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## *Human Capital or Cultural Capital?* George Farkas.

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off government social programs and into productive work. In view of widespread skepticism about the ability of many welfare recipients to find remunerative employment, a discussion of this kind would have been welcomed. Nevertheless, this is a stimulating book which should provoke much debate.

George Farkas, *Human Capital or Cultural Capital?* New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1996. \$ 42.95 hardcover, \$ 22.95 papercover.

Although the concept of human capital is now well-established in the social sciences, notions of social capital and cultural capital are still poorly defined. But, both are attracting increasing attention as the need to understand the linkages between economic and social phenomena becomes more urgent. Human capital theorists assert that education and skill acquisition should be regarded as productive investments in the economy. Proponents of social capital theory similarly believe that efforts to enhance social integration and promote effective interpersonal networks are investments which enhance economic growth. Cultural capital theorists are not as clear in asserting a direct link with economic development but, as this extremely interesting book reveals, their ideas do have relevance for economic progress.

Farkas defines cultural capital as the "toolkit of skills, habits and styles" which individuals use to construct strategies of action. Recognizing the class linkages which have been emphasized by cultural capital theorists, he contends that individuals from poor communities lack the skills, habits and styles they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. Traditional schooling, which focuses on human capital skills acquisition, has not addresses the need for children from deprived communities to enhance their cultural capital and to participate effectively in a dynamic economy.

The book traces the miserable failures of traditional educational approaches directed at children from poor communities. It points out that the vast majority of these children leave school hopelessly unprepared to cope with the demands of the modern economy. Unless attempts are made to enhance their cultural capital, they will be relegated to the margins of society. The author claims that the best mechanism for enhancing cultural capital is the inculcation of reading and writing skills at the primary school

level. However, conventional methods of literacy development have not been very successful and attempts to enhance these capabilities through one-on-one instruction are very expensive. The book presents an interesting case study of the use of university students to provide one-on-one instruction at low cost in the Dallas public school system. Although the experiment ran into opposition from traditional educational quarters, it demonstrates that the cultural capital of poor children can be enhanced in cost-effective ways.

This book makes an interesting contribution to the growing literature in the field of social investment. Its findings should be more widely applied. It would also be instructive to link human and cultural capital ideas to the notion of social capital. An effective integration of these concepts could form the basis for interesting community based projects which seek to promote development not only in narrow economic terms but in a wider social and cultural context as well.

Steven Yearley, *Sociology, Environmentalism, Globalization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996. \$ 69.95 hardcover, \$ 22.95 papercover.

'Global' and 'globalization' are terms that are now widely used in the social sciences, the media and in popular discourse. While social reality was previously based on local and national conceptions, it is today being enhanced by a greater awareness of international events and a gradual realization that these events impinge with ever greater frequency on local consciousness. The trend towards globalization has been fostered by economic changes, the expansion of electronic and other forms of communications, increased travel and contacts between peoples of different cultures, greater international political cooperation and other changes. Many social scientists argue that these developments will result in a gradual acceptance of the world as a single place rather than a disparate collection of individual nation states.

Yearly had previously published several important books on the sociology of the environment. In this book, he turns his attention to the complex relationship between environmentalism and globalization. While it may, at first, appear that the environmental movement has adopted a truly global perspective to