

Knowledge and Power: Determinations of Educational Curriculum

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Several recent contributions to the sociology of education have attempted to present and assess the various theoretical perspectives utilized to examine schooling (Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Hurn, 1978; Murphy, 1979). This work has been valuable in developing an understanding of the current sociological debates concerning education. What is lacking in these discussions, however, is a systematic appraisal of the basic assumptions of the various sociological approaches to the study of curriculum. For example, in his assessment of theoretical explanations in the sociology of education, Murphy (1979) sees the relationship between social classes (or status groups) and school attainment as being of paramount importance. Curriculum is accorded analytical treatment by Murphy mainly in terms of the way it serves as a selection mechanism in the schooling process. He tends to ignore significant underlying factors which may affect how sociologists within each perspective view curriculum. Studies and reviews which

focus primarily on the problem of stratification run the risk of taking the curriculum for granted, as a 'given'. From this viewpoint the curriculum itself is not problematic, rather the concern is over differential appropriation of classroom knowledge.

Analysis which specifically centers on curriculum, however, does not adequately deal with the relationship between knowledge and power as this is manifested in the curriculum. On the one hand, curriculum is seen to be the outcome of 'negotiations' between teacher and students, thus downplaying external constraints on the interaction process. On the other hand, advocates for greater teacher and student autonomy in the development of curriculum underestimate the powerful forces and linkages which circumscribe the decision-making abilities of those involved in the educational process. Alternatively, the 'overdetermined' approach goes beyond the 'given', 'negotiated', and 'reformist' approaches in its analysis of knowledge and control as it locates the educational system in the complex totality that is society. The differences between these approaches are to be found in certain identifiable notions of each concerning the nature of curriculum.

Theoretical Considerations

In the study of education it is useful to recognize the theoretical assumptions, both explicit and implicit, which underlie one's research. Following the lead of Sharp and Green (1975: 4), the theme of this section will be

... not so much to chart the accomplishments of the available research showing just what substantive issues have been researched and illustrating the appropriate variables, but to look at the conceptual frameworks within which these 'findings' are generated.

More specifically, I am interested in delineating certain basic assumptions of various sociological approaches to the study of curriculum. As a general

formulation curriculum is that which defines what counts as valid knowledge (Bernstein, 1971), knowledge referring here to ideas, beliefs and values which are transmitted in the classroom. Recognizing the multitude of theories and theoretical positions on the understanding of curriculum, it should be stressed that I do not intend an exhaustive appraisal of each. I do, however, maintain that these varied perspectives can be categorized in a fashion which reflects the essential vantage point from which each views curriculum. Accordingly, I propose to examine four approaches to the study of curriculum: the 'given', the 'negotiated', the 'reformist', and the 'overdetermined'.

In the 'given' approach to the study of classroom knowledge, curriculum is viewed as a received body of understanding that is transmitted in the school and is accepted a priori as being legitimate and unproblematic. From this perspective classroom knowledge is considered as objective 'fact'. In that knowledge is perceived to be external to the knower, it can be appropriated by the student, and, as such, can become the private possession of each individual. There is little question of the specific interests which may determine the nature of classroom knowledge. Indeed, the problem of curriculum, from this approach, is one of appropriation -- that is, how to make the established curriculum, (i.e., that knowledge which claims legitimacy) more relevant, and therefore teachable, to the student. This particular approach is most evident in the prevailing traditions in the sociology of education: structural functionalism and methodological empiricism (see Sharp and Green, 1975; Karabel and Halsey, 1977). Although these labels are used to designate a vast number of theories and a whole gamut of research orientations, certain common features can be found which identify these types of work as being part of a 'tradition'. For instance,

functionalist theories a) take for granted existing institutional arrangements of education, b) underplay possible structural determinations of educational processes, and c) often ignore the role of man as an active participant in the production of knowledge. By seeing the educational system primarily in terms of its significance in the maintenance of social equilibrium or consensus, they tend to downplay any necessary structural incongruities within the school or society itself.¹ On the other hand, empiricist studies, which tend to adopt a positivistic methodology, are characterized by a particular epistemological stance to social reality. In this tradition the recording of 'facts' is paramount, rather than the prior issue of clarifying the conceptual scheme operating behind the collection and recording of these facts. In many cases these studies "are guided by structural functionalism which influences the formulation of the problems to be studied and the areas within which solutions can be sought" (Sharp and Green, 1975:2).

As I have mentioned, the tradition of structural functionalism tends to emphasize the maintenance of an ongoing social equilibrium. Characterized by an over-integrated view of social structure and an over-socialized view of man this perspective postulates the human actor as being passively socialized into consensual institutional frameworks. By emphasizing the role of the school in promoting consensus researchers in this tradition tend to downplay the notion of conflict.² In viewing the role of the school in society in an uncritical manner the specific interests which underlie the schooling process are left unexamined. Not only does this perspective underestimate the importance of conflict and ideology, it also leads one to neglect the content of the educational process.³ In other words, what counts as knowledge and why this particular knowledge is

transmitted in the school are questions which this perspective does not address. The school plays a major role in maintaining social order, but this social order itself is not considered problematic.

The methodological empiricist tradition can be criticized in that while a great deal of statistical information can be gathered there are few theoretical or conceptual breakthroughs for interpreting such data (Sharp and Green, 1975). In many such studies an underlying value consensus is assumed. Although there may be some concern with power such research ignores conflict. For example, Brophy and Good (1974: 3) have compiled a number of studies which "focus attention on the individual student's present status, his pattern of strengths and weaknesses, his methods of approaching problems, and his interests, in order to prescribe an education experience which is likely to succeed for him where others have failed". This type of statistical research may highlight the problem of differential achievement within the schools. Methodological innovations may be introduced to facilitate the collection of data and thus the mapping out of observable phenomena and the relations between them in which concern centres on individual differences (according to demographic, social and psychological criteria). Consideration is not given to the underlying structure of relations which determine the patterns of school inequality. Being policy oriented with respect to 'improving' the classroom situation (i.e., to increasing the opportunity of various students to appropriate what the school has to offer as it may appear to the researcher) there is a tendency for this kind of work to take for granted the dominant institutional arrangements of education. The results of such studies can lead to the implementation of compensation and intervention programmes, but they give us little insight into the interests which are at the root of the inequality and they provide no

alternatives to the existing educational system. In that the emphasis

is on neutrality and the method is numerical, methodological empiricism is well adapted to the interests of administration, for it leaves ends in the hands of policy-makers and concentrates the efforts of the social scientist on the means by which these ends may be attained (Karabel and Halsey, 1977: 17).

In recent years, the 'given' approach to curriculum as exemplified by structural functionalism and the methodological empiricist tradition has been criticized by sociologists who feel that research must focus on the levels of subjective meaning which are created in any social setting. The approach to the study of curriculum used by these people is the 'negotiated' perspective in which curriculum is seen as negotiable, as an artifact. Knowledge is viewed as a process, something which is mutually created in the classroom. Learning is the outcome of negotiation between teachers and students about meanings.

"Sociological phenomenology" is a broad and general term which can be used to describe the study of those researchers who feel that the social structure is a human construction and therefore 'reality' is that which is negotiated in any given social situation. In the sociology of education that research which raises questions about 'streaming', 'selection', and the 'unintended consequences of educational arrangements' is criticized from this perspective for treating as unproblematic 'what it is to be educated'. For Michael Young (1971a) the starting point is 'what counts as educational knowledge' (i.e., the social organization of knowledge in educational institutions). Young's concern in the early part of the 1970s was over the interrelation of the process of knowing and knowledge as a product. In other words, recognizing that existing categories (e.g., learning-play) must be conceived as socially constructed, Young (1971b) was interested in the nature of the negotiation

process which occurred in the context of teacher-student relations. Basil Bernstein (1971) and Nell Keddie (1971) share similar concerns. For instance, Bernstein explores the concept of 'boundary' in order to see both the power and control components of the structuring of educational knowledge. Likewise, Keddie casts as problematic what were held to be knowledge and ability in the school.

The phenomenological approach is lucidly presented by Esland(1971) as well. He criticizes the notion of man presented not as world-producer, but as world-produced, (i.e., the objectivistic view of knowledge -- an image of man which is prevalent in the structural functionalist tradition). As an alternative he states that we must see knowledge in terms of "the entire complex process of intersubjective negotiation of meanings" (1971: 75). While emphasizing man's active construction of experience Esland argues that, in the schools, legitimation of knowledge is located at different levels, e.g., teachers, headmasters, and so on. The central concern for Esland is to examine the ways and means in which teachers apprehend the world and to explain why and how these perspectives change over time.

The sociological phenomenology which characterizes most of the articles in Young's book, Knowledge and Control (1971), has been criticized for a number of reasons.⁴ By focusing solely on the levels of subjective meaning this perspective is 'guilty', to a certain extent, of 'subjective idealism'. Michael Young (1976) brings this point home when he critically examines two contrasting conceptions of the curriculum. He situates the conception of 'curriculum as fact' as being in opposition to the conception of 'curriculum as practice', and proceeds to criticize both approaches to the study of curriculum. The 'curriculum as fact' conception, which arises out of the structural

functionalist perspective, sees curriculum as the structure of socially prescribed knowledge which is external to the knower. Not only are students passive in this model but teachers are presented as passively reproducing the knowledge which is produced elsewhere by others. Teaching, then, merely means the transmission of preordained knowledge. By seeing curriculum as having a life of its own, this conception obscures the human relations in which it, as any conception of knowledge, is embedded.

'Curriculum as practice', on the other hand, views curriculum as how men collectively attempt to order their world and in the process produce knowledge. "Knowledge becomes that which is accomplished in the collaborative work of teachers and pupils" (Young 1976: 188). The problem with this model is that it reduces the social reality of curriculum to the subjective intentions and actions of teachers and pupils.

Similarly, by isolating classroom interaction as the sole focus of attention, the phenomenological approaches divorce the process of educational learning from other significant aspects of the social structure. Sharp and Green (1975: 10) for example, point out that,

Whilst it may be useful from an analytical point of view to differentiate different levels of analysis -- the classroom from the school, the school from the community and so on -- it is important to avoid reifying this analytic distinction and treating the different levels of analysis as theoretically distinct. The social processes which occur within classrooms, whilst they may not merely reproduce mechanically wider societal processes, are certainly not autonomous from them.

By directing attention to the so-called microlevel interactions rather than to the larger social structure there is a tendency in studies of this sort to avoid direct confrontation with the status quo. Insofar as this type of classroom analysis is not related to social structure

it may "ignore the constraints under which human actors operate and so ... exaggerate the fragility of the daily routine of school life" (Karabel and Halsey, 1977: 58). What needs to be done is to integrate interactional analysis, which considers the management of knowledge as its central problem, with a structural analysis, which places greater emphasis on power and interests that may underlie the schooling process.

A key difficulty, then, with sociological phenomenology is that it underplays "the extent to which negotiation of meaning in social situations takes place within a context of material and other givens where certain things are non-negotiable" (Sharp and Green, 1975: 29). The starting point for an analysis of classroom knowledge, in my view, should be the ways in which material circumstances affect activity and consciousness. This is to say that I am interested in how material conditions provide the opportunities made available and the constraints imposed upon what is to be transmitted via the educational system.

To a certain extent the 'reformist' approach to the study of curriculum moves in this direction. This approach is an attempt to juxtapose the notion that there is a given body of knowledge which is considered legitimate at a particular moment in time with the position that definitions, evaluations and distribution of knowledge can change over time. To put it differently, the reformist approach recognizes that in a particular time-space location there will be some knowledge which is transmitted as given, but what gets to count as curriculum, (i.e., the definitions of what is accepted truth) is subject to the changing objective realities in which the curriculum is developed. Central to this perspective is not so much the form and content of the learning process, but examination of the exercise of power in the development of curriculum. In analyzing the practice of curriculum

in the school, this approach, being primarily policy oriented, concentrates on the question of who makes curriculum decisions within the educational institution. For example, Eggleston (1977) uses what I have called the reformist approach to examine the struggle for control over the curriculum. One of his concerns is to identify the parameters of the teachers' and the students' roles in the development of curriculum. Following this, he argues for the necessity of teacher autonomy combined with greater input from pupils, such that the definition of curriculum knowledge will lie with the main protagonists in the educational process. Essentially it appears that Eggleston's main emphasis is on increasing the decision-making role of teachers and students, as this presumably awakens them to a 'shared understanding of the human condition'.

The main problem with this approach to classroom knowledge is that it tends to simplify the complex set of constraints on educational practices and it under-estimates the strong linkages between educational institutions on the one hand and the state and the economy on the other. The production of a "model curriculum appropriate for an active democratic society" is not nearly as 'easy' to achieve as Eggleston (1977: 150) seems to suggest. Ideally, for Eggleston, schooling should result in differentiated curriculum achievements where the diverse backgrounds of the teachers and students can be accommodated by making them active participants in the schooling process. He uses the concept of power primarily in the context of a policy debate over whether decisions about curriculum development should continue to reside in present organizational arrangements (e.g., school boards, etc.) or whether they should be placed in the hands of the teachers and students themselves. The guiding rationale for Eggleston's approach to the study of curriculum arises not so much from concern at a theoretical level over what curriculum is, or the

processes through which it is produced, but what can be done on a practical, everyday level to change the roles of those involved in the definition, evaluation and distribution of knowledge in the educational system. There is little discussion of the ideological nature of schooling practices as these pertain to the class nature of capitalist society.

Eggleston's analysis places great emphasis on power as it affects the roles teachers and students are called upon to play in curriculum development. What is lacking in this approach is adequate consideration of the linkages between schooling practices and the structure of class relations in wider society, and the mechanisms whereby class power and class interests are manifested in the classroom. Hence, although he argues that curriculum ought to enhance the expectations and capacity of students to exercise power, Eggleston (1977: 71) leaves one wondering to what ends such an exercise is directed. This leads to a consideration of the fourth approach to the study of curriculum.

The 'overdetermined' approach⁵ also looks at the relationship between knowledge and power, but the primary emphasis is on viewing classroom knowledge in terms of the socio-political context within which it exists. In doing so it looks to the specific determinants of educational practices. The central concern is: 'whose interests does that knowledge which is transmitted in and by the school represent?' What is problematic in this kind of study is the content of the typifications and the context in which they emerge (Sharp and Green, 1975). This approach views curriculum, both the officially and explicitly recognized subject matter, and the unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted, as being 'overdetermined' by class interests. In examining what counts as valid knowledge this perspective maintains that the attitudes, values and beliefs which arise

out of the educational experience to a large extent may not relate to the workings of the 'real' world. The school is seen as acting instrumentally to legitimate and reproduce the fundamental inequalities of capitalist society by shaping the subjective disposition of the participants such that the existing social order is accepted as is. The process of overdetermination refers not only to the class bias in the transmission of classroom knowledge, but also to the limits of, and pressures on, curriculum as imposed by the capitalist class by virtue of its control and ownership of the material means of economic and cultural production.⁶

It can be said that this approach to curriculum is an attempt to tackle one of the main unresolved problems of Bernstein's work --- how it is that "power relationships penetrate the organization, distribution and evaluation of knowledge through the social context" (quoted in Karabel and Halsey, 1977: 71). In the next section this problem is discussed in greater depth and an attempt is made to conceptualize the nature of the determinations of educational practices.

Knowledge and Power in the Educational Process

The practico-social function of ideas in their relation to the ruling class is crucial to the existence and degree of hegemony exercised in society. The 'over-determined' approach to the study of curriculum attempts to discover and examine the mechanisms specific to the educational system which reflect the power and interests of the capitalist class and which serve to reproduce class relations.⁷ These can be linked to external forces which impinge upon the process of schooling. Class and classroom, in this view, should be examined in terms of two questions. These are

(a) "What counts as valid knowledge in the school?" which leads one to consider the nature of learning,

and

(b) "What are the specific determinations of classroom knowledge?" i.e., what constitutes the limits of, and pressures on, educational practices?

That interaction which we call learning can be captured analytically to some extent through the use of the terms form and content. Although conceptually distinct, these aspects of learning are at the same time members of an inextricable unity. Thus, one cannot adequately examine and describe a learning situation within a particular time-space location through reference only to the form of this process, excluding the content and vice versa. These concepts designate general categories of analysis, although the usage of the term may vary in examination of a specific area of study (e.g. the school). This point will be clarified later in the discussion. By 'form' I mean the structure or (established) manner of doing or saying something. 'Content' as an aspect of learning includes the subject matter and topics treated in a social situation and the essential meaning of these (i.e., the image or representation of social reality which is conveyed to the people involved).⁸ To emphasize an obvious, though certainly not trivial, point, the learning process, that is to say, learning in general, is first and foremost a social activity. As such it is necessarily context bound. Form and content are expressions of how learning in general is manifested in any given situation. The process of learning is one of appropriation and 'knowledge', as the outcome of this process, simply refers to what is received or appropriated. Conversely, teaching is a process of transmission, involving the

conscious and/or unconscious selection of a manner of conveying something to another person. Being a social phenomenon the organization of the learning process will determine the material which is to be imparted and the manner in which this is done.

With regard to this, one can distinguish between education and learning by describing learning as a social-psychic process of human development and education as a social organization of this process (Holly, 1975). Classroom knowledge (i.e., that knowledge which is considered valid) may be seen as the outcome of the educational process. Schooling, as it is institutionalized in our society, structures the process of learning; it specifies the process of socialization that it involves. Dandurand (1977: 67) makes the point that, "Education is presented as a conscious undertaking of imposition of a way of thinking, acting or feeling". To understand classroom knowledge we must look at the form and the content of the process of learning as it is found within a specific institution (i.e., the school). In doing so we need to inquire into the manner in which it affects the way of thinking, acting or feeling on the part of the individuals involved. Again, the specific applications of each term, form and content, become apparent depending on the particular instance in which it is used. For example, study on the illusion of choice⁹ focuses our attention on the manner in which something is presented (e.g., as a choice which in fact does not really exist). Similarly, analysis of school textbooks may be significant in that their contents are presented as 'objective' fact, ignoring the subjective bias involved in the writing of the book. In both cases the concern is over the manner in which something is done, although the results will vary depending on the object of study. In discussion of content not only are we referring to that information which is

explicitly recognized in the classroom as valid knowledge, that is, the textbook knowledge, etc., which is taught, but also those ideas apart from the formal curriculum which further affect the student's ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

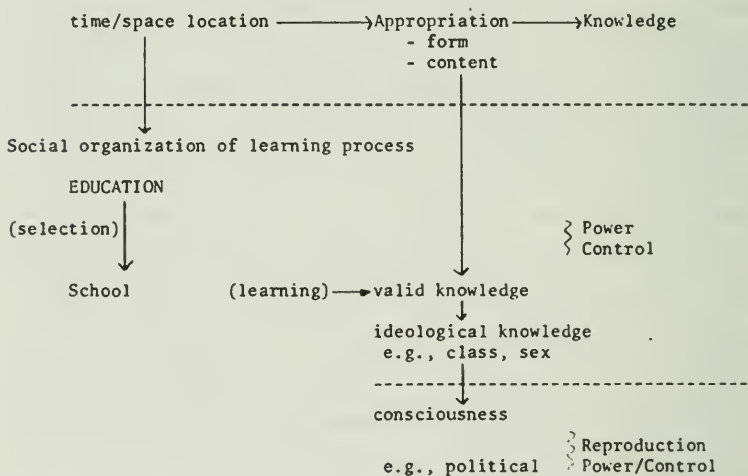
An examination of the process of learning, as formulated in the form/content unity can be useful, but insofar as this process takes place within an institutional setting, it is structured according to the underlying principles of power and control. Hence, the social organization of the learning process, with regard both to what is transmitted and to the manner in which this is done, will have no little effect on what is considered as valid knowledge. The educational system legitimates and places greater value on some forms of knowledge than other forms in the selective character of the transmission process. To put it differently, the school acts so as to pass on certain knowledge, and this knowledge is considered valid because it has been chosen to be taught in the first place. The importance of power and control in the classroom curriculum is that the outcome of the educational process provides specific interest groups with ideological support for their favoured positions. Insofar as that valid knowledge which is appropriated by the student in the school reflects the interests and concerns of a certain class, sex, race, etc., through the structured misrepresentation of social reality, this knowledge can be said to be ideological (see Figure 1).

In this particular approach to the study of schooling our focus has been on the relationship between classroom knowledge and the capitalist social structure. On the one hand, that knowledge which is transmitted by the school is problematic in that it entails specific experiences which are protective of certain class interests. On the other hand, it is necessary to examine the ways in which class bias intrudes upon the learning process within the educational system.

The above concerns can provide us with some insight into the role of the school in the hegemonic process. The school, as a particular institution, is an instance of the hegemony of the ruling class only insofar as it is articulated with the state and the economy. This is to say that the nature of learning and the development of the curriculum serve to reproduce the legitimacy of the existing social order in a manner which reflects to some extent the constraints imposed upon

Figure 1

LEARNING IN GENERAL



educational practices from forces outside of the educational institution. In making these linkages explicit one is better able to determine the concrete limits of, and pressures on, educational practices which arise out of the power relations of the capitalist mode of production. Two important notions underpin the analysis of specific determinations of classroom knowledge. First, 'knowledge' must be viewed in terms of

practices specific to the educational institution. This point was alluded to earlier when I stated that education is a particular social organization of the learning process. Second, when discussing what counts as valid knowledge, concern is primarily with outlining those experiences within the school which lead to the production of a particular type of consciousness. To restate it, beginning with the premise that ideas are a concrete political force, one should attempt to elucidate the relationship between ideas which are fostered in the school, and the ruling class and the exercise of its hegemony.

As part of the analysis there is an interest in how individuals 'make sense' of the world and their place in it. This requires that in addition to delineating those experiences which count as the valid outcomes of the learning process, we need to examine the relationship between that knowledge which is transmitted in the school and the students for whom this knowledge is intended. The consequences which follow or arise out of the students' relation to that knowledge which is considered valid will have some impact on the development of their conception of social reality. In effect, the selected perceptions regarding the direction and exercise of power in the social order are the result not only of the form and content of educational practices but the product of the structured relationship between the student and the learning process. In other words, not only is analysis of classroom knowledge important but, as well, we must consider the different ways in which this knowledge is appropriated by the student and implications that this has in terms of the hegemonic process.

Ideology and Consciousness in the School

In an effort to highlight features of the complex activity which we call educational practices one can consider a) the question of valid

(legitimate) knowledge, and b) the ties between this knowledge (and the treatment of this knowledge), the state and the economy. Writers who do focus on socialization and cultural transmission in the school often distinguish between the "formal" curriculum and the "hidden" curriculum. The formal curriculum generally refers to the transmission of classroom knowledge through explicit instruction. It is overtly recognized and readily apparent to the participants. Course outlines, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, etc., make it clear what is (or is not) to be taught in the classroom and through what procedures it is to be taught. There is a difference, however, between the 'official' curriculum statements and practices in the classroom. This is recognized in the conventional usage of the formal/hidden classification of dimensions of curriculum.

Study of the so-called 'hidden' curriculum concerns itself with the latent norms and values which are transmitted in the schooling process. One of the better formulations of the hidden curriculum is provided by Giroux and Penna (1977: 40). To these writers the concept includes

those unstated norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of classroom as opposed to the formally recognized and sanctioned dimensions of classroom experience.

While researchers have long recognized the importance of studying this dimension of curriculum the term "'hidden' curriculum" is somewhat misleading. There are underlying structural relations in the classroom that shape behaviour, but these are not necessarily invisible to the participants. Indeed, as Eggleston (1977: 18) emphasizes, "The hidden curriculum is only hidden, if at all, to the teacher; it is clearly visible to the students -- probably even more clearly visible than the official curriculum".

Although there is considerable interest in the hidden curriculum, research in this area varies. For example, Jackson (1968) examines the features of classroom life primarily in terms of the student-teacher relationship. His main concern is to describe the ways in which the students learn how to respond to the knowledge or normative context in ways that are acceptable to their peers as well as to their teachers. Other writers (Richer, 1980; Parsons, 1959; Dreeben, 1968; Bowles and Gintis, 1976) attempt to address the relationship between what is taught in the hidden curriculum and the wider social context. The school is seen to teach general attitudes and qualities which prepare students for their future adult and work roles. Where these researchers differ is in how they view the role of the school in society. Parsons, for example, argues that what the school teaches is functional for wider society, and that schooling is necessary for effective performance of adult roles in industrial society (Hurn, 1978). Alternatively, Bowles and Gintis see the school as teaching conformity and acquiescence to the demands of an essentially repressive society.

The work of Bowles and Gintis provides some direction for analysis which links what the school does with the system of class relations existing in society. However, in discussing the values and qualities which the schools teach through the hidden curriculum, they tend to overstate their case when they categorize such qualities as "tactful", "perseverant", "consistent", and so on, as repressive.¹⁰ There is a need to discriminate between the inculcation of essentially human values, and the promotion of values and qualities specifically geared to the stability of the status quo (i.e., capitalist consumer society), Entwistle (1978: 56) concisely outlines a general programmatic for this kind of analysis in the following passage:

If people are to be classified by reference to the values to which they subscribe, it is necessary to go beyond these abstract, first-order human values to the second-order norms through which they find concrete expression in the lives of individuals or groups.

This task is extremely difficult, however, if one attempts to organize research simply in terms of the hidden and formal curriculum. Although this distinction is of considerable value in discovering aspects of curriculum which had not previously been revealed, numerous conceptual ambiguities remain. This is particularly apparent with regard to analysis of ideology and consciousness in the school. An initial problem lies in efforts to demarcate the boundaries between the formal and hidden curriculum. Analytically, these categories may be useful in providing direction for study of the curriculum, but discussion of the actual content and form of the learning process can be complex and confusing. For example, textbooks can be cited as examples of the formal curriculum: they are part of the explicit instruction and the content is not hidden. Yet, the presentation of textbook information as objective fact 'hides' the subjective biases which the book may embody. Similarly, study of the hidden curriculum, which, for instance, examines the manner of which a child learns to give an acceptable performance in the classroom, must also consider institutional means of social control in order to explain classroom practices. The hidden curriculum is a particularly problematic concept. Whilst the literature on the hidden curriculum can be utilized in discussions of ideology, to equate the hidden dimensions of schooling with ideology is to impose unsatisfactory limits on analysis. In a broad sense, all interaction and communication in the classroom is ideological. Whether overtly or covertly, educational practices convey particular conceptions and impressions of the world. The examination of textbooks is a case in point. History, for example, is not only presented as an objective record of events and facts but it conveys certain information about the

world. The content of a history textbook is overt, 'open' for all to see. However, it tells "the story of heroes to be emulated and ideals to be striven for, of villains to be condemned and false prophets to be avoided" (Hurn, 1978: 192). Thus formal instruction involves the imparting of specific notions about what is right and wrong, important or unimportant.

We agree with Eggleston (1977: 117) that the hidden curriculum acts as one with the official curriculum as an agent of social control. It identifies the students with 'their place' in the social system, brings them into compliance with its norms and values and with the structure and the sanctions with which they are imposed.

Yet the central problem is not whether certain aspects of curriculum are hidden or overt. The key question is to explain the processes whereby ideological knowledge is transmitted via the curriculum. This can be accomplished by examining a) what is taught, b) how it is taught, and c) the effects on the student of the mechanisms used to ensure that something is learned. The organization of the educational process shapes the behaviour of the participants: what we wish to know is how this affects the development of consciousness in students. Recognizing the intimate ties between formal and hidden dimensions of curriculum it is incumbent upon the researcher to consider both the overt and covert ways in which ideological notions about social reality are manifested in the classroom.

Pressures and Limits on Schooling: State and Economy

As part of the 'overdetermined' approach it has been argued that the selective character of classroom knowledge has to be examined with reference to how it affects the students ways of thinking, acting or feeling. Also to be considered is the question: 'how does the ruling class limit and exert pressures on the production of knowledge in the

school?' To answer this requires an examination of the ways in which the state and economy impinge upon educational practices. Thorough analysis of the linkages between the school, state and economy is beyond the scope of this paper, but a sketch of some of the ways outside agencies influence public school curriculum can be provided.

With the bureaucratization of the school in the post-World War II period the state gained centralized administrative and social control. In the case of the public schools, the state at present has considerable legal and financial control. This is primarily in the hands of provincial and local governments. In recent years, however, the proportion of public school funds provided by provincial governments has continued to climb substantially. In addition, the consolidation of local school boards leaves even greater decision-making power in the hands of 'central' authorities.

Provincial governments have a number of legal, financial and informational instruments for school governance. Central authorities exercise their legal control in the area of curriculum development. Not only do they provide curriculum guidelines but they also exercise rights of approval over new courses, textbooks and other material. The Provincial administrations play a key role in deciding the terms of teacher certification. As an essential instrument for control, this strongly influences the content of teacher training. Financially, a Ministry of Education can effect decisions at the local level in a number of ways through formula financing and the provision of various grants. Significantly, "New courses and programmes are not automatically financed even if they are kept within the framework of formula-based funds" (OECD, 1975: 11). Governments also use informational policy instruments which are used to shape local programmes and school

organizations. For example, the OECD External Examiners' Report (1975: 12) points out that,

The central production of curriculum materials reaches substantial levels in many Provinces, which partly explains the large central staff found in some of them... 'Supervisory' functions at central and regional level employ a large number of people, many of whom act as 'expert consultants' with a de facto combination of advisory and controlling functions.

To illustrate the extensive bureaucratic controls on what is to be taught in the public schools, and how this is to be taught, one need only refer to provincial legislation regarding education. For example, in Ontario the Minister of Education has broad powers in the development of curriculum and school programs. The Minister may

8. -- (1)

- (a) name the diplomas and certificates that are to be granted to pupils and prescribe their form and the conditions under which they are to be granted;
- (b) prescribe the courses of study that shall be taught and the courses of study that may be taught in the primary, junior, intermediate and senior divisions;
- (c) in respect of schools under the jurisdiction of a board,
 - (i) issue curriculum guidelines and require that courses of study be developed therefrom and establish procedures for the approval of courses of study that are not developed from such curriculum guidelines,
 - (ii) prescribe areas of study and require that courses of study be grouped thereunder and establish procedures for the approval of alternative areas of study under which courses of study shall be grouped, and
 - (iii) approve or permit boards to approve,
 - (a) courses of study that are not developed from such curriculum guidelines, and
 - (b) alternative areas of study under which courses of study shall be grouped,and authorize such courses of study and areas of study to be used in lieu of or in addition to any prescribed course of study or area of study;

- (d) establish procedures by which and the conditions under which books and other learning materials are selected and approved by the Minister;
- (e) select and approve for use in schools textbooks, library books, reference books and other learning materials; ... (Province of Ontario, 1974: 11-12).

Although publicly controlled schools are operated by local school boards, the centralization and consolidation of these boards means that Provincial Ministries of Education can keep a close rein on curriculum and educational programmes. To be sure, the state will endorse those programmes, and set guidelines for curricula, which will 'benefit' society. I would suggest that the 'best' in intellectual, aesthetic and moral standards and values, as determined to a large degree by state agencies, still reflects the class-based paternalism of early school movements which saw education as an integrative and civilizing force in society.¹¹ That this type of educational control arbitrarily limits the definition and scope of classroom knowledge is an argument which is glossed over, especially in light of the fact that the school does teach certain 'fundamental' and 'essential' values. These values, however, reinforce the legitimacy of the existing social system and serve to 'naturalize' and mystify conflict and the nature of exploitation in society.

It has been mentioned that the state has financial and administrative control over education. Where does this leave teachers when it comes to curriculum control and development? Briefly, two points can be mentioned. First, the Provincial administrations play a key role in deciding the terms of teacher certification and the content of teacher training. For instance, in respect of teachers' colleges in Ontario, the Minister may

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- (r) (i) define courses of study and subjects to be taught,
- (ii) recommend reference books and library books,

- (iii) approve textbooks,
- (iv) determine the number of terms and the dates upon which each term begins and ends, and
- (v) grant Bachelor of Education degrees; ...
(Province of Ontario, 1974: 13).

Second, where teachers desire to have greater participation in the development of the curriculum, indications are that this interest is based more on opportunity for greater autonomy or for greater emphasis on local and regional issues (Martin and Macdonell, 1978), rather than constituting an attempt to depart in any radical fashion from the general values currently being taught. The general pattern of political 'neutrality' on the part of teachers in the classroom, however, does have its exceptions as evidenced Harp and Betcherman's (1980) paper on teacher organizations.

Needless to say, the principal agent of educational change for the past three decades has been the government. There are several factors which help to explain the government's positive attitude toward education in the recent past. The post-World War Two period saw many changes take place in Canadian society. Employment opportunities continued to shift from agriculture to manufacturing, and then to service jobs (COPSE, 1972). With intensive family formation and an increasing birth rate we experienced the 'Baby Boom', and as these children grew older it became necessary to fill an expanding and changed economy with educated workers. The new economic theory of "Human Capital" called for a highly qualified manpower and the ready absorption of graduates into well-paying jobs served to reinforce beliefs in the value of education (Harvey, 1974). This was the era of the 'Sputnik syndrome' when the Russian satellite Sputnik I touched off a nation-wide cold war trauma in the United States. The American drive to protect their

technical and scientific leadership by making heavy investments in education influenced the federal and provincial governments' roles in the funding and expansion of educational facilities. Again, the causes of higher employment levels and Canada's lag behind the U.S. in its per capita gross national product were thought to stem from a lag in education. Education, then, was seen as a crucial factor in economic growth and prosperity in a technological age.

With close ties between the educational system and the economy the amount of learning one obtained became synonymous with the amount of one's life earnings. In recent years, however, as times get tough for capitalism, educational participation has taken on added significance. In that there appears to be a direct relationship between educational attainment and participation rates in the labour force (Martin and Macdonell, 1978), education is seen by the student as a valued commodity. The instrumental value of education is increased by virtue of the fact that employers have come to perceive education as more of a screening process than a prerequisite for job performance. The result of this credentialism is twofold, as Bleasdale (1978: 30) explains:

Raising the educational ante has induced an artificial scarcity of talent, but it also latently served to exacerbate a commodity fetishism of certificates and degrees perceived as symbols of knowledge, consumed as a means in acquiring other commodities.

It is not a case that workers with better educational qualifications are necessarily better than workers with lesser qualifications; rather credentialism is, in part, the response from employers to the supply of workers which have been produced by educational institutions. Thus, credentialism has become "a new form of property holding involving the right to work" (Porter, 1977b: 9).¹²

The linkage between the educational system and the economy is further reflected in the ways in which learning has been socially organized to subserve the requirements of production. On the one hand, we have already pointed out how education is principally seen in terms of its future utility. On the other hand, with the incursion of 'technical rationality' into the sphere of education, 'success' is measured according to the degree of competence in a closely-defined field of knowledge or area of specialization. This sorting process and the compartmentalization of knowledge into specified activities, each governed by its own technical rules and strategies, not only provides the capitalist economy with a technical division of labour, but it also results in the stultification of an integrative and critical consciousness. What is left is a limited form of thought which, to a large extent, simply responds to the determined requirements of technology (Holly, 1975).

From this brief sketch it can be seen that the linkages between the state and economy on the one hand and the educational institution on the other have no little effect on the control and development of curriculum.¹³ In that the state in capitalist society is a capitalist state, it can be seen as an agent of the bourgeoisie. As such, measures utilized by the state to influence educational practices will be ideological in character, serving to uphold the interests of the capitalist class. Likewise the relationship between the economy and the school is geared to facilitate the accumulation of capital and thus to maintenance of capitalist relations. The educational process shapes the behaviour of the participants: what we wish to know is how this affects the development of consciousness in students. Recognizing the intimate ties between formal and hidden dimensions of curriculum it is incumbent

upon research to consider both the overt and covert ways in which ideological notions about social reality are manifested in the classroom.

My concern in this paper has been to present the theoretical assumptions which underlie various sociological approaches to the study of curriculum. It was argued that the overdetermined approach has much to offer for investigation which seeks to integrate interactional analysis (the phenomenologist's concern with the management of knowledge) with structural analysis (power and interests). The particular framework outlined above can provide considerable insight into the complex system of power relations underlying the educational process. In addressing the question, 'what gets to count as educational knowledge?' it recognizes the limitations of the 'given' approach which, in focusing on school attainment, ignores the content of the curriculum. Likewise, the overdetermined approach takes to task naive perspectives which look at school knowledge transmission simply as a process of negotiations between teacher and student. In doing so it attempts to situate educational practices in the context of capitalist class relations, acknowledging the complex structural constraints on classroom interaction and educational reform.

Footnotes

1. The same might be said for certain Marxist approaches, e.g., Bowles and Gintis (1976), which are inclined toward what Karabel and Halsey (1977) call a "hyper-functionalism" that sees a "perfect fit" between the educational system and other major social institutions. Insofar as these approaches assume a functional role for curricula, it is not considered to be problematic and the content of the educational system may be neglected.
2. This is not to say that researchers in this tradition necessarily ignore conflict. However, such analysis tends to cover too much ground in order that a testable explanation for various kinds of social organization can be arrived at. Collins (1977: 124) comments:

Functional analysis too easily operates as a justification for whatever particular pattern exists, asserting in effect that there is a proper reason for it to be so, but failing to state the conditions under which a particular pattern will hold rather than another.

3. "Content", as it is used here, refers to not so much the technical skills and so on which are taught in school, or to the relationship between technological advances and the development of curriculum in accordance to these changes, but to the ideological character of the educational process.
4. In particular, for comments on and criticisms of Young and his associates see Holly (1975: 6-8); Sharp and Green, (1975: 12-13); Karabel and Halsey (1977: 44-61).
5. "Overdetermination" makes reference to the fact that while all relations are not class relations (e.g., teacher-student), these relations and the practices attendant to these relations are contingent upon their articulation with relations arising out of the capitalist mode of production. Thus the class nature of schooling is to be understood by locating it contextually through examination of the exercise of power in capitalist society.
6. This class is primarily responsible for establishing the ideas and institutions which serve to guard the social order. This is not to say however, that members of the capitalist class consciously set about to deceive the people or that intellectuals are participants in a conspiracy to keep the capitalist class in its dominant position. Members of the ruling class are bound and compelled by specific material conditions to represent their interests as the common interests of all members of society. The class which has control over the means of material production not only influences the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production, but these ideas can serve to reproduce the existing social relations.
7. My main concern in this paper is with examination of the ruling class and the exercise of its hegemony. A key problem for further research which arises out of this analysis is to elucidate

those traditions and ideas, values and attitudes which run counter to the dominant culture, i.e., to study counter-hegemonic forces, such as student resistance, or teacher militancy.

8. It should be recognized that the meaning of form/content in a specific time/space situation implies varying interpretations on the part of the observers and participants. With regard to sociological research, for example, the study of curriculum by liberals or by Marxists will necessarily be informed by their theoretical vantage points.
9. Smollet (1974) provides an interesting example of this in her article, "Schools and the Illusion of Choice: The Middle Class, and the 'Open' Classroom".
10. Are these repressive values or values of the middle class? Entwistle (1978: 56) argues that, "In fact, in Western culture, these have usually been regarded simply as human values, not distinguishing characteristics of any class, but virtues by reference to which persons are deemed human."
11. Michael Katz in his study of education in American history presents an analysis of the changes in organizational models from the paternalistic voluntarism in the early 1800's to the bureaucratic model which characterizes the public school system today. Significantly, Katz (1977: 393) observes that,

The paternalistic voluntarists and the bureaucrats, of course, saw education as the educator of the people, leading, not reflecting, the general will and, at the least, shaping moral opinions... They hoped for, basically, an increasingly standardization of institutions, practices and culture in American society.

12. An interesting aspect of the relationship between education and occupation is the fact that along with the degradation of work noted by Braverman (1974), the phenomenon of credentialism has meant an increase in the substantial lack of fit between occupational requirements and the level of education one carries into the job situation.
13. For further discussion of linkages between the educational institution, and the state and the economy, see White, 1980.

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