets that individuals own and leverage throughout their educational journey. Human, cultural, and social capital all have a substantial impact on academic success, with social capital playing an especially important role. Following this discussion, the attention moves to parental school selection decision-making, where the interplay of resources and accessible information drives decisions aimed at optimizing results with least investment. Surprisingly, research shows a counterintuitive relationship between family capital levels and academic achievement. The study then moves on to examine gender dynamics in education, shedding light on the change of conventional gender norms and their impact on academic performance, as well as gender integration in the job market and

continuing impediments experienced by women. This unit concludes with an exploration of school resilience, demonstrating how individuals overcome social disadvantages to excel academically—a phenomenon that applies not only to students, but also to resilient educators who navigate challenges with flexibility, adaptability, and creativity in both personal and professional domains. Thus, resilience emerges as a transforming force, moving individuals from hardship to success across educational environments.

The inaugural exploration of the second subject, "Communities Engaged in Education," throws a strong light on the critical role of family communities. The narrative dives into the fundamental importance of parental influence, emphasizing the family unit as the foundation of socialization. Children's first contacts with the world are guided by familial relationships, which imprint lifetime patterns and ideals. This chapter emphasizes the importance of both official and informal educational activities that promote familial relations, highlighting their critical contribution to societal cohesiveness. Furthermore, it explains how the socioeconomic situation inside families intertwines with students' educational trajectories, having a tangible impact on academic achievement and prospects. Transitioning into the subsequent study, the focus pivots towards ethnic minority communities, unfurling a comprehensive exploration of foundational concepts integral to understanding their unique dynamics and experiences within broader societal contexts.

Minority groups, in contrast to their mainland counterparts, have a far stronger sense of identity, created via the crucible of daily encounters and the need to affirm their difference in the face of persistent problems. This declaration of identity serves as a shield, protecting individuals from the currents of assimilation that frequently consume people in the majority community. Based on John Ogbu's seminal research, this paper delves deeply into the dynamics of minority communities, distinguishing between autonomous and immigrant, voluntary and involuntary groupings. Within the educational arena, the choice of schools becomes a watershed moment for minority communities, with far-reaching consequences. It becomes a struggle where the delicate balance of preserving linguistic heritage and integrating into the prevailing fabric is negotiated. Thus, education appears not only as a means of acquiring knowledge, but also as a powerful tool for influencing minority groups' cultural continuity and civic engagement. The tenacity inherent in minority communities frequently translates the problems given by their host countries into possibilities for advancement, a theme that runs throughout the preceding chapters. Turning our attention to the condition of the Roma in the educational landscape, the discussion delves into the complex subject of segregation, which occurs both within and between educational institutions. Drawing on the insights of Bernard Formoso and other experts, the tale delves into the deeply embedded familial and child-centric ethos within Gypsy communities, giving light on the critical role of family socialization in molding educational attainment. The discord between Roma parents and formal schooling systems is the result of differing cultural priorities, emphasizing the necessity for sophisticated measures to overcome this gap. While schools clearly serve as channels for social inclusion, the importance of religious communities in promoting Roma integration cannot be emphasized, as discussed in later chapters. In this context, religious capital emerges as a powerful force, supplementing the earlier stated frameworks of human, cultural, and social capital. Religious schools emerge as key hubs in the field of religious education, with student demographics and social backgrounds that reflect the distinct fabric of each community they serve.

The sixth chapter digs into the dynamic arena of sports, paralleling the previous investigation of religion by introducing the concept of sport capital. The sociology of education examines the substantial influence that sports communities have on individual development, as opposed to pedagogical research into the junction of sport and education. The concept of "socialization into sports," which encompasses the diverse educational journey

leading to sporting participation, is central to this discussion. While the family emerges as the dominant agent in establishing sporting habits, the impact of social class “habitus” cannot be exaggerated, resulting in varied patterns of sporting engagement across different strata of society. A similar tendency in sports engagement can be seen, mirroring socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement, with higher participation observed in lower social classes, followed by a fall in middle classes before resurging among the highest echelons.

Chapter Seven of the second unit moves the focus to the widespread impact of media, marking the next phase of community exploration. A detailed examination reveals the numerous ways in which different media formats contribute to individual schooling, spanning from informal to formal modes and playing both ceremonial and instrumental functions. However, the ubiquitous threat stems from the lack of censorship, mandating a vigilant exercise of critical thinking in navigating the torrent of information. Beyond academic pursuits, education plays a key role in preparing pupils for the profession, interacting with familial economic wealth to shape future employment opportunities. The development of a work culture begins early, with parental attitudes regarding work acting as formative factors. The concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation highlight the complex dynamics at work within professional paths, where work experience emerges as a critical component alongside formal schooling. The final chapter, which culminates in a study of the teacher community, follows the journey of decision-making from inception to fruition throughout the school tenure. Motivations for entering the teaching profession extend beyond benevolence to include considerations of pay, working conditions, and social standing. However, the reality of teaching extends beyond classroom hours, with an often-overlooked workload that consumes personal time. Despite a historical trend toward less teaching hours, the obligations of the profession endure, demanding a reassessment of public attitudes toward education.

The third section, titled "The Contexts of Education," begins with a thorough examination of time management and its various variables. Socialization into efficient time management strategies occurs in both familial and academic settings, creating the groundwork for individual ways to organizing leisure activities and academic objectives. However, the imposition of organizational frameworks by hierarchical individuals may elicit opposition from pupils, resulting in procrastination and delays, emphasizing the complex interplay between authority and autonomy. In the following chapter, the focus shifts to the physical landscape, highlighting the ubiquitous inequities present in various environmental contexts and their consequences for students' educational trajectories. Distinguishing between external and internal peripheries, discrepancies appear not just in physical distance from major hubs but also in developmental access. The widespread influence of poor surroundings highlights the systemic impediments that impede academic advancement, whereas regions of affluence have a disproportionate advantage in creating favorable outcomes, regardless of familial or intellectual backgrounds. The third chapter, which focuses on value transmission, investigates the intricate interplay between parental effects and cognitive processes in creating individual value systems. With changing societal paradigms, the emphasis on values has shifted from ancient religious precepts to contemporary ideals centered on work and individualism.

Conclusions

The book provides a discussion of educators' critical role and the difficult metrics of teacher influence. Research emphasizes the critical role of teacher credentials in affecting student achievement; nonetheless, the trajectory of teacher effectiveness remains a complex tale, with initial gain followed by possible decline over time. This thorough examination of educational environments and their intricate dynamics provides a complete framework for comprehending the many challenges and opportunities inherent in modern educational systems.

Bibliography

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