Article

Schools and Classrooms in a Sociological Perspective

https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i1.1145

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A B S T R A C T

School and classroom are not merely educational spaces but act as dynamic arenas where social structures are reproduced and contested. While schools are expected to promote equality, sociological perspectives reveal their latent role in sustaining social inequalities. This study aims to explore how classrooms function as sites of social integration, reproduction of inequality, and identity formation. Using a qualitative library research method, this paper analyzes theories from Durkheim, Bourdieu, Foucault, Mead, and others to examine classroom dynamics. Findings show that education often legitimizes dominant cultural capital, perpetuates labeling practices, and imposes subtle disciplinary power. Classrooms become microcosms of society where power, norms, and ideologies are constructed and negotiated. The study concludes that critical awareness among educators and policymakers is vital to transform classrooms into inclusive and democratic spaces. Future studies should empirically investigate strategies that resist structural inequality within educational institutions.

Keywords: Sociology of Education, Social Reproduction, Classroom Interaction, Symbolic Violence, Educational Inequality

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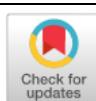
INTRODUCTION

Schools and classrooms don't just serve as places to impart knowledge. More than that, both are also important containers that reflect and shape the social order in society. In the view of the sociology of education, school can be considered as a small reflection of social life, where various values, norms, and ideologies interact with each other and even contradict each other. This means that schools play a dual role, namely as a means of education and at the same time as a space that subtly strengthens the existing social structure.

Research conducted by (Suda, 2019) revealing that symbolic dominance is very real in schools. This can be seen from the subject matter that often conveys the ideology of certain social groups that are more powerful. This material seems to set certain standards and values that must be followed by all students, including those from disadvantaged community groups. That way, schools are often a tool to maintain social inequality, not just a neutral and fair place for all students (Suda, 2019).

In addition, the aspect of economic inequality also strengthens the social reality in the classroom. Primadata shows that the high cost of education makes it difficult for children from poor families to continue their education. As a result, they are prone to dropping out of school, which ultimately widens the gap in inequality in obtaining a decent education (Kusumawati, et al 2014)

Not only about the economy, education policies such as full day school also raise their own social problems. In his research, (Shawn, 2016) explained that although this program aims positively, in fact it poses new challenges. Classrooms are indeed a place to instill social values and norms in students, but this policy can also make it difficult for students from underprivileged families and reduce their time with their families at home (Shawn, 2016).

Another side of school as a social space is the dynamics of interaction between students. (Augustine, 2022) Agustina highlighted that schools are often a place where symbolic conflicts arise. Here there is a practice of violence, both physical and verbal, as well

as marginalization between students. This shows that the classroom is often an arena for symbols of status and social power (Augustine, 2022).

This situation was further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Yasin, 2023) revealed that when limited face-to-face learning is enforced, the inequality of access to technology becomes more and more apparent. Not all students have adequate facilities to participate in online learning, so virtual classrooms reflect social inequality in society(Yasin, 2023).

Looking at these various phenomena, it is very important to examine schools and classrooms from a sociological point of view. Through the writing of this paper, it is hoped that various social practices that are often hidden behind the formal education process can be revealed. In addition, this study also aims to make a meaningful contribution, both in expanding theoretical understanding of social dynamics in the world of education, and as a material for practical reflection in formulating education policies that are more equitable, inclusive, and able to accommodate the interests of all levels of society.

Based on the background that has been described, there are three main problems that are the focus of this discussion, namely: first, how the classroom functions as a place of social integration in the midst of the diversity of students' backgrounds; second, how social inequality is reproduced through various symbolic, cultural, and structural mechanisms in the educational environment; and third, how the practice of control and discipline in the classroom plays a role in shaping students' identities, mindsets, and behaviors. This discussion aims to critically examine these three aspects by utilizing the perspective of the sociology of education, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics that take place in the classroom and the hidden role of schools in shaping the structure of society.

The benefits of this discussion are divided into two dimensions. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of the study of the sociology of education, especially in understanding the classroom as an arena of complex social interaction and full of the meaning of power. Practically, this discussion provides benefits for teachers and education practitioners in increasing sensitivity to social dynamics in the classroom, for policy makers as input in developing inclusive and equitable education policies, and for schools as evaluative material in developing learning strategies that encourage collaboration, reduce inequality, and strengthen democratic values in the school environment.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the library research method to analyze in depth the role of the classroom as a social arena in the context of educational sociology. This approach was chosen because it is able to uncover the social dynamics hidden behind the formal education process, such as value integration, inequality reproduction, and identity formation. The main focus of this study is theoretical and reflective, not for generalization, but to build a critical understanding of social relations in education (Creswell, 2016).

Data were collected from various relevant secondary literature, such as educational sociology theory books, national and international scientific journal articles, and previous research results. The main theories that are the basis of the analysis include the views of Durkheim, Marx, Bourdieu, Mead, Goffman, and Foucault. The literature was selected based on thematic relevance, the up-to-date publication (in the last 15 years), and its contribution to the study of the classroom as a social structure. Data collection techniques are carried out through systematic documentation of credible and academic sources (Moleong, 2019).

The data analysis procedure uses thematic content analysis, which is carried out by identifying the main issues in the literature, grouping theories based on perspectives, and then compiling an analytical synthesis based on major themes: social integration, educational inequality, and student identity formation. The validity of the analysis results is strengthened through triangulation of the literature and the logical linkage between the theory and the phenomenon studied. Thus, this research produces a valid conceptual framework that can be used as a reference for further empirical research (Bowen, 2009).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Studies on the Social Function of Schools and Classrooms in the Perspective of Educational Sociology

In the study of the sociology of education, schools and classrooms are not just seen as a means of transferring knowledge. Both function as social spaces that are full of dynamics of values, power, identity, and social relations. The following key theories explain how schools and classrooms play a role in forming, reproducing, and challenging social structures.

Functional Structural Theory (Emile Durkheim)

Durkheim believed that schools play a role as the main socialization agent that bridges individuals with society. Through the educational process, social values and norms are inherited and internalized in order to create stable social integration. The classroom, in his view, is a miniature society where children learn to interact, cooperate, and obey social rules. "Schools are miniature societies where dominant values are instilled and learned by students." (Suci et al., 2020, p. 15)

Thus, the latent function of schools is to create social order through the transmission of collective values and morals.

Conflict Theory (Karl Marx and Pierre Bourdieu)

In contrast to Durkheim, conflict theory sees schools as a means of reproducing social inequality. Marx highlighted that education supports the structure of capitalism by creating an obedient workforce. While Bourdieu adds the dimensions of habitus and capital which explains how the dominant class maintains its hegemony through the legitimacy of school culture.

"Education reproduces the structure of the classroom through symbolic mechanisms and school culture." (Ali, 2016, pp. 29-31)

Schools, according to this theory, are not neutral, but rather reproduce social injustices and reinforce stratification.

Theory of Cultural Reproduction (Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron)

This theory deepens conflict theory by focusing on how dominant cultures are preserved. The cultural capital brought by students from different social classes will determine their success in school. Meanwhile, schools promote dominant class culture as a universal norm.

"Schools transform dominant cultures into seemingly neutral universal norms." (Juwita et al., 2020, p. 99)

The implication is that students from disadvantaged social backgrounds have difficulty adjusting to academic standards.

Neo-Marxist Theory (Bowles and Gintis)

This approach criticizes the role of schools in the capitalist system. Curriculum, discipline, and evaluation are assessed as a way to prepare students to become a compliant workforce and according to market needs. The school acts as part of the state's ideological apparatus (ISA).

"Schools and classrooms function as the ideological apparatus of the state (ISA)." (Marsa, et al., 2022, hlm. 50)

Thus, the classroom plays a role in reproducing capitalist ideology without students realizing it.

The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism (George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman)

In a micro-view, this theory observes the everyday social interactions that occur in the classroom. Through the process of labeling, stereotyping, and negotiating meaning, students' identities are constructed. Teachers and peers play an important role in shaping students' self-concept that can have a long-term impact.

"The classroom is an arena of symbolic interaction in which identity and social roles are constructed." (Yasin, 2023, p. 5)

Small interactions in the classroom, such as praise or punishment, have a big meaning in shaping a student's self-image.
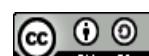
Humanistic Theory and Progressivism (John Dewey)

As a counterpoint to structural and conflicting views, Dewey viewed schools as democratic communities. The learning process is considered an active and participatory social experience. Classrooms should provide space for dialogue, collaboration, and freedom of expression.

"The classroom as a social laboratory that creates active and participatory learning." (Rodiyah, 2021, p. 45)

Progressive education aims to develop the potential of individuals and prepare them to become critical and creative citizens.

Postmodern Theory and Deconstruction (Michel Foucault)

Foucault brings a critical perspective on discipline and power in the classroom. Rules, supervision, and evaluation are not just administrative mechanisms, but part of a strategy to form a compliant and controllable subject.

"The classroom is a space of supervision that forms an obedient subject." (Purwanto, 2021, p. 9). In this context, power works not repressively but productively, shaping student behavior and mindset.

In conclusion, the various theories of the sociology of education show that schools and classrooms are complex social spaces. Not only as a place for the delivery of knowledge, but also as an arena for the struggle for meaning, power, and identity. The functional perspective sees it as a vehicle for integration, conflict theory and cultural reproduction consider it a tool for the preservation of inequality, while interactionism and postmodern theories suggest that the classroom is also a stage of social interaction and control. On the other hand, humanistic theory invites to see the classroom as a democratic space to grow and develop as a whole.
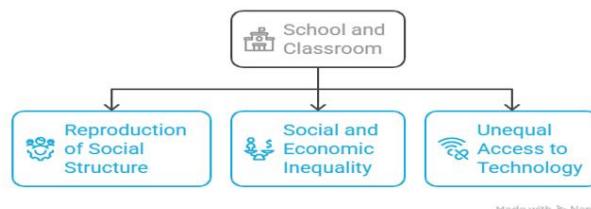

Figure 1. Schools and Classrooms as Social Arenas

Table 1. Comparison of Sociological Theories of Schools and Classrooms

Yes	Theory	Main Characters	Key Focus	The Role of School/Classroom	Quotes/Sources
1	Functional Structural	Emile Durkheim	Socialization and social integration	Miniature society to instill social values and norms	Suci et al., 2020, p. 15
2	Conflict	Karl Marx & Pierre Bourdieu	Reproduction of social inequality	The arena of class domination and reproduction through symbols and culture	Maksum, 2016, pp. 29-31
3	Interactionism Symbolism	George H. Mead & Erving Goffman	Micro-interactions and identity construction	The arena of symbolic interaction that shapes self-concept and social identity	Yasin, 2023, p. 5
4	Cultural Reproduction	Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron	Preservation of dominant culture	Normative mechanisms to legitimize the cultural capital of the dominant class	Juwita et al., 2020, p. 99
5	Neo-Marxis	Bowles and Gintis	Reproduction of the ideology of capitalism	The ideological apparatus of the state (ISA) that	Marsa et al., 2022, hlm. 50

				forms the obedient workforce	
6	Humanism and Progressivism	John Dewey	Democratic communities and individual development	Social labs for active and collaborative learning experiences	Rodiyah, 2021, p. 45
7	Postmodern and Deconstruction	Michel Foucault	Discipline and supervision	A supervision room that forms an obedient and orderly subject	Purwanto, 2021, p. 9

Schools and Classrooms in a Sociological Perspective
Schools and Classrooms as Arenas of Social Integration (Functional Structural Theory)

Schools are understood as formal educational institutions that function as the main forum for the implementation of the educational process. Schools not only facilitate knowledge transfer, but are also responsible for character building, socialization of social values, and the development of students' potential. Meanwhile, the classroom refers to the physical and social space where face-to-face interaction between teachers and students takes place in learning activities.

Schools have a strategic role as the main agent of socialization, which is in charge of passing on social norms and values to students. Teachers function as the main liaison in the process of internalizing these values to students in the classroom, which is at the same time a physical and social arena for interaction and the formation of social identity. According to Maksum (Ali, 2016, p. 12), schools are seen as agents who instill social norms and values in students.

Furthermore, schools and classrooms are seen as dynamic social arenas, where there is a process of interaction between individuals and groups, internalization of dominant cultural values, and the reproduction of existing social structures in society. Thus, both are not only academic spaces, but also fields for the formation of social identity and the reproduction of power relations.

Within the framework of Functional Structural Theory developed by Emile Durkheim, schools are positioned as one of the key institutions in maintaining social balance and order. Durkheim argued that the survival of society depends heavily on an effective socialization process, in which collective values and social norms are instilled in the individual from an early age. Through formal education, particularly in the classroom, learners are introduced to important principles such as discipline, responsibility, respect for authority, and social solidarity (Ciaffi et al., 2022).

Durkheim emphasized that without a structured socialization mechanism, society would lose its social cohesion and tend to fall into anarchy and disintegration. In this context, schools are not only a place of mastery of science, but also serve as a means to form citizens who behave in accordance with the norms expected by society (Ciaffi et al., 2022)

This view is reinforced by cutting-edge research on multicultural management in the classroom. Hadijaya, Y. et al., (2024) revealed that in an increasingly diverse society, schools play an important role as a safe space that allows social integration to occur. In the classroom, students not only learn the subject matter, but also interact with their peers who have diverse cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Through these interactions, they develop the attitudes of mutual respect, tolerance, and social skills that are so much needed in a pluralistic society.

In the findings Hadijaya, Y. et al., (2024), it was mentioned that schools have become an important vehicle in facilitating differences and fostering a sense of community among students from different backgrounds. The classroom becomes an arena where potential social conflicts can be managed constructively through an inclusive and dialogical pedagogical approach. This further shows that education plays a role not only in strengthening the cognitive function of individuals, but also in building harmonious social networks. Schools are a vehicle for social integration to ensure the sustainability of societal values and norms Hadijaya, Y. et al., (2024).

From this exposure, it can be concluded that Durkheim's concept is still very relevant in explaining the vital role of schools and classrooms today. In a modern society colored by social complexity and diversity, schools serve as a vital space to form social order and cohesion. Through various learning activities and social interactions in the classroom, students not only learn about academic materials, but also internalize social norms that are essential for the sustainability of society. Therefore, the latent function of schools as agents of social integration is becoming increasingly important in answering the challenges of contemporary social dynamics.

Schools and Classrooms as a Means of Reproducing Social Inequality

School as the Dominant Cultural Reproduction Agent

Social Reproduction, This term refers to the iterative and continuous process in society, in which norms, values, ideologies, and social power relations are inherited and maintained through various social practices, including education. Schools play an important role in this process through curriculum mechanisms, patterns of relationships between teachers and students, and academic expectations that are built.

Social reproduction is evident in the delivery of subject matter that often prioritizes dominant cultures, in the patterns of interaction that maintain social hierarchy in the classroom, and in the symbolic power relations that occur between individuals and groups (Augustine, 2022) (Suda, 2019).

Schools and classrooms are often seen as neutral arenas that support equal distribution of educational opportunities. However, in the study of critical sociology, both have the potential to be a medium for reproducing social inequality. Through a hidden curriculum, social interaction practices, and the application of dominant norms and cultures, schools not only transmit knowledge, but also maintain and reproduce existing social structures. In this context, social and cultural reproduction theory becomes the most relevant approach to understanding the role of the classroom in maintaining social hierarchy.

Pierre Bourdieu through the concepts of habitus and cultural capital explained that schools are not neutral spaces (Juwita et al., 2020). Those who come from high socio-economic backgrounds tend to bring cultural capital that is in line with school expectations. This capital makes it easier for them to understand and access the "language" of formal education. In contrast, students from lower-class families often face barriers in meeting cultural standards that are considered normative in school.

Bourdieu states that schools serve to reproduce social inequality through the symbolic legitimacy of dominant culture (Juwita et al., 2020). Thus, social selection takes place subtly. Schools, although seemingly fair, actually strengthen social stratification by providing greater opportunities for groups that already have social and cultural advantages.

Social and Economic Inequality and Its Impact on Educational Practice

Social and economic inequality in this context refers to significant differences in access to and opportunities for education, which are influenced by the economic background of students. Children from low-income families tend to face various obstacles, such as limited learning facilities, lack of academic support at home, and the risk of dropping out of school.

Further research by Suda (2019) and Augustine (2022) also highlighted how schools can be a means of preserving power relations. Subject matter and interaction patterns in the classroom often represent dominant cultures, so marginalized groups feel marginalized. High and homogeneous academic expectations often do not take into account the diverse social backgrounds of learners.

In this condition, social and economic inequality play a big role. Children from poor families tend to face serious obstacles such as limited learning resources, lack of academic support at home, and the threat of dropping out of school. Primadata & Kusumawati (2014) and Shawn (2016) reveals that this inequality has the potential to strengthen social stratification and pass on limitations to the next generation. Education, instead of being an instrument of social mobility, risks becoming a tool of social exclusion if this inequality is left unchecked (Primadata & Kusumawati, 2014; Hughes, 2016).

Unequal Access to Technology as a Reproduction of New Inequality

In the digital era, social inequality in the classroom is further exacerbated by the gap in access to technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this disparity, with students from lower economic groups and remote areas facing various limitations in accessing online learning.

Yasin (2023) stating that limited devices, weak internet access, and low digital literacy reinforce the gap gap. This has implications for learning outcomes and increases the risk of educational marginalization in the future. Today's digital divide exacerbates inequality and strengthens the process of social reproduction in the classroom (Yasin, 2023).

Labeling and Symbolic Interaction in the Classroom

In addition to structural aspects, the process of reproduction of social inequality also occurs through symbolic interactions in the classroom. Teachers, consciously or not, often give social labels to students. Designations such as "smart kid" or "bad kid" can shape their self-identity and affect their academic motivation.

Hidayatullah (2024) explained that this labeling practice is very influential in creating a self-concept that lasts for a long time in students. Labeling from teachers significantly affects students' identities and motivation in the classroom (Hidayatullah, 2024). These labels, which may initially be intended to encourage, can actually be a psychological barrier for students who are negatively stigmatized.

Based on the description above, it appears that schools and classrooms are not grade-free. In it, a smooth but systematic process of social reproduction takes place, both through curriculum, social interaction, and access to educational resources. The latent function of schools as a means of reproducing social inequality is evident when cultural capital, economic inequality, technological disparities, and symbolic practices reinforce each other. Therefore, in this study, it is necessary to have critical awareness and transformative efforts so that the classroom can function more fairly and truly become an instrument of social mobility for all students, not the other way around.

The Classroom as an Arena of Interaction and Identity Formation (Symbolic Interactionism Theory)

Classrooms as an Arena of Micro-Interaction

According to the theory of symbolic interactionism developed by George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman, a person's identity does not appear by chance, but is formed and negotiated through social interactions that take place in everyday life. In the context of education, the classroom is a very important micro-vehicle, where various forms of interaction between teachers and students as well as between fellow students occur intensively.

Kiss (2024) affirms that everyday classroom interactions, such as discussions, Q&A, and group work, serve more than just a tool for transferring knowledge. These activities also play a vital role in building students' self-concepts. In this process, teachers play the role of significant others, i.e. important individuals whose perceptions have a strong influence on how students see and assess themselves.

Kiss (2024) explained that the classroom is a latent arena where students not only learn the subject matter, but also form their social identity through various symbolic interactions with teachers and peers. Through these repetitive interactions and full of symbolic meaning, the classroom serves as an important medium for the construction and negotiation of students' self-image. Social and academic identities develop along with the intensity and quality of the social relationships they experience in the school environment (Halik, 2024).

The Process of Labeling and Stereotyping in the Classroom

In addition to building identity through positive interactions, the classroom is also a place where labeling and stereotyping occur, a process that often takes place implicitly and often unconsciously. Teachers and other students tend to give labels such as "diligent child", "smart child", "lazy child", or "naughty child", which turns out to have a huge impact on the development of a student's identity.

According to Goffman's theory outlined by Az Zakiyyah (2025), the label is not merely descriptive, but serves as a social symbol that forms stigma and expectations for individual behavior. In the study, it was found that students who often get negative labels tend to

withdraw and experience a decline in self-concept. In contrast, those who got a positive label tended to be more confident and active in participating in classes (Az Zakiyyah, 2025).

Az Zakiyyah (2025) suggests that labeling done continuously can strengthen students' social status in the classroom and affect their self-concept in the long run. Therefore, labeling and stereotypes in the classroom are not trivial, but rather symbolic processes that can construct and direct students' identities, both positively and negatively.

The Role of Teachers and Peers in Identity Formation

In the dynamics of social interaction in the classroom, teachers and peers have a central role in shaping and directing students' social identities. Teachers, as authority figures and role models, play a role in providing reinforcement, both in the form of awards and reprimands. Meanwhile, peers become actors who shape social norms and values within the group.

Mardizal & Ramatni (2024) stated that phenomena such as the formation of friendship groups, the practice of exclusion, and cooperation between students play a major role in shaping the social dynamics of the classroom. This social interaction has a direct impact on strengthening or loosening students' social and academic identities.

In view Mardizal & Ramatni (2024), the social relations between students and their relationship with teachers greatly determine the direction of the development of students' social and academic identities. The classroom, therefore, can be understood as a social stage where social norms, values, and identities are transmitted and constructed continuously through interactions that take place on a daily basis (Mardizal & Ramatni, 2024).

From the three sub-chapter exposures, it can be concluded that the theory of symbolic interactionism is very relevant to understand the classroom as an important arena for the formation of students' social identity. Through micro-interactions between teachers and students as well as between fellow students, symbolic meanings are constantly produced and interpreted, influencing how students perceive themselves and the world around them.

The process of labeling and stereotyping, while often unconscious, serves as a powerful social symbol. These labels are not only socially attached, but also shape students' expectations and behaviors in the future. Teachers and peers play a central role as socialization agents who help students form and negotiate their identities. Thus, the classroom is definitely not a neutral space. It is a dynamic social arena full of social constructions and symbolic battles, where students' identities are shaped and directed through a series of meaning-laden interaction processes.

The Classroom as an Arena of Control and Social Discipline (Theory: Postmodern and Deconstruction)

Classroom as a Supervision and Discipline Room

In Michel Foucault's view, the classroom can be understood as a concrete form of disciplinary space, which is a space where power works through mechanisms of surveillance, assessment, and systematic regulation of behavior. Foucault believed that power in the classroom exists not only explicitly through rules, but also through implicit norms that govern and supervise students' movements and thoughts.

Raditya (2014) explained that this supervision is not only carried out directly by teachers, but is also internalized through various invisible structures. The layout of the classroom, the way students sit, the rules of speech, and even the body expressions are arranged with the aim of creating order. The teacher acts as the main supervisor who ensures that all rules are carried out with discipline (Raditya, 2014).

Raditya (2014) revealing that the classroom is an arena of social supervision that shapes students' bodies and minds to submit to applicable norms. Thus, the classroom serves as a tangible manifestation of the modern discipline, where supervision is not solely in the form of punishment or direct coercion, but rather takes place through the normalization of behavior that students accept and comply with voluntarily (Raditya, 2014).

Subtle and Productive Power in Shaping Students

In Foucault's frame of mind, power does not only have a repressive face. It also functions productively, in the sense of creating subjects that conform to social expectations through

subtle and hidden mechanisms. In the classroom, this productive power is manifested through curriculum, assessment standards, and behavioral expectations internalized by students.

Seduced (2019) underlining that educational policies and teaching methods play a big role in shaping the character of students. They are gradually directed to adopt a disciplined, obedient, and competitive attitude, in accordance with the demands of modern society that prioritizes efficiency and productivity.

Seduced (2019) affirms that the power that works in the classroom is subtle and productive, shaping students to conform to applicable social and academic norms. This process shows that classroom power does not appear to be oppression, but rather comes in the form of internalizing values and norms that ultimately shape students' way of thinking, behaving, and life goals.

Discipline as a Social Control Strategy

In the context of modern education, discipline in the classroom is no longer interpreted as a repressive act that relies only on punishment or prohibition. Instead, discipline now functions as a systematic and planned social control strategy. Discipline is a tool to create social order, where students are directed to consciously and voluntarily obey the applicable rules.

Suharto (2012) shows that the discipline applied in the classroom today prioritizes a preventive and constructive approach. Students are taught to control their own behavior, manage time, speak according to manners, and build social relationships that match the values the school expects (Suharto, 2012).

Suharto (2012) emphasizing that discipline in the classroom is an effective social control strategy, which forms an orderly subject and in accordance with societal values. From this, it can be concluded that discipline in the classroom has transformed into a mechanism for internalizing norms, not just a tool of coercion. Students are encouraged to become rule-abiding individuals not because they fear punishment, but because they have internalized those norms as part of their identity.

Based on the above explanation, in the framework of postmodern and Michel Foucault's thought, the classroom can be understood as a social arena full of modern power practices that work subtly, systematically, and effectively. Several important points can be concluded as follows: (1) The classroom functions as a disciplinary space, where the supervision and normalization mechanisms take place simultaneously and continuously. Students are always in situations of observation and assessment, both by teachers and internalized norms (Raditya, 2014). (2) Power is present productively, which not only limits but also creates subjects that conform to social and academic norms through the process of education and learning (Hidayat, 2019). (3) Discipline functions as a social control strategy, in which students are not simply forced to obey, but consciously and voluntarily accept and apply school norms and rules as part of their social identity (Suharto, 2012).

Thus, the modern classroom can be understood as a mirror of contemporary power practices, where social control takes place not through visible coercion, but through the process of normalization and internalization of values. Through this mechanism, students are formed into social subjects who are obedient, organized, and ready to play a role in accordance with the order of modern society.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the presentation and analysis of various perspectives of the theory of sociology of education that have been described, it can be concluded that schools and classrooms are complex and multidimensional social arenas. It not only serves as a space for the transfer of knowledge, but also plays an important role in reproducing existing social structures. Through various formal and informal mechanisms such as socialization of values and norms, labeling, academic assessment, and behavioral supervision, the educational space also perpetuates the social patterns that apply in society. Within this framework, various forms of real social inequality are present and operating in the educational space. These inequalities are manifested in differences in access and opportunities between students from various

socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural capital gaps that affect adaptability and academic success, and symbolic practices that reinforce certain social positions through labeling and stereotyping processes. In addition, the mechanisms of subtle power applied through discipline, curriculum, and supervision also play a role in shaping subjects who are obedient and in accordance with dominant social norms. However, realizing that the classroom has the potential to become a reproductive arena for social injustice, it is very important for all parties, especially educators and education policy makers, to develop critical awareness. This awareness is needed so that the education space is not just a tool to perpetuate inequality, but can be transformed into an inclusive, fair, and democratic space. Efforts to create more equal classrooms must include recognition of students' diverse backgrounds, reduction of discriminatory practices and negative labeling, and strengthening the role of teachers as facilitators that encourage active and equal participation for all students. Thus, today's challenge for education is how to make the classroom not only a place to reproduce the existing society, but also a medium of social change that is able to bring justice and equality to all students. Seeing the classroom as a complex social arena, teachers and education managers need to have a critical awareness of the social relations that take place within it. It is not enough for teachers to be teachers of the material, but also to be able to read the social dynamics of students, understand labeling practices, and encourage fair and inclusive interactions. For this reason, training on classroom management based on social diversity needs to be continuously pursued so that teachers can create a friendly learning space and support the positive development of the identity of all students.

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