



Social Class and Transnational Human Capital

How Middle and Upper Class Parents Prepare Their Children for Globalization

by Jürgen Gerhards, Silke Hans & Sören Carlson

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Reviews

This is a rigorous and empirically-rich study of the ways in which families go about accumulating transnational human capital – focussing, in particular, on the role of bilingual pre-school education and programmes that allow school children to spend up to a year abroad. It emphasises how access to such schemes is socially-patterned, and thus the important role they play in reproducing social inequalities across society. This is an important book for sociologists of education and others interested in the social impact of initiatives to 'internationalise' education.

Rachel Brooks, Professor of Sociology, University of Surrey

How does social reproduction change in an age of international mobility? Delving into a variety of original sources, Gerhards, Hans and Carlson's book disentangles the strategies adopted by middle-upper class European families struggling to push their children into the ranks of the winners of globalization. An illuminating read.

Ettore Recchi, Sciences Po Paris

This book provides a convincing theoretical and empirical perspective on the generation of inequality of transnational capital over the life course. Globalization has turned transnational human capital into an increasingly important individual resource. Those who speak foreign languages, possess intercultural skills or have acquired experiences abroad clearly have an edge on globalized labor markets today. Using a multimethod approach, the book offers a rich empirical analysis addressing the question of how transnational human capital depends on social class, as well as how this relationship is brought about within families and educational institutions. This is a must-read for everyone interested in emerging new forms of educational inequalities in modern societies.

Hans-Peter Blossfeld, European University Institute, Florence

Once again, the innovative empiricist, Jürgen Gerhards, leads a pathbreaking project beyond the bounds of standard national models in the sociology of inequality and culture. Updating Bourdieu for a more complex, Europeanised and global society, Gerhards, Hans and Carlson convincingly mix survey data, interviews and media content analysis, to show how, when and why the children of elites use and reproduce what the authors term 'transnational human capital'.

Adrian Favell, Chair in Sociology and Social Theory, University of Leeds