ABSTRACT

Over the last three decades, the political project of school choice policy, promoted by the Vancouver School District and the BC Ministry of Education, has been contentious. Many have contended that school choice further contributes to the fragmentation and the associated hierarchies of the education system and social structures in the urban context of Vancouver, a major city with rapidly rising ethnic diversity and socio-economically polarizing urban redevelopment. To shed light on these concerns about school choice, in this study I investigate the ways in which young people, ages 11-19, positioned at various social, racial, and geographic social locations, and with varied social experiences, make sense of school choice policy. I focus on the ways in which young people imagine, experience, and form certain modes of social, spatial, and racial identification and groups, as well as relationships between these groups under the mechanism of school choice. Between 2009 and 2010, I carried out a multi-sited ethnographic study from a critical socio-phenomenological perspective. I conducted 59 semi-structured interviews with students in transition (Grades 7, 8, and 12), observed 16 school information evenings and 2 secondary schools over a 6-month period and analyzed media and policy discourses as they pertained to broader social, urban, and political changes. I draw upon an interdisciplinary analytical framework of critical policy studies and youth studies, and focus on three theoretical concepts: the imaginary, the imagination, and imaginary capital. These three concepts provide a key analytical framework for understanding the ways in which school choice complicates young people’s classification struggles and distinction-making (Bourdieu, 1984) within the widely circulating dominant social, urban, and national imaginary. I conclude that while current local policies of school choice can provide enriched alternative programs, they do so for only highly selective and competitive groups of students. Overall, the research findings point to the reality that school choice deepens existing social, spatial, and racial divisions, aggravates tensions, and ultimately worsens existing inequalities while producing new forms of social and educational stratification in the rapidly diversifying global city of Vancouver.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Born: Busan, South Korea
Academic Studies: B.A. (Hon), The University of British Columbia, 2003
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2004
M.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 2006

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Sociology of Education, Policy, and Youth

Courses

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<td>Sociology of Markets</td>
<td>Dr. Hanser</td>
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<td>EDST 580A</td>
<td>Youth Cultures, Class Conflict and Social Change</td>
<td>Dr. Dillabough</td>
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<td>EADM 554</td>
<td>Policy and Education</td>
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AWARDS

SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship
Amanda Araba Ocra Memorial Award
Patricia Dyer Memorial Award in Education
4-Year University Graduate Fellowship
4-Year Ph.D. Tuition Fee Award

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough (Supervisor)
Dr. Kjell Rubenson
Dr. Kalervo Gulson

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Educational Studies)

EE-SEUL YOON

B.A. (Hon), The University of British Columbia, 2003
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2004
M.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 2006

Thursday, May 23, 2013, 12:30 pm
Room 296, Henry Angus Building
Latecomers will not be admitted


EXAMINING COMMITTEE

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University Examiners:
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