

### **Forms of Capital**

Bourdieu's "The Forms of Capital" is both truthful and disheartening. One of the main points that I gathered from the article is that, at least in general, everything comes down to money. Everything is connected to economic capital, and everyone wants to make and retain personal gains. What differs, though, are ways in which capital can be acquired and translated between types. Bourdieu defines three types of capital: Economic, Cultural, and Social. Cultural capital is particularly related to education, as well as the study of education.

Bourdieu mentions how it takes time and/or inheritance to gain cultural capital. One longer-term way to gain cultural capital is getting an education, even better a quality and/or highly esteemed education. Within cultural capital, Bourdieu has three sub-categories: Embodied, Objectified, and The Institutionalized State. All of these relate to education in different ways. Embodied cultural capital has to do with self-improvement, and it takes time and personal investment to gain it. An education is something that one often pursues to better themselves, and is a long process. Objectified cultural capital is used in education, especially higher education. Students learn from books, art, monuments, libraries, and many other tangible pieces of cultural capital. Objectified cultural capital has potential to be educational, or used for educational purposes, but must be understood and presented correctly in order to be meaningful.

The Institutionalized State is most closely related to education, as education widely viewed as occurring in an institutional setting. Bourdieu calls "academic qualification, a

certificate of cultural competence.” Education, in the formal sense, is a tangible way of measuring and determining these more abstract aspects of culture and intelligence. These qualifications allow for an almost quantitative comparison of credentials, qualifications, intelligence, culture, and competence. Having a degree and formal record of your education makes it much easier to convert cultural capital into economic capital. Qualifications, certifications, and degrees from prestigious schools help you be competitive, and can (depending on field of study) increase your chances of having a high-status job that pays well.

As Bourdieu mentions briefly, fields studied and the goals of education shift over time, often based on which degrees are more profitable. For example, majors within STEM fields are often seen as more practical. Even more specific to this time, many people are studying technology and computer science as it is relevant and there are a lot of good jobs available. In the context of this article, a profitable field of study would be one that is practical, necessary, and prestigious. The goal for many people is to gain cultural capital through education, which then translates into economic capital through employment. Many, or even most people expect that a higher education will pay off long-term in the form of a high salary. Money is of such importance that it is often discouraged to study a field where you will have a hard time finding a job or know you won't be payed well, regardless of your passion and how important you feel it is.

The study of education and qualification process in the US is an interesting example of what I mentioned above. The process of becoming a certified teaching or being able to work in pretty much any educational job is long, challenging, and expensive. To work at a public school, you need to have gone to college and/or graduate school, and be certified in whatever state you

are working in. Even though private high schools are less strict about qualifications, many require at least a Bachelor's degree in a field relevant to the position. College is expensive, graduate school is expensive, and certification programs are expensive. Even without considering the financial burden, the process involves years of challenging courses and fieldwork.

Studying education and becoming certified to work in education takes a huge amount of invested capital, both economic and cultural. One would think that because it is so necessary and takes that much investment, a career might pay off in economic capital, but it seems like most of the time it doesn't. It is wrong how little teachers and other professionals in education are paid. For the most part, these people are qualified professionals who are working hard in positions that are important to our society. Shouldn't people in these important jobs be paid more? Why are professional athletes and Wall Street pigs earning so much more than those educating our children and building the future of our country and the world?

I am fortunate to have a family who can and does support my study of education, and that is helping me get through the challenges. I am also lucky that finances do not have to be my main priority right now, but money in the long-term is still a constantly nagging concern in the back of my mind. To me personally, money isn't everything, but it is necessary to live a comfortable life and to provide for yourself and eventually a family. Although I recognize these issues, I believe that education is vital and an increasingly important field. I am confident that I will find work in the field of education that I value in many ways, and I am willing to sacrifice some material wealth in pursuit of a career that I find truly meaningful.