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THE WELL-FORMED HABITUS OF REFUGEE'S CHILDREN

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Abstract

Habitus is an action that is influenced by the surrounding environment that results in practices. This article will show the process of forming a well-formed habitus and the influence of a well-formed habitus on the social life of refugees children. This article uses the sociological theory by Pierre Felix Bourdieu by using several concepts such as Habitus, Capital, and Field. In this research, the writer used qualitative methods in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs and also used descriptive methods in the form of descriptive analysis. The results showed that the process of forming a well-formed habitus in refugees children resulted in the habit of fondness for learning and the habit of using English which developed into a habitus for refugees children; love of gaining knowledge, diligence in studying, and the ability to speak English fluently. In addition, this research also shows the influence of the well-formed habitus of children in the Dadaab refugee camp on their social life; a wider and more profitable relationships as well as being superior in material and immaterial wealth which determines the structure and social status of refugee children.

Keywords: The well-formed habitus, capital, field, social life, refugee camp

I. INTRODUCTION

Habit is everything done repeatedly and unconsciously. A person's habits can be formed from childhood. Usually, since childhood, children are given good habits by their parents or the environment. Good habits accompanied by a good environment are the forerunner of the well-formed habitus for children. It can also occur in communities, institutions, and any social environment.

A well-formed habitus will have an influence on a person's life. For example, the habit of a child in a family environment who works as a teacher. The parents will form the habit of reading books to their children. Over time, this habit accompanied by an understanding of the importance of reading books given by the parents will form the habitus and he can grow up in the form of an intelligent child.

This article is used to find out the process and the results of the well-formed habitus formation and also to show the influence of the well-formed habitus in the form of capital on refugees' children's life. Based on the issue, the concept of habitus is employed to analyze the process of the well-formed habitus formation by showing the role of society in forming the habitus of refugees children and also the result

of forming the habitus by refugees children. The concept of capital is employed to analyze the influence of the well-formed habitus on the social life of refugees children in the form of a wider and profitable relationship and being superior in material and immaterial wealth. Then, the concept field is employed to show where the habitus and capital occur and the position of agent social or individual in society.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theory of practice or social practice is one of the famous theories by Pierre Felix Bourdieu. In this article, the writer only uses three concepts, habitus, capital, and field.

2.1 Habitus

Habitus is an action that people do repeatedly and continuously and this action is influenced by the circumstances or the people around them. Habitus appears for a long time and must go through a process. Habitus is difficult to change but does not rule out the possibility that habitus can change. According to Bourdieu in Maton (2014, p. 50), these tendencies or dispositions are enduring across time and adaptable in the sense that they can be applied in a variety of social contexts. It shows that habitus has the possibility to change according to social conditions.

2.2 Capital

Capital is all assets owned by an individual or agent that are profitable for him. There are several types of capital such as economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Here, the researcher only focuses on social, cultural, and symbolic capital.

2.2.1 Social Capital

Social capital refers to the individual network of relationships, as well as whom the individual knows and how influential or powerful they are. Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 99) says that a network of connections will provide an advantage for agents to gain access to social networks as well as a higher or prestigious field position. It shows that the relationship can be used as a connection between individuals.

2.2.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural Capital is a resource owned by an individual, agent, or group formed by formal education such as school or it can come from family. Cultural capital is into 3 parts; the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state.

The embodied state is something that is possessed by an individual or

agent for a long time (requires processing) and has been integrated into the agent such as knowledge, skills, dialect, accent, and a taste of something such as music or art.

The objectified state is everything that refers to material things owned by the individual or agent. According to Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 102) defines the objectified capital is in the form of things such as books, works, museums, galleries, laboratories, scientific instruments, etc.

While the institutionalized state focuses on the form of academic qualifications. The institutionalized state refers to the methods for calculating, certifying, and ranking cultural wealth. It concerns things such as the position and role of the individual in social life.

2.2.3 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital refers to things that show one's quality in society. Examples of symbolic capital are social status, reputation, honor, and prestige. According to Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 106) defines that symbolic capital can be obtained innate from one's body (embodiment) and some are obtained over a long duration.

2.3 Field

A field is a place where habitus and capital take place. The field exists because of the interaction between one individual and another. Bourdieu likens the field to a

football game. According to Bourdieu in Thomson (2014, p. 66), the football field is likened to a place to compete with players (social agents) who have their respective positions and roles in a field. What players (social agents) can do depends on the player's position on the field.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The writer uses the qualitative method to obtain the data. According to Creswell in Rantih (2021, p. 5) the meaning, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things are all part of qualitative research. Then, the writer analyzes and interprets the data in a descriptive analysis. Therefore, the writer uses a social theory from Pierre Bourdieu to solve the problems. This research is limited to discussing the role of society in forming the well-formed habitus of refugees children and the influence of the well-formed habitus on the social life of refugees children.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Process of the Formation of the Well-Formed Habitus of Refugees Children

Habitus is formed through a process, structured, and does not happen instantly. The process of the

formation of the well-formed habitus of refugees children happens in two ways; the role of society in forming the habitus of refugees children, and the result of the formation of habitus by refugees' children.

4.1.1 The role of the Society in Forming the Habitus of Refugees Children

Society forming the habitus of refugees children in 2 ways. First, by giving perception and motivation about education, and second by providing formal education.

4.1.1.1 Giving Perception and Motivation about Education

Habitus is formed by many factors. One of them is perception. When someone accepts a convincing perception related to habitus, he may run his life based on the perception.

In this case, Omar does not consider going to school as something to choose because he prefers to take care of his little brother who has a mental problem, and only does domestic work. Then, a community leader tries to give the perception to Omar. It can be seen through the quotation below:

“Farmers need to know how to read and count! Besides, the civil war has been raging for years now, and fighting it's getting worse, new refugees arrive here every week. I'm sorry. But right now there is no Somalia to return to.” (2020: 31)

The quotation above shows that the UNHCR staff gives a realistic view

of the importance of education. The word “farmers” not only refers to a farmer who works in the fields but also the knowledge or education in agriculture. Then, according to Bourdieu in Maton (2014, p. 49) its principal contribution, therefore, is to shape our habitus and create a sociological gaze by helping us change the way we look at the social world. The sentence, “I’m sorry, but right now there is no Somalia to return to.” It refers to the community leader’s view of the conditions in Somalia.

In addition, to transform the way Omar sees the social world, the community leader also gives motivation. In this case, the community leader continues to motivate Omar about the importance of education by giving an example of what Omar can do after receiving knowledge at school. This can be seen through the quotation below:

“Omar, only God knows what will happen in the future. But if you get an education, you’ll be prepared. You could get a job. You could start a school, like I did. You could provide for yourself and your family.” (2020: 33)

The quotation above shows that the staff of the UNHCR tries to convince Omar that

education is important. It shows that the community leader makes himself an example of the results of taking education. The repetition of the phrase, “You could” reflects that there is nothing that someone cannot do if he has knowledge. So, this motivation is one way to change Omar’s view on education and form a good habit of learning.

4.1.1.2 Providing Formal Education

There are some types of formal education such as pre-primary school, primary school, secondary school, and university. According to the UNHCR Kenya (2022, para. 1) pre-primary, primary and secondary education is available in the Dadaab refugee camps.

In this case, when Omar attends school for the first time, amazed by the English-speaking zone in the school area. Jeri says that it is normal to use English in the learning process, even in the school area. It can be seen through the dialogue quotation between Jeri and Omar below:

“Next is history class. This one is really boring.” “Wait! Why is she speaking in English? I thought this was history class!”

“All of our classes are in English! I thought you knew that”

“Oh, crud.” (2020: 46)

Based on the quotation, shows that

the teachers want to make students familiar with English. According to Bourdieu in Maton (2014, p. 50) it is 'structuring' in that someone's habitus will help to shape someone's present and also future practices. This shows that teaching and making students familiar with English will form a habitus that can be useful for the present to be a bridge of communication between teachers or staff of the UNHCR and children in a refugee camp. In future practices, the habituation of learning and speaking English in school is expected to be helpful and become a well-formed habitus for the students or refugees children.

4.1.2 The Result of the Formation of Habitus by the Refugees Children

Repeated experiences followed by appropriate reinforcement will constitute a permanent habitus that is integrated and exists in an individual's life. The result of the process of forming the habitus can be seen through the habit of fondness in learning and the habit of using English.

4.1.2.1 The Habit of Fondness in Learning

The habit of someone who is diligent will become a well-formed habitus of that

person. In the Dadaab refugee camp, the efforts made in a structured manner by the teachers in formal school (primary school) are the main key to the emergence of a habit of fondness for learning in the form of love for gaining knowledge for refugee children. Omar's habit of fondness for learning has developed into his habitus of diligence in studying also can be seen when he entered the year-end exam. It can be seen through the following quotation:

"Jeri and I started studying together every night. Soon other kids heard about our study group and joined us. Even tall Ali's friends. Tall Ali knew better than to try and join us, though. We usually met in my tent." (2020: 99)

The quotation above shows the habitus of Omar and his friends that are diligent in studying. The phrase, "Every night" describe their consistency in learning with the hope of graduating from primary school and passing to middle school. According to Bourdieu in Maton (2014, p. 50-51) practice is not simply the result of someone's habitus but also the relationship between his habitus and his current circumstances. The phrase "The study group" that was formed by Omar is actually a place to compete. According to Bourdieu in Thomson (2014, p. 67) the game occurs in a social space or field that is competitive, with many different social agents employing different strategies to maintain or improve their position. This happened

because of the selection in order to continue their education to secondary school.

4.1.2.2 The Habit of Using English

Foreign language skill is not achieved instantly. In an effort to master a language, one must be familiar with the language. In this case, the habit of using English developed into a habitus that the ability to speak English fluently among students. It can be proved through the quotation below:

“Then it’s inside for classes. English is first. Today we’re reading essays we wrote (in English, of course) about what we want to be when we grow up. I still have dreams about our farm in Somalia. But I’m trying to forget. You can’t live in the past, and dreams aren’t real.” (2020: 121)

The quotation above shows Omar is habituated to English. The phrase “In English, of course.” clearly shows that Omar is already familiar with English. This regards what Bourdieu in Maton(2014, p. 55) habitus, as the word indicates, is what a person has acquired, but is permanently incorporated into the body in the form of permanent dispositions. English is no longer a problem for Omar because English is already attached and integrated with him.

4.2 The Influence of the Well-Formed Habitus on the Social Life of Refugees Children

Social life cannot be separated from the structure, position, or social status of an individual in society. Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 100-101) said that the differences that exist in society occur because of capital. Then, According to Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 100) symbolic forms of capital are associated with well-formed habitus and in any group.

Besides that, social capital and cultural capital can be obtained through a well-formed habitus. Habitus such as love for gaining knowledge, diligence in studying, and the ability to speak English fluently by refugees children give influence their social life, such as a wider and more profitable relationship as well as being superior in material and immaterial wealth.

4.2.1 A Wider and Profitable Relationship

Social relationships can occur within a community, organization, and any environment. A wider and more profitable relationship can be associated with the habitus of an individual or agent. In this case, Michael tells Susana about Omar’s life situation, Omar’s dream to become a social worker, and how diligent Omar is at school. Omar’s habitus which is diligence in studying also influences the relationship between

Omar, Michael – Omar’s teacher, and Susana Martinez – The Spanish UN worker. It can be proved through the quotation below:

“Even though I passed my exams, almost didn’t get to go to secondary school because I couldn’t afford a uniform. Luckily, Susana Martinez, the Spanish UN worker who visited my middle school? She came looking for me when she heard I passed my KCPE Exams. I think Michael told her. When she learned I couldn’t buy a uniform, she bought one for me.” (2020: 223)

The quotation above shows the influence of a good relationship between Omar, the teachers, and also the Spanish staff of the UNHCR. Michael and Susana want to help Omar because Omar’s habitus is diligent in studying. The sentence, “Luckily, Susana Martinez, the Spanish UN worker who visited my middle school? She came looking for me when she heard I passed my KCPE Exams.” This shows that the relationship between Omar with Susana a few years ago is a form of investment that will benefit Omar in the present time.

According to Bourdieu in Richardson (1986, p. 22),

“The existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social given, constituted

once and for all by an initial act of institution, represented, in the case of the family group, by the genealogical definition of kinship relations, which is the characteristic of a social formation. It is the product of an endless effort at institution, of which institution rites—often wrongly described as rites of passage—mark the essential moments and which is necessary in order to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits.

Through the quotation above, the relationship between Omar and the teacher as the representative of the educational institution that has existed since Omar has been to school can actually secure his material. The sentence, “When she learned I couldn’t buy a uniform, she bought one for me.” This shows that Omar’s relationship with his teacher secures material wealth in the form of uniforms that can be used by Omar to continue his education. Then, when Omar can continue his education, this will provide cultural

capital in the form of knowledge or what Bourdieu called the embodied state. Later, it will produce symbolic capital in the form of social status as an educated person which will have an effect on Omar’s social life.

4.2.2 Superior in Material and Immaterial Wealth

Wealth is dreamed of by many people in this world. Material wealth also shows the social status of an

individual. Meanwhile, immaterial wealth is any property that does not have a physical form, such as degrees and knowledge. One can gain knowledge through formal education. Formal education at the same time can provide material and immaterial wealth for an individual.

Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 100) says that people who have a well-formed habitus certainly have a higher cultural capital. Formal education must be balanced with good habitus such as being diligent in studying to get cultural capital. In this case, Omar and Jeri are able to continue their education to secondary school because they received formal education and are accompanied by good habitus since they are in primary school. It can be proved through the quotation below:

“Jeri and I both passes our KCPE exams, so we’re among the few students in A2 from our grade to go to secondary school. I’m really proud of that. The whole neighbourhood is proud of us for going to secondary school. We’re kind of like celebrities!” (2020: 222)

The quotation above shows Omar and Jeri’s excellence in education and the impact on their social life. According to Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 106):

“The inequalities associated with cultural capital reflect inequalities in capacities to acquire capital which themselves reflect prior inequalities in the possession of cultural capital. There are two distinctive features that affect the manner in which forms of symbolic capital can be acquired. The first, from the point of view of acquisition, is that they cannot be divorced from the person (they presuppose embodiment), and the second is that they can only be acquired over time (they presuppose duration).”

The quotation above shows that the inequality in the social status of Omar and Jeri with other children in a refugee camp is caused by the acquisition of cultural capital obtained by them for a long time, that is through their habitus. The sentence, “The whole neighborhood is proud of us for going to secondary school” shows that they are role models for people in a refugee camp. Then, the sentence, “We’re kind of like celebrities!”

describe that they have a symbolic capital such as higher social status.

In addition, the habitus that is the ability to speak English fluently also becomes one of Omar’s immaterial wealth. In this case, Omar conducted a second interview for resettlement with the UNHCR staff. This interview is in English. Omar does not need an interpreter at all because Omar is familiar with and accustomed to English. This can be seen in the following

statement by Omar:

“We were back in the UN offices. We had a different interviewer, but maybe they were related, because they seemed to share the same inability to smile... By now I spoke English well enough that I didn't need an interpreter. I could speak for myself.” (2020: 245)

The quotation above shows an immaterial advantage that Omar feels as the result of his well-formed habitus. The sentence, “By now I spoke English well enough that I didn't need an interpreter.” shows the habit of using English formed by the UNHCR teachers or staff produces knowledge that develop into a well-formed habitus. This is called embodied capital – a part of cultural capital. According to Bourdieu in Moore (2014, p. 107), “The formation of embodied cultural capital entails the prolonged exposure to a specialized social habitus, such as that of the traditional English public school.” This also happens at the Dadaab refugee camp, where the cultural capital exists through teaching or learning English in a formal school since primary school which ultimately develops the habitus of using English which is the ability and fluency in English.

Furthermore, the habitus of the ability to speak English fluently provides an

added value for Omar compared to other students in the Dadaab refugee camp who were also interviewed. It can be seen through the sentence, “I could speak for myself.” This regards what Bourdieu in Richardson (1986, p. 18-19);

“Furthermore, the specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital: any given cultural competence (e.g., being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner.”

Omar's ability to speak English is a rare value in a refugee camp. So, this is an advantage for Omar over other refugees and indirectly shows his higher social status as a habitus practice of educated children.

In contrast to immaterial wealth, material wealth is goods or property that have a physical form. In this case, the material wealth that Omar gets is the result of a good relationship between Omar and the Community leader because of his habitus of fondness for learning. This can be seen in the quotation below:

“I did get permission, Ali. And look, I have a workbook and a pencil! Most of the other kids didn't have pencils or paper. I was one of the few kids who was able to take notes in class. I

wrote really tiny to try and save my paper.” (2020: 41, 47)

Based on the quotation above, only Omar has material wealth in the form of a workbook and pencil. According to Bourdieu in Richardson (1986, p. 20):

“Thus cultural goods can be appropriated both materially—which presupposes economic capital—and symbolically—which presupposes cultural capital. It follows that the owner of the means of production must find a way of appropriating either the embodied capital which is the precondition of specific appropriation or the services of the holders of this capital.”

Like the quotation above, Omar has material wealth in the form of a notebook and pencil. So, Omar can optimize the use of this material wealth. Omar must be wise in using and optimizing the use of capital. Omar can convert notebooks and pencils into cultural capital to increase his knowledge by using notebooks to write all the material taught by teachers at school. Other than that, the phrase “I was one of the few kids” shows Omar’s higher social status than all the students in his class even in his school. Omar can get this social status because he has material wealth.

V. CONCLUSION

A well-formed habitus will be formed through a long process and accompanied by a good environment and habit. Later on, a well-formed habitus will have a good impact or influence on the social life of refugees children.

The interaction that happened in the society between the UNHCR staff, the surrounding environment of the refugee children, and the children in the refugee camp result in the habit of fondness for learning that developed into a habitus of love for gaining knowledge and diligence in studying. Then, a habit of using English developed into habitus which is the ability to speak English fluently

among the students or refugees children in the Dadaab refugee camp. This habitus also has an influence on Omar and Jeri’s cultural capital in the form of material and immaterial-wealth. With this habitus, Omar and Jeri get a symbolic capital that is higher social status in their social life in a refugee camp.

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