Factors that Impact Children's School Readiness:
Comparing the Perspectives of Charles Wright Mills and bell hooks

Abstract

This paper defines the meaning of school readiness and investigates the political, social and economic factors that impact children's school readiness. The three factors will be critiqued using the theoretical concepts of critical theory from Charles Wright Mills and feminist theory from bell hooks. This article offers new insights on similarities and differences of viewing children's school readiness between C.W. Mills and bell hooks. The critical perspectives of C. W. Mills are power structures that make a difference for children's school readiness. A feminist critique of concepts using the work of bell hooks is concerning school readiness deeply rooted in love and freedom. As a conclusion, this paper proposes three policy recommendations for the Ministry of Education to consider enhancing children's readiness to learn. The three policy recommendations are social change and preparation policies, government leadership for school readiness policies and school readiness funding policies.

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1. Introduction

School readiness is very important for all children because it provides the basic foundations for young children's later development and success in school and life. However, not every child is ready for school to learn and is able to access high quality early years programmes of school readiness. Especially, marginalized children, including children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, immigrant children, aboriginal children and those living in poverty are facing challenges in relation to school readiness. Theoretically, all children should enter school ready to learn. In the first place, all children should have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate school readiness programmes that help prepare children for school. Plus, there are relevant factors that impact

children's school readiness, including political, social and economic factors. In addition, children do not exist in isolation. They are closely connected with their families, neighbourhoods, schools and communities in sociocultural and environmental contexts. Thus, children's readiness is not only related to an individual child's readiness, but also the readiness of family, school and community for children. Parents, prekindergarten teachers, elementary schools, and local community programmes working together provide the best base for children's success in school.

Researches have shown the significance of school readiness and its benefits to children, families, schools and society (ARAC, February 2007; UNICEF, 2012; Duncan et al., 2007; McCuaig, Bertrand and Shanker, 2012). The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (February 2007) highlights the importance of school readiness, which suggests that children who enter school not yet ready to learn are more likely to go through difficult experiences in their developmental trajectories and have poor employment records in adulthood. The evidence from UNICEF (2012) has indicated that school readiness is considered a powerful framework for improving equity in access to education and in learning outcomes, especially for marginalized children. Children living in the poorest households are less likely to receive support related to early learning at home and are up to ten times less likely to attend early childhood education programmes (UNICEF, 2012). The Canadian study by McCuaig, Bertrand and Shanker (2012) has shown that children from vulnerable families often have less access to school readiness programmes. This study has further proved that children entering school unready are more likely to repeat a grade, require special education services, drop out before graduation, and in adulthood have higher crime rates, be unemployed and less healthy. Thus, the importance of such improvement in equity implies that school readiness targets to close the learning gap, achieve lifelong learning and reach full developmental potential among young children.

UNICEF (2012) reports the benefits of school readiness presented in two sections: intrinsic benefits and instrumental benefits. Intrinsic benefits address the direct gains to the recipients, i.e., children, families and schools. Duncan et al. (2007) argue that early skills of school readiness are consistently associated with higher levels of academic performance in later grades. Across six longitudinal studies, the findings suggest that the strongest predictors of later achievement are school-entry math, reading, and attention skills. A meta-analysis of the results shows that early math skills have the greatest predictive power, followed by reading and then attention skills. The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (February 2007) further identifies that the experiences of school readiness has lifelong implications for children's health, well-being, and development, including the ability to become productive, and be socially and emotionally adjusted members of society.

Instrumental benefits of school readiness address gains towards the broader development goals of social justice and economic development (UNICEF, 2012). Most importantly, school readiness is considered the foundation of equity and quality education and a viable means for the social and economic development of a society (UNICEF, 2012; Britto, 2012a). UNICEF (2012) stresses that approaches to social and economic growth consider human capital as a key conduit for sustained and viable development, the inception of which begins in the early years. Moreover, McCuaig, Bertrand and Shanker (2012) emphasize that school readiness for children is considered a foundation to academic learning, social competencies, human capital development and local economic development. This emphasis on school readiness suggests a positive contribution to children's happiness and our collective future.

In summary, school readiness provides early learning experiences and developmental environments for young children. These early learning experiences and environments have been linked with positive social and emotional competencies in adulthood as well as improved academic outcomes in later grades of school. It also encourages children's families to support early childhood development programmes that promote their children's readiness for school. Furthermore, school readiness helps policymakers support the adoption of policies and standards for early learning, expanding the school readiness provision of opportunities beyond formal centre-based services to target those who are excluded.

This article aims to provide a new way of examining the political, social and economic factors that determine the impact on children's school readiness. To that end, this paper focuses on two basic yet critical questions: How do the political, social and economic factors determine the impact on children's school readiness? What recommendations do we make for policymakers to consider promoting children's school readiness? The purpose of this article is to critique the political, social and economic factors of children's readiness for school by comparing and contrasting theoretical key concepts of critical theory from Charles Wright Mills and feminist theory from bell hooks. This article then discusses that the critical perspectives of C. W. Mills are power structures that make a difference for children's school readiness. A feminist critique of concepts of school readiness using the work of bell hooks is concerning children's school readiness deeply rooted in loving and supporting relationships among child, family, school, neighbourhood and community. In regards to the political, social and economic factors, this article offers new insights on similarities and differences of viewing children's school readiness between C.W. Mills and bell hooks. Finally, based on the considerable discussions and in-depth analyses of political, social and economic factors that impact children's school readiness between Mills and hooks, this article draws three policy recommendations for policymakers to consider enhancing children's readiness to learn: social change and preparation policies; government leadership for school readiness policies; and school readiness funding policies.

2. Definition of school readiness

Children's readiness for successful transition into kindergarten needs to be defined in broad developmental terms so that the uniqueness of each child, family, school and community are all taken into account, which includes the learning and development of all children, the quality of schools, and the participation of families and communities. Emig, More and Scarupa (2001) define school readiness as a multi-dimensional concept. This multi-dimensional concept is reflected in three components of school readiness identified in 1997 by The US National Education Goals Panel. The three components are children's readiness for school, school's readiness for children, family and community supports, and services that contribute to children's readiness (Dockett and Perry, 2009). Further, school readiness is a product of the interaction between the child and the range of environmental and sociocultural experiences that maximize the developmental outcomes for children (Britto, 2012a). Consequently, the readiness of a child to enter school will be influenced by family, community and school expectations, as well as by children's attributes (Dockett and Perry, 2009).

3. Literature Review

The provision of early years programmes is linked with the economic investment of the country, the socio-cultural traditions of sending a young child to a programme and federal policies

that support the early years (Britto, 2012b). Political, social and economic factors have been investigated to determine the impact on children's school readiness.

In regard to political factors, the federal and provincial governments directly oversee early childhood programs. Federal policies guide provisions for access and quality of early childhood programmes, standards, certification and training of early childhood staff, and resource allocation to education systems (Britto, 2012a). As different political parties of government take over, the federal budget changes over time. Programs for school readiness also shift according to the political party of government taking charge (McCain, Mustard and McCuaig, 2011). In 2007, the Conservative Federal government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit and committed $250 million annually to fund child care spaces (McCain et al., 2011). The Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education came up with Learn Canada 2020, which will be used to enhance Canada's education systems, learning opportunities, and overall education outcomes (Councils of Ministers of Education Canada, 2008). The political inclination towards the improvement of young children and families will impact children's school readiness.

In regard to social factors, school readiness is defined in broad developmental terms (Britto, 2012a). An ecological view of child development framework considers factors related to the child's family, early childhood care and education, schools, neighborhoods and the larger society (Emig et al., 2001). Firstly, the family is the most important context in children's development. Parents play the primary role in supporting their child's development by providing positive, reciprocal and engaging experiences (McCain et al., 2011). Secondly, teachers are among the most crucial factors in building effective schools and ensuring school readiness. The teacher's teaching methodologies and professionalism towards their job are also factors that influence school readiness (McCain et al., 2011). Thirdly, the community sources of social wealth promote better school readiness outcomes for children. Schools that are at the centre of their neighbourhood nurture social networks that extend inside and beyond the school walls (McCain et al., 2011). Therefore, the importance of school readiness is not just for individual children, but also for societal and community development (Britto, 2012a).

In regard to economic factors, school readiness is considered by some as a strategy for economic development (UNICEF, 2012; Britto, 2012a). Income and education status provide the financial stability for families to purchase goods, materials, experiences, and services, which influence the promotion of children's development (Iruka, LaForett and Odom, 2012). Income-related factors include poverty, overcrowding in the home, lack of parental education, lack of support services, and the lack of school transition resources (Emig et al., 2001). Financial challenges can have adverse effects on children's school readiness. Family income is a major influence on whether or not children participate in out-of-home activities with other children. (McCain et al., 2011). Neighborhood poverty is associated with children's school readiness and long-term academic attainment (Emig et al., 2001). One study found that the wealth of the neighbourhood mattered more than individual finances. Impoverished or vulnerable children living in wealthy areas showed a far greater readiness for school than those living in poverty in working-class neighbourhoods (Lapointe, Ford and Zumbo 2007).

4. Theoretical Key Concepts of C.W. Mills and bell hooks

4.1 Theoretical Key Concepts of Charles Wright Mills

Charles Wright Mills was an American sociologist and a social-conflict critic. The key ideas of his theory are the power elite (Mills, 1956), social change by conflict, and the combination of private troubles and public issues (Mills, 1959). Mills' power elite are made up of political, economic and military leaders (Mills, 1956). The powerless are forced to obey the powerful. Mills' power elite implies calling attention to the interwoven interests of the leaders of the military, economic, and political elements of society and suggests that the ordinary citizen is a relatively powerless subject of manipulation by those entities (Mills, 1956). Consequently, Mills' power elite is associated with the political factors of school readiness. The political leaders of federal and provincial governments should take responsibility for creating school readiness policies that would benefit young children and their families as the common citizens of the country. Political leaders exercise power in effective decision making about children's school readiness programs, which leads to an influence on society.

His conflict theory emphasizes that social change comes about through conflict of the distribution of resources, power, and inequality (Mills, 1959). His conflict perspective aims to see society as a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change because of imbalance, disparity and inequality. As a result, social structures are created and divided as the wealthy group and the poor group because of conflict between differing interests. People are then impacted by the creation of social structures because society benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor. In other words, Mills' conflict perspective attunes to the economic factors of children's school readiness. The early childhood system often screens out poorer individuals, not because they are unable to compete academically, but because they cannot afford to pay for their children's extracurricular activities, programmes and services that could enhance their children's learning opportunities. Therefore, Mills' conflict theory indicates that society has an element of conflict and inequality, favoring the wealthy group over the poor group, and illustrates the way of understanding how society works.

Mills described how personal troubles and public issues are related, and emphasized that understanding this relationship is essential for developing a sociological imagination. For Mills, troubles have to do with an individual's character. In contrast, issues have to do with the broad social settings. These broad social settings are matters that transcend these local environments of the individual and the limited range of an individual's life. Based on the power of the sociological imagination to connect personal troubles to public issues, individuals can only perceive their personal experiences that entirely occurred within their own period of history. If personal troubles are in relations with other people, the contexts of matters will be expanded to the historical society as a whole (Mills, 1959). The connection between personal troubles and public issues is linked to the social factors of children's school readiness. An individual perspective on school readiness is useful for understanding how to promote and support a single child to prepare for school. A public and social perspective addresses the development of children's school readiness collectively. For that reason, public issues of children's school readiness suggest that there are different implications for the programmes and policies that serve children. In short, the critical perspectives of C. W. Mills are reflected in power structures and power relationships. These power structures and power relationships suggest whatever decisions policymakers make about children's school readiness will make up the history of their times and make a difference in young children's lives.

4.2 Theoretical Key Concepts of bell hooks

bell hooks is an American author and feminist. She believes that feminism is for everybody and the issues that concern society are deeply rooted in love. bell hooks intentionally writes her name in lower case as an explicit rejection of patriarchal/sexist naming and control of women. She also uses it to distinguish herself from her great-grandmother's name (hooks, 2000b). The key concept of hooks' feminist theory are: sexism and domination as the social problem, a transformative and engaged pedagogy, and a teaching and learning community.

hooks defines feminism as a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression (hooks, 2000b). Sexism is any prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination on the basis of sex. hooks (2000a) calls for a change of the cultural framework of power and camaraderie that is complementary between male and female, one that does not find oppression of others. The change would enable a vision that harbours understanding, appreciation and tolerance for all sexes so that all are in charge of their own destinies uncontrolled by patriarchal, political or capitalist tyrants (hooks, 2000a). hooks encourages us to "imagine a world where there is no domination, self-actualized females and males able to create a beloved community, realizing our dreams of freedom and justice, living the truth that we are all created equal" (hooks, 2000a, p.x). This idea ties in with political factors that impact school readiness. Children can be dominated by those in power, such as the Ministry of Education and school boards by deciding and implementing policies and programmes, which are best for children without consulting and including the opinions of children and their families. Issues that tie in with school readiness and policy include: adequate funding, programmes accessibility, measures of quality, and accountability of school readiness programmes.

In a transformative and engaged pedagogy, hooks promotes an environment where individuals are able to reflect on what they do. As a result, individuals are able to find a sense of meaning and purpose in their everyday lives and the lives that they come in contact with (hooks, 1994). hooks believes that students desire an education that is meaningful. Students must see the link between knowledge and practice in order for learning to become engaging and purposeful. hooks (1994) describes teaching as not merely transmitting information alone. Instead teaching is viewed as a passion and vocation in imparting intellectual and spiritual growth. School readiness policies and practices should provide children opportunity to work on their strengths and interest in order to find meaning and purpose in what they are learning. This key concept ties in with social factors that impact school readiness. Social factors include: parent's perspective of school readiness, teacher's perspective on students which could be influenced by personal biases, beliefs and practices and the Ministry of Education's perspective on school readiness programmes and curriculum content. The perspectives of the parents, teachers, Ministry of Education and school boards influence the policies and guidelines that shape the structure of school readiness program delivery.

In a teaching and learning community, hooks envisions a world where everyone's differences can be acknowledged, everyone feels empowered, valued and respected (hooks, 2000a). This approach ties in with economic factors that impact school readiness. hooks describes a teaching and learning community as an environment that is "life sustaining and mind expanding, a place of liberating mutuality where teacher and student work in partnership" (hooks, 2003, p.xv). Community includes everyone that impacts a child directly or indirectly. hooks raises the issue of the education gap present in the economic society. The economic separation between rich and poor

leads to further inequality. hooks states that there should be a bridge to diminish the education gap and relate everyone in the economic society despite the race a person belongs to, their culture, or their financial status (hooks, 2000b). Policies created for school readiness should be mindful in allowing its participants to feel empowered, valued and respected. School readiness policies should aim to provide opportunities that promote the best potential of every child. To summarize, the key concepts of bell hooks remind us that love and freedom should be present in every decision and action created and implemented for individuals in society. Unity, understanding, appreciation, acknowledgement, empowerment and respect are the outcomes of having love and freedom at the centre of policies and programming.

In essence, the perspectives of C.W. Mills and bell hooks complement each other in representing ways to be critical about issues of domination, equality of opportunities and being mindful of including everybody in society to take part in the decision making and implementation of school readiness programme services and policies. C.W. Mills and bell hooks reminds us of finding the balance between power structures and power relationships which enrich the principles of love and freedom.

5. Using Critical and Feminist Theory to Examine Factors of School Readiness

5.1 Comparison and Contrast of Key Concepts based on Political Factors

Historically, the focus of school readiness was placed primarily on individual children. A contemporary broadened conceptualization of school readiness is regarded as a condition of institutions (Kagan and Rigby, 2003). This condition of institutions acknowledges the readiness of environments that serve young children. Creating the inclusive environments of children's school readiness rely on the powerful leadership of federal, provincial and territorial governments. Mills (1956) argues that society is divided into two groups: the powerful and powerless. The power elite are threefold: political, economic and military institutions (Elwell, 2002). Politics is the real source of power in society and politicians have great power. The executive branch of the federal government represents their interests. Ordinary citizens have no political power to voice their interests (Garner, 2010). In particular, common children and families have neither information or access to the political field, nor can they make policies to benefit children's school readiness. With the growing awareness of the significance of the early years, the federal, provincial and territorial policymaking has an increasing inclination towards investment in preparing for school readiness (Kagan and Rigby, 2003). Thus, Mills' power elite theory reveals politics, holding the substantial power of policy making, as able to make a difference for children's school readiness. The policies represent a powerful and compelling agenda for improving school readiness and promoting the wellbeing of families.

hooks writes that "Feminist politics aims to end domination to free children to be who they are – to live lives where they love justice and where they can live in peace" (hooks, 2000b, p.118). The uncertainty and effectiveness of proper funding, program access, quality and accountability of school readiness programs acts as a barrier for children to live in a world where there is freedom, justice and peace. She asserts that freedom is created when children see how information can transform their lives. hooks believes that children desire an education that is meaningful. She calls for the attention of the Ministers of Education, politicians and policy makers to be authentic, committed and compassionate, to show love through their actions and be able to engage in successful dialogue (hooks, 2000b). Politicians and individuals in the government should put aside

their own biases and personal agenda. "Love can never take root in a relationship based on domination and coercion. There can be no love when there is domination" (hooks, 2000b, p.103).

In regards to political factors, both C.W. Mills and bell hooks consider power to be central. hooks agrees with Mills' idea that the powerful dominate the powerless. Mills' idea that the powerful force the powerless to conform to their interests provides evidence that domination and coercion is present. The difference between the two theorists is that Mills would likely only argue that the powerful can transform issues around school readiness. He does not mention what the powerless can do to be heard and involved. On the other hand, hooks encourages freedom wherein everyone is involved, valued and can implement change. Both theorists focus on power and place emphasis on different variables. Mills acknowledges that the powerful dominate and do not represent the voice of the powerless. hooks promotes inclusion for both the powerful and the powerless. Analyses of political factors is linked to the theoretical concepts. For example, when gathering a team to create school readiness programmes, Mills' key concept can be applied by acknowledging those who take part in the decision making process due to the shared power and expertise they contribute. On the other hand, hooks' key concept can be applied by considering a range of decision makers. These decision makers are not just those holding a government position, but must include those who would benefit the most. Children, families, educators, school board leaders, together with government leaders should collaborate to create school readiness programmes and curriculum. This example provides a perspective of how Mills and hooks' ideas are linked with political factors affecting children's school readiness.

5.2 Comparison and Contrast of Key Concepts based on Social Factors

The factors of children's readiness for school are related to bigger social contexts between individuals and their families, schools, and communities (Dockett & Perry, 2009). Two different levels are addressed for school readiness – an individual level and a population level (Britto, 2012a). The individual level is used to understand school readiness for a single child while the population level considers children collectively. The population perspective cannot be used to make individual level decisions (Britto, 2012a). Mills fully realized the relationship between personal experience and the wider society. Mills' sociological imagination enabled helping individuals to venture out of their own, personal, self-centered view of the world and engage with the social world (Mills, 1959). The view of a single child who is not quite ready for school is considered a personal trouble while the issue of a group of children's readiness or lack of readiness for school becomes a public issue that needs to be addressed for social change. Neither children nor children's school readiness can be isolated from bigger society. Thus, not only does the social factor related to Mills' public issues reject the notion of individual children being labelled ready or not, but it also accepts the impact of children's school readiness depending on the relational social construct. As a result, regarding the social factors that affect a child's school readiness, Mills' public issues indicate that multiple contexts, including families, schools, neighborhoods and early childhood settings, must be involved in creating opportunities for young children to develop and thrive prior to school entry.

hooks advocates making the child's learning environment a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute as a central goal of transformative and engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994). She states that "We must build a community in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor" (hooks, 1994, p. 39). Parents must share the responsibility of parenting. hooks contends that there is a need to create cultural awareness and believes that mutual

partnership between parents and anyone involved with the child is the foundation of love. The child's neighborhood and environment act as a teaching and learning community. hooks explains that a community entails a sense of respect and of valuing children for who they are, and to see and learn new ways of knowing. The knowledge which the community gains is used in meaningful ways that enriches everyday lives (hooks, 2003). To prepare children to be ready for school is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. Our work as a society is not to merely share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of children. This sharing should be delivered in a manner that respects and cares for the soul of the children, she sees this as essential (hooks, 1994).

The similarity between Mills and hooks is that they both categorize their ideas in a micro and macro level, which is seen in our analysis regarding the relationship between the child and the family, as well as children and the society at large. They both believe that the child cannot be separated from the larger context of society. The difference between the two theorists is that Mills' idea branches out from personal troubles and public issues to social change unlike hooks whose idea branches out from love to mutual partnership in society. Mills and hooks' key concepts work in partnership to help understand how social factors impact children's school readiness. According to hooks, positive relationships and exposure to learning opportunities allow a child to feel loved and supported, which could potentially expand to mutual partnerships in society. With love and support, a child's confidence and self-identity are strengthened, thus making a child more ready to learn. On the other hand, Mills' key concept of personal trouble is applicable if a child does not receive adequate exposure to learning opportunities and does not engage in positive relationships. This leads to a public issue wherein members of society (e.g. families, schools, neighbourhoods and communities) are affected. Inadequate learning opportunities and unsupportive relationships hinder a child's ability to be ready to learn. A child experiences self-doubt and learning delay due to the lack of experiences with learning environments and materials. Mills and hooks' ideas provide a holistic view of how a child's school readiness is shaped into a positive or negative outcome. The analysis of the two theories can be applied in the field of Early Childhood Education and Social Work by identifying and examining the variables that influence a child's positive or negative factor in achieving school readiness.

5.3 Comparison and Contrast of Key Concepts based on Economic Factors

Poverty remains one of multiple, inter-related factors affecting school readiness (Isaacs, 2012). Inequality of family income and neighborhood-level resources, and insufficient access to children's support services and resources lead to school readiness gaps among children (Isaacs, 2012). Mills' critical conflict theory shows that unequal distribution of resources and inequality leads to conflict and conflict drives social change (Mills, 1959). Conflict between unequal access and varied quality services creates social structures which impact people (Boundless, 2015). The creation of social structures shows that wealthier families are able to invest more in children's services and get more benefits. In the early childhood education system, poorer children are often excluded. The reason is that they are not rich enough to pay what school readiness requires, rather than being unable to reach the level of school readiness. Poorer children are generally also unable to access high quality services and resources, thus, they remain poor. Such an unequal and insufficient arrangement converts into an unfair cycle of poverty. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. For those children who receive services, quality is highly varied, adding to differentials

in the nature of the early years' experiences. Therefore, Mills' conflict theory is well aware of unequal distributions of wealth that impact children's school readiness.

bell hooks advocates for a change in economic discrimination based on gender, privileged classes and capitalist patriarchy. She states that there should be a bridge to diminish the gap between individuals who have more opportunities versus the ones with little to no opportunities. The teaching and learning community must bridge the education gap and connect everyone to fair opportunities despite their position in the sphere of society (hooks, 2000a). The solution to economic challenges and barriers in her feminist perspective is to "replace the culture of domination with a world of participatory economics grounded in communalism and social democracy. A world without discrimination based on race or gender, a world where recognition of mutuality and interdependence would be the dominant practice of society, a global ecological vision of how the planet can survive and how everyone can have access to peace and well-being" (hooks, 2000a, p.110).

In regard to economic factors, both Mills and hooks recognize the significance between the rich and the poor and how their dynamics might affect children's school readiness. Both theorists acknowledge that people are affected by the impacts of social structure in addition to the unequal distribution of resources and wealth. The theorists take on a different approach in discussing the extent of the topic. hooks is descriptive regarding how change can be done whereas Mills emphasizes the reason for the need to change. Mills and hooks' key concepts tie in with the economic factors of unequal distribution of resources and economic discrimination that impact children's school readiness. Both the theorists identify the same problem. hooks suggests an action plan to conquer the inequality of the distribution of resources and economic discrimination. Her action plan of implementing communalism and social democracy promotes a better chance for children to gain opportunities that boost their readiness to learn. Communalism and social democracy can be seen as independent stakeholders of school readiness initiatives participating in decision making. This means that children are represented and heard and that outcomes of school readiness programmes and curriculum serves the best interest of the child. In contrast, Mills does not propose an action plan to improve the inequality of distribution of resources and to resolve the conflicts of inequality that arise in society.

6. Policy Recommendations

Three policy recommendations are drawn upon the discussions of political, social and economic factors that impact children's school readiness between Mills and hooks.

6.1 Recommendation 1: Social change and preparation policies

According to personal troubles and public issues in Mills' theory, school readiness is not something that influences and impacts children alone. It is an integral part of society. The political task should transform school readiness for a single child into social change and preparation for school readiness collectively. The whole societal system should be fully aware of children's school readiness for a comprehensive range of health, social and parental support services committed to lifelong learning. hooks' concept of community of learning supports Mills' idea that we should look at the whole society to prepare for children's school readiness. hooks believes that mutual partnership between parents and anyone involved with the child strengthens the foundation of love.

The child's neighborhood and environment act as a teaching and learning community. hooks notes that our society is not in merely sharing information but in sharing in the intellectual and spiritual growth of children.

6.2 Recommendation 2: Government leadership for school readiness policies

According to Mills' power elite theory, the substantial power of policy making towards school readiness will change children's health, welfare, education and local agencies. The government can take its leadership role to enhance school readiness for children. If the Ministry of Education and Social Services builds the capacity of readiness to learn, publicly funded school boards will administer and implement shared knowledge and develop Ontario's youngest students with school readiness. The Ministry of Social Services determines which children need services related to school readiness. In addition, the Ministry of Education together with the children and their families, decide on the most meaningful and effective programming that would bring out the best potential of every child. The government should increase continuity polices that involve parents and caregivers in roles within a readiness to learn system. hooks calls for leadership that is rooted in love. An engagement of policy makers, Ministers of Education and politicians that are authentic, committed and compassionate would be able to attain leadership rooted in love. Leadership based on love entails putting aside personal biases and agendas therefore diminishing opportunities for domination and coercion.

6.3 Recommendation 3: School readiness funding policies

According to Mills' conflict theory, unequal distribution of resources and wealth that impact children's school readiness could lead to a change in readiness to learn for children in society. Policies should be developed and implemented to increase the effectiveness of school readiness programmes in response to the issue of inequitable outcomes of schooling and community resources. The Ministry of Education and Social Services could promote the particular funding for school readiness curriculum of the home, of the school, and of the community in order to put children in the early years on a path to lifelong success. hooks encourages freedom wherein everyone is involved and no one is being excluded. The uncertainty and effectiveness of proper funding directly affects the quality and accountability of school readiness programs. Similar to Mills' conflict theory, the insufficient or uneven distribution of funding acts as a barrier for children to access experiences that will equip them to be ready for school. Children's opportunities and freedom to grow are being limited due to challenges in funding policy.

7. Conclusion

The views of C.W. Mills and bell hooks complement each other in a lot of ways. hooks was influenced by critical pedagogy which explains why her key ideas relate to the key ideas of Mills. The themes of domination, oppression, unfairness, exclusion versus democracy, freedom, justice, and inclusion are present and overlap in both their views. To summarize, according to the literature reviewed in this article, social, economic and political factors are interrelated and have an influence on children's school readiness. Supports gained in one area can positively impact other factors and affect the development of a child's school readiness. Aspects of Mills and hooks' perspectives were discussed and compared in order to explore how each might discuss these various factors, which contributed to three policy recommendations for enhancing children's school readiness.

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