Scientific
Research
Publishing

What Is the True Purpose of Education? A Critical Exploration via the Lens of Social Class

Shuai Wang

Faculty of Social Science & Public Policy, King's College London, London, UK
Email: shuai.2.wang@kcl.ac.uk

Abstract

This essay critically explores the true purpose of education through the lens of social class, emphasizing that it extends beyond mere knowledge and skills to encompass the promotion of social justice and equality. The factors influencing the association between education and social class encompass cultural capital, economic determinants, and discriminatory practices within the educational system. Cultural capital, as conceptualized by Bourdieu, refers to non-monetary assets possessed by individuals such as taste, knowledge, and skills that can significantly impact their access to education and subsequent success within it. Economic factors including financial stability and available resources also play a pivotal role in determining an individual's educational opportunities. Furthermore, discriminatory practices embedded in the educational system such as biased curriculum development and unequal resource allocation perpetuate social class disparities. These multifaceted elements contribute to the intricate relationship between education and social class whereby education can both reinforce existing societal hierarchies while simultaneously serving as a catalyst for empowerment and transformative change. The research indicates that education should offer equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their social class, enabling them to fully develop their potential. Additionally, the article highlights the presence of social class disparities within the education system, wherein certain classes enjoy easier access to quality educational resources while others face unequal opportunities. Consequently, it calls upon the education system to actively address this inequality by ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities and fostering social justice.

Keywords

Education, Purpose, Social Class

1. Introduction

Education has often been considered a key element that guarantees human be-

ings' success through the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable them to get through life seamlessly (Baporikar, 2016). Nevertheless, the true purpose of education has been a controversial subject for a long time, with different scholars expressing different opinions that satisfy their philosophies aimed toward explaining the actual purpose of education. It is significant to note, however, that the true purposes of education cannot be answered in a single perspective due to the variegated educational outcomes and goals tied to it. This construct can be underscored through various lenses, such as philosophical, cultural, technological, economic, political, and critical lenses, such as social class, gender, and race. Evaluation of the purposes of education through social class expresses how social hierarchies influence people's access to education and their experiences. The perspective fronts the ugly inequalities inherent within the education system globally, which substantially influence individual's education outcomes based on their socio-economic backgrounds. Pierre Bourdieu and Paulo Freire offer significant insight into this aspect that facilitates an in-depth understanding of the influence of social class on educational goals and outcomes. In his work "Distinction", Bourdieu highlights how social class impacts individuals' access to education and the general experience that students have in the process (Bourdieu, 2013). According to Bourdieu, non-financial social assets and cultural capital significantly determine people's access to education and their success while at it. Bourdieu's perspective is key in prompting the critical question of whether education is indeed an equalizer or a social divider that categorizes individuals into various social pyramids. Paulo Freire, in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (Freire, 1970), articulates that the true purpose of education is to empower society and individuals to understand their social realities and be able to make meaningful changes. This critical analysis is key to examining the association between education and socioeconomic class, probing whether the stress on financial viability reinforces or challenges social inequalities.

2. Critical Perspectives

Bourdieu reiterates the fundamental role played by education in the creation and reproduction of social classes. In his arguments, he argues that humans are subjected to various sets of competitive fields that eventually result in social class groupings. In using education as a lens to determine the creation of the social class, he points out the various factors that play out in societal competitive fields, such as habitus, which is the habits that mold the society's ways (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). He further states that societal capital is a fundamental determinant in this arena. In pointing out education in the scope of societal capital, he insinuates that various factors compose the societal capital, such as economic factors that range from the financial stability that a child inherits from the parents; there is also the social capital, which encompasses the ability to maneuver through the challenging hurdles of life and the individual's ability to effectively network across the society. In addition, he also acknowledged that cultural capital includes taste and preference, mode of dressing, and possession of important

societal knowledge (Calhoun et al., 1993). Symbolic possession has also created significance in the social classes as possession of certain kinds of material artifacts, jewelry, among others, seemed reserved for particular social classes.

Bourdieu's opinion articulates that cultural capital comprises the non-financial societal capital that is an important determinant in scaling up societal ladders. For instance, possessing the socially desired set of skills such as musical talents, artistic talents and attainment of higher levels of education compounds the cultural capital (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Education has been considered to be one of the fundamental factors in ascending the social classes. However, the cultural capital, as pointed out in the theory, stipulates that in some scenarios, educators have been biased, favoring those in the higher social class. Due to the discriminative mode with which education is delivered results in those in the higher social classes being exposed to better modes of content delivery and course curricula that better equip them for the various social roles they partake in, increasing their chances of further escalating higher in the social ranking (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The influence of cultural capital on curriculum development is evident in the deliberate selection and prioritization of specific knowledge, skills, and values. Curricula often mirror the prevailing cultural norms and values within a given society during their formulation process. Consequently, this can lead to the exclusion or marginalization of alternative knowledge and perspectives that do not align with the dominant social class's cultural capital. Moreover, assessment methods and criteria employed in curricula may exhibit a bias towards certain forms of cultural capital such as academic knowledge and language proficiency while undervaluing other forms like practical skills or cultural awareness. As a result, this perpetuates social inequalities by favoring specific social classes' cultural capital while limiting opportunities for individuals from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. It is thus prudent to address the discriminatory education system that not only favors those in the higher social class but also drains the less privileged members of society as they have to struggle a lot to catch up with their counterparts who have been favored by the system.

Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of Oppressed" conceptualizes education in a multifaceted approach, with one side terming education as a tool of oppression. In comparison, on one side, it's a tool of liberation from oppression. According to Freire, the traditional system of education tends to be highly dehumanizing and oppressive as it subjects students to solely depending on the knowledge garnered by the teacher over time to enlighten their knowledge on a wide range of academic and social disciplines (Freire, 1970). He terms this oppressive as the system has a set of professionals who are perceived to hold the power to relay knowledge. In his counteractive opinion, he, however, suggests that education should embrace the freedom of free association and socializing, embracing all members of the society as inconsiderate of their social stratification (Freire, 1970). He stipulates in this theory that education should provide the students with the power to disseminate information and knowledge amongst themselves equally, with the teacher playing the moderative role, ensuring that an equal participatory approach

is embraced, giving equal opportunity to all learners. The theory is highly humanizing as all members of the class are at liberty to share the knowledge they have obtained over time in a discussion kind of setup.

In this theory, cultural capital determines the depth of knowledge that the learners interact with. Learners in the higher cultural capital tend to enjoy a highly enriched learning experience (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). With the theory postulating an all hands on the deck kind of learning approach, learners highly benefit from the learning, guaranteeing full knowledge absorption resulting in the social class ascension (Freire, 1970). In the development of curricula, the learners are treated as equals with utmost respect, taking into consideration the diverse depth of languages spoken by the learners, treating all languages as equal, and limiting discriminatory perception in the learning environment.

In his work, Micheal Apple critiques the current education system as a biased setup. He, together with Peters (2015), is keen on proclaiming the dominant societal values of the society that dominates power. He points out that the accepted values and norms that are taught in the various curricula are a subject of the subjective nature of the education sector. In his theory, he asserts that education has been dominated by the three societal pillars: economic, political, and cultural capital (Apple, 2004). The course content that is developed for passing on to the learners is a set of values and achievements of the dominant groups in society, undermining the values of the minor groups as they are made to learn, internalize, and closely associate with the values as pointed out in the curricula.

Cultural capital has played a major role in the development of the current education system. Developers of the curricula are highly ranking members of the society picked from the group that is highly ranked. During the development of the curricula, the groups tend to dwell much on the areas they closely associate with, such as their achievements, making themselves important learning figures in the education setup. Apple, in his work, directs attention to the fact that the current education system does not provide adequate solutions to the power struggles that the marginalized members of society face but instead affirms the grip that those in the higher social class ranking in society have in shaping education system and the content taught to the learners (Apple, 2004). This kind of stance indicates the vindictive nature of the education system supported by the biased curricula developed by the biased members of society who are solely interested in championing their self-interest in the name of creating content for the current and future generations to learn from.

3. Education Context

The education landscape has been a dynamic field that has continuously experienced substantial policy changes. This endearingly prompts the question of what the true purpose of education is (Hannum et al., 2019). Primarily, education is a medium that aims to enhance personal development, empowerment, equality and inclusivity, and cultural awareness. Evaluating the true purpose of education based on the social class lens, however, has presented various signifi-

cant challenges that propagate disparities hindering the achievement of one of the goals of education, which is equality and inclusivity. Social stratification determines the ability of individuals to access education, where individuals from higher social pyramids find it easy to access education due to their better financial capacities compared to individuals from lower social hierarchies. The rich do not face challenges such as the inability to continue learning due to lack of school fees. A challenge that is predominant among individuals from lower social classes.

Anyanwu, in "Social Class Disparities within Education," discusses various social class disproportions within the education system and how they interfere with the true purpose of education. Anyanwu focuses on various aspects of social class and how they propagate inequalities within the education system. An aspect such as a person's income determines where a child will study, the curricula they will undertake, the resources they are predisposed to, and the general experience they will have while studying. It is significant to note that students from higher social hierarchies come from families with good incomes. Therefore, they can easily access different forms of education that fit their social pyramid. Such student has far-wide opportunities to advance their education in different institutions that offer the best learning. This is not the case for students who come from low-income social classes since they have to be content with the low quality of education they get and have to struggle twice as much to be able to stay at school and even complete their studies amidst minimal resources that can barely serve every student within the education facility. Anyanwu notes that a person's family background and zip code also greatly determine the kind of education a person acquires, which eventually reflects on their success and education outcomes in their lives. It is evident that children or people who come from well-to-do family backgrounds, most of them are well-educated and have diverse opportunities to explore, while individuals from families with poor backgrounds struggle to break the poverty cycle due to limited networking opportunities and social exclusion. Based on zip code, Anyanwu notes that zip code exacerbates social class and disparities within the education system by influencing school funding opportunities. For instance, schools located in wealthier neighborhoods tend to have adequate funding, which facilitates adequate resources, small classrooms, and adequate teachers and support staff who ease the functionality of education compared to schools in poorer neighborhoods, which are often understaffed, lack adequate resources and have non-proportional student to teacher ratios which makes the quality of education in such schools poor and substandard. Zip codes also promote implicit bias and stereotypes, segregation, and limitation of quality schools. Anyanwu's discoveries in her work display the hindrances that prevent the realization of the true purpose of education.

Social class disparities also propagate the reproduction of social inequalities within the education system by perpetuating the existing social stratification. The contemporary society is highly stratified into haves and have-nots. These stratifications are continuously challenging to bridge as those from good socioe-

conomic backgrounds continually get educated, acquire diverse networking opportunities, and thrive, while those emanating from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds continue to struggle with access to quality education that can help them make meaningful changes in the community. This type of education system perpetuates the reproduction of more social stratification, preventing the achievement of the true purpose of education, which is empowerment and personal development. The increased reproduction of social classes promotes implicit bias and stereotypes where individuals from low strata are considered unequal and unworthy opponents at the decision-making tables (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This promotes prejudice and hate, which interfere with personal development and achievement of economic empowerment, which is one of the goals and outcomes of education. The reproduction of social inequalities is also perpetuated through the propagation of hidden curricula. More often, institutions transmit the values and cultures of the dominant middle class, such as food, communication, social expectation, and fashion, which is often unversed or conflicts with the cultural capital of proletarian students, which makes it challenging for commoners to excel in (Peters, 2015). This system may make proletarian students give up and resign to their fate, interfering with the accomplishment of the true purpose of education.

The impacts of educational policies on marginalized communities also impact the true purpose of education. The provision of high-quality education plays a pivotal role in empowering marginalized students and affording them opportunities for personal and social development. However, the impact of education on these students is often impeded by various factors. One crucial factor is the socio-economic context, as students from marginalized communities frequently encounter economic challenges that restrict their access to quality education. Limited financial resources can lead to insufficient learning materials, inadequate infrastructure, and a dearth of extracurricular opportunities. These limitations can hinder their academic performance and curtail their ability to harness their talents and abilities fully. Cultural capital also influences the effect of education on marginalized students since educational institutions often transmit values and cultures associated with the dominant middle class, which may clash with the cultural capital possessed by students from marginalized backgrounds. This creates barriers to their success and poses challenges for excelling within the educational system. Institutional practices and policies additionally exert significant influence on marginalized students; educational policies emphasizing standardized testing and narrow curricula can disadvantage these individuals who may possess different strengths and talents. These policies may prioritize competition and the measurement of success, rather than fostering critical thinking, creativity, and civic engagement. Individual agency is another crucial factor to consider. Despite the existence of structural barriers, students from marginalized communities can still exercise their agency and overcome challenges. With appropriate support and opportunities, they can develop resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of empowerment. It is imperative to provide them with inclusive and

equitable educational environments that acknowledge and value their diverse backgrounds and experiences. In conclusion, education holds the potential to empower students from marginalized communities; however, it is essential to address the structural and systemic barriers that impede their educational opportunities. By promoting educational equity, inclusivity, as well as supportive policies and practices, we can ensure that education genuinely benefits all students irrespective of their social background. For instance, Diane Ravitch, in "The Death and Life of Great American School Systems" (2010), underscores various policy changes that affect marginalized individuals, which undermines the true purpose of education. She asserts policies such as "No Child Left Behind," which stresses standardized testing, narrows the curriculum to sole focus on principal subjects such as mathematics and reading, sidelining other subjects such as arts, music, civics, and history, which are equally important (Giroux, 2012). This sidelining is detrimental to marginalized children as it deprives them of the opportunity to acquire comprehensive education that encompasses civic involvement, creativity, and critical thinking—all crucial components of Ravitch's educational philosophy (Giroux, 2012). Ravitch also postulates that the dire focus on test scores deprives marginalized students of the genuine understanding and critical thinking that can help them understand their society and make significant inquiries aimed toward positive change due to the teaching-to-test outlook. The teaching-to-test policy is more concerned with evaluating students' memories and ability to score points rather than critically analyzing immediate societal challenges and making meaningful recommendations (Ravitch, 2010). This greatly interferes with the true purpose of education. Ravitch notes that educational policies on marginalized communities are a significant impeding aspect towards the achievement of the true purpose of true education geared towards individual and social well-being since these policies focus more on competition, standardized testing, and narrowed systems of measurement of success (Hart, 2018). These policies go against the fundamental purpose of education, which is to provide all learners with impartial access to high-quality education while nurturing critical thinking, citizenship, and versatility.

4. Discussion

4.1. Access and Opportunity

Education has been perceived to provide a sense of leveling of the socially competitive fields as a sense of equality is feigned in the provision of education using curricula that are shared widely by learners across the divide. However, the provision of quality education is subjected to several inevitable factors, for instance, the availability of learning resources. While some other learners are provided with adequate up-to-standard resources that enable their smooth and steady learning, some parts with low social class rankings lack the basics of effective education, such as books and teachers. In such scenarios, the learners struggle to excel in their academics. These further limit their opportunity to transition from one academic level to the next properly. The transitionary pattern further favors

the privileged learners as they not only enjoy a rich depth of academic resources but also are guaranteed a smooth transition to the higher levels that award them automatic cultural capital as they can easily attain the highest academic levels as desired (Anyon, 1981). Infrastructural development is a key factor in the provision of quality education that guarantees academic excellence. Learners from the less privileged parts of the facet find themselves forced to put up with not only limited resources but also poor infrastructural development. In some instances, learners are forced to put up with the scorching sun of the day and some other harsh weather conditions to receive education. As a result of this condition, the fair, competitive field remains an illusion as their counterparts receive education from properly trained and motivated teachers from the comfort of a well-established and furnished classroom.

Extracurricular activities form primary components of effective learning at all levels of the education spectrum. As learners are subjected to a grilling and tiresome learning process, it is a health requirement that they be permitted to enjoy a few minutes of engaging in a wide range of extracurricular activities as this not only improves their content absorption rate but also enables the muscles to relax. Extracurricular activities can exert a positive influence on academic performance by fostering the development of crucial skills such as time management, teamwork, leadership, discipline, and commitment. These competencies can be transferred to academic pursuits and contribute to enhanced performance. Moreover, participation in extracurricular activities can cultivate a sense of belonging and connection to the school community that enhances motivation and engagement in academics. However, it is important to note that the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance may vary depending on individual circumstances and specific activity types. Therefore, schools should offer diverse extracurricular opportunities that cater to students' interests and talents while ensuring accessibility for all students. However, access to extracurricular activities is subject to the availability of other vital elements such as spacious open ground, engaging facilities, accessories such as balls, among others, or an equipped gym. This opportunity tends to be highly limited in schools endowed with learners from marginalized groups without cultural, economic, or political capital. Lack of financial capital limits the availability of these basic commodities, prompting the learners to opt for other alternatives that limit the expression of their talents. Contrary to the groups mentioned above, learners from highly ranking members of the social class are privileged with all the extracurricular resources that the education system recommends, from adequate time to facilities, accessories, and trainers. From the highly engaging extracurricular activities, learners manage to harness the experience garnered into cultural capital that enables them to scale steps up the social classes. This activity provides learners with an opportunity to learn inner gifts and tap them into beneficial financial capital. The inability to adequately identify and tap the abilities further condemns the marginalized groups down the social classes despite possessing beneficial abilities that could be harnessed and used to better their lives in so-

ciety.

4.2. Curriculum and Cultural Capital

Through the curriculum, members of the higher social class managed to oppress through the education system while solely possessing the ability to provide meaning and protect the meaning as defined in their writing, ensuring that all members of society who partake in education are taken through the terms and meaning outlined in the curricula as they dim fit. The curriculum is the set of course content from which learners are required to master and be examined. The development of the curriculum is a biased approach in the sense that a set of proclaimed professionals in a given field perceive themselves to hold in them the desired set of knowledge that should be passed through education. The said scholars or professionals compel the learners into mastering their own sets of imagination and culture. They find phenomena that are desirable to them about their communities and subject others to learn and identify with. In this case, the curriculum developers identify the kind of information that they desire to pass in the manner in which they desire it to be relayed to society and force it by terming any other contrary opinion of the learners as wrong and awarding high grades to those that are perceived to have a good mastery of the content. Often, the information passed is from the high social class members of the communities and thus the prowess of their children in mastering the concepts as, in some instances, they easily identify with their norms and ways of life. The situation has deteriorated to the extent of identifying the desired language for passing the information.

Paulo Bourdieu, in his theories, points out cultural capital as the non-financial capital that plays a bigger role in shaping social class stratification. In his words, he indicates that cultural capital encompasses factors such as attainment of higher levels of education, possession of important traditional information, taste and preference, prowess in games, ability to highly network with people in the community, and knowledge of artistic works, mastery of a particular language among others (Webb et al., 2010). Cultural capital has greatly impacted the education system in the sense that the education system greatly favors members from the high social classes; this is because they could easily manipulate education providers into attaining their desires. Through the disparity in the social class stratification and the ability to partake in the setting of the curriculum, members of the society from the higher social classes have manipulated the education system in coming up with education curricula that favor particular groups of the community at the expense of the latter. The high-ranking members have disgraced the education system, ensuring that particular traits of their culture are adopted in the education system to the detriment of the less privileged members of the community. Despite the high hopes from the members of the lower social class on education as the main ladder to scaling up the social ladder, the increase in the level of biases has resulted in the failure of the education sector.

4.3. Pedagogy and Empowerment

Different pedagogical approaches in the education system elicit different levels of empowerment to the learners and shape their learning experiences and results distinctly. There exist five key pedagogical approaches in the education system, and they include traditional pedagogy, constructivist, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Inquiry-Based Learning, and Problem-Based Learning (PBL). Traditional pedagogy is a technique that is teacher-centered (Broom, 2015). The teacher in this technique is considered the expert and is the active component in the dissemination of knowledge and skills. The students or learners are passive individuals who receive instructions from the teacher on the various learning areas. The approach is essential in facilitating optimal knowledge dissemination. However, it is rigid in that it limits students' engagement and ability to think critically and develop solutions to various challenges they encounter in their environment (Broom, 2015). Traditional pedagogy also consists of a subject-centered approach where students focus on mastering various principal subjects such as mathematics, English, and sciences. Nevertheless, its key weakness lies in disconnection from real-world realities as its mastery majorly circumvents teacher-to-test and scoring of points. Constructive pedagogy is a form of pedagogy that is majorly student-centered. It encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and cognitive skills in learners. Project-based learning is a form of pedagogy where students engage in lengthy projects that enable them to solve real-life situations. This is key in developing a connection between the theoretical aspects learned in class and the practical applications in real situations. Inquiry-based learning technique facilitates hands on experience where individuals get to assess situations, question structures, conduct experiments and independently problem-solve. The approach is significant in developing multitalented individuals with the cognitive skills to identify community issues and provide solutions. Furthermore, a problem-solving method for learning is paramount as learners may apply it as a reference point. This tactic promotes teamwork, innovative thinking, and skillful ability to figure out solutions.

Several teaching strategies are necessary to support pupils in challenging social class norms or upholding the current power structures. The utilization of problem-based education, project-based education, and constructive approaches is imperative in preparing students to reject social class norms. These norms are often rife with inequalities and prejudices that impede the attainment of education's main goals. Constructive methods help people become more capable of critical thought, situation assessment, and examination and analysis of the underlying structures and how they relate to achieving or obstructing the goal. People may establish solutions or suggestions on social class standards and beliefs using this strategy to minimize social inequities and enhance personal and social health. Because learners engage in contemporary issues and can select immediate responses, PBL methodologies are critical in enabling empowerment. Traditional and inquiry-based educational techniques both have the potential to

strengthen current power systems. The former approach is viable due to its inactive learning environment in which the instructor yields authority while the pupils are there to get guidance rather than actively participating in knowledge creation. Investigative pedagogy has the potential to perpetuate current systems of power because its effectiveness is dependent on the amount of advice students have been given or how much leeway they have to question. The fear of overstepping, it might lead to the reinforcing of current power structures. Through the development of access and equity, critical thinking capacities, autonomy, and understanding of societal power systems, these pedagogies are vital in equipping individuals to fight social class norms and values or maintain present power structures.

4.4. Policy Implementation

The implementation of various policies has the potential to demolish or reinforce social class disparities across the realm of education, thus affecting an equal and effective learning environment for all. First, financial strategies have the potential to eliminate or exacerbate social class gaps (Abbott et al., 2013). For example, equitable financial allocation to diverse learning institutions is an effective technique of reducing social class discrepancies between schools in wealthier areas and educational institutions in economically disadvantaged areas. Significant social class disparities exist between institutions located in wealthy backgrounds due to the availability of resources, an adequate number of teachers, and other resources required to promote a high quality of education. On the other hand, schools located in poorer socioeconomic backgrounds suffer from low-quality education attributed to a lack of the much-needed resources and funding required to enhance a seamless operation and make meaningful changes in the school. Therefore, implementing equitable fund distribution will help such schools acquire the resources and improve their infrastructure, substantially bridging the social class disparities. Nevertheless, if funding policies are not curated to address such concerns and only support institutions with students from higher social pyramids. In that case, such a funding policy will most likely entrench social class disparities within the education system more deeply.

Secondly, the implementation of policies that support different systems of testing and accountability rather than the renowned standardized testing is bound to dismantle social class disparities. The use of different testing metrics while assessing learners is key as it can provide evaluators with the comprehensive abilities of a student rather than confining them within the testing of core subjects alone. Such a policy is paramount in dismantling social class disparities by eradicating prejudices in standardized testing and decreasing the effect of social class inequalities on educational outcomes. Nonetheless, stressing a high standardized testing metric will entrench social class inequalities within the education system due to its disregard of contextual aspects such as resources that make students from lower social classes more disadvantaged.

Curriculum reform policies and community engagement are significant policy approaches in dismantling social class disparities within the education system. This is reflected in the development of an inclusive curriculum that is not Euro-centric (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021). The incorporation of indigenous history and knowledge in the curriculum empowers marginalized individuals and promotes learners with an authentic learning experience. Implicit biases further entrench the existent social class disparities by limiting higher education opportunities for individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

5. Conclusion

This critical evaluation via a social class lens has portrayed a sophisticated and occasionally disconcerting image of the fundamental purposes of education. Education is typically promoted as a means of achieving personal growth and empowerment. Nevertheless, it can also be utilized as an instrument for propagating and legalizing social class inequalities. Bowles and Gintis, in "Schooling in Capitalist America," (Welter, 1976), posit that education can be utilized as a medium for cultural and social reproduction, advancing current power systems and favoring dominant social hierarchies. Educational aspects such as pedagogies, curriculum, and standardized assessment metrics can be altered and prejudiced to favor a particular social class while oppressing other marginalized individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, education can be utilized as a resistance agent against social class disparities. Giroux, in his work on "Critical Pedagogy" (Giroux, 2012), notes that education can empower individuals through critical pedagogy to question the existent structures, point out injustices in the system, and dismantle systems of oppression. It is, therefore, significant to note that the association between education and social class is not invariable. Education can advance disparities; however, it can also serve as an agent of remonstrance and revolution (Musgrave, 2017). The true aim of education is embedded in conceding this strain and willingly pulling down structures that generate social stratification while giving precedence to approaches that empower people and societies to confront and redesign the power dynamics in their surroundings.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

Abbott, I., Rathbone, M., & Whitehead, P. (2013). *Education Policy*. Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473914841

Anyon, J. (1981). Social Class and School Knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry, 11,* 3-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.1981.11075236

Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and Curriculum*. Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203487563

Baporikar, N. (2016). Lifelong Learning in Knowledge Society. In P. Ordóñez de Pablos, & R. Tennyson (Eds.), *Impact of Economic Crisis on Education and the Next-Generation Workforce* (pp. 263-284). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-9455-2.ch012

Bourdieu, P. (2013). *Distinction*. Routledge.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Sage.

Broom, C. (2015). Empowering Students: Pedagogy That Benefits Educators and Learners. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education, 14,* 79-86. https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173415597142

Calhoun, C. J., Lipuma, E., & Postone, M. (1993). *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. University of Chicago Press.

Edgerton, J. D., & Roberts, L. W. (2014). Cultural Capital or Habitus? Bourdieu and Beyond in the Explanation of Enduring Educational Inequality. *School Field, 12,* 193-220. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878514530231

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic. https://envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf

Giroux, H. A. (2012). *Education and the Crisis of Public Values*. Counterpoints. https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-1557-8

Hannum, E., Ishida, H., Park, H., & Tam, T. (2019). Education in East Asian Societies: Postwar Expansion and the Evolution of Inequality. A*nnual Review of Sociology, 45,* 625-647. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022507

Hart, C. S. (2018). Education, Inequality and Social Justice: A Critical Analysis Applying the Sen-Bourdieu Analytical Framework. *Policy Futures in Education, 17,* 582-598. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210318809758

Musgrave, P. W. (2017). *The Sociology of Education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315211749

Peters, M. A. (2015). Interview with Michael Apple: The Biography of a Public Intellectual. *Open Review of Educational Research, 2,* 105-117. https://doi.org/10.1080/23265507.2015.1010174

Rapp, A. C., & Corral-Granados, A. (2021). Understanding Inclusive Education—A Theoretical Contribution from System Theory and the Constructionist Perspective. *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1946725

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. Basic Books.

Webb, J., Bourdieu, P., Danaher, G., & Schirato, T. (2010). *Understanding Bourdieu*. London Sage Publ.

Welter, R. (1976). SAMUEL BOWLES and HERBERT GINTIS. Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life. Pp. 340. New York: Basic Books, 1976. $13.95. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 426,* 270-270. https://doi.org/10.1177/000271627642600166