**Godalming College**

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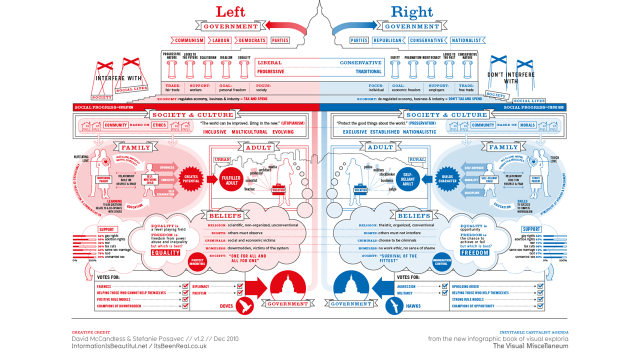
**Sociology Department**

**Education Policy**

* ***The recent history of state education policy***
* ***Different approaches on Education policy***



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Set | Group |

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**Left or Right?**

Put the statements below into the correct side of the table to list the main focuses of the left and right wing.

Low tax Focus on improving life for the working class Equality Privatisation

Values tradition Higher taxes for rich to support the poor Large welfare state

Redistribution of wealth Survival of the fittest Less regulation for big businesss

Progressive Individualism Economic freedom State ownership of services

Conservative/New Right Labour/Social Democratic

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LEFT** | **RIGHT** |
|  |  |

**Social Democratic vs New Right views of Education Policy**

**Browne pp 28-29**

The arguments of Functionalists and Marxists underpin many of the key ideas related to meritocracy, equality of opportunity, marketization and privatisation, but they are often not related to the British education system or can be directly linked to certain policies. There are two key political theories that do this. They are opposed to each other and have influenced different education policies since 1945.

They are:

**Social democrats**: linked to the education policies of the left, namely old Labour, pre 1997. Their policies included the introduction of the tripartite system in 1945.

**New Right/Neo Liberal-** associated with the political right, namely the Conservative party, in particular Margaret Thatcher’s government and the formation of the Education Reform Act 1988.

Please note- New Labour policies (1997-2010) can be a seen as a mix of these two views, as was the Coalition Government (2010-2015).

http://www.hellasmultimedia.com/webimages/education/images/bigpencil.gif*Activity: go back to your timeline and using different colours show which policies might be considered New Right ones and which ones are Social Democratic. Could any be both/either?*

**Social Democratic**

Description: MC900116066[1]Whilst this view has been associated with the political left, Social Democratic views should not be confused with Marxist ones. This approach is associated with education policies pre 1979 (when the Conservatives come to power). Social Democratic views are associated with a belief in the **Welfare State** and the necessity for governments to intervene on behalf of those who are weakest or who need support, often through tax-and-spend policies, redistributing wealth through services and benefits (so-called “Robin Hood” policies).

In response to the problem of educational inequality, Social Democratic approaches have attempted to make the system fairer by ensuring an equal chance for all. For them, **meritocracy** is only possible with the provision of **equality of opportunity**.

Define equality of opportunity:

The tripartite system which sprang from the 1944 Education Act may be seen as part of this legacy as it attempted to offer:

* Free secondary education for all
* Higher education for all qualified to attend and selected by the appropriate university
* Maintenance grants to support those in higher education

The subsequent growth of higher education was felt to benefit everyone in society with

1. the greater provision of skilled workers for the economy and
2. the increased taxes that these groups would generate for the government.

As it became apparent that the tripartite system benefitted middle class children with a greater likelihood of attending grammar schools, the logic of the Social Democratic position enforced the **comprehensivization** of education, offering common schools to all classes and abilities.

More recently, Social Democratic approaches have focused on financial support in the home through **tax credits**, and interest in **Affirmative Action** or ***positive discrimination*** policies, to ensure support for those lest privileged (e.g. through the Office of Fair Access for Higher Education – ***OFFA*** – or initiatives such as ***AimHigher)***.

In summary, Social Democratic advocates often claim that the expansion of the pool of talent that equality of opportunity brings will make the country more economically more successful. They base their idea of fairness on **high rates of social mobility** rather than greater equality, but this is in turn based on a greater degree of equality of opportunity.

Social democrats are critical of Functionalists saying meritocracy exists because of the different life chances that children have. They aim for meritocracy but do not believe it has happened yet because there is not a true equality of opportunity. Arguments for this include:

**Sharon Gerwirtz** (1995) found that the amount of choice involved in selecting a school was limited by the ability of schools and by the ability of parents to discriminate between them. She argues that because of this parents did not have an equal choice.

She identifies three broad groups of parents:

1. **Privileged/skilled choosers-** strongly motivated parents who have the ability to understand the nature of different schools. Often have time and money to make a range of choices to assist their children.
2. **Semi-skilled choosers-** ‘have strong inclination but limited capacity to engage with the market’. They are concerned by do not possess the experience or inside knowledge of the education system e.g. less likely to appeal if their child does not get into their preferred school.
3. **Disconnected choosers-** are not inclined to get very involved with the education market. They tend to consider the closest schools to where they lived. They tend to believe there is no real difference between schools.

**Thinking about what you know about factors that affect people’s life chances, what issues could surround the idea that all parents have the same ability to choose the education of their children?**

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| --- | --- |
| **What allows for parents to have more choice?** | **What means parents have less choice or less ability to make choices?** |
|  |  |

**Stephen Ball** (1994)- saw a shift in school attitudes, after the introduction of the 1988 Education Act: ‘there is a shift of emphasis from student needs to student performance: from what the school can do for the students to what the students can do for the school’. Competition between local schools to attract students, who are now regarded as commodities, creates winners and losers.

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| What problems are there with the social democratic view? |

**NEW RIGHT/NEO LIBERAL APPROACHES TO EDUCATION (a political rather than sociological approach to education)**

The New Right is a conservative political view that incorporates neoliberal economic ideas (these ideas have influenced governments since 1979 with the belief that governments should encourage competition, private businesses and not overly regulate the market).

MC900153726[1]The New Right, now more commonly known as Neoliberal, position has grown out of a critique of Social Democratic views, which they regard as beyond what the country can afford without inhibiting economic growth. The education system from the state needs to be leaner and more efficient, offering a **safety net** for those who absolutely need it rather than a necessary service for all. Policies associated with the New Right can be seen as the basis of the **1988 Education Act** and several subsequent important pieces of legislation.

The New Right approach to education policy reflects many of the ideas of the functionalist perspective. They argue that education should not be concerned with promoting equality of opportunity but with training the workforce, ensuring the most skilled and capable are recruited into the most important jobs, whilst others are prepared for lower-level employment.

**Similarities and differences between the Functionalist and New Right approach to education**

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| --- | --- |
| Similarities | Differences |
| Both believe that some people are naturally more talented than others. This means that equality of opportunity whilst present will not lead to everyone being able to get to the same point. | The New Right do not believe that the current education system achieves these goals because it is run by the state. |
| Because of this both favour an education system run on meritocratic principles of open competition, and one that serves the needs of the economy by preparing young people for work. | The New Right argue the state education system takes a ‘one size fits all’ approach, which imposes uniformity and rejects local needs. State education systems are seen as unresponsive and inefficient. |
| Both believe that education should socialise pupils into shared values, such as competition, and instil a sense of national identity. | The New Right think education needs to be marketized, whereby the users of education become consumers, picking and choosing the best option for them in an open market. |

**New Right views: Chubb and Moe**

**Their solution?**

To create an ‘education market’ to provide more competition between schools to empower consumers; the aim being to introduce more choice, diversity and efficiency within the system.

New Right theorists like **Chubb and Moe** believe an education system controlled by the state and local authorities (local councils) is not the best means of achieving the aim of training an effective workforce. They argue there should be a free market in education that provides parents and local communities with choice. There should be a range of schools that are independently managed, run like private business and accountable to the wishes and needs of local communities. This marketization would lead to more competition, which would drive up standards.

**Education Policy: influence of different governments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Social Democratic (broadly 1944-1979)** | **New Right (broadly 1979-1997)** |
| Main arguments: | Main arguments: |
| What problems do they see with the education system? | Who are the key thinkers and what do they say? |
| How do they view meritocracy? How do they justify this? | How do they view meritocracy? How do they justify this? |
| Evaluation of the approach | Evaluation of the approach |
| Which policies have they impacted? | Which policies have they impacted? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| New Labour (1997-2010) – which of their policies are more social democratic? | New Labour (1997-2010) – which of their policies are more new right? |
| Coalition government (2010-2015) and current Conservative government (2015-2017, 2017>)  Are arguably more right wing, which of their policies indicate a return to the New Right? | |

Using the Webb textbook page 70, outline 4 criticisms of the New Right

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**Quick Test – New Right vs Social Democracy – 18 statements.**

Name:

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|  | **Social Democrats** | **The New Right** |
| 1. Believes in the Welfare State |  |  |
| 1. Is closely linked to Marxism |  |  |
| 1. Linked to a Tax-and-Spend social system |  |  |
| 1. Believes that the Welfare State is too centralised and expensive |  |  |
| 1. Believes that investment in education is an individual’s responsibility |  |  |
| 1. Believes that the introduction of the discipline of the market will improve the education system |  |  |
| 1. Believes that schools need to be locally and democratically accountable |  |  |
| 1. Believes that schools need to serve local catchment areas |  |  |
| 1. Believes that the Welfare State is likely to decrease rather than increase poverty in the long term |  |  |
| 1. Believes that schools need to be responsible for their own budgets |  |  |
| 1. Believes that schools are best coordinated by Local Educational Authorities |  |  |
| 1. Believes that Equal Opportunities are the basis of Meritocracy |  |  |
| 1. Believes that state investment in education will benefit all |  |  |
| 1. Believes in the comprehensive system |  |  |
| 1. Believes that the poor may suffer from a dependency culture |  |  |
| 1. Believes that the Welfare State is likely to increase rather than decrease poverty in the long term |  |  |
| 1. Believes that catchment areas restrict freedom of choice |  |  |
| 1. Is closely linked to functionalism |  |  |

**Total /18**

**The relationship between education and work**

Successive governments have focused on the relationship between school and skills for employment. This has led to a range of policies that you will research and evaluate in the next part of the booklet. As background, these are the aims of the Conservative and Labour parties during their leadership.

When the Conservative party was elected in 1979 their aims, related to education were to:

* Develop an education system which met the needs of industry
* Raise standards throughout Britain’s schools and colleges

Their policy was known as **New Vocationalism**. This policy aimed to address the large numbers of unemployed young people. Previously, vocational training (training for work) was regarded as the responsibility for employers, however the new government felt schools should take responsibility for the creation of skills for industry.

Labour continued a similar policy from 1997, focusing on two main areas:

* Providing the training needed for a high wage/high skill economy to allow the UK to compete internationally.
* Reducing youth unemployment and addressing the problem of young people identified as NEETs (**N**ot in **E**ducation, **E**mployment or **T**raining)

**RECENT POLICIES- summary using Webb textbook**

**Marketisation (pages 78-81 Webb)**

* 1. Define marketisation.
  2. Which sociological perspectives favour marketisation?

1. What is parentocracy and how do those who favour it say it benefits education?
2. Define the following:   
   a. Cream-skimming

b. Silt-shifting

1. How do league tables enable these two processes to take place?
2. What is the impact of the funding formula on differences between schools?

**New Labour and inequality (page 80 Webb)**

1.List the New Labour policies aimed at reducing inequality.

2.What is the ‘*New Labour paradox’*?

**Coalition government policies since 2010 (p.81-82 Webb)**

1. Give a brief outline of the following policies:

a. Academies

b. Free schools

2. What criticisms have been made of free schools?

3. Define the following:

a. Fragmentation

b. Centralisation

4. What criticism has been made of the Pupil Premium?

5. What Coalition policies may have reduced opportunities for working-class pupils?

**Summarise the following aspects of privatisation** (pages 82-83)

1.Blurring the public/private boundary

2.Privatisation and the globalisation of education policy

3.The cola-isation of schools

4. Education as a commodity

**Examples of Possible A Level Exam Questions related to the topics covered in this booklet**

NB your ability to tackle many of these questions will be stronger after covering the whole of the education section – and similarly other parts of this course will require you to refer back to the policies and theories outlined in this booklet.

**4 mark questions**

Outline two ways in which globalisation has influenced educational policies [4] [*O’Leary revision book*]

Outline two ways in which the education policies encourage equality of opportunities [4]

**6 mark questions**

Outline three ways in which government educational policies have attempted to reduce inequality in achievement between social classes [6]

Outline three ways in which government educational policies have attempted to reduce youth unemployment [6]

**10 mark questions (with an Item/extract to guide your response)**

Item A: Some sociologists argue that a major role of the education system is that it should provide equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed so they can be allocated to their most appropriate role in the economy. However, statistics on achievement suggest that schools systematically fail the majority of working-class pupils. Sociologists critical of this view have put forward a number of reasons why working class students end up in working class jobs. *[O’Leary revision book]*

Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which the education system legitimates or reproduces social inequalities [10]

Analyse two ways in which the education system supports the economy.[10]

Analyse the effects of two marketization policies [10]

**30 mark questions (with an item / extract to guide your response)**

Item B: Until the 1980s, most education was provided by elected local education authorities, directed and funded by central government. However, the 1988 Education Reform Act began the marketization of education, aimed at raising standards by increasing parental choice and competition between schools. After 2010, there was a substantial move towards the privatisation of increasing parental choice and competition between schools. After 2010, there was a substantial move towards the privatisation of education through policies such as the growth of chains of academies run by private businesses. Some sociologists claim that the main impact of marketization and privatisation policies has not been to raise standards, but to increase educational inequality.

**Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the claim that marketization and privatisation policies have increased educational inequality [30]**

**Examples of Possible AS Exam Questions related to the topics covered in this booklet**

NB your ability to tackle many of these questions will be stronger after covering the whole of the education section – and similarly other parts of this course will require you to refer back to the policies and theories outlined in this booklet.

Define the term “parentocracy” [2]

Define the term “meritocracy” [2]

Define the term “equality of opportunity” [2]

Define the term “cultural capital” [2]

Define the term “myth of meritocracy” [2]

Define the term “hidden curriculum” [2]

Using one example, briefly explain how the education system might not be meritocratic [2]

Using one example, briefly explain how the education system promotes social solidarity [2]

Using one example, briefly explain how the school acts as an agent of secondary socialisation [2]

(and see glossary to construct further 2 mark questions)

Outline three ways in which schooling reflects the workplace [6]

Outline three functions that the education system performs for society [6]

Outline three ways in which government educational policies have attempted to reduce inequality in achievement between social classes [6]

Outline three ways in which the correspondence principle operates in schools [6]

Outline and explain two ways in which schools reinforce social solidarity [10]

Outline and explain two ways in which the education system supports the economy.[10]

Outline and explain two roles that education fulfils according to functionalists [10]

Item A: Some sociologists claim that education reproduces and legitimises social class inequality. They argue that it operates in the interests of the ruling class, preparing working-class pupils for working-class jobs and justifying this outcome as fair. Other sociologists disagree. They claim that education offers all pupils an equal opportunity to succeed.

**Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that ‘education reproduces and legitimises social class inequality [20]**

Item B: Until the 1980s, most education was provided by elected local education authorities, directed and funded by central government. However, the 1988 Education Reform Act began the marketization of education, aimed at raising standards by increasing parental choice and competition between schools. After 2010, there was a substantial move towards the privatisation of increasing parental choice and competition between schools. After 2010, there was a substantial move towards the privatisation of education through policies such as the growth of chains of academies run by private businesses. Some sociologists claim that the main impact of marketization and privatisation policies has not been to raise standards, but to increase educational inequality.

**Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the claim that marketization and privatisation policies have increased educational inequality [20]**

**50:50 Extension Tasks**

To help reinforce your learning and understanding in A-Level Sociology it is important to go beyond the set homework. Knowledge only stays in our heads if it is regularly reinforced and built upon. These tasks will help you do so. It is up to you what you do as people learn in different ways but it is important that you spend the same time on your work as you do in lessons, so 50:50

**Education history, policy and theory**

- Read the relevant section in the textbooks. Make notes, either as bullet points or to reinforce revision notes.

Browne, ‘Sociology for AQA Year 1’, p.26-37, 52, 87-112 (take it further and complete the activities in the textbook as you go)

Webb, ‘AQA A Level Sociology Book One’, p.66-86

- Create a quizlet or Kahoot for the different theories and policies <https://quizlet.com/en-gb> <https://kahoot.com/>

- Write the key concepts (which can be found in the booklet) as flashcards or as a quizlet.

- Practice additional short questions.

- Plan and write an additional 30 mark question.

- Read and make notes using relevant revision sites such as <https://revisesociology.com/sociology-family-revise/>