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The Influence of Conservative Ideology on Taiwan's Education System

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Abstract

This paper explores the close relationship between education and ideology, with a particular focus on the influence of conservatism on Taiwan's education system. Education is seen as a key for shaping ideology and values in society, while also being influenced by social, political, and cultural contexts. In Taiwan, the developmental trajectory of education has been influenced by multiple factors, from the period of Japanese colonization to the takeover by the Nationalist government, and more recently, the transition to democracy. Each stage has shaped the characteristics and direction of education. Conservatism plays a significant role in Taiwan's education system, affecting curriculum design, teaching methods, and textbook content. However, as society evolves and ideologies change, education continues to adjust and develop to meet new needs and challenges. Therefore, the paper calls for ongoing assessment and reflection on educational policies and practices to ensure education continues to drive social progress and preserve culture.

Keywords: Ideology, Conservatism, Conservative Ideology, Taiwan's Education.

Introduction

The Concept of Ideology and Its Importance in Education

The concept of ideology, as discussed by Eccleshall et al. (1984) in their article "The concept of ideology", is a complex, dynamic and contested concept that has evolved over the centuries. Initially controversial in nature and a source of analytical problems for philosophers and social scientists, the term was coined during the French Revolution by Antoine Destutt de Tracy. Ideology was conceived as a science of ideas - an encyclopedic and authoritative form of knowledge aiming at purifying the prejudices and superstitions of the ancien régime. In this early sense, ideology was seen as a positive force, providing the foundation for enlightened policies and contributing to the civilization of post-revolutionary France. Ideology remains a critical and evolving concept in the realms of philosophy and social science.

According to Apple (1985), the school is viewed as an institution that contains collective traditions and intentions with humanity, recognizing the products of social and economic ideologies. Broadly, ideology refers to a set of beliefs, values, and ideals that shape societal structures and institutions (Mansoor et al., 2025). In the context of education, ideology plays a crucial role in determining curriculum, teaching pedagogy, and overall educational goals, serving as a guiding framework that influences the dissemination and reception of knowledge (Eccleshall, 1984). In essence, ideology acts as a guiding force that informs decisions related to curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and overarching educational objectives. It provides

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a lens through which individuals make sense of the world, fostering a shared understanding of societal norms and values within the educational context. This shared understanding, deeply rooted in ideology, not only influences the transmission of knowledge but also shapes the very fabric of socialization and cultural identity within educational institutions.

As Durkheim observed, ideology plays an important role in education. The state's involvement in this sector is primarily concerned with articulating and disseminating fundamental values that underpin social life. It is also responsible for ensuring that all children receive instruction in these values and that they are instilled with a sense of respect for the principles espoused (Durkheim, 2006). Education becomes a means of transmitting the dominant ideologies that shape cultural and moral frameworks. Through the content of textbooks and curriculum design, the state exerts significant influence on shaping collective beliefs and values. The ideology inherent in educational systems also manifests in teaching methods, student evaluations, and classroom dynamics, reflecting societal views on success, morality, and achievement. For example, the ways in which teachers assess students and the criteria they use for measuring success often align with prevailing cultural and institutional values.

Curriculum design, a fundamental aspect of education, is intricately tied to ideological perspectives. Ideology guides the selection of themes, topics, and historical narratives, influencing how different subjects are presented and interpreted. For instance, a nationalist ideology may emphasize a specific country's historical achievements, fostering a sense of national pride, while a liberal ideology may prioritize inclusivity, diversity, and critical thinking, aiming to cultivate a more pluralistic worldview among students.

Moreover, ideology extends its reach into the realm of values and morality within education. The moral compass of educational systems, including considerations for honesty, responsibility, justice, and civic duties, is shaped by the prevailing ideological perspective. This ensures that the younger generation not only acquires knowledge but also imbibes the ethical principles that align with the broader societal ethos.

Teaching methods and pedagogical approaches are also deeply influenced by ideological considerations. The implicit ideologies present in teacher-student interactions and classroom practices convey to students what constitutes good performance, acceptable behavior, and desirable traits. Different ideologies favor distinct instructional techniques, with progressive ideologies encouraging student-centered learning and critical thinking, while conservative ideologies may emphasize discipline and traditional teacher-centered methods. This ideological influence on pedagogy directly impacts how students engage with and absorb information.

Theoretical and practical issues in education are not solely technical but inherently ethical and political, involving individuals' choices and preferences for the common good (Apple, 2004). Concerns about power, class, race, and gender inequalities operate through schools, controlling teachers and students, as well as shaping the content and organization of the curriculum. It becomes essential to politicize these issues further, rooted in the definitions of democratic education by Dewey and Counts, past moments of democratic curriculum reforms, and the emphasis on teaching "knowledge about ourselves as a whole" within school (Apple, 2004).

Apple (1985) proposed a relational perspective in education, emphasizing the conscious alignment of curriculum with the common good. This perspective suggests that every step in social programs should be measured based on contributions to equality, sharing, personal dignity, safety, freedom, and care. Because Education serves as a powerful tool for socialization,

contributing to the formation of cultural identity and collective consciousness. Ideological perspectives influence how the education system incorporates cultural heritage, language, and traditions into the learning process, fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

Ideology plays a crucial role in discussions about social justice and educational equity. Ideological frameworks shape policies related to educational opportunities, fund allocation, and the implementation of affirmative action measures to address historical inequalities. It serves as a reminder for educators to adhere to principles when updating and critiquing curriculum assertions, school-related planning, and policies.

In conclusion, ideology serves as a guiding force in shaping the nature and purpose of education. It provides a philosophical foundation for the establishment of educational policies, practices, and values, making it a fundamental aspect of the broader societal structure. Understanding the role of ideology in education is crucial for critically assessing and improving the education system to meet the diverse and evolving needs of society.

The Principle of Conservative Ideology

Eccleshall (1977) points out that conservatism is a seemingly simple ideology: simple because its meaning appears evident from everyday usage; deceptive because common usage obscures the unique characteristics of conservatism as an ideology. The adjective "conservative" has, since the fourteenth century, conveyed a tendency to preserve or maintain the status quo. However, it was only in the nineteenth century that this term became associated with a set of political principles in Europe and the United States. Conservatism is a belief system that emerged at a specific historical moment, beginning in the fourteenth century, articulated by certain social groups. Conservatives typically emphasize social order, authority, traditional values, and economic freedom. This ideology opposes rapid social changes and tends towards gradual reforms to protect and consolidate existing social structures. Therefore, it is inherently ideological, similar to liberalism or socialism.

In conservatism, there are two main factions: Libertarian Conservatism and Organic Conservatism. They are illustrated as follows:

Libertarian Conservatism:

In the late nineteenth century, economic liberalism was prominent in conservatism, aiming to uphold a free-market economy. Enoch Powell was a recent advocate of free-market capitalism. Even before the emergence of modern conservatism, Powell revealed that conservatives might both respect national heritage and harbor a radical desire to reduce government economic intervention. They reject pragmatism, professing their convictions with a dogmatic belligerence once reserved for political fringes. Instead of moderation, they offer an extreme alternative to the mixed economy and social welfare. They emphasize minimizing government intervention, believing that the market and individual freedom can effectively address societal issues. This faction views society as a collection of independent individuals, relying on bourgeois or classical liberal rhetoric of free enterprise, self-help, and limited government. Williams (1977) emphasizes that education is distinct from the production of goods such as cards or bread; it should be seen as a process of societal knowledge selection and organization within a specific time frame. This process involves conscious and unconscious societal and ideological choices. The selection and organization of the curriculum reflect the values of society and ideology. Academic research should focus on how these principles affect the curriculum, the institutional and interactive environments of schools, and the overall systemic structure. The emphasis is on

the idea that knowledge is not neutral but rather linked to societal interests. This also implies that research on potential curriculum and implicit teaching becomes more crucial. Williams (1977) criticizes liberalism, arguing that its perspective overly emphasizes meritocracy and individual achievement, highlighting elite rule while overlooking issues of societal reproduction and inequality. He points out that liberalism views education as a form of social improvement but neglects the interconnections between education and politics, economics, and ethics.

Organic Conservatism:

Emphasizing the organic wholeness of society, Organic Conservatism highlights shared responsibility and traditional social hierarchies (Eccleshall, 1984). They view society as an interconnected whole, where the wealthy and powerful have a responsibility for the common welfare. Organic Conservatism takes a more positive stance on the role of government, supporting social reforms and welfare programs to address social inequality (Eccleshall, 1984). Compared to their liberal counterparts, Organic Conservatism is more restrained in praising *laissez-faire*. They are more inclined to support social reform projects, especially those aimed at improving poverty. Society is seen as a cohesive entity connected by a network of rights and obligations, where the rich and powerful bear overall responsibility for the common welfare. In this organic concept, some individuals in the conservative tradition have sought to solve the problems of market capitalism through political-economic management.

Conservative ideology is rooted in a commitment to tradition, order, and authority, insisting that maintaining social stability requires organized social systems and power structures (Williams, 1977). In Taiwan's education system, conservative principles have left an indelible mark, influencing aspects ranging from admission procedures and curriculum design to pedagogy and assessment. While these principles contribute to cultural preservation and order, ongoing discussions and evaluations are crucial to ensuring that education remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to the constantly changing needs of society.

Williams (1977) argues that conservative ideologies persist in education through textbooks, which, from a dominant hegemonic position, shape official ideologies. Textbooks, as authoritative sources, define the meaning and scope of social or cultural relations. They cleverly integrate events and legitimize them, presenting them as "natural," "inevitable," or "self-evident" within a broader structural worldview. However, it must be recognized that these connections often involve simplification, transformation, and mystification (Hall, 1980:136-138). The representation of modern conservatism suggests that we should abandon everyday language in the quest for the unique characteristics of ideology (Eccleshall, 1977). Ideological analysis considers textbooks as a mechanism of "social control," emphasizing how textbooks generate a certain "selective tradition," including biases and stereotypes related to gender, ethnicity, politics, etc. (Apple, 1993; Johnsen, 1993/2001). As social texts, textbooks carry specific values and positions, transmitting their ideology through the dominant hegemonic structure. The public perceives textbooks as authoritative, accurate, and necessary, providing a framework conducive to understanding educational phenomena. The content of textbooks offers each generation of students an officially sanctioned, authoritative version. It reflects the values, historical perspectives, cultural identities, etc., of a particular society, and these ideas enter students' minds through textbooks, influencing their value judgments and social identity.

Taiwan's Education System Influenced by Conservative Ideology

Educational historians often delve into the context of historical development to better understand past educational systems. By examining historical events and their unfolding contexts, they attempt to grasp the workings, actual conditions, and issues of contemporary educational systems, and even try to predict future trends (Cook & LaFleur, 1975; Wang, 2000). As noted by Edward H. Carr, a prominent British historian, "History is not merely a record of humanity's significant achievements; it not only chronicles past events in chronological order but also integrates the relationships between people, time, events, places, and objects, thereby allowing the connection between the past and the present to endure" (Carr, 1961). Therefore, historical research in the social sciences should focus not only on the ongoing interaction between the researcher and historical facts but also on the self-reflective process, which enables the formulation of general principles or laws.

The education system in Taiwan has undergone significant transformations, especially in its relationship with conservative ideology. Between 1895 and 1945 during the Japanese colonial period, Taiwan embraced the Japanese education system, laying the foundation for an initial framework of education. By the time the Nationalists (KMT) took over Taiwan in 1945, the inhabitants in Taiwan, having been subjected to Japanese rule for 50 years, had more or less adopted Japanese culture (Tu, 2007). A campaign to remove any trace of the challenge of Japanese rule in Taiwan - the De-Japanisation Campaign - was launched immediately after the Republic of China (ROC) government under the Kuomintang (KMT) took over Taiwan in 1945. Instead, the KMT government implemented a comprehensive programme of "Chinese language education" for the local population. Not only Japanese but also the local languages such as Taiwanese, Hakkanese, aboriginal languages were banned in schools and government offices. Throughout the period from 1949 to 1987, freedom of speech was universally limited (Zhang, Z., et al., 1991). The purpose of this measure is to avoid the spread of local languages, and to a certain extent, to destroy their cultures. By doing so, the regime of KMT may continue its ruling for good.

From the early 1970s, the Kuomintang (KMT) exercised control over education through surveillance, censorship, and the curtailment of intellectual freedoms (Ho & Hindley, 2011). From censorship and surveillance to the incorporation of key stakeholders, the KMT sought to mold the education system to align with its ideological principles. The authority was concentrated in the hands of the teachers, with decisions being made unilaterally. This authoritarian structure limited the rights of people, denying them the freedom to make choices and stifling their ability to express themselves. People were not encouraged to voice their thoughts, reflecting a culture that discouraged active participation and self-expression among the young learners.

Ho and Hindley (2011) note this turning point: the KMT's grip on power began to weaken in the early 1980s, leading to the gradual visibility of dissent within the education sector, signaling a shift in the dynamics of ideological control. This period of ideological transition was further catalyzed by Taiwan's political shift in 1987, when Taiwan underwent what John Wilkinson (2021) describes as a "mini-revolution" following the end of Martial Law. The dissent that emerged during this period challenged the conservative underpinnings of the education system, marking a departure from the previous era of conformity and also indicating that the grip of conservative ideology on education was not absolute and paved the way for subsequent reforms.

Conservative Educational Paradigm (1980s-2010): Rote Memorization and Exam-Centric Model

During the conservative era in Taiwan in the 1980s, a notable characteristic of education was the deep-rooted curriculum based on traditional subject models. The emphasis was on imparting knowledge through discrete subjects, often overlooking the holistic development of young learners. Core subjects took precedence, and the curriculum was primarily based on the memorization of facts and data. Rote memorization was emphasized as the primary learning method, becoming a typical example of conservative educational approaches experienced by students in Taiwan from the 1980s to 2010. Students were frequently required to memorize information verbatim, and consistency and standardized answers were deemed more important than critical thinking. Education adhered to a uniform, exam-centric learning model, emphasizing discipline, obedience, and absolute respect for authority.

The uniformity of textbook content compiled by the National Institute for Translation and Compilation and teacher-centered teaching pedagogy contributed to the standardized education experienced by students during this period. Because textbooks play a crucial mediating role in the education system, serving not only as carriers of knowledge but also as disseminators of ideology (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991), the analysis of subject concepts views textbooks as a "system for transmitting facts," emphasizing their role as carriers of knowledge. Textbooks, as institutional forces, shape the official textual ideology conveyed by the government, defining meanings and societal or cultural relationships through their terms, creating a "natural," "inevitable," and "taken-for-granted" view of social order. The Ministry of Education's nationwide uniform policy on educational textbooks and curriculum further reflected the era's commitment of conservatism at that time to maintaining a social standardized and controllable educational environment.

Pedagogical Authoritarianism: In terms of pedagogy, an authoritarian social structure approach prevailed during this era. Educators typically employed teacher-led instructional techniques, maintaining control over the learning environment. Students were expected to adhere to strict discipline, and active participation in the learning process was limited. The emphasis was on conformity and adherence to established norms, reflecting a more rigid and structured pedagogical approach.

Classroom Structure: Seating arrangements within classrooms were notably conservative. Desks were arranged in traditional rows, facing the teacher at the front of the room. This setup facilitated a teacher-centric learning environment, reinforcing the authority of the educator. It limited interaction among students and placed a strong emphasis on maintaining order and discipline within the classroom.

Evolutionary Phases: Navigating Taiwan's Educational Landscape

Taiwan's educational trajectory is a tapestry woven with the threads of societal shifts, educational transformations, ideological transitions, and policy reforms across different eras. The school education system is a part of the social system, often undergoing adjustments and transformations in response to external structural changes. These adaptations aim to ensure harmony and coexistence among systems, contributing to the pursuit of social progress (Chen, 2001). The development of Taiwan's education system has gone through distinct phases, shaped by historical influences. Schools not only control individuals but also control meaning because schools preserve and distribute what is considered "legitimate knowledge," that is, "the

knowledge we possess," which is imbued with specific national knowledge cultural acceptability (Franklin & Apple, 2004).

Democratic Winds of Change (1991-2000):

Between 1991 and 2000, Taiwan underwent a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic political system (Taiwan Saga - Taiwan Martial Law History, 2010). This was achieved through several constitutional amendments and the election of its first president by popular vote in 1996 (Presidential Office, Republic of China, 2023). A path towards a more liberal and democratic country was forged. As fundamental freedoms and human rights expanded, these changes reverberated into various aspects of society, including education. The government established the Education Reform Review Committee under the Executive Yuan from 1994 to 1996, marking the beginning of the promotion of kindergartens and reforms in higher education. Prior to this, the access to high school and university was limited to the joint entrance examination system for national and high schools. The entrance system has also transitioned to a more diversified approach (Ministry of Education, 1995).

Era of Educational Reforms (2000s - Early 2010s):

At the turn of the millennium (2000s - early 2010s), various educational reform initiatives in Taiwan were primarily focused on "overthrowing the exam-oriented education system and reducing academic pressure." The previous emphasis on the examination system and the standardized answers associated with the college entrance-oriented ideology gradually changed through multiple rounds of educational reforms. The government, through amending educational laws and reviewing the administrative structure, initiated reforms in elementary and secondary education, promoted widespread early childhood education, developed special education for individuals with disabilities, diversified and refined vocational education, reformed higher education, implemented a variety of admissions programs, facilitated private participation in education, and established a lifelong learning society (Ministry of Education, 1995).

During this period, the admissions system underwent a transformation from the traditional examination-based system. The adoption of uniform textbooks, coupled with the perplexing admissions system and new methods of assessing student performance, contributed to the popularity of the extensive after-school tutoring centers and private schools that emerged in response to the existing exam-oriented admissions system. Taiwan's education was also influenced by the global trends of the Earth as a village and the rise of neoliberalism. The country began adopting a laissez-faire, market-oriented approach, impacting the qualifications for teacher training.

Under the influence of neoliberalism, characterized by a "market-based populist culture of differentiated consumerism and individual liberalism" (Harvey, 2005, p. 42), Taiwan's education embraced the principles of a free-market economic system. Neoliberalism combines the functions of the free market with government authority in establishing an economic system. On the one hand, it creates market competition through the choices made by members of society. On the other hand, it uses government power to eliminate barriers hindering the free market (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). The interaction between parents' demands for curriculum design and market competitiveness influenced the structural choices parents made. Emphasis on open competition, choice, and performance improvement in education policy promoted privatization and deregulation. Some expressed concerns about the dangers of education commercialization and increased social stratification, emphasizing the need for fair policies

(Tan, 1998).

Taiwan's educational ideology shifted towards pragmatism and liberalism conservatism concepts during this period, giving precedence to the practical development of skills and overall capabilities. During this period, teaching methods have evolved to include more interactive and experiential learning, which encourages the development of critical thinking skills. Additionally, flexible seating arrangements have become more prevalent, allowing for a combination of traditional rows and collaborative setups. It is worth noting that textbooks have also evolved, breaking away from the past when there was only one national standardized edition. Multiple editions of the same subject have begun to appear. Schools have made progress in creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

Liberal Horizon: Nurturing Dynamic and Inclusive Education

In recent years (mid-2010s onwards), education in Taiwan has adopted more liberal approaches. The curriculum now places a strong emphasis on diverse learning experiences, integrating social, emotional, and cognitive development. Pedagogical innovations include the widespread adoption of play-based learning, child-led exploration, and personalized learning plans. Seating dynamics have become highly flexible, accommodating various activities and encouraging movement within the classroom. The shift towards project-based learning is a prime example, empowering children to delve deep into topics of interest, fostering creativity and independent thinking.

Pedagogical: The pedagogical landscape has transformed from an authoritarian model to one that is child-centered and inquiry-based. Current liberal approaches prioritize the student can active participation in the learning process. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding them through exploration and discovery. Inquiry-based learning encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of concepts. This education system shift reflects a commitment to nurturing independent thinkers and lifelong learners.

Classroom Structure: In contrast to the rigid rows of desks in the conservative era, contemporary classrooms are characterized by collaborative and flexible seating arrangements. Tables and chairs are often arranged to facilitate group work, discussions, and interactive activities. This setup encourages peer interaction, communication skills, and cooperative learning. The physical environment is intentionally designed to support the social and emotional development of young learners.

Admissions Evolution: Nowadays, apart from the examination system, there are more ways for students to apply for schooling, and the application system has changed from the Joint Entrance Examination System (JEE) to the Application for Admission System (AAS), where students' participation in school activities and performance can be considered as one of the ways to apply for schooling.

Learning Environments: Contrastingly, contemporary practices recognize and celebrate student diversity, fostering an environment where each child's unique strengths are acknowledged and nurtured. Over the past three decades, through changes and implementation of educational policies, Taiwan's national education system has evolved from the traditional 9-year compulsory education to the current 12-year basic education. The shifts in the way access school, curriculum, pedagogy, accountability and classroom arrangements reflect a broader global trend towards creating inclusive, child-centered, and adaptable learning environments. With reforms in teaching and adjustments to the curriculum, the role of education has expanded beyond

The reform of education policies has shifted the focus of the curriculum, emphasizing the development of practical literacy skills that can be applied in conjunction with subject knowledge, rather than solely concentrating on students acquiring disciplinary knowledge. The "108 Curriculum Guidelines" explicitly incorporate these principles into formal policy implementation, breaking traditional disciplinary boundaries and advocating for a curriculum where literacy takes precedence in all subjects. The aim of this approach is to cultivate critical thinking, decision-making abilities, and a mindset open to changing perspectives in children. It enables students to transform knowledge into practical problem-solving skills (Ministry of Education, 2018). Education no longer solely emphasizes instilling moral values but places a greater emphasis on the holistic development of students, respecting individual differences. All these efforts share a common goal: promoting human development and constructing a more harmonious and comfortable society.

In Taiwan, conservatism has also left a lasting imprint on social history evolution, especially within the education system. This influence is evident in various aspects, from the admission procedures and curriculum design of high schools and universities to pedagogy and assessment. While these conservative principles contribute to cultural preservation and order, ongoing discussions and evaluations are crucial to ensuring that education remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to the constantly changing needs of society. This aligns with Robert Eccleshall's assertion that conservatives can be radicals or traditionalists, emphasizing the need to find a sufficient definition that can accommodate both (Eccleshall, R., 1977). In other words, within conservatism, the ongoing challenge is to navigate between these two perspectives and continue to find a common ground for the greater social common good.

Ideological Transformation and Critique in Taiwan Education

Looking back through history, conservatism has dominated education, emphasizing discipline, traditional teaching methods, and obedience to authority. In the past, Taiwan's education was deeply rooted in traditional conservative values, with a focus on uniformity in teaching methods. Teachers were expected to adhere strictly to standard answers in the classroom, reinforcing an authoritarian image. The examination-oriented system emphasized rote memorization and the transmission of predetermined knowledge. The educational emphasis was not on fostering learners' understanding or seeking the truth of problems. The overall school atmosphere did not encourage students to ask questions or express personal thoughts and opinions.

With the democratization and liberalization of society, there has been a fundamental shift in educational philosophy. The transition from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching reflects a value system that respects individual differences. The curriculum moves beyond traditional subject knowledge frameworks, emphasizing the cultivation of independent thinking in students. There is a greater focus on developing students' literacy skills and the practical application of knowledge to problem-solving. Attempts to break away from the conservative framework in education now prioritize collaborative learning and critical thinking, with interactive methods taking precedence over rote memorization. The encouragement of reflection and interaction between teachers and students marks a significant ideological shift in the impact of school education on individuals.

Students from different generations are also influenced by educational reforms and cultural perceptions of past history. The government and educators now place greater importance on the

impact of education on future generations. Policies are implemented to allow public participation and voice opinions on current policies or systems through online platforms. Such exchanges and critical reflections contribute to challenging existing educational systems and the framework of conservative hegemony, fostering the momentum and power for reform.

While Libertarian Conservatism seeks progress, economic liberalism is prominent in conservatism, allowing free-market competition to determine the prosperity of schools. The reduction of government intervention in the market economy indirectly exacerbates inequality in providing education infrastructure. Public high schools and universities predominantly cater to students from upper-middle-class families, while private schools, despite high tuition fees, enroll students from less affluent backgrounds who struggle to afford quality education. This situation perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage, leading to social class reproduction from the educational stage. In Dewey's ideal of democratic education, education serves as a social function, playing a societal role. In a democratic society, different lifestyles converge with different interests, fostering an essential process in the progress or adaptation of a democratic society (Dewey, J., & Xue, Xuan, 2006).

In a period dominated by conservative neoliberalism, Organic Conservatism seems to plant seeds for change, awakening awareness of the current situation of "Them that has, gets" (Wang, 2002). It prompts reflection on the hierarchical reproduction of schools and ideological awareness of social structures, reminding the government, policymakers, educators, parents, and broad supervisors to critically examine the impact of existing systems and make prudent considerations for the long-term effects and changes education brings.

The conservative principles embedded in Taiwan's education system play a crucial role in shaping societal values and structures. Education is a century-old endeavor, and progress cannot be rushed. Educational policies should be implemented progressively, promoting equal opportunities from top to bottom, aligning with international standards, and maintaining a well-intentioned approach.

However, the long-term effects of policy implementation are significant. Awakening through ideological consciousness and potential curricula challenging long-standing issues in schools or society is a key to the future. This consciousness, including the potential curriculum conveyed by school, family, and social education, is a legacy. Continuous and critical dialogue is essential to striking a balance between cultural preservation and the ever-changing needs of a dynamic society, ensuring that education remains a catalyst for positive change and societal progress.

Educators should engage in timely reflections and discussions based on factual awareness, accept positive and critical perspectives, and provide space for correction, establishing flexible solutions for research, development, and change. This offers hope for a better educational system and brings about change in unjust institutional systems, laying the foundation for excellent education in our next generation in a democratic society.

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