

Learning to Labor: How Working-Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs Book Review.

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AUTHORS INFORMATION

British author Paul Willis is well-known for his work in sociology and cultural studies. His writings, which place an emphasis on consumerism, socialization, and popular culture, are particularly well-liked in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and education. Currently a lecturer at Princeton University's sociology department, he also founded and serves as editor of the worldwide magazine ethnography of stage publication. His best-selling books include the ethnographic imagination, Profane Culture, and Learning to Labor: How Working-Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.

PREFACE

“The difficult thing to explain about how middle-class kids get middle-class jobs is why others let them. It is difficult to explain how working-class kids get working-class jobs because they let themselves.” The main aim of the work was to shed some light on this issue. The other objective of the author was to examine important and central aspects of working-class culture through the concrete study of one of its most revealing manifestations. The working-class culture was of interest to Paul Willis.

The book results from a 1972–1975 investigation on working-class boys' non-academic transition from school to work. Hammertown served as the basis for Willis and his team's case study. Twelve young lads from the town's working class who were not academically accomplished were chosen. They were chosen based on friendship connections and participation in a working-class school's oppositional culture.

One of England's smaller towns, Hammertown, saw increased population and importance during the Industrial Revolution. It was one of the earliest industrial cities with an early industrial proletariat as its inhabitants (pg 3). The town became a significant hub for bearing engineering and spring, cycle, glass, screw, nut, and bolt production. The Midlands are home to a sizable industrial conurbation. However, the perception of the town as harsh and filthy persists. Boys from Hammer town still identify as being from other towns when they meet girls from other towns. Major factories account for a large portion of the town's employment.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

An overview of the study's empirical data and key findings is presented in part 1 of the book. As a practical contribution to the literature on the transition from school to work, it examines oppositional working-class cultural forms within the school. The section is divided into three sections: Elements of culture, Class and institutional form of a culture, and Labor power, culture, class, and institution. Part 2 of the book presents the analysis, which is more theoretical. Cultural processes recorded earlier are analysed for their inner meaning, rationality, and dynamics. In addition to contributing to working-class culture in general, they also contribute to maintaining and reproducing society unexpectedly. As with the previous part, this section is divided into three parts: penetrations, limitations, and ideology's role.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY

The book expands more on education. It was a Neo-Marxist approach to education. The study aimed to clarify how and why working-class children obtain working-class occupations. Willis and his colleagues used a variety of qualitative research approaches, including participant observation, group discussions, and interviews, intending to understand participants' activities from their point of view in ordinary circumstances. As the book shows, Willis begins from a Marxist perspective but then criticizes the Marxist approach to education as unfavourable. Willis found that the boys were utterly uninterested in school. Thus, he claims boys developed an anti-school culture because school was irrelevant. The boys felt that they were above teachers and other students who conformed. The boys also found school boring and the adult world more enjoyable. They were keen to leave school and looked forward to having full-time jobs. They saw little benefit in studying for years, were not paid, and needed more independence. They saw school as a sissy for middle-class kids, and their approach to learning was to get by, do as little work as possible, and have as much fun as possible by testing the limits of authority. They did not value education because they thought they would get factory jobs that did not require any formal education. According to Willis, the boys who have anti-school culture are not forced to behave in that way nor to look for manual work; instead, it is in their subculture that they learn it from their parents, relatives and others in the community. Willis concludes that anti-school culture does not benefit or harm capitalism. The boys understand that a capitalist society does not value merit. They are aware that they cannot change their circumstances on their own and must collaborate to make things better for the working class, both at work and in education. They know no jobs in the area and that attending school will not make them job-ready.

Willis also displays how one segment of the workforce prepares for their future jobs by voluntary absence from school.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Families are the foundation of educational careers. The role of the family in a child's education must be discussed in education sociology, as well as how parents' attempts to help their children learn differ according to their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Although the school has a crucial and systematic role to play in the reproduction of class society (Willis, 1977, p. 147), the fact that sexism and deeply naturalized divisions arise in more virulent forms when the school's authority is weakened is not a result of the school's manifest intents. As part of the ideological control function of capitalist society, schools play a multifaceted role. Middle-class institutions that focus on academic qualifications essential to middle-class employment unintentionally contribute to the emergence of counter-school cultures by operating as middle-class institutions. Because the schools fail to address the needs of working-class students, who do not seek academic jobs, they fall prey to the counter-school culture – the men 'choose to fail.' The schools are not at fault, at least not on the surface.

Based on Willis' analysis, unfree conditions can be entered freely by finding the conditions that allow them; (120). Willis' argument explains why class exploitation and domination exist and why that dominance is essentially uncoerced and subjectively chosen. He is particularly interested in why working-class boys eagerly anticipate and accept physical labour occupations, which appear to be the least compensated and useless. However, it is essential to note that his investigation into this matter is not based on the idea of false consciousness. The key, according to Willis, lies in culture. According to Willis 'inquiry and analysis, a person's actions and interpretations of the world are shaped by the culture they live in. Culture is a form of creativity, according to him. In some ways, culture does more than a mark or act out more considerable societal tensions. Resources are employed to work on them (124). During this process, culture takes shape and serves as the basis for meaning and action.

Furthermore, Wills made several policy recommendations to improve the relevance of schools to working-class children and to prevent them from reproducing class inequality and ideological control. The following are some of these strategies: Recognizing that schools have a middle-class teaching paradigm that disadvantages working-class students; showing tremendous respect for working-class culture and perspectives; ceasing to convey to working-class children that they are inferior; educating students about the role of culture in their lives and demonstrating interest in norms such as instant gratification and a luff associated with working-class living.