

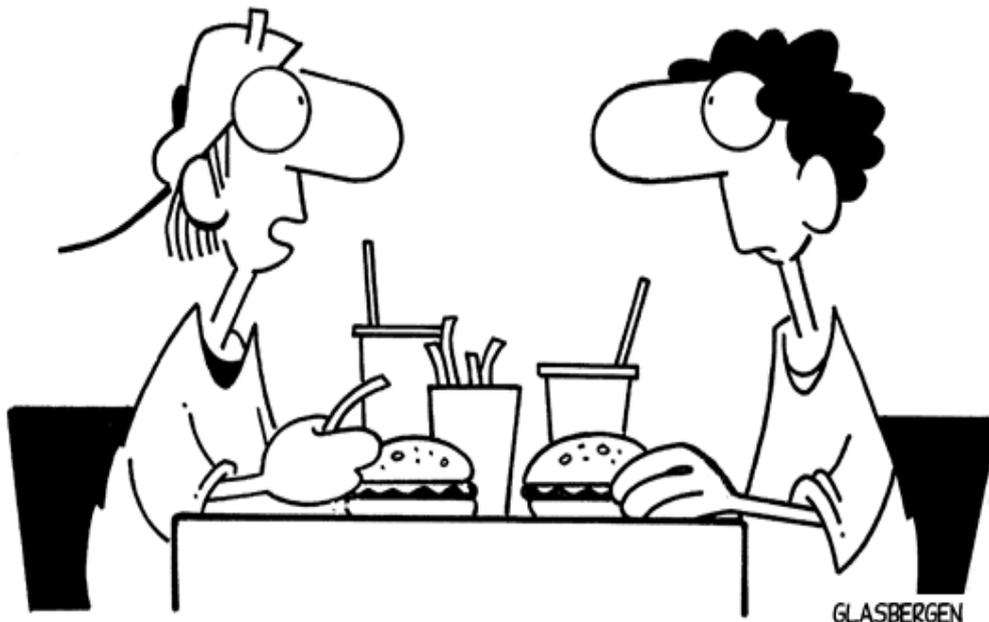
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Sociology of Education

Unit Two: SCLY2

Miss Sakine Koc



**“I forgot to make a back-up copy of my brain,
so everything I learned last semester was lost.”**

Course Outline

1. **The role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training, in contemporary society**
 - Functionalist and New Right views of the role and purpose of education: transmission of values, training workforce
 - Marxist and other conflict views of the role and purpose of education: social control, ideology, hegemony; 'deschoolers' (Illich, Friere): socialisation into conformity by coercion
 - Vocational education and training: the relationship between school and work: human capital, training schemes, correspondence theory.
2. **Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society**
 - Statistics on educational achievement by class, gender and ethnicity; trends over time
 - Social class and educational achievement: home environment; cultural capital, material deprivation; language (Bernstein); school factors, relationship between achievement by class in education and social mobility
 - Gender and educational achievement: feminist accounts of gender-biased schooling; the concern over boys' 'underachievement' and suggested reasons; subject choice; gender identities and schooling.
 - Ethnicity and educational achievement: patterns; reasons for variations; multicultural schools, the relationship between class, gender and ethnicity
 - The effects of changes on differential achievement by social class, gender and ethnicity.
3. **Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning**
 - School processes and the organisation of teaching and learning: school ethos;
 - streaming and setting; mixed ability teaching; the curriculum; overt and hidden
 - The 'ideal pupil'; labelling; self-fulfilling prophecy
 - School subcultures (eg as described by Willis, Mac an Ghail) related to class, gender and ethnicity
 - Teachers and the teaching hierarchy; teaching styles
 - The curriculum, including student choice.
4. **The significance of educational policies, including selection, comprehensivisation and marketisation, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of education**
 - Independent schools
 - Selection; the tripartite system: reasons for its introduction, forms of selection, entrance exams
 - Comprehensivisation: reasons for its introduction, debates as to its success
 - Marketisation: the 1988 reforms – competition and choice; new types of schools (CTCs, academies, specialist schools, growth of faith schools)
 - Recent policies in relation to the curriculum, testing and exam reforms, league tables, selection, Special Educational Needs (SEN), etc
 - Recent policies and trends in pre-school education and higher education.

1. The Role of Education: Functionalist Perspective

Functionalist theories of education:

Functionalism is a **consensus theory** which sees society as being essentially **harmonious**. It argues that:

- Society has basic needs, including the need for social order. To survive, society needs **social solidarity** through everyone sharing the **same norms** and **values**. Otherwise, society would fall apart.
- **Social institutions** such as education perform **positive functions** for both society and for individuals, by **socialising** new members of society and by helping create and sustain social solidarity.
- Functionalism is a **conservative** view of society. Functionalists tend to focus on the **positive** contribution education makes to society.

Functionalists ask two key questions about education:

1. What are the **functions** of education for **society** as a whole?
2. What are the functional relationships between **education** and **other parts** of the **social system**?

Durkheim - education and solidarity

Durkheim identifies **TWO** main **functions** of the education system:

1. Creating **social solidarity**.
2. Teaching **specialist skills**.

1. Social solidarity:

- Durkheim saw the major function of education as the **transmission** of **society's norms** and **values** from **one generation** to the **next**.
- This is necessary in order to produce **social solidarity**. This is where individual members of society feel that they belong to a **community** that is much bigger than they are.
- The **school** is a **society** in **miniature**. In school the child learns to **interact** with other members of the **school community** and to **follow** a **fixed set of rules**. This experience prepares the child for interacting with **members of society** as an **adult** and accepting social rules. E.g. law and order.

2. Teaching specialist skills:

- Durkheim argues that individuals must be **taught specialist skills** so that they can take their **place** within a highly **complex division of labour** in which people have to co-operate to produce items.

Criticisms of Durkheim

- **Marxists** argue that educational institutions tend to transmit a dominant culture which serves the interest of the ruling class rather than those of society as a whole.
- Studies by **Willis** and **Hargreaves** show that the transmission of **norms** and **values** is **not always successful**. Some students openly reject the values of the school and form anti-school sub-cultures. Willis's lads openly embraced values which were the opposite to those of the school and conformist students.
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Parsons - education and universalistic values:

Parsons argues that **school** performs **TWO** major **functions** for **society**:

1. Through the process of **socialisation**, education acts as a **bridge between** the **family** and wider **society**.

- In the **family**, **children** are **judged** according to **particularistic standards** that apply only to them. Their **status** within the family is also **ascribed**.
- In wider **society**, the **individual** is **judged** according to **universalistic standards** which apply equally to all members of society. E.g. law and order. Also, **status** is **achieved** through **merit**.
- **Education** helps to **ease** these **transitions**. The **exam system** judges all pupils on **merit**, and **school rules** such as wearing **uniform** are applied to all pupils.

2. **Education** helps to **socialise young people** into the **TWO basic values** of **society**; **socialisation**.

1. **The value of achievement** – everyone achieves their own status through their own effort.
2. The value of **equality of opportunity** for every student to achieve their full potential.

Criticisms of Parsons

- Functionalists such as Parsons have an 'over-socialised view' of people as mere puppets of society by implying pupils passively accept all that they are taught and never reject the schools values.
- Parsons assumes that Western education systems are meritocratic in that it rewards students primarily on the basis of objective criteria like achievement, ability and intelligence. The existence of private education and inequalities tied to social class, gender and ethnicity challenges this view.
- He fails to consider the diversity of values in modern societies.
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Davis and Moore - education and role allocation

- **Davis and Moore** see education as a **means of role allocation**. The education system **sifts** and **sorts** people according to their **abilities**.
- The **most talented** gain high qualifications which lead to functionally **important jobs** with **high rewards**.
- This will lead to **inequalities** in **society**, but this is quite **natural** and even **desirable** in capitalist societies because there is only a **limited amount of talent**. These talented few need to be persuaded to make a **sacrifice** (by staying in education rather than earning a wage) and society therefore offers **incentives** through the **promise** of **greater rewards**, such as higher salaries.

Criticisms of Davis and Moore

- Intelligence and ability have only a limited influence on educational achievement. Research indicates that achievement is closely tied to issues of social class, gender and ethnicity. E.g. **Bourdieu** argues that middle class students possess more cultural and social capital and are thus able to gain more qualifications than working class students.
- There is a weak link between educational qualification and income.
- **Bowles and Gintis** reject the idea that society is meritocratic. The children of the wealthy and powerful obtain high qualifications and well-rewarded jobs irrespective of their abilities. The education system disguises this with its myth of meritocracy. Those denied success blame themselves rather than the system. Inequality in society is thus legitimated: it is made to appear fair.
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The New Right Perspective on Education

The New Right is more of a **political** than sociological perspective. However, the New Right is of interest to sociologists because:

- It is a more **recent** conservative view than functionalism.
- It has **influenced educational policy** in Britain and elsewhere.

Functionalism and the New Right compared:

New Right ideas are **similar** to those of **functionalists**:

- They believe that **some people** are **naturally more talented** than others.
- They agree with functionalists that **education** should be run on **meritocratic principles** of open **competition**.
- They believe that education should **socialise** students into **shared values** and provide a sense of **national identity**.

In addition, the New Right believe that older industrial societies such as Britain are in decline, partly as a result of increased global competition.

The market vs. the state:

1. The effects of state control

- A key feature of New Right thinking (not found in functionalism) is that too much state control of education (as well as other areas of social and economic life) has resulted in inefficiency, national economic decline and a lack of personal and business initiative. A culture of welfare dependency has developed, the cost of which has reduced investment in industry.

2. One size fits all

- New Right arguments are based on the belief that the state cannot meet people's needs. In a state-run education system, education inevitably ends up as 'one size fits all' that does not meet individual and community needs, or the needs of employers for skilled and motivated employees.

3. Lower standards

- State-run schools are not accountable to those who use them – students, parents and employers. Schools that get poor results do not change because they are not answerable to their consumers. The result is lower standards and a less qualified workforce.

The solution: Marketisation of education

- For the New Right, the issue is how to make schools more **responsive** to their **'consumers'**. In their view, the **solution** is the **marketisation of education**. Marketisation is the introduction of market forces of consumer **choice** and **competition** between **suppliers** (schools) into areas run by the state (such as education and health).
- The New Right argue that creating an 'education market' **forces schools** to **respond** to the **demands** of **students, parents** and **employers**. For example, competition with other schools means that teachers have to be more efficient. A **school's survival** depends on its **ability** to **raise the achievement levels** of its **students**.

Chubb and Moe: giving the consumer choice

- **Chubb and Moe** compared the achievement of 60,000 students from low-income families in 1,015 state and private high schools in the USA. The data shows that students from low-income families' do **5%** better in private schools. **This suggests that state education is not meritocratic.**
- State education had **failed** to create **equal opportunity** because it **does not** have to **respond to students' needs**. Parents and communities cannot do anything about failing schools while the schools are controlled by the state. **Private schools produce higher quality education** because they are **answerable** to **paying consumers** – the parents.

The solution

- Chubb and Moe's answer to the supposed inefficiency of state schools is to **introduce a market system** in state **education** – that is, give **control** to **consumers** (parents and local communities). This should be done by a **voucher system** in which each family would give a voucher to spend on **buying education** from a **school of their choice**.

Evaluation of the New Right perspective

- Although school standards – as measured by exam results – seem to have risen, there are other possible reasons for this improvement apart from the introduction of a market. E.g. Blair's equality of opportunity policies like Sure start and EMA.
- Critics argue that low standards in some state schools are the result of inadequate funding rather than state control of education.
- Gerwitz argues that competition between schools **benefits** the middle class, who can get their children into more desirable schools.
- Marxists argue that education imposes the culture of a ruling class, not a shared culture or 'national identity' as the New Right claim.

Marxist explanations

What is Marxism?

Marxism is a **conflict view** that sees society as being based on **class divisions** and **exploitation**. Marxists argue that:

- In capitalist society there are **two classes** – the **bourgeoisie** and the **proletariat**.
- The bourgeoisie own the **means of production** (land, factories etc.) and make their profits by **exploiting** the labour of the proletariat.
- This creates **class conflict** that could **threaten** the **stability** of **capitalism** or even result in a **revolution** to **overthrow it**.
- **Social institutions** (such as the education system) **reproduce class inequalities** and play an **ideological role** by **persuading** exploited workers that **inequality** is **justified** and **acceptable**.
- Marxists argue that the **main function** of the **education system** is to **reproduce** the **inequalities** of the **capitalist economic system**.

Louis Althusser – the role of ideology

- **Althusser** sees the education system as part of the **ideological state apparatus** (process of indoctrination). He claims that education, along with other ideological state apparatuses, such as the family and the mass media, **reproduce class-based inequalities** by creating the **belief** that **capitalism** is somehow '**normal**', '**natural**' and '**just**'.
- The effect of all this is that is the **reproduction** of the **class system** in that the sons and daughters of the working class tend to remain working class.
- How does this occur? Due to the **Base vs. Superstructure dialectic**.

Evaluation of Althusser

- Assumes individuals don't have the capacity to reason and don't have choice over their actions. Thus it's deterministic.
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Bourdieu - cultural capital

- Like other Marxists, **Bourdieu** argues that the main **function** of **education** is to **reproduce** and **legitimize ruling class culture** and **power**.
- Another important function of education is to **socialize** the **working class** into a '**culture of failure**' so that they take up, without question, **routine** and **dull work**. Thus, individuals **blame themselves** rather than the **capitalist system** for the reproduction of class inequalities.

Evaluation of Bourdieu

- Ignores creative work and self-employed workers! Assumes all jobs are the same.
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Bowles and Gintis - schooling in capitalist America

- **Bowles and Gintis** argue that there is a close relationship between **social relationships** in the **workplace** and in **education**.
- Thus, work casts a '**long shadow**' over the education system. In other words, education **mirrors** the world of work.
- This **correspondence principal** operates through the **hidden curriculum** and it shapes the workforce in the following ways:
 - It helps to produce a **subservient** workforce - Conformist students receive high grades while creative ones loose out. The same occurs in the work place.
 - The hidden curriculum encourages an **acceptance of hierarchy**. E.g. teachers / bosses over students / workers.
 - Pupils learn to be motivated by **external rewards** rather than the love of education itself. Likewise in the work place it's for a bonus or pay rise.
 - School subjects are **fragmented** in the same way that routine work is. This is so workers are kept **unaware** of all the parts of the process and thereby remain **divided** and experience **false consciousness**.
- The **end-product** of this is the production of a **hard-working, docile, obedient workforce** which is **too divided** to **challenge** the **authority of management**.

Evaluation of Bowles and Gintis

- Giroux argues that working class students do not accept the **legitimacy** of school. Many **resist** the **influence** of the **hidden curriculum** and the history of **trade unionism** and **industrial action** in the UK does not support the idea of **worker conformity**.
- **Exaggerate** the **correspondence between work and education** as much of **modern work** requires **teamwork**, **education** is based on **individual** merit.
- Courses like Sociology and Politics within the **ordinary curriculum** teaches **Marxist theory** and yet it is not enough to eliminate false consciousness.
- **HOWEVER**, the **freedom** of **teachers** being **restricted** by the **National curriculum** provides support together with the introduction of **vocational education** which prepares students for a **specific career**.

Willis - Learning to Labour

- Willis challenges the **over-deterministic nature** of much of **Bowles and Gintis's work**, which sees schools producing docile and compliant workers; thereby **rejecting** assumption that **education** is **directly linked** to the **economy**.
- He studied 12 working class boys and came to the conclusion that **working class 'lads' see through** the **smokescreen** of **meritocracy** that tries to **legitimise inequality**.
- They create a **counter-school culture** that **challenges** the **schools dominant values** and entertained themselves by **'having a laff'**.
- Such culture was based on traditional notions of **masculinity**, thus it was highly **sexist** and **racist**. Thus, **manual labour** was seen as **more worthy** than **'pen-pushing'**.
- When Willis studied the same boys in their first jobs he found that the **same counter culture existed** in the work place.
- However, Willis accepts that the **outcome** is **similar** to that suggested by **Bowles and Gintis**, as their **anti-school behaviour guarantees** that they end up in **dead-end jobs**.

Evaluation of Willis

- **Blackledge and Hunt** (1985) put forward some criticisms of Willis:
 - His **sample** is too **small** to **generalise** regarding the role of education in society. His sample contained 12 boys who were not typical of the children at the school.
 - Willis largely ignores the **full range of subcultures** within schools. Many pupils fall somewhere in between **total conformity** and **total rejection**.
 - Ignores the response of girls. Thus he study is **androcentric**.

2. Social Class and Achievement

Trends in Class and Achievement

- Children from **working class** backgrounds **underachieve compared** with their **middle class peers**. **Jeffries** (2002) studied 1,1000 children born in 1958 and noted that, by the age of **seven**, those who experienced **childhood poverty** had **significantly fallen behind** children from middle class backgrounds in **mathematics, reading** and other **ability tests**. The research also found that the gap in educational attainment between individuals from higher and lower social classes widened as time went on and was greatest by the age of 33.
- The **Institute of Education** (2009) found that more children were born to educated parents in 1970 than in 1958, but those born into **poverty persistently underachieve**. The research concludes that **childhood poverty makes educational attainment more difficult**, even for children with similar test scores.
- In 2011, the **National Children's Bureau** noted that children from **poor backgrounds** (i.e. from families living on state benefits) were **two-thirds less likely to gain at least 5 GCSEs graded from A*-C** than those from affluent backgrounds.
- **Payne's** (2008) research into **participation in further education** (16-19) showed that differences in home background influence staying-on rates. E.g. **82%** of children of **professionals and managers** were in **further education**, compared with only **60%** of children of **semi/unskilled** workers.
- **Connor et al** (2005) study of students in higher education found that **fewer than one in five** young people from **lower social class** groups **participate in higher education**.
- **Thus, the statistics suggest working class students underachieve in comparison to their middle class counterparts and are less likely to carry on into further and higher education.**

External Explanations for the Class Gap

The main **external** (outside school factors) explanations for the class gap in achievement are:

1. **Cultural deprivation** – these include class differences in norms and values acquired through socialisation, attitudes to education, speech patterns etc.
2. **Material deprivation** – these are the physical necessities of life, such as adequate housing, diet and income.
3. **Cultural capital** – the values and attitudes needed to be successful at school.

1. Cultural Deprivation Theories

- **Blames the culture of the working class for failing to adequately socialise** their children into the **'correct'** culture required for educational success. Thus, children grow up **'culturally deprived'** and are likely to **under-achieve**.

1. Intellectual development – refers to the **development of thinking and reasoning skills**. Douglas (1964) argued **working-class homes lack the books, educational toys and activities** that would **stimulate** a child's **intellectual development**. Thus, these children start school **without** the **skills** needed to **progress** and thus underachieved in comparison to the middle-class children.

2. Language – Bernstein (1975) found that children in working-class families had **deficiencies in communication** as they often used **gestures, single words, or disjointed phrases**. Consequently, they were **unable** to use **abstract thinking and language to explain, describe, question and compare** material needed in school.

Bernstein believed there were **two types of speech codes**:

1. **Restricted code** – used by the **working-class**. It has a **limited vocabulary**, based on **short, often unfinished, and grammatically simple sentences**. The speaker also assumes the listener shares the same set of experiences.
2. **Elaborated code** – used by the **middle-class**. It has a **wide vocabulary**, based on **long, grammatically more complex sentences**. Speech is more **varied** and communicates **abstract ideas**. The speaker does not assume others share their experiences so they spell out everything they think.

Middle class students are therefore at an **advantage** as the **elaborate code** is used inside the **education system** by teachers, books, exams as it is seen to be the **'correct'** way of speaking. The fact that middle-class students are socialised into this code at an early age means they **feel 'at home'** in school and are **more likely to succeed**.

3. Attitudes and Values of parents – Douglas et al (1967) found that **working-class parents** placed **less value on education**, were **less ambitious** for their children, gave them **less encouragement** and took **less interest in their education**. They also **visited schools less often** which meant children had lower levels of achievement motivation in comparison to the middle-class kids.

This encouraged **immediate gratification** (seeking pleasure now rather than making sacrifices in order to get rewards in the future e.g. education) in **working class children** as opposed to **deferred gratification** (making sacrifices now for greater rewards later) found in **middle class children**. Thus, working-class students were more likely to drop out of education and work at 16 due to the subcultural attitudes and values of the working class they were socialised into.

Evaluation of Cultural Deprivation

- **Keddie** (1973) describes this cultural deprivation as a myth and sees it as a victim-blaming explanation. She argues that working class kids are culturally different NOT culturally deprived. They fail because they are disadvantaged by an education system that is dominated by middle class values.
- Rather than seeking working-class culture as deficient, schools should recognise it and build on their strengths.
- It's not that working class parents are not interested in their child's education but most of them don't have time for it due to the long hours of work they engage in. Also they may want to help but not have the knowledge or language skills to do so!
- **Compensatory education** – policy designed to tackle problem of cultural deprivation by providing extra resources to schools in deprived communities provides support since policies like Sure Start, EMA, and Education Action Zones increased performance rates as well as encouraging more working class students to remain in post compulsory education.

2. Material deprivation factors:

- Material deprivation refers to the **lack** of **physical resources** such as **money, room, equipment** etc. which may have an adverse effect on the educational achievement of working class children.
- For example, children receiving **free school meals** are **50% less likely** to do as well as children **not** receiving free school meals. Likewise, working class children are more likely to experience **truancy** and **exclusion**. Finally, **90%** of '**failing**' schools are located in **deprived areas**.
 1. **Housing** – poor housing can affect achievement **directly** and **indirectly**. **Overcrowding** has a **direct** effect by making it **harder** for a child to **study** as there is **less room** for **educational activities**, nowhere to do homework or read etc. Poor housing can also affect the **child's health** and **welfare indirectly** as it **runs greater risk of accidents**.
 2. **Diet and health** – Howard (2001) found **poorer homes** have a **lower intake of energy, vitamins** and **minerals**. As poor nutrition affects health by **weakening** the **immune system** and **lowering energy levels** this can lead to working-class students taking **more days off** from school due to **illness** and they are also more likely to **suffer** from **concentration difficulties** in class.
 3. **Financial support and cost of education** – lack of financial support means poorer families may not have **educational equipment** and **miss out** on **experiences** that would **enhance** their **achievement** – e.g. school trips. **Bulls** (1980) argues the '**cost of free schooling**' like uniforms, books, computers, calculators etc. are a **heavy**

burden on poor families as most cannot afford them and the kids that have 'cheaper' versions are stigmatised/bullied at school.

Finally, these theorists argue middle class parents can **afford** to move to **catchment areas**, send their children to **private schools** or simply pay for **extra tuition** to boost their child's performance.

Evaluation of Material Deprivation

- Lack of financial support can also explain **why** working-class children are **more likely** to **leave school** at 16 and why relatively **few** go to **university** as they have a **fear of dept**. E.g. the introduction of EMA increased the number of students from working-class backgrounds entering further and higher education which supports this theory.
- While material factors are important, the quality of the schools attended can also influence a child's decision to carry on/ drop out.
- The cultural, religious or political values of the family also have an important impact regardless of poverty.

3. Cultural Capital; Bourdieu and Gewirtz

- **Bourdieu - Three types of Capital** - both **cultural** and **material** factors are **interrelated**, not separate!

- (1) **Cultural capital** – is used to explain why middle class students are more successful. It refers to the **knowledge, attitudes, values, language, and abilities** of the middle-class which he sees as an asset because it gives them an advantage in the education system.

Bourdieu sees middle class culture as **capital** because it can be **translated** into **wealth** and **power**, and gives an advantage to those who have it.

This is because the **culture, knowledge and language** of the **school fits** more closely to **middle class culture**; therefore middle class students have an **in-built advantage**.

On the other hand, the children of working class parents experience a **cultural deficit**. They soon realize that the school and teachers attach little importance to their experiences and values. As such they may **lack** the **cultural capital** necessary for educational success.

- (2) **Educational** and (3) **Economic capital** – educational and economic capital are **interlinked**. E.g. middle-class students are **better equipped** for school, parents can send children to **private schools**, move to a **catchment area** with 'good' state schools or pay for **extra tuition**. Working class parents on the other hand lose out as they don't know how the education system operates nor can they afford to pay for it.

Evaluation of Bourdieu



- **Gewirtz – Marketisation and Parental Choice** - differences in **economic** and **cultural capital** lead to **class differences** in how far **parents** can **exercise choice** of schools. **Three types of choosers**;
 1. **Privileged-skilled choosers** – parents spend time evaluating quality of school. They often have money and knowledge to make choices – like moving to a catchment area, pay for tuition etc. Usually middle class.
 2. **Disconnected local choosers** – concerned with getting the best possible education for their children but do not have experience or skills of privileged choosers. E.g. more likely to accept rumours about schools. Mostly working class.
 3. **Semi-skilled choosers** – not likely to get involved. Usually pick schools that are closer to home. Emphasis is placed on the happiness of child going to school with most of their friends than academic reputation of the school. Usually working class.

Evaluation of Gewirtz



Internal Explanations for the Class Gap

The main **internal** (inside school) explanations for the class gap in achievement are:

1. **Labelling** – process of attaching a label to a student. E.g. 'bright' or 'slow'.
2. **The self-fulfilling prophecy** – accepting a teachers label.
3. **Pupil subcultures** – pro and anti-school group behaviour.
4. **Banding, setting and streaming** – process of splitting students into higher and foundation tiers for specific subjects.
5. **Marketisation and selection policies** – education policy which encourages choice & section.

1. Labelling

- Teachers may **label** students as '**bright**' or '**slow**', **trouble maker** or **hard worker**. Studies show that teachers often attach these labels **regardless** of the **student's ability** or **attitude** and that they use **stereotyped assumptions** about the student. On the whole **working-class students** are **labelled negatively** and the **middle-class positively**.
- **Labelling in primary schools** – teachers use information about **children's background** and **appearance** to place them in **different ability groups**. **Fast** learners were usually labelled as '**tigers**' (mostly middle class with neat appearance) and **slow** learners as '**clowns**' (mostly working class) who were given **fewer books** to read and **fewer opportunities** to demonstrate their ability.
- **Labelling in secondary schools** – Becker found **teachers** labelled students according to how well they fitted into the '**ideal pupil**' **image**. On the whole most students who were **closer** to the ideal image were **middle class** which disadvantaged the working-class students.
- Research suggests teachers tend to expect more from middle class students, and are more likely to convey their expectations to them and act in terms of it.

Evaluation of Labelling:

- Deterministic – assumes all teachers label and this inevitability leads to failure. E.g. Fuller found that the black girls resisted teacher labelling by misbehaving in lessons but working hard at home and thereby passing to disprove.
- Marxists criticise it for ignoring wider structures of power within which labelling takes place. They argue that labels are not merely the result of teachers' individual prejudices, but stem from the fact that teachers work in a system that reproduces class divisions.

2. The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

- The self-fulfilling prophecy is when a pupil **internalises** the **label** a teacher has attached to them. Thus they begin to see themselves in that light.
- This occurs in **two ways**:
 1. **Teacher expectations** of student are **formed** according to **test results** and **classroom behaviour**. They then express this expectation to the student through their **interactions** – including body language and amount of attention and encouragement they give to the student. This can have a negative effect on working class children since their attainment levels are on the whole lower than that of the middle-class. **Thus, teachers should be neutral and encouraging towards all pupils.**
 2. **Banding and Streaming** or **splitting** students according to **ability** can also produce a self-fulfilling prophecy. If students are streamed into **'foundation'** groups, as most working class student are, they get the message that their teachers have written them of as **'no hopers'**. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the pupil lives up to the teacher's low expectation. Research shows **once streamed**, it is usually **difficult** for students to **move up** to the higher group.

Evaluation of the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

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3. Pupil Subculture

- Pupil subcultures **emerge** as a **response** to the way students have been **labelled**. Lacey (1970) found **two different responses** adopted by students:
 1. **The pro-school subculture** – pupils placed in **high streams** (usually middle-class) that tend to **conform** to school rules and values. They gain their **status** in the approved manner of **academic success**.
 2. **The anti-school subculture** – those placed in **low stream** (usually working-class) who suffer a **loss of self-esteem** as the school has undermined their self-worth by placing them in low ability groups. Thus, they seek **alternative ways** to **gain status** which usually involves **inverting school rules**. E.g. truancing, not doing work, challenging teacher's authority etc.

Evaluation of Pupil Subcultures

- Deterministic – assumes you fit into one group or the other. Ignores subcultures that can be both pro and anti-school at the same time. E.g. Fuller’s study of black girls who were anti-school in terms of behaviour but pro-school in terms of handing in work and achieving examination success
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4. Marketisation and selection policies

- Marketisation policies and greater use of **selection** have created a much more **competitive** climate among schools. In this light, **middle class students** are seen as more **desirable** recruits as they achieve **better exam results**. Conversely, working class students are seen as **‘liability students’** which are barriers to efforts by schools to climb the league tables.
- According to **Bartlett**, marketisation policies leads **popular schools** to **‘cream-skimming’** – selecting able pupils, who gain best results and cost less to teach – and **‘silt-shifting’** – off loading pupils with learning difficulties, who are expensive to teach and get poor results. This in effect **disadvantaged working-class** students at the **expense** of the **middle-class as schools** are more likely to consider them as bright students and in effect select them to attend school.
- Gewietz argues Marketisation is creating a **polarised education system**, with popular and **successful schools** taking in **able students** (mostly middle-class), and so called **‘failing’, ‘sink’** or under resourced schools taking in **low-achieving working class students**.

Evaluation of Marketisation and selection policies

- Marxists argues Marketisation polices ignores wider power structures. Who controls government policy? Who interest does it benefit?
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3. Gender and Achievement

Trends in Gender and Achievement

- Official statistics suggests that girls general outperform boys in all levels of the education system.
 - **Primary** - girls outperform boy in literacy, maths and science. The gap is particularly big for literacy.
 - **Secondary** - the gender gap in GCSE's widened by 10%.
 - **College** – at A-Levels girls are more likely to pass their exams and get the higher grades. Vocational courses show a similar pattern. In 2008, 20% of girls received a distinction in comparison to 11% of boys.
 - **University** – girls are more likely to pass and gain first class honours.
- **Three key debates** which arise in regards to **gender** and **schooling**:
 - a) Explanations for **girls improvement** in achievement.
 - b) Explanations for the **underachievement of boys**.
 - c) Explanations for **gender differences** in **subject choice**.

(a) Explanations for girls improvement in achievement

1. External Factors

External (outside school) factors which may explain the improvement in girls' achievement include:

1. The **impact of feminism**.
2. **Changes** in the **family**.
3. **Changes** in **women's employment**.
4. **Girls'** changing **ambitions** and **perceptions**.

1. The Impact of Feminism

- Since the 1960's **Feminism** has **challenged** the **traditional stereotypes** of a woman's role as mother and housewife within a patriarchal family. More broadly, feminism has **raised girls' expectations** and **ambitions** with regard to **careers** and **family**.
- Feminism also led to **social change policies** such as Sex Discrimination Act or GIST (Girls into Science and Technology), which has provided girls with **equal access to education** and **employment**. Thus, **encouraging girls to succeed** within the system.
- These changes are partly **reflected** in **media images** and **messages**. A good illustration of this is **McRobbie's** comparison of **girls magazines** in the 1970s and 1990s. In the **1970s** girls' magazines stressed the **importance** of marriage, whereas by the **1990s** they emphasised **career** and **independence**.

Evaluation of the impact of Feminism

- Not all girls would support Feminism, know about it or say they have been influenced by it. What accounts for their success?
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2. Changes in the Family

- There have been a number of **major changes** to the **family** in the last 30 years. Including **increase in divorce**, **increase in cohabitation**, and **increase** in the number of **lone-parent families**, together with a **decline** in **marriage**.
- These changes are **affecting girls' attitudes** towards **education** in a number of ways. E.g. increasing numbers of female-headed **lone-parent families** may mean more women need to take on the **major income-earner role**. This then creates a new **financially independent, career-minded role model for girls**. The need for good qualifications is made very clear.

Evaluation of changes in the family

- Some girls study and work hard within education but still aspire to be a full-time or housewife.
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3. Changes in Women's Employment

- There have been a number of important changes in women's employment in recent years including:
 - **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** and **Equality Act 2010**.
 - Number of **working women** rose from **47%** in **1960** to **73%** in **2008**. Growth of the service sector and part-time jobs offers women more opportunities.
 - **Pay gap** between has **decreased**.
- Some women are breaking through the **invisible barrier** of the '**glass ceiling**' to **high level professional jobs** previously denied them. E.g. Angela Merkel (German chancellor) and Christine Lagarde (Director of IMF).
- These greater opportunities and successful role models provide an incentive for girls to take education seriously.

Evaluation of changes in women's employment

- Gender pay gap still exist to this day. Women earn 80% of the same wage given to her male counterpart. Thus equal rights polices haven't gone far enough.
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4. Girls' changing ambitions

- Research shows that **changes** in the **family** and **employment** are **producing changes** in **girls' ambitions** and **priorities**.
- E.g. Sue Sharp (1994) found that the **perception of girls changed overtime**. In the **1970s** girls believed **educational success** was **unfeminine** and instead **prioritised 'love, marriage, husbands, children, jobs and career'**.
- **HOWEVER**, by the **1990's** they were more likely to see their future as independent women rather than being dependent on a husband and his income. Thus they now prioritise **'jobs, careers, being able to support themselves'** over **'love, marriage and children'**. This in effect requires educational success.

Evaluation of girls' changing ambitions

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2. Internal factors

While factors outside the school may play an important part in explaining gender differences in achievement, factors within the education system itself are also important. These include:

1. **Equal opportunities policies.**
2. **Positive role** models in schools.
3. **GCSE and coursework.**
4. **Teacher attention.**
5. **Challenging stereotypes** in the **curriculum.**
6. **Selection and league tables.**

1. Equal opportunities policies

- **Impact of feminism** brought about **equal opportunity policies** within the education system such as **GIST** (Girls into Science and Technology) and **WISE** (Women into Science and Engineering). These policies aim to encourage girls to pursue **careers in non-traditional areas** women tend to work and study in.
- Similarly, the introduction of the **National Curriculum** 1988 meant that boys and girls had to study the same subjects.
- **Jo Boaler** argues that **equal opportunities policies** are a key factor in the improvement of girls' educational performance as schools have become more **meritocratic**; suggesting those who work harder will achieve best results.

Evaluation of equal opportunities policies

- Not all policies provide equality of opportunity. E.g. coursework in core GCSE subjects have either been reduced or removed as it 'favours' girls. One can argue such policy is holding back the achievement of girls.
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2. Positive role models in schools

- **'Feminisation of schools'** – In recent years, the proportion of **female teachers** and **head-teachers** has **increased**. As such, **women** in **positions of power** and **authority** have acted as **important role models** for **girls** because they show girls that it is possible for them to achieve important positions. This then **reinforces** the **importance** of **education** in gaining such positions. E.g. **primary schools** are said to be completely **'feminised'** since **88%** of staff are female.

Evaluation of positive role models in schools

- This argument is only true for low level education, e.g. primary and secondary. Most academics at college and university are still male.
- While women constitute most roles in schools, senior positions are still mostly dominated by men! This in effect provides boys a better incentive and thereby cannot explain the achievement of girls

3. GCSE and Coursework

- Some sociologists have argued that changes in the way students are examined have favoured girls and disadvantaged boys. The gender-gap in achievement increased after the introduction of GCSEs and coursework in 1988.
- According to Elwood girls are more successful in coursework as they prefer extensive writing and are more organised and care about the presentation of their work, while boys prefer short and factual writing. Thus, the introduction of coursework has benefited girls as it rewards their aptitude for organisation and sustained application.

Evaluation of GCSE and coursework

- Outdated since coursework has been removed from most core subjects at GCSE and A-Level. In addition, so has retake examinations which used to favour more boys than girls.
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4. Teacher Attention

- Research suggests that **teachers** respond more **positively** to **girls** than **boys**. This is because teachers see **girls** as more **co-operative** and **boys** as more **disruptive**. This may lead to a **self-fulfilling prophecy** in which **positive interactions raise girls' self-esteem** and thereby levels of **achievement**.
- **Barber** found that teacher-pupil interactions were very significant. For **girls**, **feedback** from teachers **focused** more on their **work** rather than their **behaviour**; for boys the **reverse** was true. Moreover, **Boys** felt they **received less support, encouragement and guidance** from teachers.

Evaluation of teacher attention

- Can't account for the rise in female anti-school subcultures.
- Deterministic – assumes all boys respond the same way to teacher attention, ignoring ones that are not affected by it and ones that succeed regardless of negative interaction.

5. Challenging stereotypes in the curriculum

- Some sociologists argue that **removing gender stereotypes** from the **curriculum, textbooks** and other **learning materials** has **removed a barrier to girls' achievement**.
- **Ball** argues that since the **1980s, teachers** have **challenged gender stereotypes**. Also, in general, **sexist images** have been **removed** from **teaching materials**. This may have **helped to raise girl's achievement** by presenting more **positive images** of what women are capable of.

Evaluation of challenging stereotypes in the curriculum

- National Curriculum still overlooks the role of women, particularly in history. Only time women appear is if the suffragette movement is taught.
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6. Selection and league tables

- **Marketisation policies** and **greater use of selection** have created a much more **competitive** climate among schools. In this light, **girls** are seen as **more desirable** as they **achieve better exam results**. Conversely, **boys** are seen as **'liability students'** which are **barriers** to efforts by schools to **climb the league tables**.
- **Jackson** found that the **introduction of league tables**, which place a high value on academic achievement, has **improved opportunities for girls**. This tends to produce a **self-fulfilling prophecy** in which girls are more likely to be recruited by good schools and are therefore more likely to do well.

Evaluation of selection and league tables

- Schools are not allowed to discriminate according to social divisions like gender, class or ethnicity as it goes against the Equality Act 2010.
- State schools can only select a small number of students. Usually 10-15%. Thus this cannot account for the success of girls within education alone.

(b) Explanations for the underachievement of boys

- The underachievement of boys has become an important issue for concern once **girls** began to **outperform** them in **all levels** of the **education system**.
- However, this is **not a recent occurrence**. E.g. girls used to outperform boys in the 11+ examinations and thus they had to gain a higher percentage than boys to win a place at a grammar school.
- **Explanations** for the **underachievement** of **boys** are split into **external** and **internal factors**:

External factors

External (outside school) factors which may explain the underachievement of boys include:

1. Boys' **poorer literacy skills**.
2. The **decline** of '**traditional**' male jobs – '**crisis of masculinity**'.
3. **Unrealistic expectations**

1. Boys' poorer literacy skills

- Research suggests that **girls** are **more likely** to spend their **leisure** time in ways which **complement** their **education** and **contribute** to **educational achievements**. E.g. girls are more likely to enjoy reading as a hobby.
- In general **women** are **more likely** to **read** than men, and **mothers** are **more likely** than fathers to **read** to their **children**. Girls are, therefore, more likely to have same-sex role models to encourage them to read.
- As such, **poor language** and **literacy skills** are likely to **affect boys' performance across a wide range** of subjects.

Evaluation of boy's poorer literacy skills

- 'Read Men Read' was a government policy encouraging father to read to their sons at home as well as inviting influential men to schools to read to children. However, this has not had a great impact in encouraging boys to read. Thus, social learning cannot explain the underachievement of boys alone.
- Can't explain why girls are outperforming boys in subjects which don't require literacy skills.
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2. The Decline in Traditional Male Jobs – ‘Crisis of Masculinity’

- According to some Sociologists, the **decline** in **traditional manual work**, like mining, may result in **working class boys lacking motivation**.
- Browne argues that this decline in **male employment opportunities**, together with the **rise in the service sector** (associated with ‘feminine office work’) has led to a **‘crisis of masculinity’**. Many **boys** now believe that they have **little chance** of getting a **‘proper job’**. Boys, therefore, feel **confused** about their role in **society** as they are not long the sole ‘breadwinner’. This **undermines** their **self-esteem** and **motivation** and so they **give up** trying to gain academic qualifications.

Evaluation of the ‘crisis of masculinity’ theory

- While the argument can be used to explain the underachievement of some working class boys it cannot account for all boys generally as most boys in the UK do not wish to work in physically demanding jobs.
- Difficult for the change in traditional jobs to affect boys today as they have been born and raised with the service sector only.
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3. Boys Unrealistic Expectations

- Research indicates that **boys** are often **surprised** when they fail exams and tend to put their **failure** down to **‘bad luck’** rather than **lack of effort**.
- **Francis** points out that **boys** are **more likely** to have **career aspirations** that are not only **unrealistic** but often require **few formal qualifications**. E.g. professional footballer.
- **Girls’ aspirations**, however, tend to **require academic effort**. E.g. doctor, and therefore they have a commitment to schoolwork.

Evaluation of boys’ unrealistic expectations

- Ignores boys who have realistic expectations and still fail within the education system.
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Internal factors

While factors outside the school may play an important part in explaining the underachievement of boys, factors within the education system itself are also important. These include:

1. The **feminisation** of **education**.
2. **Teacher interaction**.
3. **'Laddish' subcultures**.

1. The 'feminisation' of education

- According to Sewell boys fall behind in education because schools have become **feminised**. E.g. 88% of all staff in primary schools are women. This means that **schools** tend to **emphasise feminine traits** such as **methodical working** and **attentiveness**, and provide role models for girls, thereby **disadvantaging boys**.
- Sewell sees **coursework** as a **major cause** of **gender differences** in **achievement**. He argues that some **coursework** should be **replaced** with **final exams** and a **greater emphasis** should be put on **outdoor adventure** in the curriculum.

Evaluation of the 'feminisation' of education

- Top positions are still run by men who decide the overall school norms and values plus provide successful role models.
- Coursework in most cases have been replaced by examinations and yet boys continue to underperform.
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2. Teacher Interaction

- **Teacher-pupil interactions** were identified by **Barber** as being very **significant**. For **girls**, **feedback** from **teachers** focused more on their **work** rather than their **behaviour**; for **boys** the **reverse** was true. The **low expectations** of **girls** in science **reinforced** their **own self-images**; **boys** frequently **overestimated** their **abilities**.
- **Negative teacher labelling** for some boys **undermined** their **confidence** and **interest** in **school**. For both boys and girls, where motivation in a subject is low, achievement tends to be low.
- **Teachers** may tend to be **less strict** with **boys**, giving them more leeway with deadlines and **expecting a lower standard** of work than they get from girls. This can allow boys to under-achieve by failing to push them to achieve their potential

Evaluation of teacher interaction

- Deterministic – assumes all boys respond the same way to teacher attention, ignoring ones that are not affected by it and ones that succeed regardless of negative interaction.
- Can't account for the rise in female anti-school subcultures.
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3. Laddish Subcultures

- Growth of '**laddish**' **subcultures** can also explain boys' underachievement. Ghail examines the **relationship** between **schooling, work, masculinity** and **sexuality**. He identifies a particular pupil subculture, the '**macho lads**', could help to explain why some boys underachieve in education. This group was **hostile** to **school authority** and **learning**, similar to the lads in Willis's study.
- **Jackson** found that **laddish behaviour** was based on the idea that it is **uncool** to **work hard** at **school**. She found that **boys** based their **laddish behaviour** on the dominant view of **masculinity** – they acted **tough, messed around, disrupted lessons** and **rejected schoolwork** seeing it as 'feminine'.

Evaluation of laddish subcultures

- Ignores the rise in laddets and the impact this has had on girls education.
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Overall Evaluation of Gender and Achievement

- Only some boys are failing – not all! The recent discover of the underachievement of boys is said to be a moral panic.
- There appears to be a close link between gender and class since mostly working class boys are failing. The same is true for working class girls.
- The pre-occupation with so-called 'failing boys' diverts attention from underachieving girls. Research by Plummer suggests that a high proportion of working class girls are failing in the school system.
- Gender is one of many factors affecting underachievement. Also important to note the influence of class and ethnicity.

(c) Explanations for gender differences in subject choice

- Research shows that there appears to be a **difference** in the **subjects** chosen to be studied by **girls** and **boys**.
- On the whole a majority of **girls** tend to study subjects like **Performing Arts, Humanities, Design, Communication studies, English** and **Modern languages**.
- **Boys**, conversely tend to study **Computing, the Natural Sciences, Economics, Politics** and **Business Studies**.
- Sociologists have put forward a number of external and internal factors to explain gender differences in subject choice.

External factors - reasons outside school which can affect subject choice

1. **Early socialisation.**
2. **Gender domains.**
3. **Gendered subject images.**
4. **Gendered career opportunities.**

1. Early Socialisation:

- While **sex** is **natural**, **gender identities** are **socially constructed**. E.g. **teacher reaction** to the **behaviour** of **boys** and **girls vary** according to **gender stereotypes**. Crying boys are called 'sissies' and told to 'man up'. Likewise, girls are expected to be quite and submissive.
- **Elwood** found that early difference in **gender socialisation** leads to boys and girls having different tastes in reading and these can lead to **differences** in **subject choice**. **Boys** tend to read **hobby** related **books** which develops an interest in **natural sciences**, whereas **girls** tend to read **stories** about people which lead to interests in English and humanities.

Evaluation of early socialisation

- Not all children are socialised into traditional gender roles which cannot explain why such kids may still stick to gender.
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2. Gender domains:

- According Ross, **gender domains** are **tasks** and **activities** that children see as **male** or **female**. Children tend to be more **confident** in engaging in **tasks** which they see as **part** of their **gender domain**. E.g. in a **maths** equation, **boys** will be more **confident** tackling a **problem** related to **cars**, whereas **girls** might prefer a task related to **health** or **nutrition**.
- **Both genders** also **interpret task different**. E.g. when asked to design a car, boys mostly designed military tanks or sports cars whereas girls designed family car.
- Could this be a result of early socialisation? Whether it is or not it can still be used to explain why girls are attracted to arts and humanities subjects and boys prefer sciences.

Evaluation of gender domains

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3. Gendered subject images

- **Kelly** identifies **three** main **reasons** why **science** tends to be seen as **masculine**.
 - 1) Most **science teachers** are **men**.
 - 2) The **examples** used in **textbooks** and by **teachers** tend to be **linked** to **boys' experiences** such as football and cars.
 - 3) Involves using **machines** and **apparatus** which **appeal** to the **male gender domain**.
- **Students** themselves **reproduce** these **subject images** and **boys** tend to **dominate** in pair or group work within science laboratories.

Evaluation of gendered subject images

- Only true for mixed schools as research suggests gendered subject images do not play an important role in single sex school, particularly if it's all girls. Reverse is true if it's all boys and subjects like cooking is available.
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4. Gendered Career Opportunities

- **Differences in subject choice** are also associated with **differences in employment opportunities** for each gender. **Female jobs** tend to involve **nursing** and **childcare**, while **male jobs** include a **wide variety**. E.g. over half of all female employment falls into four categories; clerical, secretarial, personal service and cleaning.
- This can explain why **vocational course** are **more gender specific** than academic ones.

Evaluation of gendered career opportunities

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Internal factors – reasons within school which can affect subject choice

1. **Verbal abuse** – name calling
2. **Peer group pressure**; boys are more likely to yield into peer pressure
3. **Teachers and discipline**
4. **The ‘male gaze’** which views women as sex objects

1. Verbal abuse

- **Connell** found that **boys** use **name-calling** to **put girls down** if they behave in certain ways. E.g. ‘slag’ for sexually open girls and ‘lezzie’ for girls interested in ‘boyish’ activities. Subsequently, **name-calling** helped to **reinforce**

- **Peer pressure** can influence **subject choice** in terms of **gender domains**. E.g. boys tend to opt out of dance and music because others will perceive these subjects to be outside the male gender domain and apply negative pressure.
- Similarly, **Paetcher** points out that pupils see **sport** as being firmly inside the **male gender domain** and will therefore **label girls** as **'butch'** or even **'gay'** if they show **too much interest** in **sports**.

Evaluation of peer group pressure

- Peer pressure is not so dominant in single sex schools.
- Can't explain why students that are home schooled opt for gender specific subjects.
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3. Teachers and discipline

- Research shows that **teachers** help **reproduce** and **maintain gender stereotypes**. E.g. **Hayward** found **male teachers** told **boys** off for **'behaving like girls'** and **teased** them when they **achieved lower marks** than **female students**.

Evaluation teachers and discipline

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4. The 'Male Gaze'

- The **'male gaze'** refers to the way **male teachers** and **student** look at **girls** up and down, seeing them as **sexual objects**. It suggests that the 'male gaze' is a form of **surveillance** through which **dominant masculinity** is **reinforced** and **femininity devalued**. This is achieved through telling stories of sexual conquest which in effect reproduces gender identities.

Evaluation of the 'male gaze'

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4. Ethnicity and Achievement

Some patterns and trends

Patterns of ethnic achievement are **complex, cross-cut** by **gender** and **class**. For example,

- **Black, Pakistani** and **Bangladeshi** students do worst, **Indians** and **Chinese** do best.
- **White** students are very close to the **national average**, but this is because they the great majority of the school population.
- Among **black** and working class students, **girls do better than boys**, but among **Asians**, **boys do better than girls**.
- Working class **black girls** do **better** than working class **white girls**.

External explanations

External (outside school) factors which may explain ethnic differences in achievement include:

1. **Cultural Deprivation**
2. **Material Deprivation** and Class
3. **Racism** in Wider Society

1. Cultural Deprivation

- Cultural deprivation blames the inadequate culture of ethnic minorities in three different ways:

a) Lack of intellectual and Language skills

- Children from **low-income black families** lack **stimulating** experiencing which leaves them **ill equipped** for school as they haven't developed **reasoning** and **problem solving skills**.
- In some Asian households **English** is **NOT** the **first language** used. A study found that **lack of fluency** in English was a significant **problem** for some groups. Amongst men nearly everyone spoke English fluently. Amongst women about a fifth of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were not fluent. Moreover, ethnic parents that can speak English often use **grammatically incorrect** and **disjointed sentences** which are a **major barrier** to **success** in education.
- However, Gillborn (2000) point out that the very high attainment of Indian pupils suggests that having English as an Additional Language is not a barrier to success. It also can't explain why black students are likely to fail when the majority speak English as a first language.

b) Attitudes and values

- **Lack of motivation** is believed to be the **major cause** for the **failure** of **black children**. While most children are **socialised** into **mainstream culture** which instils **ambition** and **competiveness** (that are good for educational success), **black children** are socialised into **subcultures** that inspire **fatalism** – ‘live for today’. E.g. YOLO - attitude that do not value education and leaves them ill-equipped for success.

c) Family life

- Studies suggest the **nature of family life** affects levels of **attainment** among ethnic minorities.
- E.g. **South Asian** parents have **high aspirations** for their children's education despite having little formal education themselves. Most want their children to become doctors or lawyers regardless of ability or interest for these fields.
- **Dysfunctional family** structures also mean children are **not socialised adequately**. E.g. most black families are headed by a lone mother who struggle financially and means boys lack a male role model.
- Recent research has suggested that **white working class** students are among the **lowest achievers** with **very low aspirations**. Lupton (2004) found that teachers reported poorer levels of behaviour and discipline in white working class schools. Teachers blamed this on **lower levels of parental support** and the **negative attitude** white working class parents have towards **education**. By contrast, many ethnic minority parents see education as a route to upward social mobility.

Evaluation of cultural deprivation

- Ignores positive impact of ethnicity on education. E.g. black lone mother provide daughters with a strong and independent female role model.
- Ignores the impact of racism in school and wider society.
- Ethnic children are culturally different not deprived. Thus they underachieve as school are ethnocentric.

2. Material Deprivation and Class

- Material deprivation and social class theorists blame poverty and **lack of material necessities** and **economic capital** in ethnic homes for differences in educational performance.
- **Ethnic minorities** are **more likely** to face **material problems**:
 - **Pakistani** and **Bangladeshis** are **three times** more likely than whites to be in the **poorest fifth of the population**.

- **15%** of ethnic households are **overcrowded** in comparison to 2% of white households.
 - 19% of white men and **70% of Bangladeshi** men were in **unskilled or semi-skilled jobs**.
 - **Minority employees earn 10-30% less than whites** and are more likely to work long hours.
- **These inequalities parallel those seen in education.** E.g. on average Indians, white and Chinese groups have a higher social class than Bangladeshi and Pakistanis who face high level of poverty. Thus, the social class of an ethnic group is directly related to educational success as it accounts for 50% of differences in ethnic achievement.

Evaluation of material deprivation and class

- While material factors are important, the quality of the schools attended can also influence a child's educational performance.
- The cultural, religious or political values of the family also have an important impact regardless of poverty.
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3. Racism in Wider Society

- **Discrimination** is a **continuing** and **persistent** feature for ethnic minorities.
- Rex (1986) found **racial discrimination** leads to **social exclusion** which in effect **deepens material deprivation** faced by ethnic groups.
- E.g. in housing minority groups are more likely to be pushed into substandard accommodations than White members of society. Likewise in **employment** there is **direct discrimination** as **white** people are more likely to be in **top positions**. This explains why these groups experience unemployment and low pay which in turn has a negative effect on their children's educational progress.

Evaluation of racism in wider society

- Equality Act 2010 means discrimination by race is against the law in education and employment.
- Racism is no longer apparent in British society as we have become tolerant. Thus it is unlikely to affect the education of young coloured children.
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Internal Factors

The main **internal** (inside school) explanations for ethnic differences in achievement are:

1. **Labelling** and **teacher racism**.
2. **Pupil responses** and **subcultures**.
3. The **Ethnocentric Curriculum**.
4. **Institutional racism**.
5. **Selection** and **segregation**.

1. Labelling and Teacher Racism

- To **label** someone is to **attach** a **meaning** to them. Studies show teachers often see **black** and **Asian students** as being **far** from the '**ideal pupil**' **image**. **Black** students are often seen as **disruptive** and **Asians** as **passive**. Negative labels also mean teachers would treat ethnic minorities differently:
- **Black pupils** - Gilborn (1990) found teachers were quick to **discipline black** students as they saw them as a **threat** to their **authority** and **safety**. They often misinterpreted their behaviour as **threatening** when no threat was intended. Teachers acted on this and **black students responded negatively** (self-fulfilling prophecy!). This can explain the **higher rate of exclusion** for **black** students and why they tend to be in **lower sets** which in effect leads to lower levels of achievement.
- **Asian pupils** - Wright (1992) teachers viewed **Asians** as **passive** and assumed they would have a **poor grasp of English**, so they left them **out of class discussions** or used **simplistic language** when speaking to them. Asian students also felt **isolated** when teachers **disapproved their culture** and **pronounced their names incorrectly**. Teachers mostly ignored Asian students, leaving them to feel marginalised at school

Evaluation of labelling and teacher racism

- Deterministic in assuming teacher labelling would automatically lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.
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2. Pupil Responses and Subcultures

- **Fuller (1984)**: studied **black girls** and found instead of accepting negative stereotypes of themselves, they **channelled their anger** about the label into **pursuit of education success**. However, they didn't do this by seeking teacher's approval or limiting their choice of friends to academic achievers, but by working consistently while giving the appearance of not doing so. Thus, the study shows: 1) students can **succeed** even if they **refuse to conform**, and 2) **negative labelling** doesn't always lead to a **self-fulfilling prophecy**.
- **Sewell (1998)**: examined responses and strategies **black boys** used to cope with **racism**. **4 different reactions** appeared to challenge stereotypes of themselves as **rebellious** and **anti-school**:
 - (1) **The rebel**: most visible but only a small minority of black students. They rejected the school rules and expressed their opposition by conforming to teacher stereotypes.
 - (2) **The conformist**: largest group. These boys accepted school goals and were keen to succeed so they avoided subcultures by making friends from different ethnic groups.
 - (3) **The retreatists**: small minority of isolated individuals who were disconnected from school and black subcultures.
 - (4) **The innovators**; 2nd largest. They were pro-education but anti-school. They valued success but not the approval of teachers and conformed only as far as schoolwork was concerned.
- Thus, this study shows only a **small minority** of **black students** fit into their **teacher's negative label**.

Evaluation of pupil responses and subcultures

- Ignores low aspiration and lack of father roles models in black families.
- Ignores reaction of other ethnic groups to teacher labelling.
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3. The Ethnocentric Curriculum

- The **ethnocentric curriculum** refers to the **priority** of **one culture** and **viewpoint over others**. In the case the British over ethnic cultures.
- The **British curriculum** is **ethnocentric** as it gives **priority** to **white culture** and the **English language**, **ignoring** the culture, literature and music of **non-European countries**.

- **Ball** (1994) criticised the curriculum as it ignores the culture of ethnic minorities and promotes '**little Englandism**'. E.g. history lessons glorify the British Empire for 'civilising primitive people' and ignoring the exploitation of black and Asians. This in effect **undermines** the **culture** of such students and **undermines** their **self-esteem** which can lead to **failure**.

Evaluation of the ethnocentric curriculum

- Can't explain why Indian and Chinese students do really well!
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4. Institutional Racism

- **Institutional Racism** refers to the idea that **schools routinely discriminate** against **ethnic minorities** in two ways:
 - 1) **Individual racism**
 - 2) **Institutional racism** or discrimination in the way the school operates.
- **Hatcher** (1996) found **little priority** was given to **tackle** issues of **racism** in schools. There was also **no channel** of **communication** between the **school** and **ethnic parents**. Thus, ethnic students are routinely disadvantaged by the system that disregards their needs which can explain underachievement.
- Moreover, research suggests expectations of **black students** were **comparatively low** and through a system of '**educational triage**' they were **systematically denied access** to the sets, groups and exams that would give them the best chance of success.

Evaluation of institutional racism

- Can't explain why ethnic differences occur in schools that challenge racial discrimination.
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5. Selection and Segregation

- **Gillborn** (1997) found that while **Marketisation** gave schools **greater scope** to **select** pupils this put some **ethnic groups** at a **disadvantage** as selection leaves room for **negative stereotypes** to influence decision over admissions. He argued **selection** lead to **ethnic irregularity** with minority pupils failing to get into good schools and warned that it could eventually lead to an **ethnically stratified education system**.
- **Gewirtz** supported Gillborn but also claimed **parental choice policies** further this possibility as **parents** from **ethnic backgrounds** are **not** in a position to **take advantage** of **choice policies**.

Evaluation of selection and segregation

- London is an ethnically diverse city but segregation by ethnicity does not occur. Thus the theory over exaggerates the nature of selection and parental choice policies on ethnic attainment.
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5. Processes within Schools

Labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy:

- Interactionist perspectives study **small scale** (micro) **activities**.
- They focus on what happens **within schools** and the **classrooms**.
- They are interested in how **students** are defined in different ways – e.g. ‘good’ vs. ‘bad’ – and the **consequence** that arise from such definitions.
- Students are not seen as a **passive ‘victim’** of **structural** or **cultural forces**.
- Labelling occurs in **two ways**: 1) **teacher labelling**. 2) **Banding** and **streaming**.

1. Teacher labeling and the self-fulfilling prophecy:

- Teachers routinely **judge** and **classify** pupils, e.g. ‘bright’ or ‘slow’, ‘troublemakers’ or ‘ideal pupil’, and ‘hardworking’ or ‘lazy’. This **process** of **classification** is called **labelling** and research shows that it has a **direct effect** on the **performance** of **students**.
- The stereotypes held by the teacher can produce a **halo effect**. A **Halo effect** occurs when pupils become labelled on the basis of earlier impressions, and these **impressions colour** future **teacher-student relations**.
- **Becker** (1971) found **teachers** evaluate pupils according to how well they meet their stereotypes of the ‘**ideal pupil**’. A whole range of **non-academic factors** – such as speech, dress, personality, appearance, behaviour, enthusiasm for work, and conduct – **influence** their **assessments** of a **student’s ability**.
- Teacher labelling eventually leads to a **self-fulfilling prophecy** in which the student **accepts** the **label** placed upon them by the teacher and comes to **view their ability** in this **light alone**. The teacher student relationship will carry on with this label in place thereby fulfilling the prophecy.

The diagram below demonstrates two examples of the process of labelling and self-fulfilling prophecy:

Pupil A	Pupil B
Teacher labels the pupil as 'bright' and predicts she or he will do well. ↓	Teacher labels the pupil as 'slow' and predicts he or she will not do well academically. ↓
Teacher encourages the pupil, answers questions, and gives extra help. ↓	Teacher spends less time with this pupil than with brighter ones and dismisses her or his questions as 'red herrings'. ↓
Pupil feels encouraged, develops self-confidence and works hard to keep up and improve performance. ↓	Pupil lacks encouragement and self-confidence – "teacher thinks I'm thick, so what's the point of trying?" ↓
Pupil sees himself or herself as 'bright' and strives for success. Teacher's original impression is confirmed. ↓	Pupil sees himself or herself as 'slow' and gives up trying. Teacher's original impression is confirmed. ↓
More teacher praise and encouragement. ↓	Less teacher praise and encouragement. ↓
Pupil achieves academic success. ↓	Pupil fails to achieve much success. ↓
Teacher's original prediction is confirmed: the prophecy has been fulfilled.	Teacher's original prediction is confirmed: the prophecy has been fulfilled.

- **Rosenthal and Jacobson** (1968) studied US primary school and found **support** for the labelling theory and self-fulfilling prophecy. They chose students of **random ability** and informed the **teacher** that one group of children were **bright** and could demonstrate rapid intellectual development, even though their ability was **no different** from other students. **However**, they did make **greater progress** than students not so labelled.
- The researchers concluded that **teacher expectations significantly affected student performance** since the teacher's **encouragement** and **positive feedback** produced the **self-fulfilling prophecy** among the students in the **placebo group**.

Evaluation of Rosenthal and Jacobson

- IQ tests used by R & J were of doubtful quality and were improperly administered.
- Not all forms of labelling leads to the development of a self-fulfilling prophecy. E.g. Fuller (1984) found that black girls resented negative labelling and sought to challenge it by proving teachers wrong. Thus, while they misbehaved in lessons they worked hard on studies to achieve educational success; thereby avoiding deterministic nature of labelling.

2. Banding and streaming

- **Banding** is where whole classes of pupils are put into different groups or bands for particular subjects, while **streaming** involves grouping them for all subjects. They are both **used to group** students according to **'ability'**.
- Being placed in a **low stream** or **band** may **undermine** pupil's **confidence** and **discourage** them from **trying**, and the **teachers** may be **less ambitious** and give **less knowledge** to lower-stream children than they would with others. This can in effect **labels** students according to **ability** and can **lead** to the **self-fulfilling prophecy**.
- **Ball's** (1981) study of a comprehensive school found that pupils were put into **one** of **three** bands according to **information** supplied by **primary schools**. While students in the **top bands** were **'warmed up'** through **encouragement** to achieve highly and to follow academic courses of study, students in **lower bands** were **'cooled out'** and encouraged to follow **lower status vocational courses**. Such labelling reflected in the latter group **constantly achieving lower levels** of **academic success** and **leaving school** at the earliest opportunity. He also found that **streaming** is linked to **social class** – the higher a pupil's social class, the greater the chance of being allocated to a top set.

Evaluation of labelling theory

Advantages

- It is based on detailed and empirical evidence unlike Functionalism and Marxism.
- It shows that internal factors within schools are just as important as external ones.
- It has practical applications – can be used in schools to improve teaching quality.

Disadvantages

- Fails to locate the origins of labelling and ignores factors outside school E.g. home background and racism which can impact educational attainment.
- Deterministic – assumes once a label is applied, it will automatically lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Fuller's study contradicts this!
- Ignores other factors in schools, like class sizes, financial resources given to schools etc., which can also affect attainment.

6. Education and Social Policy

Historical Context to Education Policy in the UK

- The English education system has historically been **divided** according to **social class and gender**. **13th century onwards** - **Formal schooling** was only provided to **upper class boys** who were educated in 'public' (private) schools. Education of **girls** was **poorly provided** – **upper class girls** were usually taught at home by a **governess**. Provision for 'ordinary people' made by **church and charities**.
- In **1870 Free State education** was established. In 1918 **attendance** was **compulsory** up until the age of **14**, rising to **16** in **1972**.

The Tri-partite System (1944)

- Also known as the **Butler Act**
- Introduced the **11+ examination** to allocate children into secondary education.
- 3 types of schools:
 1. **Grammar schools** (academic) – top passes.
 2. **Technical schools** (mechanical and Scientific training) – Average passes.
 3. **Secondary Modern** (Practical skills for manual labour) – majority who failed.

Advantages of the Tri-partite System

- It served many middle-class families very well, such that even today it survives in a few areas of the country.
- Guaranteed social mobility for working-class pupils who made it to grammar schools.
- Some recent research has gone so far as to suggest the system gave working-class pupils more chances than they have.

Limitations of the Tri-partite System

- 10%-20% children wrongly allocated.
- 11+ examinations was culturally bias, favouring the middle class culture.
- Stigma – children that unsuccessful were labelled as failures in society.
- Social class – 9/10 children from working class backgrounds didn't get into grammar schools – no equality of opportunity.
- 11+ didn't allow late developers an opportunity to succeed.
- Discrimination – girls had to achieve higher results than boys to get into grammar schools.

- Unequal funding – grammar schools received more money per student than the other two.
- Rather than promoting meritocracy it reproduced class inequality creating a polarised education system.

The Comprehensive System (1965)

- During the 1950s, discontent grew with the way in which the tripartite system limited the opportunities available to many students.
- In 1965, the **Labour government** instructed all local authorities to submit plans for **comprehensive reorganization**. Facilities were upgraded so that the new comprehensive schools could provide a **broad curriculum**.
- Comprehensive schools focus on providing **equality of opportunity** by establishing **'good' schools** in **every area** across the country where there is **no selection**.

Advantages of the Comprehensive System

- More children from working class backgrounds continued onto further education.
- No more pressure at 11 to be labelled as failures for life.
- One type of school means more resources for all students.
- Streaming and banding meant students could still work at level according to their abilities.
- Uniformity of self-esteem.

Limitations of the Comprehensive System

- Middle class parents could afford to move to good schools in catchment areas. Thus, middle class still did better than working class students.
- Holding back the intelligent students?
- Streaming and setting mean that inequalities still exist, students in low sets are made to feel as 'failures' – Tri-Partite system under one roof?

The New Right (1979-97) Marketisation and Parentocracy

- Move away from equality of opportunity to Marketisation and Parentocracy. Two Key policies to achieve this:
 1. **Improving educational standards through marketization** – introduce competition between schools to give parents more choice and drive up standards. Thus, good schools would thrive while the failing ones would close down.
The Education Act 1988 was able to achieve this by introducing the National Curriculum, League tables, SATs and GCSEs, giving parents power to select schools, formula funding etc.
 2. **Ensuring education met the needs of employers** – emphasis on basic skills and Vocational education and training. E.g. Education Act 1988 also introduced GNVQs, more commonly known as BTEC today.
- Davies describes the parental choice policies as **'Parentocracy'** because it takes power away from producers (schools and teachers) to the consumers (Parents) with the hope of rising standards among schools.

Advantages of New Right Policies

- Gives Parents choice and control over their child's education.
- Easy to compare performance of schools using league tables since they all have to follow the National Curriculum.
- Allows specialist career training for those who are not suitable to academic courses.

Limitations of New Right Policies

- Marketisation reproduces class inequality since choice policies advantage middle class parents who have both economic and educational capital.
- League tables allow good schools to become more selective over their students, thereby reproducing inequality since white middle class students are likely to be chosen over working class or foreign ones.
- Formula funding distributes funds according to the number of students in a school. This means popular schools have more funding to attract able students, hire better qualified teachers etc. while non-popular schools are forced to remain this way due to lack of funding.
- Myth of Parentocracy – not all parents are able to take advantage of parental choice policies; only the middle class.

New Labour (1997 – 2010)

- Since 1997 New Labour, under Blair and Brown, continued the education policies of the New Right, emphasizing **standards, diversity and choice**. However, they sought to **reduce inequality**.

Policies designed to reduce inequality:

- **Education Action Zones** – help schools in deprived areas to regenerate and improve standards by pairing them with local business. It also sent in specialist staff to help schools tackle issues of misbehaviour, social exclusion and truancy.
- **Reduction of class sizes to 25** students maximum.
- **Literacy and numeracy hour at primary** – one hour of both subjects a day to boost basic skills.
- **EMA** – up to £30 payment a week to students from low-income backgrounds to encourage them to stay in post-16 education.
- **Sure Start** – nursery for young children before state education to build on social and linguistic and provide them a learning environment.
- **Social Exclusion Units** – centres where excluded students would be given lessons while away from school, to ensure learning is taking place and they are not held back.

Policies designed to increase diversity and choice:

- Introduction of '**Specialist Schools**' (by subject) & **Academies** (sink schools regenerated and part funded/ran by businesses). **Increase in faith schools**.
- Introduction of the **A*** to A-Level examinations.

Advantages of New Labour Policies

- Entrenched equality of opportunity by extending policies to tackle class inequalities. E.g. EMA.
- Provided more choice to parents by introducing various types of schools.
- Enabled regeneration of sink schools.
- Dramatic increase in the number of children from low income families progressing onto further and higher education.

Limitations of New Labour Policies

- Introduction of top-up fees at university education challenges agenda to reduce inequality.
- Increase in choice policies only gives rise to class polarisation in education since middle class parents are only able to make effective use of them.
- A* at A Level does not challenge existing problems with the curriculum or address the question of 'easy' subjects.

Coalition government Policies (2010 - today)

- In 2010 the **Conservative** Party formed a **coalition government** with the **Liberal Democrats**. Coalition policies also point towards **strengthening Marketisation** in education but also an **elimination** of the **equality of opportunity policies** implemented by **New Labour**.
- The coalition policies thus far have involved
 - **Tuition fees** tripling to **£9,000** per year.
 - **Abolishment** of **EMA** and **Sure Start**.
 - Introduction of **Free schools** – run by parents, teachers, charities and business not local authority!
 - Encouraging **all** schools to turn into **Academies**.
 - **Abolishment** of **modular** and **January examinations** at A-Level and GCSE.
 - **List of 'core' and 'soft' subjects**.

Evaluation of the Coalition government Policies

- The strength to the coalition policies is that it increase in parental choice and competition between schools to drive up standards.
- However, it has eliminated equality of opportunities policies bringing back a polarised education system.
- Myth of Parentocracy – it once again gives rise to middle class parents with increase in choice policies.
- Tripling of fees, abolishment of EMA has reduced the number of low income students proceeding into further and higher education.
- List of 'core' subjects labels disciplines as 'desired' or 'undesired' assuming academic education is the best choice for all.