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Savage Inequalities in Education

As a teacher from China and as a previous student educated in the Chinese public education system, I previously believe that the United States has the highest quality of education in the world. It has a fully developed public school system, a well-balanced curriculum design and most professional teachers in the world. Although some educators from the United States hold the belief that the education system need a change, or even revolution, I did not seriously believe the education system in the United States needed that change, as it was almost perfect! Although the system has some issues to be fixed, these issues are common issues all round the world and educators in the public education system have put so much effort to deal with these problems.

However, I was amazed by the US public education history when I go deep into some commonly mentioned issues, such as race segregation. In *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools,* Kozol (1994) compares inner city and suburban public schools in terms of deep disparities among them by using East St. Louis High vs. Fairview Heights High (10 miles away). He presents the great difference in terms of school infrastructure, teaching materials, health conditions of children, conditions surrounding the schools, quality of teachers and funding. East St. Louis High was unsanitary, harmful to students, dysfunctional, and lacking of basic teaching tools, qualified instructors, or administers. This high school stacked the deck against poor children. Kozol attributed part of the reason for the phenomenon to the segregation and part to depressed economic condition to the East St. Louis. Thus, he wanted to raise the awareness of common people, as well as educators, to pay attention on the situation and finally make a change to the high schools in plight situation. He also paid constant effort on this social issue.

After 11 years, Kozol (2005) released his observation on the segregation issue in public education system in the United State in another essay, *Still Separate, Still Unequal: America's Educational Apartheid*. At that time, it was commonly believed that the serious segregation had been ended because of booming economic condition. However, this was not the fact: segregation was still there, even in the well-developed area. Martin Luther King Jr. High school in New York locates in an upper-middle-class white neighborhood. However, most students in that public school were back and Hispanic, but not white. Why?

There were reasons for this phenomenon. First, a new belief of “separation but equality” appeared at time. It appeared that the money invested in and the school facilities used by high school students were equal and, thus, in these schools, it was legal to have all black students. However, when a school was dominated by Hispanic and African American students, white students would not like to apply and even their family would move to a new community where high schools were dominated by white students. Second, some officers would use “the rich variations of ethnic group” to explain the inequality in the term of investment in education for different schools. What’s more serious, these officials would not likely to admit their unequal treatment towards different groups. Third, SFA (the Success for All Program) had been installed in many public schools, erasing the creativity of students in these schools. This newly emerged phenomenon provides insights into the equality in education system.

Although China has almost only one race, Han, the education resources are distributed unequally among the country. Every major city in China, such as Beijing and Shanghai, have a large amount of qualified teachers, well-equipped labs, and most intelligent students, while in the other parts, especially the rural parts of our country, there are not so many qualified teachers. Educators in China have pay attention to this phenomenon and some actions are used to protect more serious issues on the inequality in allocating of educational resources, such as full finical add to normal school students who wish to be teachers in the rural areas in China. However, there are also new problems occurring in this situation. Some students, after receiving full finical add from China government and then knowing their fixed jobs after graduation, become less motivated in the colleges. Their poor academic performance at colleges result in poor quality in future job when they are teachers. Even more worse is the fact that some students with finical add drop from college, wasting the money from tax payers. It is educationally and sociologically necessary for educators to know these issues and make a change in the current educational system in China to cultivate more qualified high school teachers with valuable founding.

References

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