Between Curriculum Complexity and Stereotypes: Exploring Stereotypes of Teachers and Education in Media as a Question of Structural Violence

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Abstract

The paper highlights four tendencies in the media reporting of teachers and education: a) recurring patterns of defining education in crisis, b) mantling responsibility as exterior spokespersons for education and teachers, c) excluding teachers' and educational researchers' knowledge and experiences in the media, and d) simplifying the notion of a good and bad teacher through stereotypes and dualistic frameworks that overlook task- and relational complexity. In this paper I explore how the simplifications of teachers and education that are often presented in the media can be interpreted as structural violence. In the light of these tendencies, research on structural violence helps to remind us that: a) teachers are unwillingly forced into a paradoxical (in)visibility, b) they are squeezed in-between two pressuring external demands, namely the complexities in their professional assignment that are politically steered and stereotypes of the good and bad teacher produced by, in this case, the media, c) they risk wasting time and energy on addressing prejudices that have nothing to do with the specific work they are expected to do, and d) the logic of binary stereotypes is a power issue that brands teachers into a position of permanent failure.

References


