

What Is School For

Sociology

The competing answers, and what evidence would distinguish them.

Integrative view

- Transmits shared values, Durkheim
- Sorts by ability, Davis and Moore
- Bridge from family to wider society
- Builds skills the economy needs
- Meritocratic if the contest is fair

Reproductive view

- Bowles and Gintis: correspondence to work
- Althusser: an ideological state apparatus
- Bourdieu: rewards inherited culture
- Willis: lads resist, and reproduce anyway
- Credentials screen more than they train

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Both predict schools sort people. They differ on whether the sorting tracks ability or origin, which is testable.

Educational reference. The correspondence thesis is widely criticised as too neat about the fit between school and workplace.