



THE SELECTION FUNCTION OF EDUCATION: EXPLORING THE PARSONIAN VIEW

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Abstract:

The present paper is a reflection on the Sociologist Talcott Parsons's analysis of education. His ideas on education have been explored and reflected upon by keeping the function of selection as the focus of the discussion and the other function of socialization has been looked upon in the context of the former. While Parsons accorded equal significance to both the functions, it is the function of the school as a selective agency that can be seen as encompassing or rather building upon its other function as a socializing agency. Thus it is through the discussion of the former that the latter is also reflected upon, thereby allowing for a holistic discussion of the Parsonian account of education, which this paper puts forth.

Introduction:

Talcott Parsons was one of the most influential sociologists of his times and laid much of the groundwork for the Functionalist theory. Along with the discipline of Sociology in general, Parsons also left a considerable impact on the Sociology of education as well. He applied functionalism to the analysis of education and elaborated upon its functions with regard to the society. Functionalism is founded on certain basic assumptions which include, that every society is relatively stable and well integrated structure of elements, every element in the society has a function and that there exists a value consensus among its members. In the analysis of education, it is these assumptions within the framework of which, functions and role of education is looked at. These are very clearly reflected in Parsons's analysis of education which is most clearly stated in his work 'The School class as a Social System: Some of its functions in American society' (1959) in detail. It is with reference to this work that a discussion is made on his views pertaining to the subject at hand.