

Educational Inequality

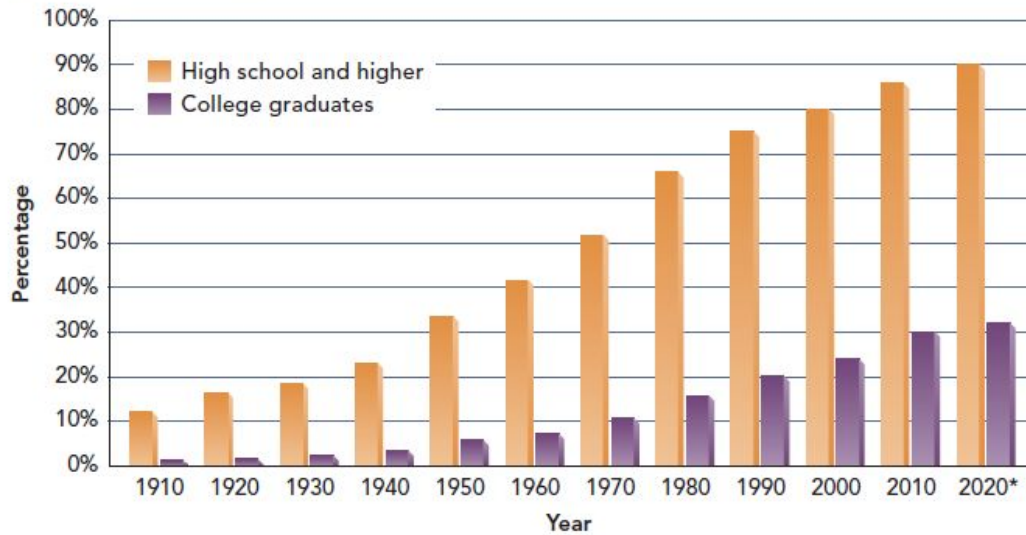
Boza chapter six

Education in Perspective

- Credential Society: one in which employers use diplomas and degrees when determining job eligibility.
- The sheer size, urbanization, and consequent anonymity of U.S. society is a major reason for the requirement of credentials.
- Employers use diplomas and degrees as sorting devices.

Education

FIGURE 13.1 Educational Achievement in the United States



Note: Americans 25 years and over. Asterisk indicates author's estimate. College graduates are included in both categories (High school and higher, and College graduates).

Sources: By the author. Based on National Center for Education Statistics 1991:Table 8; *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 2013:Table 236.

Functionalism

- A central position of functionalism is that when the parts of society are working properly, each contributes to the well-being or stability of that society.
- Education is a social institution. Social institutions are organized means (ways) of meeting basic needs defined and approved by society.
- Manifest Functions
- Latent Functions

The Functionalist Perspective: Providing Social Benefits

- **Teaching Knowledge and Skills** – Education's most obvious manifest function is to teach knowledge and skills; each generation must train the next to fill the group's significant positions.
- **Cultural Transmission of Values** – Manifest function – Process by which schools pass on a society's core values from one generation to the next.

The Functionalist Perspective: Providing Social Benefits

- **Social Integration** – Schools provide a sense of national identity; to forge a **national identity** is to stabilize the political system. This function of education is especially significant in the lower social classes, from which most social revolutionaries emerge. The wealthy already have a vested interest but getting the lower classes to identify with a social system *as it is* goes a long way towards preserving the system.

The Functionalist Perspective: Providing Social Benefits

- **Gatekeeping (Social Placement)** – Rd page 409 – Refers to opening the door of opportunity for some and closing it for others.
- To accomplish this, schools use some form of **tracking**.
- The impact of gatekeeping is lifelong; tracking affects opportunities for jobs, income and lifestyle.
- To explore tracking, refer to symbolic interactionism.

The Functionalist Perspective: Providing Social Benefits

- **Replacing Family Functions** – Manifest and Latent Functions –
Childcare has always been a latent function of education but now schools are providing childcare both before and after school, thus it has become a manifest function.
- Another example would be providing sex education. Conversations that used to take place in the home, have become more visible in the schools.
- Functionalists support society's institutions as being good and necessary for social order.

The Conflict Perspective: Perpetuating Social Inequality

- Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists argue the educational system (institution) is a tool used by those who control society to maintain their dominance. They DO NOT support social institutions.
- Education reproduces the social class structure, as well as society's divisions by race-ethnicity, helping the elite maintain their dominance.
- The **hidden curriculum** -- the unwritten rules of behavior and attitude (e.g., obedience to authority, conformity to cultural norms) taught in school.
- Unequal funding & Discrimination by IQ

The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective: Teacher Expectations

- Study face to face interaction in the classroom. Find the expectations of teachers have profound consequences for their students.
- The **Rist Research** (participant observation in an African-American grade school with an African-American faculty) found tracking begins immediately, starting with teachers' perceptions.
- Students from whom more was expected did the best; students in the slow group were ridiculed and disengaged themselves from classroom activities.

Tracking (S.I.)

- Tracking is the placement of children into different classes based on ability or “tracks.”
- Studies find that white children are most likely to be placed in college-bound tracks.
- Some arguments to this have focused on standardized testing and GPA.
- GPA for White students 3.09, African American students 2.69, Hispanic students 2.84, and Asian/Pacific Islander students 3.26
- Opportunities also differ w/in the school system.

Other Problems in U.S. Education

- The rising tide of mediocrity (CT, SI)
- Grade inflation (CT, SI)
- Dropping SAT scores (CT, SI)
- Falsifying graduation rates and how these relate to social promotion and functional illiteracy (CT, SI, F)
- Violence in schools (CT, SI, F)
- Cheating (CT, SI, F)

Education in the Most Industrialized Nations: Japan

- A nation's education reflects it's culture.
- Japanese education reflects a group-centered ethic.
- Cram Schools
- Children work as a group; on any one day children all over Japan even study the same page from the same textbook.
- As in the U.S. children from Japan's richer families score higher on college admission tests and are more likely to attend the nation's elite colleges.

Education in the Industrializing Nations: Russia

- After the Revolution of 1917, the government insisted that socialist values dominate education as a means to undergird the new political system.
- Children were taught that capitalism was evil and communism was the salvation of the world.
- Today, Russians are in the midst of “re inventing” education. Private, religious, and even foreign-run schools are operating, and students are encouraged to think for themselves.

Education in the Least Industrialized Nations: Egypt

- Little emphasis on schooling.
- Few children go to school beyond the first couple of grades.
- In Egypt, many poor children receive no education.
- 1/3 of Egyptian men and over half of Egyptian women are illiterate.

Achievement Gap

Gender Comparison:

Between 2000 and 2015, the male status dropout rate declined from 12.0 to 6.3 percent, and the female status dropout rate declined from 9.9 to 5.4 percent. While the rate for male youth was 2.1 percentage points higher than the rate for female youth in 2000, there was no measurable difference between the rates for males and females in 2015.

High School Drop Out Rates

In 2015 the Hispanic status dropout rate (9.2 percent) remained higher than the Black (6.5 percent) and White (4.6 percent) status dropout rates.

Dept. of Education

Achievement Gap

□ Collegiate attainment:

- Total pop. 33%
- Asian Americans 54% (22)
- Whites 33% (256)
- Blacks 23% (47)
- Latinos 15% (58)
- Native Americans 13-18% (7)

□ Advanced degrees:

- Total pop. 12%
- Asian Americans 21%
- Whites 12-14%
- Blacks 8%
- Latinos 5%

□ <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>

Achievement Gap

□ **Asian Americans** are the most likely group to immediately enroll in college following H.S. at 84%, Hispanics next at 67%, and African Americans not far behind at 63% (Boza 2015).

□ Explanations include: Parent SES, Acting White Theory, Funding, Tracking, Social and Cultural Capital, Hidden Curriculum, and issues in Higher Ed.

Challenges to attainment

□ Parent Socioeconomic Status:

- A major factor in who goes to college is family wealth.
- The chances of collegiate attainment are seven times higher for high income groups.
- Scholars use family income to explain about 1/3 of the test score gap between blacks and whites and nearly all of the differences in college completion rates (Boza, 2016).

Challenges to attainment

- **Parent Socioeconomic Status:**
 - In addition to income, parental education matters.
 - Students whose parents have college degrees are much more likely to also obtain degrees.
 - Research highlights the connection between income and education and why black and Latino children fare less well in school.

Challenges to attainment

□ Acting White Theory:

- The work of two anthropologists
- Originally applied to African American students
- Two components: children don't do well in school because they equate school success with "acting white" and further they have responded to widespread discrimination by developing an identity in opposition to dominant white culture, and thus in opposition to school success.
- When first published this research was well received; however, subsequent studies have shown that it is simply not true.
- Labeling Theory

Challenges to attainment

□ Tracking:

- Although legal segregation is abolished, schools often have internal segregation.
- Non-white children tend to be placed in low-ability tracks, whereas white children are placed in college-bound tracks.
- A new argument has taken over – placement is on the basis of more than parent SES, but rather the internal makeup of the school.
 - If a school is predominantly white, then they are more likely to have advanced placement classes than primarily black and Latino schools.

Challenges to attainment

□ Hidden Curriculum:

- Schools design their curriculum to reflect interests of the dominant group
- Schools operate as sorting mechanisms, not based on merit, but reflective of socioeconomic status.
- Schools are reproducing the social class structure by transforming working-class students into diligent workers who do not question authority, whereas middle to upper class students are taught to be creative and motivated leaders.

Challenges to attainment

□ Hidden Curriculum:

- Additionally, children are not evaluated solely on achievement but also their ability to conform.
- Punishment becomes another mechanism by labeling children on their ability to obey school rules.
- Read page 162 in Boza

Challenges to attainment

□ Social and Cultural Capital:

- Social refers to relationships and networks students have; cultural refers to the resources a student has at his or her disposal.
- Simply put: social is WHO you know, and cultural is WHAT you know.
- Read pages 157 and 158 in Boza

Challenges to attainment

□ School Segregation:

- Primary form of segregation today is residential. This leads to de facto segregation, which is a type of school segregation.
- Recent studies have documented that one in six of the nations black students attends a school that is all black.
- Some of the most residentially segregated cities include: Detroit, Jackson, Birmingham, Baltimore, Memphis, Atlanta, New Orleans, Montgomery, and Savannah.
- Tracking often used as an explanation for internal segregation

Group by Group Challenges

□ Asian Americans and the Model Minority Myth:

- Despite success, the model minority myth continues to stereotype all Asians despite differences in culture and attainment.

□ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Afxr55l1Xok>

□ Symbolic Interactionism:

- Labeling Theory
- Stigma
- “Praising the victim”
- Creates and perpetuates stereotypes
- Failure to produce/outperform could be the very cause of that stress in education
- Issue becomes: If a minority group is labeled as successful, its members no longer will be included in programs to alleviate social ills.

Impromptu Writing #2

- Sociologists often argue inequality is rooted in social structure. In other words, a student's success depending on social class, parental education, tracking and curriculum issues are all reflective of each other. (They are related.) Explain this by describing a student, his/her family socioeconomic status, and how opportunities for educational success may be affected. This student may be Asian American. Remember, microaggressions if using R/E status as a determining factor.

Group by Group Challenges

- Higher Education for African Americans (Schaefer p. 162):
 - Reductions in financial aid
 - Pushing for higher standards without providing remedial courses
 - The need to work over go to school
 - Affirmative Action issues
 - Racial incidents on college campuses

Group by Group Challenges

- **Poverty and Native Americans:**
- Educational attainment (collectively) could be as high as 19%
- According to the CB, the high school graduation rate is 82.7%
- The negative effects of entrenched poverty and the troubled history of Indian education have combined with systemic challenges to result in sharply lower academic and educational outcomes for Native youth, who also have dramatically fewer educational opportunities than their peers (White House).
- Overall, Native students score far lower than other students on national tests; the gap in reading and math test scores between Native and white students is more than half of a standard deviation throughout their educational careers.

Group by Group Challenges

- According to WH, “American Indians and Alaska Natives are over represented in the school discipline system. They are disproportionately suspended and expelled, representing less than one percent of the student population but two percent of out-of-school suspensions and three percent of expulsions.”
- Furthermore, proficiency in higher ed is challenged by ill-equipped students who lack the rigor and advanced classes to allow them to succeed.
- Problems perpetuating educational disparities could be: misrepresentation, irrelevant curriculum, lack of student support, and funding.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hdt9ZBQy7WM>

Landmark Cases

- Segregation first deemed legal in *Plessy v. Ferguson*
- Separate but equal
- Used to justify the existence of separate facilities for white and non-white students
- Schools often were designed to “Americanize” Latino students through instruction
- However, in 1946, a critical forerunner to a future case, *Mendez v. Westminster* ruled segregation of children of Mexican and Latin American descent was unconstitutional.

Landmark Cases

- **Brown v. Board of Education** overturned Plessy v. Ferguson
- 1954
- Four cases in four different towns
- Read page 146 in Boza
- Long process to the road ahead
- Some schools rejected the court ruling and closed their schools so white students would not have to integrate
- Eventually, the SC forced those public schools to be reopened

Conclusion

- With a changing labor market, postsecondary education has become increasingly important.
- Financial stability has become dependent on completing college.
- There is divide in the critique of education as an institution; however, many use structural and cultural explanations for these racial disparities in educational outcomes.

Resources

- [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov)
- U.S. Department of Education
- Race and Racisms, Boza (2015 & 2016)
- Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Schaefer (2014)