

The education system exists mainly to select

[Education](#)



The role of the education system has broadened and perhaps been restructured to apply to different eras of capitalist society. Developing ideologies around the purposes of the system towards young people have been brought forward by Marxists and highly critical perspectives by feminists have also appeared to challenge the system. Functionalists developed the concept of secondary socialisation viewing the education system as playing the role started by the family of integrating children into society and the future working world by setting rules and norms to follow in order to succeed in the educational system.

Sociologist Durkheim created the theory and Parson supported his theory applying it to 20th industrial society of the America where the educational system played a functional fit to the wider economy allowing each individual to benefit from education while polishing their employability skills. Davis and Moore further illustrated the influence of the system linking it to equal opportunity where ascribed status isn't the determining factor of an individual's achievement within the educational system.

Functionalists argue this has led to a more meritocratic society where role allocation is based on merit however this has come under attack in the 21st century where social class has been identified as perhaps the most influential factor in educational achievement of young people and contributing massively to constitutional racism. All the criticisms highlighted the educational system as a filter sieve where talent is selected and sorted out leading to roles been given according as part of the division of labour allowing society to function efficiently.

Marxists contrastingly signal out the system as another institution made to meet the demands of capitalism rather than prepare young people for their true roles in the future. Bowles and Gintis criticised the structure insisting the filtering of talent through streaming and setting in the educational system prevents a meritocracy as the working class and some ethnic minorities are left out of the talent pool of those selected due to internal factors.

In addition to this the sociologists challenge the ideology of the system referring to the hidden curriculum of the educational system which the lower classes are often unable to meet due to the cost of educational success. The idea of meritocracy has been prevented as the structural barriers within society and in turn only justified the existence of inequalities as part of society rather than rid them of affecting the educational system.

Bourdieu also questions the concept of equal opportunities stating success in the educational system demands the possession cultural capital something the middle class easily meet where as the working class habitus doesn't include. The social values of education are more institutionalised in middle class children allowing them to play around the educational system more effectively than working class children who perhaps won't have the role models and necessary advice to succeed in a growingly tough educational system.

Social policies are extremely effective in deciding the goals of the educational system according to different eras of capitalism. Young people are manufactured to meet the government's concept of what's needed in

society. This is evident in today's society where the Labour Party aims to increase university applicants has been contrasted by the conservative government aiming to restrict the number of young people graduating due to the high unemployment in society caused in by the recent recession.

Feminists also appear to agree with ideology of government control over the educational system in terms of female success within education. Barrett and MacIntosh imply the changing ideas towards female education from domestic roles and service to being a part of society and the working sector. Female education has been encouraged to succeed by the gradual expansion of female roles in society.

The introduction of legislation promoting equality and equal opportunities for women has led to improved performance from girls within the system and internal factors appearing to no longer limit girls portrays the idea of a meritocratic system in society. The Genderquake after the industrial society forced social policies to focus on improving the economic and educational system of women and ensuring external factors are directed at motivating greater female educational achievement to meet the service sector requiring female labour.

Despite appearing to control educational aims of the system most social reforms regarding education have been successful and largely suggested the ideology of meritocratic society exists and can be achieved. Sociologist Saunders' research found social policies force schools to ensure all children gaining qualifications during their time in school rather than the ones sieved out of the talent pool.

The educational system is perhaps more effective if analysed as gate keeper allowing the appropriate number of students through to meet the requirement of the job market rather than an institution which promotes out and out meritocracy. Studies conducted by Brown and Lauder highlighted the increasing number of graduates since the 70s until the 1st decade of the 21st century where global recession and employment problems have led to decreasing figures further pushed by social reforms of university fees.

The education system is undoubtedly another government institution created publicly as a meritocracy promoter but in truth manages the regulation of achievement according to society and demands of the population as highlighted previously by reforms to promote female and working class achievement and limitation of achievement by social policies increasing university fees for undergraduates rather than encourage achievement for all.