Chapter 20
Mapping [Capital v.2.0]: An Encounter of Thoughts

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ABSTRACT
This chapter explores the benefits of a theoretical and methodological encounter between Bourdieu’s concepts of capital, Deleuze’s line of thought, and Marxist activity theory, particularly the Russian strand by Ilyenkov and Leontjev. Bourdieu, Deleuze, and Ilyenkov share a common denominator in Marx. In a contemporary light, Bourdieu’s sociological concepts reflect an effort to readdress issues of class and practice as raised by Marx. The author claims that development of Marxist activity theory benefits from such an encounter, especially in educational research. The expanded concept of capital is exemplified through the optic of an educational Danish project. The author intends to show how the expanded concept of capital resonates with the theoretical framework of activity theory. He also shows how development of Marxist activity theory benefits from the methodological construct of capital. Bourdieuian and Deleuzian perspectives lead to the construction of a new structural map of events.

UPTAKE IN SCIENCE EDUCATION: A QUESTION OF CAPITAL

A literary reference to Shakespearian drama introduces the theme of this chapter, that is, human activity related to notions of capital, value, and ownership and descriptions of how they are connected.

This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond, and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

(Shylock, Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare, 2003 p.89)

This is 2014 and a Danish administrative region suffers from a structural educational problem. Problems of low uptake into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) begin in

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upper secondary schools (gymnasium/STX). The problems continue as poor uptake into university. The facts and figures of the studied region do not match the desired political goal of uptake in tertiary education. There are specific social problems in neighbouring municipalities regarding parental background and educational mobility (Lange, Johannesen & Henriksen, 2010). A regional council associated with the troubled educational system has funded the Youth-to-Youth Project. The purpose is to bridge transfer from primary school to upper secondary school and from upper secondary school to university studies. The goal of the bridging effort is to provide youths with lacking interest and performance in STEM and tertiary education unlikely, a new foreground (Alrø, Skovmose & Valero, 2007) related to information and experiences of studying at upper secondary school and university levels means. To implement this scaffolding project, a network was established between teachers and classes from upper primary school (seventh to eighth grades) to upper secondary school, as was a network between students in upper secondary school and university mentors. The main project idea was that relations between youths ‘one step ahead’ in the educational system have a potential to provide another new insights into what it means to study in upper secondary school and at university. The intent was an attempt at dealing with reproduction in the educational system, especially related to STEM areas, facilitating an educational trajectory. This is 2014 and a structural event, an uneven distribution and positioning of interest, has occurred – but only on the surface of the structures, substructures, and strata of a spatio-temporal location in Denmark: In such a place, such sum or sums as are. Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit. Be nominated for an equal pound (Shakespeare, 2003).

This chapter aims at outlining how the structural problem in education requires a specific conceptualization of capital that rests on Marxism, activity theory, and dialectical materialism. Then we will be able to make sense of and topologically map the problem. This specific methodology has been explored previously in relation to the notions of field and power through an encounter with Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault (Bang, 2014a). I argue that educational researchers need a double movement and construction of capital to capture the various ways capital differentiates and manifests between past, current and future activities. The first part of the movement is the construction of a conceptualization of capital which lies close to sociology. Bourdieu’s methodology helps educational researchers chart relatively valid and measureable factors in different forms of capital. Cultural capital and science capital are especially critical to the mapping of the referred structural problem in education. The second part of the movement is inspired by Gilles Deleuze. A conceptualization of capital related to Deleuze’s reading of structuralism leads to the creation of a map of events – combining strata of discourse, thought, and history to Bourdieu’s axis of cultural and economical capital. Bourdieu’s and Deleuze’s methodologies have a common denominator in Marx. My aim is to show how the encounter between systems of thought benefits theoretical and methodological research. I use Marxist activity theory and supply a necessary element of a specific kind of structuralism extracted from Bourdieu and Deleuze. However, before I vivisect the body of educational institutions and study their functions, structures and objectives, which explain the given regional ‘defect’ and ultimately help create a productive map of events, I turn to the concept of capital.

CAPITAL: A CONCEPT BEYOND MONEY

The concept of capital was at the centre of Marx’s analysis and it lies at the very roots of Marxist thought. Examining the consequences of capital during the industrial revolution in England gave birth to The Capital. Marx and Engels’ (1904)