

Perspectives on Education	
Functionalism	Marxism
<p>1) Durkheim: Solidarity and Skills Teaching</p> <p>Social Solidarity: Durkheim argues that society needs a sense of solidarity. Without it, social life and cooperation would be impossible because each individual would pursue their own selfish desires. The education system helps to create social solidarity by transmitting society's culture (shared beliefs and values) from one generation to the next. For example the teaching of a country's history instils in children a sense of shared heritage and a commitment to a wider social group. This can also be achieved through the hidden curriculum.</p> <p>Specialist Skills: Modern industrial economies have a complex division of labour where the production of even a single item usually involved the cooperation of many different specialists. This cooperation promotes social solidarity but, for it to be successful, each person must have the necessary specialist knowledge and skills to perform their role. Durkheim argues that education teaches individuals the specialist knowledge and skills that they need to play their part in the social division of labour.</p> <p>2) Parsons: Meritocracy</p> <p>Parsons see schools as an important place for secondary socialisation; acting as the bridge between the family and wider society. This bridge is needed because the family and society operate on different principles, so children need to learn a new way of living if they are to cope in the wider world.</p> <p>Within the family, the child is judged by particularistic standards (rules that only apply to them). They also have an ascribed status (fixed at birth). For example, an elder son and a younger daughter may be given different rights or duties because of differences in age and sex.</p> <p>In school and wider society we are all judged by the same universalistic standards. For example in society the same laws apply to everyone. In school each pupil is judged against the same standards. They all sit the same exam and the pass mark is the same for everyone. Those students might be expected to achieve a place at university because of their exam grades, not because they knew someone who worked there. Meritocracy refers to a society where jobs and pay are allocated on the basis of people's individual talents, abilities, qualifications and skills.</p> <p>3) Davis and Moore: Role Allocation</p> <p>Davis and Moore see education as a device for selection and role allocation. They argue that inequality is necessary to ensure that the most important roles in society are filled by the most talented people. It would be inefficient and dangerous to have less able people performing roles such as surgeon or airline pilot. Not everyone is equally talented so society has to offer a high reward for these jobs. This will encourage everyone to compete for them and society can then select the most talented individuals for these positions.</p> <p>Education plays a key part in this process as it acts as a proving ground for ability. The most able gain the highest qualifications which gives them entry to the most important jobs in society.</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Durkheim</p> <p>Sociologists have criticised Durkheim's ideas by pointing out that the education system does not teach specialised skills adequately. For example, the Wolf review of vocational education (2011) claims that high quality apprenticeships are rare and up to a third of 16-19 year olds are on courses that do not lead to higher education or good jobs.</p> <p>Parsons</p> <p>There is a great deal of evidence that equal opportunities in education do not exist. For example, achievement is greatly influenced by class/gender and ethnic background rather than ability. (Note: use information from your class/gender or ethnic learning table here to explain this evaluation point).</p> <p>David and Moore</p> <p>Tumin (1953) criticises Davis and Moore for putting forward a circular argument. How do we know that a job is important? Answer: because it is highly rewarded. Why some jobs are more highly rewarded? Answer: because it is important.</p>	<p>Althusser: The Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)</p> <p>According to Althusser, education is an important ISA. He argued that education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduces class inequality by transmitting it from generation to generation, by failing each successive generation of working class pupils in turn. • Legitimises (justifies) class inequality by producing ideologies (sets of ideas and beliefs) that disguise its true cause. The function of ideology is to persuade workers to accept that inequality is inevitable and that they deserve their subordinate position in society. If they accept these ideas, they are less likely to challenge and threaten capitalism. <p>Bowles and Gintis: Reproduction of Social Class Inequality</p> <p>Functionalists argue that the education system is meritocratic, but Bowles and Gintis claim that meritocracy is an ideology legitimating inequality by falsely claiming that everyone has an equal opportunity and that unequal rewards are natural as a result of unequal ability.</p> <p>Bowles and Gintis argue that education reproduces an obedient workforce that will accept inequality as inevitable. From their own study of 237 New York High School students and the findings of other studies they concluded that schools reward precisely the kind of personality traits that make for a submissive, compliant worker. For instance, they found that students who showed independence and creativity tended to gain low grades, whilst those who showed characteristics linked to obedience and discipline (like punctuality) tended to gain high grades. From this, Bowles and Gintis concluded that education helps to produce the obedient workforce that capitalism needs.</p> <p>The Correspondence Principle and Hidden Curriculum</p> <p>Bowles and Gintis argue that there are close parallels between schooling and work in capitalist society. This is known as the correspondence principle – the relationships and structures found in education mirror or correspond to those of work. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both schools and workplaces are hierarchies, with head teachers or bosses at the top making decisions and giving orders. • Alienation through students' lack of control over education (e.g. over what to study and timetabling) reflects alienation through workers' lack of control over production (e.g. managers decide what, how when and where to produce). • Competition and divisions among students (e.g. to come top of the class, to be higher stream) reflects competition and divisions among the workforce (e.g. through difference in status and pay). <p>Bowles and Gintis claim that the correspondence principle operates through the hidden curriculum – that is all the 'lessons that are learnt in school without being directly taught. For example, through the everyday workings of the school, pupils become accustomed to accepting hierarchy and competition, working for extrinsic rewards and so on. In this way schooling prepares working class pupils for their role as the exploited workers of the future, reproducing the workforce capitalism needs and perpetuating class inequality from generation to generation.</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Althusser:</p> <p>Althusser's approach to education is useful in exposing the 'myth or meritocracy'. They show the role that education plays as an ideological state apparatus, serving the interests of capitalism.</p> <p>Bowles and Gintis: Methodological Evaluation</p> <p>Bowles and Gintis conducted their own research into how schools reproduce social class inequality which may have been the result of researcher bias. (A tendency for researcher to find what they are looking to find by manipulation of data).</p> <p>Too Focussed on Class:</p> <p>Post-modernists Morrow and Torres argue that society is now more diverse. They see non-class inequalities, such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, as equally important. They argue that sociologists must explain how education reproduces and legitimises all forms of inequality, not just class and how the different forms of inequality are related.</p>

The **New Right** approach to education reflects many of the ideas of the functionalist perspective. The New Right argues that education should:

- Train the workforce, making sure the most able students have their talents developed and are recruited into the most important jobs whilst others are prepared for lower-level employment.
- Socialise young people into a collective value and responsible citizenship, and thereby build social cohesion and social solidarity to ensure a stable and united society.

However, a key difference is that the New Right do not believe the current education system is achieving these goals. The reason for its failure is that it is run by the state.

Chubb and Moe: The Marketisation of Education

Chubb and Moe believe that state run education imposes a single type of school regardless of the wishes and needs of parents or local communities. They argue that there should be a free market in education, with a range of different types of independently managed schools and colleges, run like private business, answerable to the local communities' parents and students.

They based their arguments on a comparison of the achievements of 60,000 pupils from low income families in 1015 state and private high schools, together with the findings of a parent survey and case studies of 'failing' schools.

They found that pupils from low-income families consistently do about 5% better in private education than in state schools.

Based on these findings, Chubb and Moe call for the introduction of a market system in state education that would put control in the hands of the consumers (parents). They argue that this would allow consumers to shape schools to meet their own needs and would improve quality and efficiency.

The Role of the State

There remain two important roles for the state:

- To impose a framework on schools within which they have to compete. For example, by publishing Ofsted inspection reports and league tables of schools' exam results, the state gives parents information with which to make a more informed choice between schools.
- To ensure that schools transmit a shared culture. By imposing a single national curriculum, it seeks to guarantee that schools socialise pupils into a single cultural heritage.

Evaluation

Chubb and Moe

Chubb and Moe used surveys to investigate the efficiency of state schools – how can we evaluate surveys?

Marketisation of Education

Gerwitz (1995) and Ball (1994) argue that competition between schools benefits the middle class who can use their cultural and economic capital to gain access to more desirable schools.

Self-contradicting

Critics argue there is a contradiction between the New Right's support for parental choice on the one hand and the state imposing a national curriculum on all its schools on the other.

<p>Feminists</p> <p>Feminists focus on gender inequalities within society. Reveals male dominance in society and how this is maintained. Main role of education is to maintain gender inequality. From the 1960's onwards feminists highlighted the following gender inequalities in education. Gendered Language – reflecting wider society, school textbooks used gendered language e.g. him, man. Downgrades women Gendered Roles – how males and females are presented in textbooks and reading schemes. Gender stereotypes – stereotyping of gender in traditional reading schemes Women in the curriculum – missing in the background and hidden from history – plus stereotypes. Subject choice – traditional 'boys' and 'girls' subjects with lower status and market value put on girls ones. Discrimination – see 11+ exam. FE and HE – traditionally less girls went often due to less encouragement – but no longer the case. Liberal Feminists Different strands Liberal feminists argue that legislation and education can help to change gender inequalities in society. Many believe that this gradual process has had a great success rate already – males and females have access to equal opportunities in education. Marxist feminists blame the capitalist system for forcing women into the supporting role of wife/mother at home and in lower positions in the workforce. Education helps to preserve these expectations on both men and women. Radical feminists focus on the violent nature of patriarchy. The school classroom and playground are where this male violence (both physical and emotional) is learned. Black feminists argue that black females suffer different problems to white females. Their differential treatment at school by teachers and other students suggest that we should look at the situation of black women separately</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>+ Valuable in exposing gender inequality and partly because of the sociological research much of the Sexism has gone. BUT – now girls achieve better than boys at all levels and are more likely to go to university, SO focus is now on boy's underachievement.</p> <p>Post feminists in line with post-modern thinking argue that there is no single meaning to being a 'woman'. Working class women have different experiences from middle class women, gay women have different experiences from straight women, gay working class women have different experiences...etc. Consequently no overall theory can explain gender differences.</p>	<p>Social Democratic</p> <p>Social Democratic Perspectives: Start from the view that everybody should have an equal chance to succeed in the educational system. Equal Opportunity. - A.H.Halsey (1961; 1980) – criticised functionalist views. - Social class has a significant effect on educational attainment. Education and the Economy. - There is a close link between education and economic growth. - Educational system reflects this requirement. Evaluation. - Difficult to unravel the relationships between education and the economy. - Growth in vocational education with its focus on workplace skills</p>	<p>Post Modernism</p> <p>Postmodernism means literally 'after the modern era'. The modern era was a time of certainty and stretched from the 18th century to the late 20th century. Postmodernists believe that this era was far more predictable than the times we live in today, e.g. jobs were for life and class was a major source of identity. Since around the 1970's we have been living in times characterised by risk and diversity. Consequently this has had huge implications for education . Moor and Hickox 1994 Argue that such policies as the National Curriculum are doomed to failure because they can't keep up with the increasingly diverse nature of society. The continual testing, target setting and recording of results is seen as an attempt to keep some kind of order. Criticisms Some argue that no such thing as a post-modern world exists and that issues such as social class are just as important today as ever. Postmodernists criticise sociological theories for being 'meta-narratives' (large all-embracing explanations). However, in putting forward their views are not postmodernists falling into the same trap?</p>
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