

Beyond the Third Way- Reconstructing Class Consciousness through Marxist Educational Theory

Ayhan Aksakallı

Vocational School of Health, Bayburt, Türkiye

Abstract

This article explores how Third Way policies have weakened class consciousness in education and how a Marxist model of education offers a powerful alternative to this weakening. By blending neoliberal approaches with social democracy, the Third Way promotes individualistic and market-oriented reforms in education, which have been found to deepen class inequalities and weaken class consciousness. These policies make the education system an instrument of capitalist ideology and hinder the achievement of social justice. The article argues that the Marxist model of education has the potential to reverse this weakening and rebuild class consciousness in education. This model is built on collective consciousness, the importance of critical pedagogy and the need for democratization in education. Education should be transformed from a system that prioritizes individual achievement into a tool for social justice. The research analyzes in detail the destructive effects of neoliberal education policies on class structures and demonstrates that Marxist education offers an effective solution to these inequalities. As a result, it is emphasized that the education system should be restructured as a tool to strengthen class consciousness and ensure social transformation.

Keywords: *Critical pedagogy, education policies, Marxist education model, neoliberalism, class consciousness.*

Introduction

In the late 1990s, the Third Way emerged as a political approach advocated by leaders such as Tony Blair in the United Kingdom and Bill Clinton in the United States. This approach aimed to balance market efficiency and social justice by synthesizing classical social democratic policies with neoliberal economic strategies (Giddens, 1998). However, in practice, the impact of Third Way policies on education led to deepening class inequalities and the marketization of the education system (Harvey, 2005). According to Harvey, these educational reforms commodified education, reducing students to "products" tailored to the needs of the market, thus shifting the focus from equality to efficiency and competition (Hill, 2006). As Apple (2001) observes, this transformation has fundamentally altered the social function of education, leading to a system in which the public good is overshadowed by market forces. As a result, the Third Way's impact on education, as part of a broader neoliberal transformation eroded the idea of education as a public good, framing it instead as a commodity subject to market dynamics (Ball, 2012; Whitty, 2002). This transformation has changed not only how education is perceived, but also how it functions within society.

In contrast, Marxist educational theory offers a critical perspective on these market-driven policies by emphasizing the role of education in class struggle. Althusser (1971), for example, argues that education functions as an ideological apparatus of the capitalist system, perpetuating class inequalities, but also has the potential to develop class consciousness. This dual role of education is crucial; it supports the continuity of capitalist relations of production while at the same time providing an arena for resistance and the exposure of systemic contradictions (Marx & Engels, 1848). As Marx and Engels (1848) put it, "the dominant ideas of every age have been the ideas of the ruling class of that age," underlining the importance of education in both maintaining and challenging the

status quo. Furthermore, as Rikowski (2022) elaborates, Marxist educational theory does more than critique; it provides a practical alternative by transforming education into a site for developing critical class consciousness and fostering resistance to capitalist exploitation. Rikowski (2022) argues that by rejecting the commodification of education and promoting collective ownership of the means of knowledge production, Marxist education proposes an economic alternative. Instead of producing workers who serve capitalist interests, it aims to create a class-conscious workforce that can collectively challenge capitalist structures and support socialist modes of production. As a result, Marxist educational theory advocates an alternative model that not only promotes equality and justice in education but also resists capitalist exploitation (Giroux, 1983

This article aims to examine the effects of Third Way policies on class consciousness in education and explore how a Marxist model of education can offer an alternative. The central research question guiding this investigation is: "How do Third Way educational policies affect class consciousness, and what alternatives does a Marxist model of education offer in response to these effects?" Accordingly, this article first discusses how Third Way policies have deepened class inequalities in the education system. It then analyzes the negative effects of neoliberal policies and especially the Third Way reforms on class consciousness by turning education into a commodity. Thirdly, it discusses the obstacles that these policies create for the reconstruction of class consciousness and finally analyzes in depth the alternative solutions offered by the Marxist model of education.

Theoretical Framework-Marxist Education Theory

Marxist educational theory is based on the basic tenets of Marxism, which emphasizes the role of education in maintaining or challenging the class

structures inherent in capitalist societies. According to Marxist theory, education serves as an ideological state apparatus that reinforces the dominant ideology of the ruling class and thus preserves the existing social order (Althusser, 1971). Althusser, a leading Marxist theorist, argued that education is one of the key institutions through which the ruling class imposes its ideology on the working class, ensuring the reproduction of labor power and the continuation of capitalist relations of production. Gramsci's concept of hegemony, as discussed by Mayo (2022), further elucidates how this process works by showing how the ruling class secures consent from the masses. Rather than relying purely on coercion, the ruling class shapes cultural institutions, including education, to cultivate acceptance of existing inequalities as 'natural' or 'inevitable.' This hegemonic influence is deeply embedded in the educational system, which subtly instills values, beliefs, and norms that align with capitalist interests. This process is not just a matter of a formal curriculum, but encompasses the entire educational experience that subtly inculcates values, beliefs and norms that support the status quo (Apple, 2004). Moreover, as Avis (2022) points out, contemporary education systems, particularly in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, continue to produce workers tailored to the needs of capitalist production, reinforcing social and economic divisions. Marxist theory critiques this by revealing how education reproduces labor divisions and deepens inequalities under the guise of meritocracy.

In this framework, education is seen as both a site of reproduction and a potential site of resistance. While typically serving to perpetuate capitalist exploitation, it can also be a platform for raising class consciousness and challenging the existing order (Gramsci, 1971). Althusser (1971) elaborates this as follows:

"The school (as well as other state institutions such as the Church and even the family) teaches 'know-how', but it does so in ways that ensure subordination to the dominant ideology or mastery of its 'practice'" (p. 132).

Similarly, Mayo (2022) emphasizes that:

"Education offers a platform where the oppressed can become aware of the contradictions within the capitalist system, making it a key site for fostering resistance and challenging the dominant ideology" (p. 290)

In this sense, education operates as a mechanism of the ruling class to maintain ideological control over the working class, but it also holds the potential to be a site where this hegemony is contested.

Class struggle plays a central role in Marxist educational theory. Education is not a neutral space, but a battlefield where the interests of different classes clash. According to Davies (2003), education often reflects broader social and economic conflicts, acting as a site where inequality is both reproduced and contested. These conflicts are directly linked to economic structures, as the education system mirrors the inequalities inherent in the capitalist economy. The competition for resources, power, and opportunities within education is a reflection of the larger class struggles at play in society. In this sense, class and economic interests are inextricably linked to educational conflicts, as the ruling class seeks to maintain control through the reproduction of dominant ideologies, while the working class strives to challenge this through the development of class consciousness and resistance. Marxist theorists argue that curricula, teaching methods and the institutional structures of education are shaped by the needs of the capitalist system to reproduce a compliant and skilled workforce (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). However, Marxist theory also suggests that education can be used as a tool for emancipation. Education can empower individuals to

recognize and challenge the oppressive structures that dominate their lives by promoting critical consciousness, what Paulo Freire calls education of conscience (Freire, 1970). This perspective transforms the classroom from a passive learning space into an arena of active participation and social critique where students and teachers engage in the process of liberation. As Freire (1970) puts it:

"Education either functions as a tool to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the existing system and to ensure conformity, or it becomes a practice of freedom that enables men and women to deal critically and creatively with reality and to discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p. 34).

The third way and education policies

The Third Way was an approach shaped by Tony Blair in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US at the end of the 20th century as a search for a new direction in politics. Such policy sought to combine classical social democratic ideals with neoliberal economic policies, this approach aimed to create a middle way between unregulated capitalism and state-controlled socialism (Giddens, 1998). The ideological roots of the Third Way can be traced to the perceived crisis of the welfare state and the desire to adapt social democracy to the realities of a globalized economy. The Third Way sought to modernize traditional left-wing policies by promoting market efficiency as well as social justice. However, this synthesis has been heavily criticized from a Marxist perspective for prioritizing market mechanisms over genuine social equality (Hill, 2006). Marx and Engels argued that under capitalism every new political strategy ultimately serves the interests of the ruling class. The Third Way, which focuses on market solutions, is no exception (Marx & Engels, 1848). As Marx and Engels (1848) put it:

“The ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas in every age. The class that holds the dominant material power in society is also its dominant intellectual power, shaping and controlling the prevailing ideology and beliefs” (p. 37).

In education, the policies of the Third Way have manifested themselves through market-oriented reforms that have restructured education systems around the world. These reforms emphasized competition, accountability and performance measures, leading to the commodification of education and exacerbating existing inequalities (Ball, 2012). Under the Third Way, education policies have encouraged the privatization of public schools, the establishment of charter schools, and the introduction of standardized tests to measure educational outcomes. These policies aimed to increase efficiency and innovation in the education sector, but in practice deepened class divisions and reinforced social stratification (Whitty, 2002). As Hill (2007) argues, the marketization of education has brought educational institutions closer to the needs of the capitalist economy and resulted in a system in which success is increasingly determined by one's socioeconomic background. The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities in education under the Third Way reflected broader patterns of inequality in capitalist societies, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and privilege (Hill, 2006).

From a Marxist perspective, the education policies of the Third Way are seen as mechanisms that maintain the capitalist status quo. These policies serve to perpetuate class inequalities by shaping education in a market-oriented framework instead of ensuring social justice. As a result, these policies perpetuate a system that prioritizes economic efficiency over social development and equality of opportunity (Giroux, 2008). For example, the focus on performance measures and accountability has been criticized for narrowing the curriculum and reducing education to a means of producing a

compliant workforce, rather than promoting critical thinking and social transformation (Hill, 2009). According to Marx and Engels, education in capitalist societies functions as an ideological apparatus that perpetuates the ideology of the ruling class. In this process, the education system reproduces social inequalities by maintaining class power balances and supports the continuation of the existing order. The education reforms of the Third Way serve to legitimize and maintain these power structures by embedding neoliberal values in the education system (Althusser, 1971).

A Marxist critique of the Third Way highlights its inability to tackle the foundational issues of educational inequality. Despite its professed aim of balancing market efficiency with social justice, the Third Way's dependence on market-driven solutions serves to perpetuate entrenched social hierarchies and class divisions (Hill, 2006). The emphasis on individual responsibility and competition obscures the structural factors that contribute to inequality and places the blame for educational failure on students and schools rather than wider economic and social systems (Marx & Engels, 1848). This focus on individual success also conceals the reality of intergenerational collective struggle, particularly the efforts of working-class communities to resist exploitation and demand social justice. By framing success as an individual achievement, capitalist ideology masks the long history of collective labor movements that have fought for educational access, workers' rights, and economic equality across generations (Davies, 2003). Marxist theory critiques this by exposing how capitalist societies cultivate individualism to undermine collective consciousness, thus weakening the potential for solidarity and class resistance. The narrative of individual responsibility effectively erases the contributions of past struggles, allowing existing inequalities to persist while presenting success as solely the result of personal effort. Moreover, the Third Way approach to education often marginalizes alternative pedagogical models

that emphasize collective empowerment and social change. Instead, it promotes a narrow market-oriented view of education that prioritizes economic outcomes over human development and social equity (Freire, 1970).

In sum, the Third Way's impact on education is emblematic of its broader ideological commitment to neoliberalism. By prioritizing market mechanisms, it has increased inequalities in education and reinforced the capitalist status quo. A Marxist critique of these policies emphasizes the need for a radical rethinking of education that prioritizes social justice and challenges the hegemony of neoliberalism. This critique is essential for envisioning an education system that truly serves the interests of all, rather than merely reproducing the existing social order.

Marxist education as an alternative to third way politics

In contrast to the market-oriented approach of Third Way policies, Marxist education offers a radically different model that aims to deconstruct the foundations of inequality and capitalist exploitation embedded in the education system. While the Third Way sees education as a means of increasing economic competitiveness, Marxist theory sees education as a means of building class consciousness and social justice (McLaren, 2005). This alternative model aims not only to reform the existing system but to fundamentally transform it. Marxist education opposes the commodification of knowledge and the reduction of education to a tool for labor market preparation. Instead, it emphasizes the role of education in promoting critical thinking, social awareness and collective action against oppression (Giroux, 1983). McLaren (2005) emphasizes the transformative potential of Marxist education, stating:

"A revolutionary pedagogy aims not only to understand the world, but to change it. It equips students with the tools to criticize the dominant ideology and challenge the inequalities of the capitalist system" (p. 45).

Marxist education seeks to rebuild class consciousness by engaging students in critical pedagogy that encourages them to question and resist dominant ideologies that legitimize and perpetuate inequality (Giroux, 2001). This approach contrasts sharply with the Third Way, which often blames individuals for failing to succeed in a competitive market without addressing the structural conditions that create and maintain inequalities. By promoting a curriculum that includes the histories and perspectives of the working class and other marginalized groups, Marxist education aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the struggle for a more just and equitable society (Hill, 2009). This model of education aims not only to empower students as individuals, but also to build a collective movement that can challenge and ultimately overthrow the capitalist system. Giroux (2001) articulates this vision in the following words:

"Critical pedagogy is based on the belief that education should not only be about the transmission of knowledge, but also about the production of a critical consciousness capable of transforming oppressive social conditions" (p. 113).

In sum, Marxist educational theory offers a comprehensive critique of the role of education in capitalist societies and proposes an alternative model that prioritizes the development of class consciousness and social justice. A practical example of this can be seen in the education system of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which integrated education with the realities of working life, placing a strong emphasis on the dignity of manual labor and the contributions of workers to society. In the GDR, education was designed not only to cultivate intellectual development but also to foster respect for physical labor and the

collective good, challenging the capitalist valorization of individual achievement (De la Motte & Green, 2015). This model linked education to real-life skills and societal needs, embedding the value of work and contribution to society into the educational framework. Moreover, education in this context became a mechanism for promoting solidarity and collective empowerment, shaping students to understand their role within a larger socio-economic framework and their responsibility toward the working class. By valuing the contributions of manual laborers and integrating their work into the broader societal narrative, this approach aligns education with the practical necessities of life and promotes a deeper respect for all forms of labor, creating a more equitable society where social and economic divisions are minimized. This model stands in stark contrast to the neoliberal foundations of Third Way policies, instead advocating for an education system that serves as a vehicle for emancipation and social change. As McLaren (2005) succinctly puts it:

“Education should be about liberation, not domestication; it should empower students to become critical thinkers and agents of change, challenging the status quo rather than conforming to the demands of the capitalist system that seeks to exploit them” (p. 52).

Literature review

Studies from a Marxist perspective to understand the effects of Third Way education policies on class inequalities clearly reveal how neoliberal education policies deepen social inequalities and how education is used as an ideological tool in this process. In this context, the analyses of David Hill and other Marxist education theorists critically examine how neoliberal policies have led to the transformation of education from a public right to an individual consumable. Hill (2006, 2007) emphasizes that market-oriented reforms, in particular, have

undermined equality of opportunity in education, prevented the development of class consciousness and made class differences more pronounced.

Cole (2008) also comprehensively analyzes how neoliberal education policies reproduce class inequalities. Cole argues that these policies reduce education to an individualistic measure of success, making it impossible to achieve social justice. According to Cole (2008), the promotion of performance criteria and competitive structures in education largely eliminates equality of opportunity for low-income students, leading to a deepening of class inequalities in education.

Similarly, Rikowski (2001) discusses how education is used as a tool of ideological hegemony in capitalist societies. Rikowski argues that Third Way policies in particular reinforce social inequalities by aligning education with capitalist market demands. According to Rikowski, this commodification of education weakens class consciousness and reduces students' potential to mobilize for social change.

McLaren (2005) and Giroux (1983) both critique neoliberal educational policies through the lens of critical pedagogy, albeit with distinct emphases. McLaren asserts that Third Way reforms have shifted education's focus from promoting social equity to emphasizing individual competition and personal achievement. Giroux, in contrast, highlights the role of education as a catalyst for societal change, advocating that students be empowered to challenge and question social hierarchies through critical pedagogy. From this perspective, neoliberal reforms divert education's purpose away from addressing systemic inequalities, thus reinforcing the status quo.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach, grounded in theoretical and conceptual analysis methods, as outlined by Merriam (2009). The study relies primarily on a critical review of the literature to explore the impact of Third Way educational policies and the potential alternatives provided by Marxist educational theory. Data for this analysis were gathered through an extensive review of scholarly articles, books, and theoretical frameworks relevant to the topic. The analysis was conducted using a theoretical framework, with the findings interpreted in light of existing academic discussions on neoliberalism, Marxism, and education reform (Creswell, 2013).

The study's limitations are primarily due to its theoretical and conceptual nature, as no empirical data were directly collected or analyzed. This reliance on secondary data limits the ability to draw specific conclusions based on practical, real-world applications. Consequently, the findings are largely speculative and rely on theoretical interpretations rather than empirical verification (Maxwell, 2012). Although this approach allows for in-depth theoretical exploration, future research could benefit from incorporating empirical studies to support and extend the theoretical arguments presented here.

Analysis and findings

This section presents a theory-driven analysis of the impact of Third Way education policies on class consciousness, while examining the Marxist model of education as a viable counter-response to these policies. Throughout this study, a critical examination of the inequalities fostered by neoliberal educational reforms and their exacerbating effects on class structures has been undertaken (Cole, 2008). The theoretical framework employed in this analysis draws from Marxist educational theory, offering an alternative perspective to challenge the status quo (Giroux, 1983).

The analysis highlights how the market-oriented reforms of the Third Way, particularly following the post-Cold War period and the rise of neoliberalism in the 1990s, contributed to the commodification of education and weakened the formation of class consciousness (Rikowski, 2001). In contrast, the findings suggest that Marxist educational theory offers a counter-narrative with the potential to reverse these detrimental effects and promote the reconstruction of class consciousness (McLaren, 2005). By utilizing both literature-based analysis and conceptual insights drawn from Marxist theory (Apple, 2006), the study investigates the broader social implications of these educational policies. Rather than merely focusing on the transmission of knowledge, education, as the analysis reveals, plays a crucial role in shaping social consciousness and fostering collective resistance to structural inequalities (Freire, 1970). The findings emphasize that Third Way policies not only perpetuate existing class inequalities but also obstruct efforts toward creating an education system that can serve as a platform for social justice and transformation (Hill, 2007). By employing a theory-led analysis, this research underscores the need to rethink education not merely as a neutral space but as a dynamic site where class struggles are reproduced and where transformative pedagogical practices can emerge. The key themes identified in this study are centered on the relationship between education, class inequality, and the potential for Marxist pedagogy to disrupt neoliberal frameworks and reinvigorate class consciousness.

Deepening class inequalities in education

One of the central insights from this study is the substantial intensification of class inequalities within the education system, driven by the application of Third Way policies. These findings, grounded in theory-led analysis, demonstrate that such policies, with their emphasis on market-oriented reforms, have exacerbated pre-existing social disparities. By shifting education from a

public good to a commodified service, these policies undermine the principle of equal opportunity, further entrenching class divisions. This theoretical framework highlights how education is not neutral but operates as a tool within capitalist structures, contributing to the reproduction of class inequalities. The implementation of competitive funding models, school choice and privatization disproportionately benefited students from affluent backgrounds, while those from lower socio-economic strata found themselves increasingly marginalized (Whitty, 2002). As Bourdieu (1987) emphasizes, the commodification of education has made learning a process directly linked to one's socioeconomic status. This process not only reinforces existing class divisions, but also deepens the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged. Apple (2004) articulates this point more clearly, stating:

“Neoliberal education policies have transformed education from a right into a commodity accessible only to those with economic power, further stratifying educational opportunities” (p. 78).

This process of commodification is not only a matter of resource allocation, but also a reflection of how education is valued in society. As schools compete for funding and students are seen as customers, the intrinsic value of education as a tool for personal and social development is undermined. The emphasis on market principles in education leads to a situation where schools are forced to prioritize test scores and marketability over critical thinking and holistic development (Apple, 2004). As a result, the educational experience is increasingly narrow and focused on easily measurable metrics rather than developing a well-rounded, critically thinking citizenry.

Third Way policies have restructured the educational environment to favor market efficiency over social equity. The introduction of performance-based

assessments and school rankings, while intended to raise standards, in practice created a hierarchy of schools that reflected and perpetuated existing social class structures. This stratification means that wealthier families have access to better educational opportunities, while poorer families are left with underfunded and underperforming schools, thus reinforcing cycles of poverty and social exclusion (Ball, 2012). From a Marxist perspective, this issue is critical, as it explains how such inequalities are embedded within capitalist systems.

Marxism helps to reveal how education serves to maintain class structures and conditions society to accept these disparities as natural, rather than challenging them as products of systemic inequities. The ideological underpinnings of these policies are aligned with the broader neoliberal agenda that prioritizes individual responsibility and competition over collective well-being and social justice. The education system thus becomes a means of reproducing the capitalist order rather than a means of challenging it (Althusser, 1971).

Althusser (1971) explains the role of education in the maintenance of the capitalist order as follows:

“The school as an ideological state apparatus not only reproduces the dominant ideology, but also legitimizes the inequalities inherent in the capitalist system by naturalizing them through the educational process” (p. 133).

This stratification also affects students' social mobility. While proponents of these policies claim that competition drives progress, in reality it reinforces existing privilege. Wealthier families are able to invest more resources in their children's education through private tutoring, extracurricular activities or simply through the ability to select higher performing schools. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle in which the rich get richer and the poor have fewer opportunities to improve their socio-economic status (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In essence, the education system under these policies becomes a

mechanism for maintaining the status quo rather than a tool for social improvement.

Moreover, these policies have effectively depoliticized education, shifting the focus away from its potential as a space for critical engagement and social change. By framing education primarily as a means of increasing economic competitiveness, Third Way policies have narrowed curricula and discouraged pedagogical approaches that emphasize critical thinking and social justice (McLaren, 2005). This narrowing of educational goals not only undermines students' potential to develop a critical consciousness, but also reduces their capacity to question and resist power structures that perpetuate inequality. Social control in schools is often enacted through disciplinary practices that enforce compliance with these norms, further suppressing critical engagement. As Macedo (2023) argues, the hidden curriculum of schools works to "dumb down" students by promoting passive acceptance of authority, rather than encouraging them to challenge the dominant ideology (p. 367). For example, zero-tolerance policies, common in many schools, not only enforce strict behavioral codes but also disproportionately target marginalized students, ensuring their compliance with the rules of a system designed to maintain social stratification. These disciplinary practices reflect broader societal structures, conditioning students to accept their position within the hierarchy rather than questioning the inequalities inherent in the system. The resulting educational environment is one that discourages dissent and critical thinking and instead encourages conformity and acceptance of the status quo as inevitable and unchangeable (Giroux, 1983). Giroux (1983) emphasizes the dangers of such an approach, stating the following:

“Under neoliberalism, education becomes an instrument of social control where students are trained to accept rather than challenge existing power relations, effectively suppressing the potential for social transformation” (p. 112).

The impact of these policies is particularly evident in the widening achievement gap between students from different social classes. Research shows that students from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to succeed in a system that rewards competition and individual achievement, while those from disadvantaged backgrounds struggle to do so (Hill, 2006). However, this disparity is not merely an issue of resources but reflects deeper ideological structures within education. Class ideology is constructed to favor middle and upper-class students by aligning schooling practices, such as standardized tests and literacy acquisition, with their cultural capital, while the experiences of the working class and poor are largely ignored (Anyon, 2011). Standardized testing, for instance, often privileges language and cognitive skills developed within middle-class environments, leaving working-class students at a disadvantage, both in terms of their academic performance and their sense of belonging. As Anyon (2011) argues, "the curriculum and testing practices in schools are structured to reflect the values, language, and experiences of the ruling class, reinforcing the exclusion of working-class students from full participation" (p. 59). By promoting an educational model that rewards individual success over collective empowerment, the system perpetuates the inequalities it claims to mitigate. This marginalization also extends to the sense of place and belonging, as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often feel alienated in schools that prioritize the values of the elite. This inequality is not simply a reflection of individual effort or ability, but is deeply rooted in structural inequalities that Third Way policies have failed to address, or even actively reinforced. The commodification of education has led to a situation where access to quality education is increasingly determined by one's economic status,

further deepening class divisions and limiting social mobility (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Reflecting on this dynamic, Bowles and Gintis (1976) state the following:

“Education in capitalist societies is designed not to eliminate class differences but to maintain and legitimize them, providing the appearance of meritocracy while systematically favoring the privileged” (p. 135).

The erosion of public education under Third Way policies has also had profound effects on social cohesion. As schools become increasingly segregated along socio-economic lines, students from different backgrounds have fewer opportunities to interact and learn from each other. This segregation not only reinforces class patterns but also limits the ability of education to serve as a unifying force in society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The result is an education system that, instead of leveling the playing field, further reinforces social divisions and maintains the status quo. The diminished role of education as a public good has led to a society where inequality is normalized and the potential for collective social progress is suppressed. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), discussing the long-term effects of this segregation, state:

“The reproduction of social structures through education ensures that class inequalities persist across generations as the education system reflects and reinforces the social divisions that exist in wider society” (p. 164).

In sum, the findings under this heading underline the extent to which Third Way policies have deepened class inequalities within the education system. By prioritizing market efficiency and individual competition over social equality, these policies have transformed education into a mechanism that reproduces the capitalist order. The consequences of this change are profound, leading to increased social stratification, reduced social mobility, and the erosion of

education's potential as a space for critical engagement and social transformation. The implications of these findings are significant and highlight the need for a radical rethinking of educational policies that prioritizes social justice and equity over market-driven imperatives.

Commodification of education and weakening of class consciousness

Neoliberal policies, especially those introduced through Third Way reforms, have significantly changed the landscape of education by framing it as a market-oriented commodity. This transformation has undermined education's capacity to foster critical thinking and promote social equality, as access to quality education increasingly depends on financial resources rather than merit or need (Bourdieu, 1986). Instead of serving as a public resource aimed at providing equal opportunities, education is now seen as a private investment- a shift that alienates marginalized groups and exacerbates class divisions. By prioritizing market efficiency over social justice, neoliberalism further deepens systemic inequalities by redefining education as a privilege for those with economic capital.

The consequences of viewing education as a market commodity are profound and multifaceted. With an increasing focus on measurable outputs such as standardized test scores and job market readiness, education's role in fostering well-rounded development and critical inquiry diminishes. This shift not only restricts the breadth of educational experiences, but also marginalizes disciplines that don't directly serve economic imperatives. By reducing education to a transactional exchange, where students are consumers and knowledge is a product, the deeper purpose of education—as a vehicle for intellectual growth and social transformation—is compromised. This commodification leads to the preservation of existing inequalities and reinforces

the educational system's function as a mechanism for sustaining the prevailing social order (Apple, 2004).

This transition toward commodification aligns with the neoliberal agenda, where public goods like education are subjected to market dynamics. Instead of fostering collective well-being and equity, the emphasis shifts toward competition, efficiency, and individual success. This shift, paradoxically, amplifies the very inequalities it claims to solve. As market-driven priorities dominate, the notion of education as a public right diminishes, leaving behind a system that values productivity over inclusivity and undermines the principles of social justice (Apple, 2004).

The commodification of education not only undermines its emancipatory potential, but also depoliticizes the educational process, turning students into consumers and education into a product to be bought and sold. This commodification leads to a situation in which the value of education is measured not by its ability to foster critical thinking or social consciousness, but by its capacity to produce economically viable individuals who can contribute to the capitalist system. As Bowles and Gintis (1976) observe:

“The education system in capitalist societies functions primarily as a mechanism for maintaining existing social relations, ensuring the preservation of the privileges of the ruling class while systematically restricting the opportunities of the working class” (p. 135).

This observation emphasizes the role of education in maintaining class structures by reproducing the conditions necessary for the maintenance of capitalist relations. The commodification of education therefore serves to

reinforce the inequalities inherent in the capitalist system, rather than challenging or disrupting them.

Moreover, the commodification of education significantly intensifies students' alienation from their learning experiences. As policies shift toward performance metrics and standardized testing, education becomes a more transactional process, where students are encouraged to see it not as a journey of intellectual and personal development but as a series of tasks aimed at producing measurable outcomes. Türk (2014) notes:

That alienation in education manifests in several ways, including students feeling disconnected from the content they are learning, as well as from the teachers and institutions that are supposed to support their development (p. 45).

As education becomes more focused on measurable outcomes, such as test scores and rankings, students are less likely to engage with the material in ways that foster creativity, critical thinking, and personal growth. Instead, they are pushed to conform to predefined standards, which limits their agency and reduces their educational experience to a checklist of tasks. This transactional relationship with education fosters a sense of alienation, where students see their schooling as a means to an end—often defined by external expectations—rather than an opportunity for self-discovery and intellectual empowerment (Türk, 2014).

The commodification of education also weakens the development of class consciousness by intensifying educational stratification. As elite institutions increasingly serve affluent students and underfunded schools serve disadvantaged communities, the common educational experiences that once helped bridge social divides have diminished. This growing segregation

entrenches class distinctions and reduces the likelihood of students uniting across socio-economic lines to challenge systemic inequality (Giroux, 2003). The separation of students by socio-economic background limits interaction and shared understanding, making it harder for them to recognize common interests and collectively question the structures that sustain inequality. This fragmentation within education diminishes the sense of solidarity that is crucial for fostering class consciousness and coordinated efforts to address inequality.

The consequences of this fragmentation are particularly evident in the context of neoliberal reforms that promote individualism and competition as primary values in education. As students are encouraged to compete against each other for limited opportunities, the sense of solidarity vital to class consciousness is further undermined. This competitive ethos, reinforced by the increasingly narrow focus of education on standardized tests and measurable outcomes, shifts the emphasis from collective well-being to individual achievement. In such an environment, students are more likely to see their peers as competitors rather than allies, which weakens the potential for collective action and social transformation (Harvey, 2005). As Harvey (2005) points out:

“Neoliberal education policies promote an ideology of individualism that obscures the structural determinants of success and failure, thus weakening class consciousness and reinforcing the status quo” (p. 76).

The long-term consequences of this alienation, particularly within the structure of neoliberal education, can be profound. Middleton (1963) emphasizes that alienation, when fostered through such competitive practices, inhibits the development of collective solidarity, which is crucial for resisting the inequalities that are entrenched in the system:

"Alienation in education, especially when driven by competition, discourages students from seeing themselves as part of a collective struggle, weakening their ability to unite against the systemic forces that perpetuate their marginalization" (p. 975).

In this way, alienation and competition in education contribute not only to the fragmentation of the student body but also to the isolation of marginalized groups, preventing the formation of collective movements that could challenge the entrenched hierarchies of power.

This promotion of individualism is not just a by-product of neoliberal policies, but a deliberate strategy to maintain existing power structures by preventing the formation of collective identities that can challenge the status quo. By focusing on individual achievement, neoliberal education policies distract attention from the systemic inequalities that shape educational outcomes, making it harder for students to recognize and resist these structures.

In conclusion, the commodification of education driven by neoliberal policies has diminished the potential for collective class consciousness by fragmenting educational experiences and emphasizing individual success. These trends reduce education's capacity to foster critical thinking and engagement with broader social issues. From a Marxist perspective, it is essential to resist the marketization of education and restore its function as a catalyst for collective awareness and action against structures that sustain inequality. Re-engaging education with its social and political dimensions is crucial for rebuilding class consciousness and ensuring that education serves the pursuit of social justice rather than reinforcing existing societal divisions.

The obstacles of third way policies to the reconstruction of class consciousness

By blending elements of neoliberalism with traditional social democracy, Third Way policies have created significant obstacles to the reconstruction of class consciousness. By promoting market-oriented reforms in the public sector, including education, these policies have not only deepened existing social inequalities, but also undermined the collective consciousness necessary to challenge these inequalities. The Third Way's emphasis on individual responsibility and personal achievement weakens the potential for class-based solidarity and resistance by diverting attention away from the structural factors that perpetuate inequality (Giddens, 1998). This diversion is particularly insidious because, by adopting the language of empowerment and personal development, it masks how the system is rigged to favor the privileged. The emphasis on individual agency within the Third Way not only depoliticizes economic issues, but also reinforces the idea that systemic change is unnecessary because individuals can only “succeed” within existing structures if they work hard enough.

Marx's critique of ideology is particularly important here. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels argue that the dominant ideas in every age are ruling class ideas designed to maintain the status quo and prevent the proletariat from realizing its true interests. The Third Way's rhetoric of individual responsibility can be seen as a modern iteration of this ideological control, where the focus on personal achievement obscures the systemic nature of class oppression.

The promotion of meritocracy under Third Way policies is a key mechanism through which class consciousness is eroded. Meritocracy suggests that individual success is solely the result of personal effort and talent, ignoring the socio-economic structures that create unequal starting points for individuals.

This narrative is closely aligned with neoliberal ideals that prioritize competition and self-reliance over collective action and social support. As a result, individuals who succeed within this framework are more likely to internalize their success as evidence of their own merit, while those who struggle are seen as lacking effort or ability (Brown, 2003). This perspective not only obscures the realities of class oppression, but also promotes division within the working class as individuals are pitted against each other in a zero-sum game of success. The myth of meritocracy thus serves as a powerful tool in maintaining the capitalist order, as it naturalizes inequality and discourages collective action by framing it as unnecessary and even counterproductive.

In the context of Marxist theory, meritocracy can be understood as an ideological tool that perpetuates false consciousness among the proletariat. Marx's concept of false consciousness refers to the ways in which the working class is misled into perceiving its conditions as natural or just, rather than as a product of exploitation. Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* adds to this by arguing that traditional education systems often reinforce this false consciousness, keeping the oppressed in a passive state where they accept the existing social order rather than challenging it. Freire promotes *conscientização*—critical consciousness—as a way to dismantle false consciousness, empowering individuals to understand and resist the structures of oppression. The meritocracy narrative feeds this false consciousness by suggesting that the inequalities inherent in capitalism are the result of individual differences in ability rather than systemic exploitation. By shifting the focus from structural inequalities to individual achievements, meritocracy conceals the true nature of exploitation within capitalist systems. Marx (1867) criticizes this kind of ideological mystification in *Capital*, writing: “The veil of the market conceals the underlying exploitation of the system by presenting all capitalist relations as relations between commodities.” Griffiths (2022) further

problematizes meritocracy as part of a global system that sustains economic disparity, arguing that it legitimizes these inequalities by presenting them as the result of personal merit, thus preventing collective resistance against capitalist exploitation.

The meritocratic discourse becomes further problematic with the Third Way's adoption of privatization and market-driven principles in the public sector. Viewing essential services such as education and healthcare as commodities to be bought and sold shifts the narrative from social mobility being a collective right to an individual responsibility. In particular, the privatization of education has resulted in a stratified system, where access to quality schooling is increasingly tied to economic status. This system not only worsens existing inequalities but also undermines the shared experiences necessary for fostering class consciousness (Hill, 2001). As education becomes commodified, it moves away from its potential to foster social cohesion, transforming instead into a mechanism that sustains class distinctions. Furthermore, this move towards privatization reframes access to education as a market transaction, reducing its potential to challenge capitalist exploitation and limiting its role as a tool for collective resistance.

Marx's analysis of the commodification of labor in *Capital* provides a critical lens for understanding the commodification of public services. Marx argued that in capitalist societies, labor itself becomes a commodity to be bought and sold, stripping workers of their autonomy and reducing them to mere means of production. Similarly, the commodification of education under Third Way policies turns a public good into a private commodity, depriving it of its potential to empower individuals and communities. Marx (1867) states:

“The more wealth the laborer produces, the greater the power and scope of his production, the poorer he becomes. The laborer becomes a commodity, and the more commodities he creates, the cheaper a commodity he becomes” (p.54).

This observation underscores the dehumanizing effects of commodification, whether of labor or education. Moreover, the Third Way's focus on individualism and personal responsibility has a depoliticizing effect on the working class. By framing social issues as matters of personal choice rather than structural inequality, these policies discourage collective action and resistance. By placing the responsibility for social problems on individuals, the rhetoric of personal responsibility exempts the state and capitalist structures from responsibility for the conditions that perpetuate inequality. This depoliticization is further reinforced by media and political discourse that often emphasizes individual success stories in the face of adversity, while ignoring the systemic barriers that prevent others from achieving similar outcomes (Giroux, 2008). The focus on individual success stories serves as a form of ideological control, reinforcing the belief that systemic change is unnecessary because individuals can overcome challenges through sheer determination. However, counter-narratives, such as the testimonies of marginalized individuals, serve as powerful critiques of this ideology. These testimonies reveal the structural barriers that individuals face, barriers that cannot be overcome simply through personal resolve. By foregrounding the lived experiences of those on the periphery, these counter-narratives expose the limitations of the meritocratic ideal and highlight the necessity of systemic change.

Freire (1970) similarly argued that the voices of the oppressed are essential for challenging dominant ideologies, as these testimonies provide the necessary perspective to understand how deeply ingrained inequality is within the system,

and why systemic reform, not just individual success, is essential for true social justice.

By integrating the experiences of marginalized individuals, education can foster critical consciousness and collective action, creating a platform where counter-narratives challenge the dominant discourse of individual achievement. These testimonies emphasize that systemic change, rather than isolated success stories, is necessary to address the deeply rooted inequalities inherent in capitalist societies.

Marx's concept of alienation is useful for understanding the depoliticizing effects of Third Way policies. In his 1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, Marx describes how workers are alienated not only from the products of their labor, but also from their own potential as creative beings. Under capitalism, this alienation extends to all aspects of life, including education. When education is framed as a personal commodity rather than a collective right, students are alienated from the social purpose of education and instead encouraged to see education as a means to individual advancement. Marx (1844) wrote:

“The more wealth the worker produces, the greater the power and scope of his production, the poorer he becomes. The worker becomes a commodity, and the more commodities he creates, the cheaper a commodity he becomes” (p. 30).

This alienation can be extended to the context of education, where the commodification of education leads to a form of intellectual alienation, alienating students from the transformative potential of collective education.

The weakening of class consciousness under Third Way policies is also linked to the erosion of traditional working class institutions such as trade unions and community organizations. These institutions have historically played a crucial role in promoting class solidarity and providing a collective voice for the working class. However, the neoliberal turn of the Third Way has led to the weakening of these institutions through deregulation, privatization and the promotion of flexible labor markets. As a result, the working class has fragmented, individuals have become increasingly isolated from each other, and their ability to organize collectively has declined (Harvey, 2007). The decline of these institutions has not only reduced the power of the working class, but has also contributed to the erosion of class consciousness. This erosion has been exacerbated by the rise of precarious work, which destabilizes traditional employment relations and makes collective organizing more difficult.

Marx's analysis of the relationship between the working class and capitalist structures in the Communist Manifesto remains valid in this context. Marx and Engels argued that the strength of the working class lies in its ability to organize collectively against the capitalist system. However, the fragmentation of the working class under neoliberalism, exacerbated by Third Way policies, has weakened this potential. "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles," wrote Marx and Engels (1848, p. 21). Yet, in the neoliberal era, we see not only a weakening of class consciousness but also a diversification of struggles against various forms of exploitation. Social movements such as the fight for racial equality, environmental justice, and feminist struggles also represent important forms of resistance, showing that while class-based organizing may have fragmented, other forms of collective action continue to challenge the capitalist system. Moreover, recent labor movements like the rise of worker cooperatives and global campaigns for fair

wages exemplify that the historical struggle against capitalist exploitation is far from over, but now manifests in both traditional and non-traditional forms.

Alternatives offered by the Marxist education model

The Marxist model of education offers a radical alternative to the neoliberal and Third Way approaches that have dominated education policy in recent years. While neoliberalism emphasizes competition, individualism and market-oriented reforms, the Marxist perspective advocates for an education system that promotes collective consciousness, critical thinking and social justice. This model aims to dismantle capitalist structures that perpetuate inequality and instead create an educational environment where students are empowered to challenge the status quo and work towards a more just society (Hill, 2009). The emphasis on collective consciousness is crucial as it challenges the individualistic values inherent in capitalist ideologies. By fostering a sense of common struggle and mutual aid, the Marxist model of education encourages students to see their personal achievements as intertwined with the well-being of their peers rather than as a zero-sum competition.

This model also rejects the commodification of education, a hallmark of neoliberalism. Rather than seeing education as a commodity that can be bought and sold, the Marxist approach sees education as a public good that should be accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. This perspective is based on the Marxist belief that education, like other public goods, should not be commodified but should serve the interests of the working class. Marx saw education as a fundamental tool for class struggle, through which the proletariat could develop the critical consciousness necessary to challenge capitalist exploitation. The Marxist model of education decommodification aims to remove the barriers that prevent marginalized communities from accessing educational opportunities, thereby promoting greater social equity and

inclusion. By removing education from the market sphere, this approach directly challenges the capitalist system's tendency to reproduce class inequalities, ensuring that education becomes a tool of empowerment rather than a means of maintaining the status quo.

At the core of the Marxist educational framework lies the principle that education should not merely reinforce the interests of the ruling class by maintaining existing social hierarchies, but rather serve as a catalyst for societal change. Marx and Engels, in the *Communist Manifesto*, argue that under capitalism, education is often co-opted as a mechanism for ideological indoctrination, instilling values that uphold the capitalist system. In contrast, the Marxist model envisions an educational structure designed to cultivate a critical awareness of societal inequalities and empower students to challenge those systems of oppression (Marx & Engels, 1848). This model emphasizes the importance of fostering not just an awareness of personal subjugation, but also a collective consciousness that recognizes the shared power to resist and dismantle the institutions sustaining inequality. By nurturing this sense of agency, education becomes a means for students to actively engage with the world as participants in shaping social transformation, rather than as passive receivers of established ideologies.

In addition to promoting revolutionary consciousness, the Marxist model of education emphasizes the importance of critical literacy. Critical literacy goes beyond the ability to read and write; it involves the capacity to analyze and question the power structures that shape society. This educational approach encourages students to engage critically with texts and media, understanding how language can be used to perpetuate inequality and oppression. By developing critical literacy skills, students are better equipped to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for social justice. This aspect of the Marxist

model is particularly important in the digital age, where misinformation and propaganda can easily spread. Educating students as critical consumers of information is essential for maintaining a healthy democracy and resisting authoritarianism.

An important component of the Marxist model of education is the emphasis on critical pedagogy as articulated by scholars such as Paulo Freire. Freire's concept of “consciousness-raising” or the development of critical consciousness is closely aligned with Marxist educational principles. Consciousness-raising involves not only learning about the world, but understanding it in such a way as to act to change it. Freire argues that traditional education often operates as a “banking model” in which students are passive recipients of knowledge. In contrast, a Marxist approach to education encourages active participation, dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge, empowering students to question and challenge oppressive systems (Freire, 1970). This approach transforms education into a practice of freedom in which students not only adapt to the world as it is, but are empowered to envision and create a more just society.

In the Marxist model of education, the practice of critical pedagogy is not limited to the classroom; it extends to the wider society. Education is seen as a collaborative process involving not only students and teachers but also families and communities. This holistic approach ensures that education is relevant to students' lived experiences and addresses the social and economic conditions that shape their lives. By engaging with the community, educators can help students relate what they learn to real-world problems and develop a sense of agency and responsibility. This connection between education and society is essential for building a sustainable movement for social change as it grounds abstract theories in the concrete struggles of everyday life.

In addition to developing critical consciousness, the Marxist model of education emphasizes the importance of collective learning experiences. In contrast to the competitive, individualistic approaches favored by neoliberal policies, Marxist education advocates collaborative learning environments where students work together to understand and address social issues. This collective approach not only improves learning outcomes, but also builds the solidarity necessary for collective action. Education becomes a communal activity where the classroom is seen as a microcosm of the larger society and students learn the value of cooperation, mutual aid and common struggle (Apple, 2013). By breaking down barriers to individualism, this model aims to foster the sense of common purpose and collective responsibility necessary to build a more just and equitable society.

In the Marxist model, collective learning also involves the development of a shared historical consciousness. Students are encouraged to study the history of social movements and struggles for justice, understanding how past generations resisted oppression and fought for change. This historical perspective helps students see themselves as part of a broader continuum of struggle and relates their own efforts to those of others who have come before them. By learning about the successes and failures of past movements, students can develop more effective strategies for resistance today. Focusing on historical consciousness can also challenge dominant narratives that often erase or marginalize the contributions of oppressed groups, allowing students to develop a more accurate and inclusive understanding of history.

Moreover, the Marxist model of education emphasizes the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, requiring the integration of practical experience with theoretical learning. Marx stated that “philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the main thing is to change it” (Marx,

1845). This principle is central to the Marxist approach to education, where learning is not an abstract exercise but is directly connected to the lived experience of students and the wider struggles of the working class. Through this integration of theory and practice, students are encouraged to apply what they learn to real-world contexts, deepening their understanding of social dynamics and their capacity for transformative action. The emphasis on practice in the Marxist model ensures that education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but about using that knowledge to create meaningful change in the world.

The importance of praxis in Marxist education cannot be overstated. It ensures that students are not detached from the realities of the world around them. By engaging with real world problems, students develop a deeper understanding of the systemic nature of oppression and inequality. This engagement helps to break down the barriers between academic knowledge and lived experience, making education relevant and responsive to the needs of society. Moreover, praxis fosters a sense of empowerment among students as they see the concrete impact of their actions and begin to understand their potential to drive social change. This process of praxis is central to the development of a revolutionary consciousness as it encourages students to move beyond abstract theorizing and take concrete steps towards social transformation.

This perspective goes beyond theoretical understanding and emphasizes the importance of an educational system that encourages and equips students for meaningful social change.

Another critical aspect of the Marxist model of education is its focus on democratizing the educational process. This includes not only making education accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status, but also giving students

and educators a voice in shaping the curriculum and learning environment. The hierarchical structures that dominate traditional educational institutions are seen as reflections of broader capitalist hierarchies, and a Marxist approach aims to dismantle these structures in favor of a more participatory and egalitarian model of education (McLaren, 2005). This democratization is essential to create an education system that truly serves the needs of the people rather than the interests of capital.

In the Marxist model, the democratization of education also includes a commitment to equity in education. This means addressing the systemic barriers that prevent marginalized students from fully participating in the educational process. These barriers include not only economic barriers, but also cultural and linguistic biases that can alienate students from minority backgrounds. The Marxist model aims to empower all students to reach their full potential by creating an inclusive educational environment that values diversity and promotes equity. This commitment to equality is central to the Marxist vision of a just society where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the collective good.

Conclusion and discussion

This study critically examined the impact of Third Way policies on class consciousness in education and explored the alternatives offered by the Marxist educational model. The findings underscore the detrimental effects of neoliberal and Third Way approaches on the collective consciousness of the working class, highlighting how these policies perpetuate social inequalities and weaken the potential for resistance against capitalist structures (Hill, 2009). By commodifying education and promoting individualism, these policies have not only fragmented the working class but also undermined the foundations of solidarity and collective action necessary for social change (Giroux, 2008).

The analysis illustrates that the Marxist educational model, centered on collective learning, critical consciousness, and social justice, offers a robust alternative to prevailing dominant ideologies (Freire, 1970). This study adds depth to the broader discourse on education and social equity, highlighting how educational policies either reinforce or challenge entrenched power dynamics (Apple, 2013). From a Marxist perspective, education is far from neutral; it is a politically charged process shaped by the interests and ideologies of the ruling class (Marx & Engels, 1848). While Third Way policies emphasize meritocracy and individual responsibility, masking the structural inequalities that perpetuate capitalism, the Marxist model seeks to empower students to critically engage with and resist these systemic injustices (Brown, 2003). In contrast to the depoliticized and market-driven frameworks of neoliberal education, the Marxist approach frames education as a means of fostering collective resistance and building a more equitable society.

This study reaffirms the critical role that education plays in either maintaining or dismantling social hierarchies and argues for the adoption of a Marxist framework to achieve genuine educational equality and social transformation. In light of these findings, several recommendations can be made for future research. First, empirical research should investigate how the Marxist educational model can be tested in practice. Comparative studies examining the long-term effects of different educational approaches on various socio-economic groups would provide valuable insights (Hill, 2009). For example, the educational models of social movements like the MST (Landless Workers' Movement) in Brazil could be a fertile ground for testing this approach (Freire, 1970).

Second, further research could conduct comparative studies on how Third Way policies are implemented in different countries and how these policies deepen

class inequalities. Understanding the global impact of these policies in countries such as Brazil, Pakistan, and Nigeria would help to contextualize these theories on a broader scale (Bruns, Evans, & Luque, 2012; Rahman & Shaw, 2015).

Additionally, the integration of theory and practice in education should be emphasized. Students should not only learn about social justice theoretically but also have opportunities to apply what they learn in real-world contexts. Partnerships with community organizations, internships focused on social justice, or participatory action research projects could allow students to engage directly with issues affecting their communities. This would ensure that theoretical knowledge gains practical significance and supports the development of critical consciousness (Giroux, 2008).

In conclusion, the findings of this research highlight the urgent need to redesign education through a Marxist lens. The Marxist educational model provides a robust framework for addressing the shortcomings of neoliberal and Third Way policies, offering a path that prioritizes social justice, collective action, and the development of class consciousness (Apple, 2013). By adopting this model, we can begin to rebuild an education system that not only prepares students for the workforce but also empowers them to challenge the structures of power and inequality that shape our society (Hill, 2009). This is not only an educational imperative but also a moral one, as the future of our society depends on the ability of the next generation to imagine and work towards a more just and equitable world (Freire, 1970).

References

- Althusser, L. (1971): *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. In L. Althusser (Ed.), *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (pp. 85-126). Monthly Review Press.
- Anyon, J. (2011): *Marx and education*. Routledge
- Apple, M. W. (2001): *Educating the "Right" Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality*. Routledge.

- Apple, M. W. (2004): *Ideology and Curriculum* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (2013): *Can Education Change Society?* Routledge.
- Avis, J. (2022): Fourth Industrial Revolution, post-capitalism, wage labor, and vocational education. In R. P. George & M. Bray (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Marxism and Education* (pp. 8-28). Brill.
- Ball, S. J. (2012): *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neo-Liberal Imaginary*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986): *The Forms of Capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977): *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Sage.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976): *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. Basic Books.
- Brown, P. (2003): The Meritocracy Myth: Education and the Reproduction of Social Inequality. *Education and Social Mobility*, 52(3), 50-70.
- Cole, M. (2008): *Marxism and Educational Theory: Origins and Issues*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Davies, L. (2003): *Education and conflict: Complexity and chaos*. Routledge.
- De la Motte, B., & Green, J. (2015): *Stasi state or socialist paradise? The German Democratic Republic and what became of it*. Artery Publications.
- Freire, P. (1970): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.
- Giddens, A. (1998): *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Polity Press.
- Giroux, H. A. (1983): *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Giroux, H. A. (2001): *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Giroux, H. A. (2003): *The Abandoned Generation: Democracy Beyond the Culture of Fear*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Giroux, H. A. (2008): *Against the Terror of Neoliberalism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Gramsci, A. (1971): *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers.
- Griffiths, T. G. (2022): World-Systems Critical Education. *Encyclopaedia of Marxism and Education*, 661-672.
- Harvey, D. (2005): *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2007): Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 610(1), 22-44.
- Hill, D. (2001): *Global Neoliberalism and Education: The Destruction of Public Education in England and Wales*. In *Critical Education for Economic and Social Justice* (pp. 85-100). Routledge.
- Hill, D. (2006): *Class, Capital, and Education in This Neoliberal and Neoconservative Period*. In D. Hill (Ed.), *Critical Education for Economic and Social Justice* (pp. 9-35). Routledge.

- Hill, D. (2007): Critical Teacher Education, New Labour, and the Global Project of Neoliberal Capital. *Policy Futures in Education*, 5(2), 204-225.
- Hill, D. (2009): *Social Class and Education*. In M. W. Apple, S. J. Ball, & L. A. Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 145-153). Routledge.
- Hill, D., Cole, M., & Rikowski, G. (2009): *Marxism Against Postmodernism in Educational Theory*. Lexington Books.
- Macedo, D. (2023): *Literacy for stupidification: The pedagogy of big lies*. In *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (pp. 364-384). Routledge.
- Maisuria, A. (2022): *Neo-liberalism and revolution*. In R. P. George & M. Bray (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Marxism and Education* (pp. 483-500). Brill
- Marx, K. (1844): *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Progress Publishers
- Marx, K. (1845): *Theses on Feuerbach*. In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (pp. 121-123). Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K. (1867): *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume I. Penguin Classics.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1846): *The German Ideology*. Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1848): *The Communist Manifesto*. International Publishers.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012): *A Realist Approach for Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.
- Mayo, P. (2022): *Gramsci, Antonio (1891-1937): Culture and education*. In R. P. George & M. Bray (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Marxism and Education* (pp. 286-301). Brill.
- McLaren, P. (2005): *Capitalists and Conquerors: A Critical Pedagogy Against Empire*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009): *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Middleton, R. (1963): Alienation, race, and education. *American Sociological Review*, 28(6), 973-977.
- Rikowski, G. (2001): *The Battle in Seattle: Its Significance for Education*. In *Cultural Logic* (pp. 49-73).
- Rikowski, G. (2022): *Marxism and education*. In R. P. George & M. Bray (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Marxism and education* (pp. 417-434). Springer.
- Türk, F. (2014): Alienation in education. *International Journal of Educational Policies*, 8(1), 41-58.
- Whitty, G. (2002): *Making Sense of Education Policy: Studies in the Sociology and Politics of Education*. Paul Chapman Publishing.

Author Details

Ayhan Aksakalli is a lecturer at Bayburt University. His research interests include philosophy of education, philosophy of science, quantum philosophy, polytechnic education and Marxist theory.

Correspondence Details

ayhanaksakalli25@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6281-5828>