Schools as agents of cultural transmission and social control

Résumé

During the development of sociology of education, there have been a move from macro questions of education and social change, and from the notion of input-output of people in education, to a greater concern with problems of curriculum change, teacher-pupil relationship, the formation of pupil identities, in other words to the complex question of how culture is transmitted through schools. This shift is precisely dated from the publication of Knowledge and control (1971), edited by M.F.D Young (Williamson, 1979, P10).

In this essay, which concern the transmission of culture in schools, I have started it by a brief definition of the concept of "culture". The second point deals with the relation that emerges between culture and education. The third step is an outline of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein. They are considered as the theorists of cultural transmission. The final paragraph is dealing with the principles that govern the selection of transmittable knowledge.

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ملخص

خـلال تطـور علـم اجتمـاع التربيـة انتقل الاهتمام من دراسة مسائل التربية الكبرى مثل التغير الاجتماعي و مفهوم الانتمـاء و التخـرج مـن المنظومـة التربويـة إلـى اهتمـام أكبـر بالمشـاكل المتعلقـة بـالتغير في المـنهج و محتـوى التدريس و البرامج و العلاقة بين المعلم و التلميذ و تكوين شخصيات التلاميذ و بقـول آخـر أصـبح الاهتمـام بالقضـايا المعقدة للتربيـة مثـل كيفيـة انتقـال ثقافـة مجتمع ما عن طريق المدارس.

Definition of culture. The word "culture" has often been given many definitions and meanings overtime. This term has now two main usages: the popular and the technical usage. The popular usage tends to mean certain types of interests and activities such as "highbrow" music, literature and art Technically, the term "culture" as used by anthropologists and sociologists means "everything that exists in a society"(1).

Lawton (1975) goes further more to say that "culture includes everything that is (man-made), technological artefacts, skills, attitudes and values"(2).

Hoebel (1960) considers that "culture is more than a collection of mere isolated bits of behavior. It is the integrated sum total of learned behavior traits which are manifest and shared by the members of a society"(3).

For Taylor (1871) "culture is....that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and

habits acquired by man as a member of a society" (4).

Singleton (1974) defines culture in an educational angle as "The shared products of human learning", and from a psychological orientation, Singleton sees culture as "Standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it"(5).

Culture has some specific characteristics, which we ought to point out here. Charles Valentine (1968) has suggested that the use of the culture concept in anthropology imply three major assumptions.

1) Culture is universal. All people have cultures and therefore share a common humanity.

2) Culture is organized, there is a coherence and structure among the patterns of human behavior and meaning.

3) Culture is the product of human creativity. It is the collective product of human experience and shared interpretations of that experience as communicated within specific groups (6).

But the concept of culture also involves in the same time three meanings paradoxes related to the three assumptions mentioned previously.

1) Culture is stable, yet it is also dynamic and manifests continuous and constant change.

2) Culture fills and largely determines the course of our lives, yet rarely intrudes into conscious thought (7).

These paradoxes found in the concept of culture explain why some anthropologists such as Ruth Bendict emphasis on the differences between cultures while others stress the similarities between them, such as Clyde Kluckholm (8).

The relationship between culture and education: Lawton (1975) sees the relation of culture to education emerging from two major educational problems associated with "culture". The first one is concerning the extent to which it is possible to identify a general or common culture as the basis for a curriculum selection. The second problem concern the extent to which sub-cultures or aspects of sub-cultures should be reflected in educational programs or processes of curriculum selection (9).

Lawton (1975) takes the view of three educationalists who have grapple with such problems.

The first one is Bantock. According to his point of view, the culture of a society such as ours, can be subdivided into high and low, upper class and folk. They might both be categorized under the same headings, at least to some extent, such as music, art, etc..., but they are essentially different. The most important difference between these two cultures is the non-literary, oral tradition of folk culture. Bantock believes that

لقد بدأ هذه المرحلة في البحث منذ نشــــر كتــــاب (المعرفــة و الرقابـــة الاجتماعيـــة) لمؤلفـــه م.ف.د يـــونج (ويليامسون 1979).

أردت مــن خـــلال هـذا المقــال أن أظهر دور المدارس في نقل الثقافة في المجتمـع، و بدأت عن طريـق تعريـف مفهوم الثقافـة ثـم أظهـرت العلاقـة بين الثقافـة و التربيـة و التعلـيم و تعرضـت إلـى نظريـات بيـار بورديـو و بـازل برنستاين باعتبارهما من المنظرين في ميدان انتقال الثقافة وفي الأخير ذكرت المبـادئ التـي تحكم عمليـة الانتقاء فـي انتقال الثقافة و المعرفة.

public or mass education has so far been a dismal failure, and this is largely because we have attempted to force a literary culture to the masses whose tradition is an oral one.

Lawton (1975) argues that there is an evident similarity between Bantock and the views of Eliot. He clearly identified the most worthwhile aspects of culture with the existence of small, governing, leisured class. This class, according to Eliot, was necessary in order to create and preserve the "high" cultural heritage and also to ensure its transmission to the next generation of that class. Eliot seemed to find the idea of common culture distasteful, or even necessarily a contradiction from the fact that the diffusion of the precious cultural commodity among large members could only be a dilution of quality. Bantock shares Eliot"s disbelief in the desirability of a common culture, but he argues that the case with closer reference to educational practice should merit a careful examination.

The conclusion drawn from Bantock analysis is that there should be two kinds of curriculum, a high culture curriculum for a small minority who are academically minded, and a totally different "non-literary" curriculum for the masses.

In his outline of an alternative curriculum for the mass population, Bantock suggests that it should have the following characteristics, the curriculum should be aimed at practical common life, it should be concrete and specific rather than abstract, it should includes aspects of television, film and popular press.

Bantock support his views by referring to Bernstein's work on language, the psychological views of Burt, Eysenck and Jensen to stress the importance of heredity in the distribution of knowledge.

There have been many criticisms and doubtful questions put forwards to the views of Bantock. I do not think that it is necessary to draw them up in this essay.

The second curriculum theorist is Hirst. Bantock rejected his views. Hirst point of view about curriculum selection is largely "non-cultural" in the sense being transcultural. This is because Hirst sees the curriculum largely in terms of knowledge and the structure and organization of knowledge is, by his analysis, universal rather than culturally based. For this reason, Hirst will have no truck with different kinds of curriculum for different levels of ability, or different areas, or different sub-cultural interests. According to Hirst, the main objectives of education are concerned with knowledge, most school knowledge should not be bound to specific sub-cultures. Hirst admits that the knowledge is objective and universal, therefore if we are serious in our desire to educate everyone in a society, then everyone must have access to the same kinds of knowledge because everyone needs the same kinds of curriculum.

For Hirst, then, the traditional secondary curriculum, with some important modifications such as the inclusion of social sciences and moral education, will provide the appropriate selection from the culture for all pupils. He considers that the question of sub-cultural background of the pupils is irrelevant to the ends (or goals) of education, but may be very relevant to the means (i.e. teaching method and content).

Lawton (1975) points out the similarity that exists between Hirst and John White in his book "Towards a compulsory curriculum (1973)".

White accepts Hirst's basic thesis, but he develops the forms of knowledge into a curriculum subdivided into what should be compulsory and what should be offered optional experiences.

Williams is the final example of theorists with views on the relation between culture and education.

Williams believes that we cannot discuss the relation between culture and education adequately without historical analysis. The past for him is contained in the present. Therefore Williams sees culture in a historical setting, in particular, he examines cultural change taking place over a long period of time.

His analysis also, shows that educational change has not kept pace with social change and cultural change, and indeed that in his view, education has taken several false turnings.

Williams focuses attention on the unsuitability of a class-based nineteenth-century structure of education and devise curricula for the needs of a democratic, industrial twentieth-century society.

The solution, which Williams adopts, includes a common curriculum for all pupils, but unlike Hirst, he does not see the traditional curriculum as providing a useful basis (10).

Lawton (1975) concludes, from what was outlined previously, that the three theorists recognize the importance of the transmission of culture as the basis of education, but they also differ considerably in the emphasis they place on certain aspects of culture and also the kinds of selection they would make as a basis of curriculum planing (11).

Theories of cultural transmission in sociology of education.

Among the sociologists, who have a deep interest in cultural transmission, are Bourdieu and Bernstein. The approaches of Bernstein, Bourdieu and the new sociologists of education have some striking similarities, notably a concern with how social structure (especially social class) shapes educational phenomena (curriculum, pedagogy, teacher-student interaction), testing and how these, in tern, reproduce social inequality. But, unlike, the "new" sociologists of education, Bernstein and Bourdieu have stressed how class differences in language style affect educational interactions and outcomes. Furthermore, they have quite explicitly tried to draw connections between education and social structure. They have been obviously influenced by Emile Durkheim who believes that education meets social needs, which are consensually accepted in the society (12).

I shall, first of all, try to outline the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu. Swartz (1977) affirms that Bourdieu's theory of the higher educational system is part of a more general theory of cultural transmission (pedagogical action) that links knowledge, power, socialization and education.

Bourdieu finds that it is through socialization and education that relatively permanent cultural dispositions are internalized, these in turn, play the role of structuring individual and group behavior in ways that tend to reproduce existing class relations (13).

Swartz (1977) reported that Bourdieu does not simply explain patterns of inequality by using statistics or educational input-output data. But his focus was on the process through which cultural knowledge and style operates as carriers of social inequality. "Cultural capital" is a central concept in Bourdieu's theory which enables him to analyze general cultural background, knowledge disposition, and skills as analogous to

economic goods that are produced, distributed, and consumed by individuals and groups.

Bourdieu points out the existence of unequal distribution of cultural capital among the social classes in levels of educational attainment and patterns of cultural consumption. For instance, most university diplomas are held, in France, by individuals of upper class origins and very few are held by children of farmers and factory workers.

According to Swartz (1977) there are three themes recurring in Bourdieu's work. First, academic performance is linked to cultural background. Bourdieu finds that children's academic performance is more strongly related to parent's educational performance history than parent's occupational status.

Secondly, schooling does make a difference. The educational system "retranslates" the initial degree of educational opportunity and amount of inhirited cultural capital into characteristically academic traits.

Finally, Bourdieu, systematically, relates the selective process of education to social-class structure without reducing this relationship to one of simple class determinism.

Swartz (1977) argues that because Bourdieu views educational transmission as a means of conveying status inequality, he looks to the structural features of curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation for an explanation of this pattern.

Bourdieu considers that the traditional program of humanist studies, which is used as a preparatory track or stream, for the entrance to the university and to get in the elite professional school in France, is tangential to the kinds of skills needed in the job market. This curriculum can be appreciated only by students whose economic background assures them a professional security. Moreover, this program acts as a selection device in the sense that academic success in the humanities requires general cultural awareness and a refined and elegant style of language. Therefore, curriculum content and style offer advantages to those who possess the "educational profitable linguistic capital of bourgeois languages" (14).

Swartz (1977) draws attention to the oral transmission of knowledge in formal lectures, which defines the traditional method of instruction. On the ground of this idea, Bourdieu makes the interesting observation that even the physical organization of the french universities-lectures halls, amphitheaters, podiums rather than small seminar rooms or even libraries testifies to the pre-eminence of the spoken word. The formal lecture elevates the role of the professor as the legitimate transmitter of cultural goods. Therefore classroom knowledge in Bourdieu's opinion is not the outcome of negotiated meanings between students and teachers but rather the imposition of legitimate symbolic meanings by the instructor (15).

Finally, Swartz (1977) argues about the views of Bourdieu by saying that Bourdieu's work is highly stimulating and thought provoking, if at times rather tedious to read. It would be helpful if he included a more systematic and complete presentation of his own research along with more frequent comparisons with other theoretical positions and available empirical findings. Many of his most interesting insights and theoretical formulations are presented without backing or specifications of appropriate empirical tests (16).

The second sociologist of education who devoted his attention to the subject of

cultural transmission is Bernstein.

In the first part of "Class, codes and control" (volume 3), he seeks to explain the various dimensions of school culture and specially to deduce the major consequences that flow from their interrelations (17).

Cherkaoui (1977) reported that Bernstein, following Durkheim, identifies two organically linked behavioral complexes that the school transmits to the pupil. Bernstein calls these the "expressive order" and the "instrumental order". This later concept is defined as the body of facts, procedures, practices, and judgements needed to acquire specific skills which can generally be measured by objective methods. This order is transmitted so as to divide pupils according to differences in ability. In this way, the heams or tracks, which appear at the beginning of secondary education, or even earlier, reflect hierarchies manufactured by the instrumental order. While these cleavages mainly affect the pupils, the teaching corps also very rapidly becomes stratified. These intrascholaristic stratification are both dependent on and modulated by psychological and social characteristics, such as age, sex, and social class of the individuals involved. Further more, Cherkaoui (1977) argues that even though, Bernstein hardly mentions it, the instrumental order is subject to indirect impact of the process of economic production.

On the other hand, Cherkaoui (1977) exposes the definition of Bernstein's "expressive order". He defines it as a body of ideas, conduct and behaviors shared by everyone, of individual characteristics. The expressive order is regarded as the fundamental basis of social integration.

In Bernstein's views, the "instrumental order" divides where as the "expressive order" unifies. By promoting shared school values, the "expressive order" constitutes the principal mechanism of social consensus that allows the school to be a genuine moral collectivity.

According to Cherkaoui's expose, Bernstein links his discussion of the general process or transmitting knowledge and shaping attitudes to an original conception of rituals to the school. Bernstein divides these rituals into two groups: consensual rituals and differentiating rituals. The former are powerfully cohesive, tending to bind all the school into a single community, to bind school values to those of certain dominant social groups, and thereby to facilitate social integration. Consensual rituals involve different types of ceremony and sets of specific signs, such as clothing, chants and jocks. Differentiation rituals are less cohesive than consensual rituals, they distinguish among groups in terms of age, sex and other characteristics, but they simultaneously deepen the bonds within each group, heighten respect for those in authority and thereby create order overtime. Together, the two types of rituals are major mechanisms of internalization, of actualization of the social order and hence of control of loyalty to this order. In most recent work, Bernstein modifies and enriches his concepts. For instance, the concept-pair of expressive and instrumental order is dissolved to give way to a newer conceptualization.

Cherkaoui (1977) argues that Bernstein has three levels of abstraction in his theory of curriculum change and principles of social control. The first level is curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, and the second is concerned with classification and framing, and the third is the "educational knowledge code".

The first level

According to Bernstein, the school curriculum defines what is regarded as valid knowledge, pedagogy refers to the valid transmission of knowledge, and the evaluation is the measurement of pupils assimilations of knowledge. Curriculum is connected to the principles governing the relations among "contents" of different field of study (e.g. maths, history) taught in school.

These relations among contents may be subjected to a variety of analysis, from merely determining the status of contents by comparing the amount of time devoted to each, to subtler more important considerations regarding their relative degrees of openness or closeness. Bernstein calls the degree of openness or closeness the principle of the "strength of the boundary between contents" (18).

These two types of open and close axis of correspond to two kinds of curricula. The first one is the "collection types" where relations among contents are closed and the pupils are expected to collect a series of precise contents in order to satisfy evaluation criteria, the other one is the "integrated type" where, on the contrary, the contents are openly related to each other (19).

The second level

Cherkaoui (1977) reported that the degree of openness or closeness between content underlie "classification" and "framing" of educational knowledge. Bernstein believes that classification "does not refer to what is classified but to the relationships between contents" (quoted in Cherkaoui, 1977). In other words, classification is referring to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents framing, on the other hand, refers to all the process of control over contents, in short, to the power of the teacher and the pupil to transform the organization of the space, time and setting in which these contents are taught. Bernstein admits that while classification relates to curriculum and framing to pedagogy, evaluation is a function of both classification and framing (20).

The third level

The educational knowledge code governs all systems of messages in the school (curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation) though the mediation of underlying structure formed by classification and framing. The educational code, however, is not reducible to pure processes of knowledge transmission, it also gives rise to categories of thought, ways of thinking, and modes of perceiving and evaluating one's own educational status.

Bernstein subdivides the educational knowledge code into two types: the "integrated code" and the "collection code". This latter one tends to keep categories of knowledge distinct and pure, creating different identities for pupils in different fields of study. The "integrated code", on the hand, reduces the isolation of the different content, these by both diminishing the teachers authority and increasing that of the pupil (21).

Principles which govern the selection of transmittable knowledge

Evetts (1973) argues that education is used as a powerful instrument of social control that can be utilized to promote almost any social goal. She has attempted to analyze how education is involved in the creation and transmission of values and the way that the development and institutionalization of knowledge and intellectual styles contributes to the social order, culture and tradition of any social structure (22).

She believes that "all educational theories are political theories, all educational arguments and ideas contain values-assumptions and includes visions of utopias" (23).

As a practical example of those arguments, she points out the situation in South Africa. Everything about South African society is affected by the race problem. The government makes this its major concern. The state controls the educational system to ensure the national policy of race relations. The same thing has happened in the national socialist regime in Hitler's Germany, which has provided an example of a dominant regime giving shape and direction to the educational system.

In Evetts's opinion, all societies with a formalized state organized educational system, education is designed to promote specific political and social goals. In socialist countries, like Russia, with its socialist economy and ideology, education clearly means training individual materialism and socialism.

In capitalist countries, like the U.S.A, where economic and political freedom are emphasized, education is equivalent to training in American traditions, which are definitely anti-socialist. In Britain, also education includes training in British traditions which are emphasized by idealist who see the educational system stimulating, promotion and maintaining an intellectual elite. However, in this country, they give the opportunity to each teacher to develop his own argument on the ground that they are advocators of democracy (24).

Even though, the previous examples show clearly that education is a tool of social control, Evetts (1973) finds that until recently, sociologists have hardly considered education as an instrument of social control. The "new" sociologists of education have given a reason that explains this situation. For instance, M.F.D Young (1971) has argued that this latter matter is caused by the fact that the content of education has not been examined in terms of how contemporary definition of culture have consequences for organization of knowledge in the school system. And this is why Williamson (1979) has argued that schools should not be regarded simply as people processing institutions, but they should be seen as agents of cultural transmission and social control (25).

M.F.D Young (1971) focus his attention on the contribution of Marxist thought to the sociology of Knowledge and curriculum, and particularly, their writings about the use of education as a mean of social control.

Young (1971) points out the contribution of Raymond Williams (1961) who has distinguished four sets of educational philosophies or ideologies which rationalized different emphases in the selection of content of curriculum. He relates these to the social position of those who hold them. Also, he suggests that curricula changes have reflected the relative power position of the different groups over the last hundred years (26).

Ideology	Social position	Educational policies
1) Liberal, conservative	Aristocracy, gentry	Non vocational, educated man emphasis on character
2) Bourgeois	Merchan and professional classes	Higher vocational and professional courses. Education as access desired position.
3) Democratic	Radical reformers	Expansionist,

| 4) Populist, proletarian | Working classes, subordinate groups | "education for all" Student relevance, choice, participation. |

M.F.D. Yourng (1971) has pointed out another example. It is the contribution of the italian marxist Antonio Gramsci. His main concern was with both the role of the intellectuals and what he called the cultural hegemony, which he considered as imposed on the working classes that are, thus prevented from thinking for them. He argues that they are in a position where knowledge available to certain groups becomes "school knowledge" or "education" and that available to others does not have this wright (27).

Finally, Young (1971) draws attention to the ideas of Max Weber and Wilkinson.

Weber identifies three characteristics of the education of Chinise literacy (or administrators). He explains their curriculum selection by relating it to the characteristics of what he called the patrimonial bureaucracy, in which administration was carried out by referring to the classical tests. Any change in curriculum would have undermined the legitimacy of the power of the administration whose skills, therefore had to be defined as "absolute".

Wilkinson has a similar thesis about the classical curriculum of the nineteenth century English Public Schools. Both, Weber and Wilkinson are suggesting that curricula are defined in terms of the dominant group's idea of the "educated man" (28).

Williamson (1979) believes that some theorists claim to offer a marxist interpretation in education phenomena.
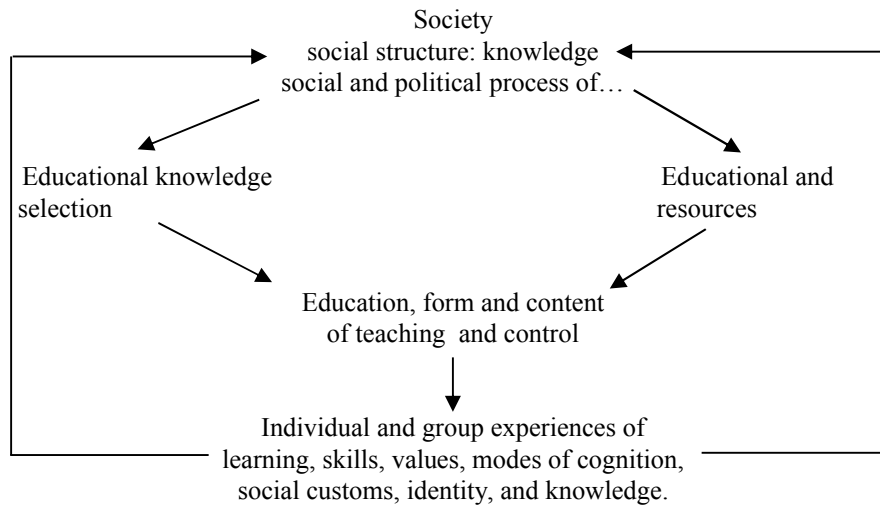
Althusser (1972), Bowles and Gintis (1976) assume that the main function of education is to prepare people for their economic fate in capitalist society, either to be exploiters or to be exploited. Education, in their opinion, has to be studied in its relationship to forms of production and to process of occupational placement. For Bowles and Gintis, the educational system "tailors the self-concepts aspiration, and social class identifications of individuals to the requirements of the social division of labor" (29).

They argue that when the pupil has no control aver his work in school, this reflects alienated labor. They consider also that the fragmentation of the labor force through skill levels and competition has its counter-part in the fragmentation of pupils through competition for scare academic reward (30).

Williamson (1979) argues that Berger, Luckman (1966), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) are in contrast although not in opposition. They all, however, have a common preoccupation with education and reproduction.

He draws out schematically the main outlines of their way of thinking about education.

Williamson (1979) believes that the static diagram indicates that what is available as education in a given society is the outcome of political process which determine the pattern of educational facilities and the content of what is to be learned. It indicates also that the daily practice of schools is geared to transmitting and legitimating a given taken -for-granted view of the world and that learning is a process of acquiring the concepts and values of a culture (31).

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Society
social structure: knowledge
social and political process of…

Educational knowledge
selection

Educational and
resources

Education, form and content
of teaching and control

Individual and group experiences of
learning, skills, values, modes of cognition,
social customs, identity, and knowledge.

A schema for the analysis of education

CONCLUSION

From this essay we can conclude the importance of school as agents of cultural transmission and social control. We have found that a lot of sociologists argue that schools are used to transmit a certain type of culture and used also to make a certain control over society especially to maintain the social and the political system in a society.

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