

Enhancing Resilience and Social Alliances: Exploring the Sociological Impact of a Positive School Climate on Educational Communities and Peripheral Territories

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Recent sociological literature on educational policies highlights how the current economic crisis has exacerbated inequality within the broader social context, especially evident in the digital divide and overcrowded housing (ISTAT, 2020), largely impacting families with school-age children.

This paper aims to focus on the alliance between school and family and between school and the educational community (Bianchi, 2020), analyzing the impact that a more active and resilient school system has on peripheral territories.

Poverty is certainly a multidimensional phenomenon arising both from the socio-economic and family context in which children live (Save the Children, 2015), and educational poverty is often its most relevant dimension (Allmendinger, 1989). In this sense, researchers from more areas and contexts have questioned more generally the mechanisms of intersections between educational and social policies and in particular the effects that social inequalities have on learning outcomes (Di Sano & Balenzano, 2019).

Psychology addresses the issue of educational poverty and social inequalities through theoretical and practical approaches, contributing to the design and implementation of interventions and educational policies aimed at mitigating the effects of poverty. Actions may include programs or interventions to enhance teachers' skills, socio-emotional support for students, as well as public policies aimed at reducing inequalities in access to educational resources (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; McIntosh, 2022; Martinsone et al., accepted). These inequalities trigger dynamics of marginalization related to both urban and social issues, becoming spaces of potential exclusion. In this regard, the consequences of Covid-19 have increased the gap between individuals and the rise in households living in absolute or relative poverty, limiting the possibility for children to access school and extracurricular activities (Iavarone, 2019). In this direction, the international psychological literature highlights how the school climate can significantly influence the conditions of educational poverty and social disparities; a positive and inclusive school climate can contribute to mitigating the effects of economic poverty and social inequalities (Cohen et al., 2009; Martinsone et al., accepted). An inclusive and equitable school climate may be necessary to counteract marginalization and social exclusion (Di Sano et al., accepted). Therefore, schools must work towards ensuring equal access to

educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their family's socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, students from families experiencing poverty may face more complex emotional and social conditions (Lee & Zhang, 2022; Arslan, 2021). A school climate that provides socio-emotional support, such as counselling services, social skills development programs, and inclusive extracurricular activities, can help students develop greater resilience and psychological well-being, which can be associated with a reduction in stress and anxiety associated with poverty and enabling them to better focus on learning (Cocoradă & Orzea, 2017; Aldridge et al., 2016). A safe and supportive school climate can serve as a protective factor, particularly in socio-spatially disadvantaged areas where students often have to deal with situations of violence, crime, or poverty. It can help counteract the adverse effects of external circumstances and provide a space for personal, social, and academic growth (Blitz, Yull & Clauhs, 2020; Edwards & Konold, 2020). A positive school climate also promotes fair allocation and distribution of resources within the school, encouraging equitable practices, ensuring access to quality educational resources, extracurricular activities, and support services for all students, regardless of their socio-spatial background, and reducing disparities that can be attributed to external factors (Ross, 2013).

From the described perspective, teaching is subject to adaptations in socio-political and educational contexts, changes in culturally situated social relations, and multiple interpretations of teaching action in specific situations (Altet et al., 2006). Teachers' professionalism should be understood as a system that observes and interacts with contextual systems (the educational settings), having the ability to observe, interpret, and simultaneously interact with them while safeguarding their complexity (Colazzo, 2012). In this perspective, programs that promote a positive school climate can positively enhance teachers' self-efficacy, with implications not only for personal satisfaction and well-being but also for the improvement of the quality of education, towards the full achievement of educational objectives (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Collie, Shapka & Perry, 2012). Furthermore, a positive school climate appears to have a broader impact beyond the school's boundaries, encouraging greater parental and family involvement in school life and promoting partnerships and collaborations with local community organizations and institutions (Martinsone et al., accepted).

In a comparative logic, the contexts in which schools are active implementers of those formative processes are defined as "ubiquitous," extending beyond the school environment (Frabboni, Pinto Minerva, 2013; Damiano, 1984): learning is considered a continuous and widespread process that impacts everyday life (Tramma, 2019).