

The reproduction of inequality essay

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Definitions In relation to the topic, MacLeod explains social reproduction as the theory that “ explains how societal institutions perpetuate or reproduce the social relationships and attitudes needed to sustain the existing relations of production in a capitalist society.

” (MacLeod 9) In this definition, the societal institutions are places like, government offices, and schools. These institutions according to him help continue to maintain the status quo by preserving the existing barriers between classes. To investigate this there are two main ways to analyze the situation, one can use the advocate deterministic model or the model that focuses more on the autonomy of the individual. The deterministic model takes into account the structural requirement of the capitalist economic system.

With this information, the theorists attempt to explain the predetermined roles that are laid out for a student. Usually these results focus on the student continuing on a path that leads to the same social class. The other model, which is more culturally attuned, is more focused on the experiences of the student and only after these are understood does the theorist being to connect that with the capitalistic society. These models help to explain the different types of capital that one may or may not possess. One commonly referred from of capital is that of economic nature.

However, although monetary wealth is an important aspect of this it is not limited to money. Any type of good or service that can be traded for some type of material gain would be considered apart of cultural capital. (Kennedy 2009) Social capital is yet another factor that is important in assessing the

reproduction of inequalities. The relationships that one has within their network and the powers that the different connections yield explain the concept of this type of capital. An example of this is from the McDonough article. The parents of the upper-middle class students used their economic capital to create social capital for their child by enabling them to benefit from a private college counselor. The final form of capital referenced is the cultural kind.

This primarily deals with, from the section entitled Cultural Capital and Habitus: Bourdieu's Theory of Reproduction, " the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next. (MacLeod 12) One term related to this premise is habitus, in the same article, Macleod referenced Bourdieu in relation to this topic. Bourdieu's habitus is " composed of the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of those inhabiting one's social world" (MacLeod 13) and this combination results in profoundly internalized beliefs and values that influence an individual's reactions toward various aspects of life, most notable in this situation, education. What is most notable about this is how the educational system reacts to these ideas of capital.

In the article, Bourdieu comments, " among all the solutions put forward throughout history to the problem of the transmission of power and privileges ... [the] solution which the educational system provides by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations and by concealing ... the fact that it fills this function. (Bourdieu 72) He says this because the belief is that schools hold a neutral attitude when it comes to the ideas of capital. It is this exact form of political correctness is continuing <https://assignbuster.com/the-reproduction-of-inequality-essay/>

the cycle of the reproduction of inequalities. An example demonstrating this is when one fills out the personal questions before taking a standardized test and chooses to decline to state about their cultural background and parents' education level. By not filling out the information they are making themselves a neutral party. Valuable data is lost because of this and for example a Hispanic female coming from a family with no college background, whom is deficient in math will not contribute to the group statistic. This lack of information thereby either creates a picture that is too positive or too negative thus creating a situation where the participants in the group do not receive the attention they truly need.

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