

Candidate 1 evidence

Introduction

The social issue being discussed in this assignment is poverty and within poverty, it'll mainly be focusing on how poverty can influence school attainment. In particular, how school attainment can affect social mobility through functionalism theory as functionalists believe that social mobility is possible with some hard work when in school and through Marxist theory. Marxists believe that social mobility isn't possible due to capitalism and its effect on education. Social mobility is the ability for a person to move up or down in the socioeconomic classes. It's important to understand how social mobility can be affected by factors such as education as if we can identify what causes the constant cycle of poverty, it can allow us to prevent poverty or even reduce the number of people in poverty. As there is a preconception held by the public that poor people are lazy and cannot be bothered finding a job and would much rather live off benefits for the rest of their lives. This is backed up by newspaper articles such as the daily star, a large tabloid newspaper that 'publishes headlines such as "REVEALED: How UK's most notorious benefit scroungers spend OUR cash' (Jolly, 2016) this projects the view that all poor people spend their benefit money on luxury items which portrays them as taking advantage on the benefits systems and that they all don't need the money. The hypothesis of this assignment is that poor people choose to be/remain in poverty due to them choosing to do badly in school.

Summary of Sources

A research study by Alice Sullivan from the University of Oxford called "Culture Capital and Educational Attainment" (Sullivan, 2001) explores how capital culture can affect social mobility as Sullivan explains that people from the higher classes want to stay in power and remain at the top due to this the people lower down on the social ladder will find it increasingly difficult to achieve social mobility. It's still possible for them to achieve social mobility however it will be significantly harder due to the more obstacles they will have to overcome. Sullivan adapts on this point by highlighting the fact that people of the higher class have more educational privileges such as better facilities, home environment and encouragement from parents. In addition to these factors. Activities outside the home can also affect a child from a more affluent family as they're exposed to more high-class activities such as art galleries or the theatre which gives these children a greater advantage of developing a stronger comprehensive language and literacy skills. This gives these affluent kids an edge in the educational system over children from a less wealthy family as they will be missing out on these activities meaning they aren't receiving this upper hand. This is backed up in Sullivan study as she served pupils from schools and she concluded that children that have parents who are of a higher service class or have graduated have impacted their child's cultural activities this can be due to the child adopting an interest with the high cultural activities they've done

ever since they were young, this suggests that children are conditioned to adopt their parents interests and activities.

A published policy paper by the UK government (Department for Education, 2017) explains the link between social mobility and education as it explains the fact that all children come to school with a different background. This background is their foundation for adapting and succeeding in the education system, the extract begins to explain that, children from an affluent background tend to have a stronger background and due to this they thrive in the education system and this causes an attainment gap between classes as children from a deprived family are more likely to fall behind in school at an early age due to a weaker foundation. Since this development gap starts at the early age of five it only worsens further up education. The abstract also explains actions the UK government is taking to closing this development gap by allowing children to have access to more facilities such as more teaching staff and more opportunities for kids to get into university or getting into jobs for example through apprenticeships. This source identifies the link that education has with social mobility and gives potential solutions to the issue to lessen the effect of poverty on children with high aspiration.

Theories

The research explores the idea that poverty is related to social mobility through education. In an ideal world, everyone has an equal opportunity to make their life however they wish to but this isn't the case when discussing modern Britain as we see large inequality between poverty and opportunity as the Joseph Rowntree foundation publish a report in 2016 stating that 13 million people in the UK are in poverty (JRF, 2016) and with poverty comes with unequal opportunity as these people don't have the funds for necessities they need to better their lives. Functionalism believes in meritocracy meaning that social mobility is possible for everyone as you just need to work hard to move up the social ladder. Marxists believe that poor people are forced to stay poor due to capitalism, as if everyone had the ability to become rich and powerful then the bourgeoisie will have less control. A way in which the upper class keep the proletariat from achieving these high paying jobs/roles is by social closure. Social closure is when people who are in the upper class "the enclosure" have a vast network of people around them to ensure that the "enclosure" is filled with people for upper-class family and not people from working-class backgrounds, this is done by elite self-recruitment. This means that the working class are excluded from achieving high status and high paying jobs due to them not having access to these elite networks.

The effect poverty has on school attainment can be shown in the Glasgow centre population health of Children and Young People's which showed Glasgow and Dunfermline (two of Scotland most deprived areas) had less than 30% of S4 pupils which gained five or more national qualifications, this compared to Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire (more affluent areas) had more than 60% of kids achieving this standard (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2017). The quality of education a person will play a large factor in the type of job they'll have, a person with a good quality of education are more likely to achieve a high-skilled job. In contrast, a person with a low quality of education will more likely to be in a low-skilled job with low pay or even unemployment. This factor is so significant as can determine how fast the gap between rich and poor can increase, as poor quality of education will lead to low pay/unemployment meaning low-income causing poverty or be pushed further into poverty to be more likely. (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1972) proposed the idea of a 1:2:4 rule of relative hope which showed social mobility was difficult due to inbuilt inequality, this ratio explain that the chances a person from a working-class background has half the chances of achieving social mobility of a person from an intermediate class, and a person from an intermediate class has half the chances of a person from the service class from achieving social mobility. As this inequality can be quantified it must be inbuilt to our society, this inbuilt inequality gives rise to this 1:2:4 rule of relative hope. In contrast to all this functionalist believe that with hard work you can achieve well in school

and that with some hard work everyone is capable to gain a good high paying job. This can be backed up from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2013 (Numeracy) as this source shows that in 2013 61% of children in P4 from the most deprived areas are performing very well or well and 75% of kids from the least deprived areas, this is a relatively small difference of 14% which supports the functionalist view of everyone having equal opportunity, however, this point can later be weakened as the effect of poverty can be shown in that 25% of S2 of children from the most deprived areas are achieving well or very well and this is slightly more than half from kids from the least deprived areas (The Scottish Government, 2014), this contradicts the belief that we have equal opportunity as if we did then this attainment gap wouldn't be as large as it is. these two sources link back to the ideas that poverty leads into low school attainment which links back to poverty, both sources back up a Marxist view on poverty through education and a functionalist view. Another study to back up a Marxist view in in the Future of Children Vol. 16, No. 2, Opportunity in America (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006) as it depicts an image of wealthier people investing more money and time into their child's education and people from a poorer class not having enough time, as the more affluent parents are mainly focused on that child getting the best education so they can be rich and wealthy like them however in a poorer household the parents may be more focused on how they'll pay for bills, heat the home or even where their next meal may come from and this poverty is due to capitalism as government

policies has caused such an imbalance in social class that social mobility is extremely hard.

Evaluating Findings

When discussing the social issue of poverty and education it's important to evaluate the sources and the theory's in which they've been adapted from, as it allows for a more balanced and fair comparison to be made. Source 1 has a high validity as the research was conducted by a researcher in Oxford university which makes the information reliable as the research was conducted by a researcher with a high educational background in sociology and the researcher must've been approved by the university which increases the reliability, however this source has its limitations as the researcher had an aim to prove or disprove which may have caused bias in the information. Another way in which the information may not be as reliable as when interpretation the information which may have caused personal bias to be present in the analysis. The information in this source also contains very relevant points as it directly discussed the impact economic factors had on children's ability in school and especially focused on the differences that different class had on school attainment in a sociological manner. Source 2 was reliable as the information was published by the UK government which is an official body, this ensures the information is reliable as the statistics have been carried out by professionals which are expected in this field and done on a large scale which is beneficial as the information will reflect on the whole population.

Also, little to no biases will be present in the information as the official statistics are investigated by civil servants which have no affiliation to a political group which decreases the chances that political biases. One limitation to official statistics is that it lacks validity as the statistics are given however the reason for these statistics/trends are not explained in why a trend is formed which can be an issue when discussing a social issue as the statistics are further developed in official statistics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study disproves the hypothesis that poor people choose to be/remain poor due to them choosing to do badly in school and supports the idea that the people that are already living in poverty have an increased chance in doing badly in school which leads them into further poverty. When considering both sociological arguments the Marxist theory seems to better explain the link between social mobility and poverty are through education as this theory considers the fact that different people have different obstacles to overcome, in which functionalism doesn't. Marxists acknowledge that the Upper class have a wider and higher skilled opportunity and that the proletariat have a narrow and low skilled opportunity, this is backed up by official government statistics, this makes the argument more reliable as it has significant statistical backing. The functionalist view on social mobility is that they believe that poor children choose to do badly at school, this idea is rejected in this assignment as is not always true due to the inbuilt inequality. A limitation of functionalism is that it labels poor people as 'not hard working' which result in fewer people in supporting this theory. Even though functionalist theory explains why some people who are from a deprived background have been able to achieve social mobility in moving up the socioeconomic ladder. The number of people who achieve this is very small when looking at societal trends, this again strengthens the argument that the people that are

already living in poverty have an increased chance in doing badly in school which leads them into further poverty as not all people but the wide majority of less affluent people won't achieve social mobility due to barriers out with their control such as location, these hidden barriers have arisen and strengthened through capitalism.

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