



Can education change society? A critical analysis and insights from sociological perspectives

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Abstract

Presented paper concerns the relationship between the educational system and society. The research question is whether the educational system can provoke changes in society or whether it can only reflect changes that occur outside the institution. The essential is to create a theoretical framework for further research on educational issues while answering the question from different sociological perspectives. The main sociologists covered in the paper are Bowles and Gintis, Illich, Bourdieu and Passeron, Bernstein, and Apple, but other authors are also presented to make the final picture more coherent. The choice of the authors is based on an attempt to represent a diversity of theoretical framework and possible answers. The results show that despite the different theoretical backgrounds and viewpoints all given authors to a certain extent agree with the notion that the role of the educational system in society is secondary and that the institution of education cannot itself change the larger society. In relation to this issue, the authors are concerned with social and/or cultural reproduction in schools, emphasizing the different means through which reproduction occurs. Interconnections between the sociologists and the comparison of their theories are introduced in the Discussion part of the paper.

Key Words: Education system, role of the institution, social reproduction, cultural reproduction, changes in society.

Introduction

The sociology of education and school is a very broad field, as in many issues it overlaps with general pedagogy, general sociology or social psychology. It is neither possible nor productive to elaborate the whole scale of alternatives that is offered by the sociology of education.

The analysis of education by sociology has its own specific features in relation to the other sciences. This specificity becomes apparent as a sociological approach to education, which consists of the following. First, it is oriented on the definition of place and role of education in society, that means on the revelation of interaction and interference of education and the other spheres in the society's vital activity: economic, political, social and spiritual. The specificity of sociological approach starts with

the fact that sociology is interested in the essence and structure of education, its interaction with the other subsystems in society and the society.

The education is considered by sociology in different kinds: as social phenomenon and process; as a complicated social system; as a social institute and organization; as a special activity category; and, finally, as a value for a person and society. Education in all its kinds, as an element of society, experiences almost all the changes that are occurring in it. Revelation of dialectics between the education and society is connected also with the studying of influences of the former on the latter. The sociological approach to education means also the studying of education as a one of the main elements in modes of people's life, tightly connected to the other elements of everyday forms and kinds of activities.

Material and Methods

The essential of the paper is to represent the answer on the specific question through the different sociological perspectives. This question concerns with the role of school institutions in the context of the other institutions in the society. Particularly, it is a question whether the educational system can change the society or whether it just reflects the changes that occur outside the institution.

We consider this issue as one of current importance as there are many changes that are under way nowadays and it is important to understand where their beginning is. In this paper we are trying first to provide the diverse opinions on that problem and then in the end to discuss which of them are the most relevant for the contemporary situation.

Sociology as a whole and the sociology of education serves the purpose of understanding the functioning of the society. We believe that it is important not just for better understanding itself, but also for more conscious acting. In the sphere of education there is much to do for its improvement to achieve the state of educational system that is truly contributive to personal development and learning. Sociology of education is providing the participants of that process of improvement with needed theoretical and analytical base.

This paper is intended to make at least little contribution to a further research in this field, while answering the question of the role of educational system in the changes that happens inside and outside the institution. Many of the authors put the emphasize conversely on the preserving of existing social order and cultural modes that the system of education supports, and in that connection, they talk about social and cultural reproduction that occur at school. As the question is still quite broad, three levels of analysis have been chosen:

1. The first one is specifically about the ability of the system of education to cause the changes in society.
2. The second level is about the mechanisms by which social and cultural reproductions proceed.
3. And the third one deals with the role of teacher and pedagogy in these processes.

Each of these levels is represented in individual chapters, sometimes apart from the third one, regarding the fact that not every author expressed toward the pedagogical question.

The research showed that even though most authors wouldn't agree with the statement that the educational institution itself is the source of changes in society, some of them would agree that the changes within the institution can contribute to the changes in larger society.

The paper is divided into several sections; each of them is devoted to a perspective. We begin with the conflict theory, so with Marx and Engels, Bowles and Gintis, and Katrňák. The last one is not directly a conflict theorist but is covered in this part because he helps the better comprehension. The next section introduces the theory that is contradictory to the conflict perspective, as it emphasizes the role of individual instead the role of the institution. The author represented is Ivan Illich, and we also mention Beck at one point in connection with Illich's theory. Then we talk about Bourdieu, who is not that unambiguous in his conclusions as the previous theorists. The next part is dedicated to Bernstein, who follows some of Bourdieu's concepts but is more concrete in that. After that we devote some attention to Michael W. Apple's critique of Bernstein. Finally, in the discussion part we try to grasp the whole obtained vision to contemplate about what theories are more relevant nowadays and whom to give the priority.

The discussion part is devoted to the comparison and analysis of the introduced theories which then leads to a coherent answer on the research question about the role of educational system in broader

societal changes. This section is divided into two parts accordingly: the first one deals with the comparison, and the second one provides a reflection of the created framework.

The sociology of education is a special branch of sociological knowledge. The constitution of the sociology of education is related with the names of American sociologists Ward, Dewey; French sociologist Durkheim; German scientists Weber and Mannheim. Their papers contain the main principles of the sociological attitude towards the education. Lester Ward (1906) considered education as one of the main institutions in a society and connected the success of social modifications with it. John Dewey thought that the mission of education is to teach people the methods of perception and transformation of the world (Ward 1960). Emile Durkheim (2004) analyzed the sociological problems of education in connection with upbringing. This connection reflects the needs of society and contributes to the strengthening of collective values. Weber saw the role of education in widening the knowledge about life conditions that people live in; in clearing the goals and means of social acts; in understanding and specification of one's own activities (Nechaev, 1992). Mannheim as one of the main functions of education considered the forming of one special group in society – intelligentsia, which he connected with the process of democratization of all the spheres of society's vital activity, including the education itself (Nechaev, 1992).

Tomáš Katrňák in his book *Destined for Manual Job: Educational Reproduction in Papering Class Family* (2004) cover the group of sociologists concerned with the questions of social and cultural reproduction. Depending on whether they emphasize the social or the cultural inequalities, he divides these authors into left wing and right wing accordingly. Each of them puts stress on one key element. Among left wing adherents he rates for example Althusser, which explains the reproduction by the state ideology. Bowles and Gintis accuse in continuation of educational inequalities the economic system. Kohn stresses the values that emerge from the parent's profession, which their children inherit. Right wing authors Basil Bernstein and Shirley Heath consider the different using of language as a key point. Willis in his research focuses on the influence of parents' status. Mackleod shows on the importance of cultural differences. Bourdieu holds the viewpoint between the two extremes, if both factors (social and cultural inequalities) have the impact (Katrňák 2004).

It is impossible to introduce even a short overview of all these issues in one paper. The criterion for selection of appropriate perspectives in this paper is based on the goal to represent a vast diversity of existent opinions on the specific question. It was difficult to preserve this intention as the theories often include observations that are not directly connected with the main question, but at the same time lead the authors to their answers.

In this paper we introduce the theories of the other authors that emerge from the described fundamental ones. To serve the purpose of representation of diversity inside the discourse, the authors covered in the paper adhere to completely different perspectives, in some cases contradictory to each other. Their attitude towards the system of education vary from macro level analyses to micro level, from those who view the role of education from extremely structural perspective to extremely individual, as well as some that are not that radical. When choosing authors to represent these different perspectives we were inspired by the chapter about sociology of education in Giddens' *Sociology* (1999). There he mentions Basil Bernstein, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Ivan Illich and Pierre Bourdieu. To make the picture more complete, some other authors were added – Michael W. Apple, Ulrich Beck, Karl Marx together with Friedrich Engels. Searching for the answers to the question of the role of education in their theories and searching the connections between their theories and points of disagreement allowed us to represent a comprehensive extract from the sociological discourse about education.

Conflict theory

The foundation of conflict theory relates to the name of Karl Marx. His concept of a conflict as a fundamental element of the development became the base for the contemporary sociological conflict theories, and theories of education (Rabušicová, 1991). As the basic model for the conflict theory is viewing of society from the standpoint of social inequalities, this model is also applied in the sociology of education.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels created principles of new attitude toward education as a significant complex conditioned social phenomenon. They analyses the task of education in the society

and showed its dependence on economic, social political and cultural conditions. As it emerges from their common paper *The Communist Manifesto* (1974), they had a clear answer to the question whether education can change the society. According to them, education itself cannot change the social order, as utopian socialists believed, but within the scope of this order can significantly contribute to the successful development of society. It is possible to frame that point in Marxist concepts of base and superstructure in society. In short, base is the economic (material) sphere, and superstructure includes all remaining spheres – political, juridical, religious and others (spiritual/ideological). To superstructure also belong philosophical, moral and esthetical views prevalent in the society. The system of education is also a part of superstructure. It means that if base determines superstructure, the current state of development of economics defines the form and the content of schooling in the country. But it is also necessary to remember that superstructure in its turn influences base, so, in this case, the system of education can influence the material conditions in the country. This mutual influencing between base and superstructure is the main point of my interest in this paper. Marx and Engels also expressed themselves to the aims of education, which they saw in the general development of an individual.

The well-known followers of Marxist theory in education are Bowles and Gintis. Even though their theory is quite controversial and one-sided, it supplies with a rich ground for discussion and critique that might be even more relevant for the topic than the theory itself. In any case, the main argument of their common book *Schooling in capitalist America* (1976) is that modern system of education is an answer on economic needs of industrial capitalism (Giddens, 1999). School is the secondary social institute, in other words belongs to the superstructure in society, and contributes to the reproduction of inequalities in the capitalist society. Educational system cannot itself make any changes in the society. If there existed bigger democracy on the paper place and bigger equality in the society, that would allow an emergence of new system of education which would provide more chances for a distinctive development of everyone. According to them, the only way to improve the education system is to look for wider social changes. “*The labor market and the class system are at the root of the education system, and it follows that education is not an independent area that can be changed at will. Educational policy, and ideas – even progressive ones – have little effect*” (Bowles, Gintis, 1976, p. 28). The point we would like to stress here is that they don’t only argue that educational system cannot change society, but that educational system cannot even change itself without waiting for changes outside the institution.

As Bowles and Gintis notice, people have different opinions on the way the government can reduce social (particularly economic) inequalities. Based on the empirical regularities and statistics from research in the United States, they conclude that “*the intergenerational transmission of economic status is accounted for by a heterogeneous collection of mechanisms*” (1976), including the superior education that children of higher status get. At the same time, they are convinced that educational system cannot play a big role in reducing inequalities, because the role of education is rather reproduction of social order. According to them, if designed reforms in the sphere of education have a potential to threaten the function of reproduction at school, they cannot work.

The author concerned with similar questions from the Czech surroundings is Tomáš Katrňák. In his book *Destined for Manual Job: Educational Reproduction in Papering Class Family* (2004) he distinguishes the main point of his interest – the reproduction of educational inequalities in papering-class families. He shows the significance of education for individual success in life and the role of school in reproduction of social inequalities in modern society. He answers the questions how educational differences reproduce in the society, and what influence has the surroundings in which child is getting socialized. The author also refers to the Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) with the idea that apparent appreciation of talented pupils at school, which leads to more prestigious occupations for them, is made in favour of higher social classes. Thus, school selected that has already been made and creates the inequalities that correspond with social inequalities. Moreover, it is not only creating (reproduces) and preserves the inequalities, but also hides that fact under an excuse of inherent differences among children. Katrňák provides the statistics from countries of Western Europe and the United States, that proves the theory that educational and social level of parents is (in most occasions) in linear correlation with child’s success at school and in career. The research in Czech Republic confirmed that theory.

Ivan Illich

There is one thing that conflict theorists (particularly Bowles and Gintis) and Ivan Illich have in common. All of them believe that development of school system is associated with the economic requirements of discipline and hierarchy, and that school primarily teaches pupils the forms of behavior rather than the content of curriculum. But otherwise these authors have extremely different attitudes towards that phenomenon. While the former is confident that educational system can only reflect the changes in larger society, the latter argues that school is the institution that the changes can spread from.

Ivan Illich is one of the most controversial authors that ever expressed about the question of schooling (Giddens, 1999). In our opinion, his theory is significant to this topic because he enriches the discourse around educational system with quite radical ideas and provides the diverse opinion on the question of the school's ability to change society. He declares for cancellation of school system in the form it exists. Even though his book *Deschooling society* (2001) was firstly published more than 40 years ago, his critique of the existing educational system is still topical in many regards. Irrespective to the fact that many of his ideas are controversial and disputable, the problems and contradictions that he finds in educational system are of current importance. That is why we consider Illich's theory as relevant to this paper.

According to Illich, school not only can change itself, but it should be changed to enable the changes in the society. His argumentation is based on the detailed critique of the school institution. The author argues that school education is a kind of symbiosis of learning and determination of social roles, and the learning part has much less space in that formation. While actual learning means obtaining new knowledge and understanding, but at school it is replaced with the promotion which is almost fully dependent on the opinions that the other make on a pupil. That's why Illich suggests abolishing the existing system of education and offers a solution in a new form of education, that would allow people to learn (2001).

The school system does not actually educate pupils. What school is good for, is teaching children the principles of disciplines and hierarchy and authorities. It also saves the social inequalities between poorer and richer pupils, no matter how much money can state devote to the system of education, because they will be anyway distributed among everyone. Illich shows on popular illusions about the educational system. He also talks about the institutionalization of values that occurs at school. All those facts lead him to the conclusion that school in the form it exists now doesn't really serve the purpose of learning and individual improvement.

The official curriculum and the content of school subjects is not the main thing that pupils will gain while being at school. School education doesn't support neither individual learning, nor social equality. On the contrary, what do they learn is to obey to the authorities and accept existent social order. Educational system prepares students to enter the world of occupations by inculcating them with the appropriate behavior and the habit to rely on institutions and specialists.

Illich writes that state's financial support of an institution leads to its establishment in the society and argues that it is a negative effect in case of schools. He refers to William O. Douglas, a judge of American Supreme court, who said that the only way to establish an institution is to fund it. In that sense Illich (2001, p. 17) talks about "*disestablishment* ", or the separation of school from the state and abolishing its monopoly in the state. The only way to stop further impoverishment resulting from the harmful incidental influence of institutional care is to remove money from the institutions that are carrying out education, medical and social care.

Illich argues that there are some illusions about school system that rule in the society. First illusion is that the school ensures the public trust depends on the relevant school/academic success. Though, instead of creating the equal opportunities, school system gets a monopoly over their assignment. The second illusion is that most learning is the result of schooling, while the reality is that most people get the biggest part of their knowledge beyond the school system. The idea that people capable of teaching the others are only professional and licensed teachers is also an illusion. Rather he argues that anyone who is good at something is able to teach, in other words to deliver his/her knowledge and skills to the other ones.

Illich's critique of educational system also includes the notion about ritualization of improvement and institutionalization of values that happens at school. School setting up the myth about unlimited consumption. This modern myth is grounded on the belief that every process inevitably creates a definite value and as a result production guarantees demand. School teaches us, that teaching

produces learning. As soon as we learned to need schools once, all our behavior attains the shape of consumers' behavior that leads to the dependence on specialized institutions. At school we learn, that valuable studying is the result of school attendance, so its value increases with the number of inputs and can be measured by evidenced by marks and certificates. The transmission of responsibility from oneself to the institution leads to social regress, especially when that institution is accepted as a duty (Illich 2001).

Even though personal development is not a measurable quantity, institutionalized values inculcated by schools have quantitative nature and as such can be simply measured. School instills the conception that values can be created and measured. For example, the quality of education is measured by the quantity of years spent at school and the kind of certificate one's got. This point in Illich's contemplation I would like to connect with Beck's conception of devaluation of education. In his book *Risk society* (2011) Beck talks about an „escalator effect“. This phenomenon expresses the shift of the whole society to the better social level, like for example higher wages or better education. From the 1960s it goes to significant improvement of the level of education. The results of the revolution in education are reflected by the fact that primary schools lose their significance and rather other levels of school gain the significance. Education becomes a need, which is essential for a person to run for a place on the labor market. At the same time increasing unemployment often encourages students in attempts to avoid it by different forms of further or additional education. The pressure on the labor market force them to elevate the number of years of formal education.

So, to summarize Illich's critique, the system of education doesn't reach its original goal of providing people with a chance of personal development and getting knowledge and skills that are important for each individual. Rather it meets the goal of capitalist economic system and prepares children to enter the labor market by instilling appropriate values and styles of behavior. Illich also criticizes school for reproduction social inequalities between children from different social classes. He then represents some illusions about the schooling system that are welcomed in the society. In the end he mentions the ritualization and instutualization of values that happens due to the compulsory school attendance.

As it was mentioned in the beginning of chapter, Illich does not only criticize the existent schooling system, but comes with a proposal of how to change it. He stands up for deinstitutionalization of the school system and giving an education a completely new and different shape. He argues the system of education in the form it exists nowadays was not established so long time ago and can (should!) be radically changed. His vision of the new education is the education for everybody through the agency of everybody, when people learn from each other the things they are interested in. To make the education more productive, to support the developing of critical thinking, independence of choices of interests, new friendships, he supposes the organization of a web where people can find partners to discuss their common interests. The role the state could play in that system is an organizational one, it can provide these people with space for discussions and mutual teaching. Another suggestion, is that every person with his birth gets a „credit“ for future learning, that allows him to take part in informal and random education wherever he will wish. The key moment is that the value of a person on the labor market should not be judged by the numbers of years he/she has been taking part in schooling system or the highest level of education he finished with. Rather should be evaluated his actual skills and knowledge.

This book was firstly published in 1973. Today, more than 40 years after, Illich's ideas get into attention again, because now the developed technologies would allow the realization of education beyond the school system, and even special buildings for personal meeting are not always needed thanks to the internet. His ideas about life-long education are also more actual now, because people are forced to learn during the whole life to follow the pace of changes in the society. Much of what he talked then has already became real, but only as additional education, never as a principal one. But some of his suggestions are quite controversial, however. When he talks about mutual learning and making independent choices about what to study, it sounds very well, but can paper only for mature people or older children. The process when a child will learn to make the choices, and to get the basic skills for learning, like reading, writing and counting, are not covered in the new educational system. The idea to leave in on parents seems very unlikely, at least because their opportunities and ambitions are very diverse and will not contribute to the equalization of educational opportunities.

Even though Illich's vision of the future educational system seems to be very controversial and not completed, that doesn't really matter for this paper. What matters though is that he provides with the belief that the system of education must be radically changed and supports his viewpoint with significant arguments.

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron

Bourdieu is one of the classic sociologists concerned with education. He applies the terms of his broader theory, such as symbolic violence, social and cultural reproduction, cultural and linguistic capital on the analyses of education. Bourdieu's and Passeron's common paper *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1990) is regarded as an indispensable reading for the students of sociology of education. Moreover, their perspective is contributive for the topic as they supplement the picture indicated in the previous chapters with more concrete vision of mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction and bring more sociological concepts. Taking these premises into account, we assume their perspective on education as relevant for the purpose of the paper.

Bourdieu and Passeron differ from the authors described above as their view on education is not that radical, in the sense that do not incline to extremely structural or extremely individual perception of the role of educational system. However, they argue that the role of education is to preserve class structure and reproduce social and cultural inequalities by the means of inherited cultural capital. Together with Passeron they divide the impact of educational system into the elements that can serve for explanation of cultural and social reproduction through schooling. Those elements are pedagogic action, pedagogic authority, pedagogic paper, school authority, the paper of schooling and education system (Dopita, 2007). However, there is a critique of this theory because quantitative researches do not conform to the given analytical framework (Sullivan, 2002), that is reviewed in the end of this chapter.

When talking about cultural and social reproduction, Bourdieu and Passeron construct a link between the social origin of children and their educational aspirations. Social origin becomes apparent as a cultural, and specifically linguistic capital, which is essential in the process of education. Cultural capital embodies the sum total of investments in aesthetic codes, practices and dispositions transmitted to children through the process of family socialization, or in Bourdieu's term „habitus“. Habitus is an important form of cultural inheritance, reflects class position or the actor's location in a variety of fields and is geared to the perpetuation of structures of dominance (Bourdieu, 1998). As a part of the cultural capital, the linguistic capital is also something that a child gets in family, so its fortune mostly depends on one's family upbringing traditions, which is in its turn usually comes from the family's social stature. *“Moreover, language is not simply an instrument of communication: it also provides, together with a richer or poorer vocabulary, a more or less complex system of categories, so that the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic, depends partly on the complexity of the language transmitted by the family”* (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990, p.74). According to them, the social origin usually predetermines educational destiny. Any kinds of discrimination of one social class and giving advantages to the other do not have to be present, as the actual ability to study and to be successful in academic disciplines is based on the capital (particularly linguistic) that is given by origin.

Bourdieu and Passeron argue that teachers contribute to preserving of cultural and social inequalities at school. *“All pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”* (1990, p. 5). Violence in a symbolic configuration is a complex of vague and unclear means of inculcation of meanings and senses that serve for legitimation and reproduction of different forms of social domination (Bourdieu, 1998). Pedagogic action implies the pedagogic authority, which possesses a symbolic power, and as every power to exert symbolic violence adds its own specifically symbolic force to the power relations. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) at the same time refer to certain autonomy of the agency that performs pedagogic authority. Pedagogic paper contributes to the formation of habitus. Habitus includes a complex of dispositions – modes of perception and acting that an individual gain in the process of socialization, incorporating a combination of ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Those dispositions are constant and appear as links between objective structures and agents (Bourdieu, 1998). According to the authors, there is one way to reduce the inequalities in education in culture and it is to transit from the traditional pedagogy to the rational pedagogy. While contemporary traditional pedagogy has its foundation in psychology and ignores

social differences, rational pedagogy is based on the sociology of cultural inequalities. Rational pedagogy should be truly grounded on the analyses of value and benefit of different forms of teaching – seminars, papering teams, lectures, practice, and on the different types of pedagogic actions – from simple advices to the supervision of students' papers. (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990).

However, there is a detailed critique on their theory, from example Alice Sullivan's chapter in *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Science* collects the critique on Bourdieu's theory of education and questions whether and how useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers (2002). Even though *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* is a common book of Bourdieu and Passeron, Sullivan in his critiques refers mainly to Bourdieu's theory of education. The critics claim that persistent inequalities in educational attainment may be unrelated to the cultural capital-based mechanism. *"Quantitative evidence has generally failed to support Bourdieu's social reproduction hypothesis consistently, convincingly or unambiguously. Cultural capital can be retained both as a heuristic and analytically potent concept but should be operationally unbound to Bourdieu's original but restrictive class-analytic framework"*. (Sullivan, 2002, p.147)

Bourdieu's theory about the role of school and teachers in the transmission of intergenerational inequalities rests on several assumptions about the teacher population and the school context. It is necessary to consider those assumptions separately, as individual hypothesis. Teachers' role in cultural reproduction at school must be empirically approved, but a few steps must be taken beforehand. First, it should be verified that teachers' cultural values are indeed "qualitatively and quantitatively significantly different from those of the average public" (Sullivan, 2002). As a second, the effect of school context should be considered as well, and the impact of teachers' own cultural capital and demographics on evaluation of students' progress. However, knowledge about teachers is limited. *"When so-called "teacher bias" has been reported, it is not clear whether such so-called bias is in fact an objective reflection of actual observed differences in student behavior and performance"* (Kingston cit. in Sullivan 2002). However, these hypotheses have not been approved by large-scale statistics. Quantitative researches on cultural capital have neither revealed school effect. There are no convincing arguments based on the proofs from empirical researches. Special quantitative researches on the relation between teachers and cultural capital have not even been undertaken. Thus, it would not be right to generalize Bourdieu's theory of teachers' roles in the social and cultural reproduction (Sullivan 2002).

"However, none of the above precludes the occurrence of social reproduction. Indeed, social reproduction may still occur without the mechanisms that Bourdieu has suggested as central. Inequalities may persist even when school become more open and inclusive. Gender and ethnicity-related inequalities may persist in the face of extensive educational expansion. These leaves three possibilities open: Perpetuation of inequalities may paper via schools but in a way different from that suggested by Bourdieu. Alternatively, schools may only be indirectly involved in this process. Finally, social reproduction may be a longitudinal process in one's life course as much affected by context and circumstance as by individual choice and risk. Thus, there is a need of a different approach and methodology to study and understand why inequalities persist. In all cases, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital does not offer an empirically framework for class analyses" (Sullivan, 2002, p.150)

To summarize, Bourdieu and Passeron view educational system as an instrument of standardization in society, as an institution that reproduces the existing social order and cultural traditions. Cultural and social inequalities are reproduced by the means of cultural capital (and language capital in particular), and pedagogic communication as a symbolic power contributes to that reproduction. The way to escape from this scheme lies in the transfer from traditional to rational pedagogy. Their assumptions about cultural capital as mechanisms of reproduction are being questioned though as not sufficiently approved by quantitative researches. Pedagogical discourse is doubt as well because of lack of empirical data about teacher's role in reproduction and distribution of specific form of cultural capital.

Basil Bernstein

Basil Bernstein is a sociologist who founds his theory of education on sociolinguistic analysis and emphasizes the importance of verbal communication (Giddens, 1999). Many of his concepts intersect with Bourdieu's theory, for example his notions of language codes and Bourdieu's language capital (Dopita, 2007). At the same time Bernstein's theory is a more concrete one and school education

occupies the main place in his whole theory. While Bourdieu mostly applies the concepts from his wider theory (like symbolic violence, habitus, capital) on education, Bernstein's primary concern is just education, and with that specific focus he creates and uses his concepts.

We consider Bernstein as relevant to this topic as he combines structural and individual perspectives on school system without giving priority to one of extreme courses. He talks about how the system of education is being changed in the technological era and discusses the influence of the school on children. In his book *Class, Codes, and Control* (1975) Bernstein considers a school as a microcosm in society. He argues that this micro level analysis is essential for a deeper understanding of macro level, as it allows to look on the important details, for example the socialization of individual pupils within the school context. "*Bernstein's analysis of the social class assumptions of pedagogic discourse and practice is the foundation for linking microeducational processes to the macrosociological levels of social structure and of class and power relations*" (Sadovnik, 2006, p. 202).

The answer on the question whether education system has a power to modify society or whether it just reflects the changes that happen outside the institution, is in case of Bernstein's theory quite dialectic. On the one hand, he argues that school might be a „*source of social, occupational and cultural change*“ (Bernstein, 1975, p. 37). On the other hand, school by its context somehow supports and reproduces the existing social inequalities. To understand better what the author means by these contradictions, it is important to take a deeper look on his theory.

Basil Bernstein distinguishes two orders at school – the instrumental and the expressive. He also tells apart two language codes – the elaborated code and the restricted code. He classifies the types of pupils and the types of families and argues that school can transmit pupils' role type. Following the Durkheim, Bernstein indicates two types of solidarity that can hold the school together and shows how the solidarity changes with the technological growth in society.

Considering a school as a social form, Bernstein distinguishes two different orders of relation. An order is a complex of activities and behavior, and two types of it reflect different origin and direction of that complex of activities and behavior. "*An instrumental order which controls the transmission of facts, procedures and judgments involved in the acquisition of specific skills, and expressive order which controls the transmission of the beliefs and moral system*" (Bernstein, 1975, p. 54). In other words, expressive order deals with character training, while instrumental order with formal learning. There is another key difference between the orders. While instrumental order is divisive in function, expressive order bounds the school together as a distinct moral collectivity.

The crucial concept in Bernstein's theory is the one of language codes. "*They can be defined, on a linguistic level, in terms of the probability of predicting for any one speaker which syntactic elements will be used to organize meaning*" (Bernstein, 1975, p. 76). The language (language codes in particular) is the means by which the social reproduction at school occurs. He uses the term *code* to contrast with genetic code, which is inherent, while language code is acquired. According to Bernstein, there are two types of language codes: the elaborated code and the restricted code, each of them characteristic for the certain social class. The former is more typical for the middle-class and the latter for papering class children. In the process of the primary socialization child adopt one of these codes in his/her family. To transmit the elaborated code to a child it is important to talk to him/her more and give the explanations to the actions, resp. prohibitions. This way of upbringing is more common among middle class families, which explains the later differences between the middle class and papering class children in their ability of communication. Another fact is that handling the elaborated language code automatically means the handling of the restricted code, while it doesn't pass backwards (Giddens, 1999). Bernstein points that none of the codes is „worse“ than the other, but restricted code is not that appropriate for the formal learning as the elaborated code. It just doesn't really fit to the school context (regarding the instrumental order), getting into the contradiction with the academic culture of school. Despite equal conditions for all pupils at school, some of them have more chances for academic success a priori, thanks to their family background.

But as it was meant above, a school itself has an ability to influence the pupil's role, according to Bernstein. The author offers a classification of pupils' roles considering their attitudes towards the means and ends of both the instrumental and the expressive orders. The types he marks out are settled on the scale from the *commitment to alienation* with *detachment*, *deferment* and *estrangement* in between. For example, no understanding of the means and no involvement in the means by a child determines the type of alienation, while a situation when a child understands and accept the means and

the ends of both orders means his/her commitment. Detachment could mean for instance acceptance of the means and the ends of the instrumental order and the rejection of the ends of expressive order. However, the task of the school is to guide each child to the “commitment” state. „*The more important a school is in re-ordering an individual's place within society, the more can the type of involvement in the role of pupil have critical consequences for society*“ (Bernstein, 1975, p.79). How much the school is successful in that depends on many factors, including the internal culture in the school or the pedagogical skill of the staff. Bernstein considers this classification as useful also from another point of view, as it sets the framework for analysis of pupil's socialization into the larger society. The way children are differentiated at school regarding their prestige to some degree copies the differentiation of groups in society. But if in society that prestige depends mostly on economic position, at school it often depends on academic success, at least if instrumental order has the priority, which is usually the case. That is how divisive function of instrumental order is realized, and that is how pupils „*come to know, to accept, reject or come to terms with, the class system before they are formally part of it*“ (Bernstein, 1975, p. 49).

Bernstein argues that there are changes that occur in the educational system now, that are the changes he registered at the time he wrote the paper almost fifty year ago. He meant the changes occurring in Britain at that time, especially the rapid technological growth that forced the changes in the system of education. Two factors allow the applying of those assumptions today: the technological growth that did not stop till then (it rather speeded up) and Bernstein's own note that these assumptions are capable of extension to the other societies that undergoing technological changes. Thus, we can look on the changes in the institute of education that he connects with technological changes. There are shifts in the type of solidarity, the role of teachers and the content of teaching. First, the type of solidarity shifts from mechanical to organic. This concept of solidarities Bernstein borrows from Emile Durkheim, who used these types to describe a society. Mechanical solidarity refers to the society, which is based on similarity of its parts, so the society is homogeneous and coherent in a very high level. Society with organic solidarity is on the contrary characterized by differentiation of individuals and heterogeneity (Durkheim. 2004). Bernstein applies it on school, but the key idea remains the same. One of the examples of this differentiation at school is growing specialization as well as the shift from subject to idea in school curriculum. Practically it means more collaboration between the subjects and cooperation of teachers. By the term *idea* Bernstein means a topic, so a shift towards idea means “*topic-centered interdisciplinary enquiry*” that already often takes place at the university level (1975, p. 64).

We would now like to devote some attention to the critique of Bernstein's theory by **Michael W. Apple**. He grounds he theory within the neo-Gramscian and radical democratic position. In this critique Apple mostly focuses on Bernstein's notions of social and cultural reproduction at schools. In his analysis of reproduction of dominant culture and power relationships, Bernstein put the biggest stress on social classes. Apple points out that class are indeed very important and useful analytical concepts and objective set of relations, but the fact is that they do not explain all. It should not be used as an excuse to leave it out from analysis, but at the same time it is not right to reduce the analysis only to the class assumptions. (Apple 1995) Thus Apple blames Bernstein on emphasizing the class theory way too much. There are several problems connected with it. The one has already been mentioned, it is that class construct yet useful does not explain everything. The second one, is that Bernstein in his considerations represents two classes – the middle class and the papering class, and that categorization is not adequately. “*It is no longer generally accepted that a two-class polarized model is anywhere near sufficient to grasp the complexity of class structure within capitalism*” (Wright, 1985, p. 9). Finally, the fact that classes are not homogenous constructs cannot be omitted as well.

Such binary models – papering class/middle class – neglect the crucial role played by the middle strata in a social formation increasingly organized around information-based industries and the influence of what I have elsewhere called technical-administrative knowledge. Yet, while the middle strata – whether called the professional middle class, the new petty bourgeoisie, those in contradictory class locations, or more generally simply middle class – have an important place in the economy, the state, and cultural institutions, it would be all too reductive to see them as homogeneous (Apple, 1995).

However, Apple recognizes that Bernstein partly covers the idea of heterogeneity of the middle class in his notion about visible and invisible pedagogy. Bernstein (1990) then points out a fraction of the middle class who have a direct relation to the economic field and the other fraction that is not directly related to the economic capital in their employment, but rather to a field of symbolic control. “*For both*

these fractions education is a crucial means of cultural and economic reproduction, although perhaps less so for that fraction directly related to the economic field” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 74). He argues that assumptions of visible pedagogy are more likely to be met by the first fraction, and those of invisible pedagogy by the second fraction.

So, to summarize, Apple criticizes Bernstein for leaving out several important details in his analysis of the nature of the relationships between culture and power. Apart from what is described more in details above, the concentration on the concept of class led to less or no attention towards the other influences, like the impact of race and gender. But as Apple stresses it more times, there are many positive things about Bernstein’s theory. He recognizes Bernstein’s undoubtable contribution to the debate over how dominance is represented at school. His investigations of overt and hidden curriculum, pedagogy, the forms of evaluation and the way they represent the relations of domination and exploitation in the larger society are beneficial for the sociology of education (Apple, 1995).

Comparison

This part of discussion is devoted to the analysis of sociological perspectives represented in the theoretical part of the paper, finding similarities and contradictions between the theories, and possible interconnections between the authors. The comparison is carried out on three levels – first, as to extent of social determination of educational institution, then as to the mechanisms and means by which society implements that determination, and finally as to pedagogical discourse.

All introduced sociologists agree on the point that it is society that is superior over a single institution, and specifically over the educational system. That means that education itself is not a source of social changes, but rather reflects the changes in the larger society, alternatively reproduces the existing social order. But single authors incline to the different extent of social determination of educational system, leaving room for autonomy and individual impact within the institution. These differences were also reflected in the structure of this paper – first there were conflict theorists, that are the most conservative in this matter, arguing that educational system has only instrumental role and serves the needs of above institutions. On the contrary, Illich which follows in the chapter after adheres to the power of educational system to change its form. Then Bourdieu with Passeron and Bernstein which don’t tend to extreme positions but consider cultural and social reproduction in education and at the same time don’t omit the role of an individual.

Let us go through these differences more in detail, to show what they mean. According to Marx and Engels (1974), the main goal of education consists in comprehensive personal development. Ivan Illich (2001) agrees with this statement, but he argues that it is the goal of education that has no chance to be reached in the existing educational system. While the former say that education can contribute to the development of society within the current social order with no potential to make changes in it, the latter argues that if education doesn’t change itself it will never reach its goal. The reason for that, according to Illich, is that the existent system of education serves quite different goals – to transmit the new generation notions of hierarchy and discipline, to prepare them this way to the future in industrial society. Bowles and Gintis (1976) at their turn agree with Illich on that, as they are also convinced that educational system meets the requirements of labor market by socializing children to the economic system, but the actual content of education is not the primary matter. Using Bernstein’s terminology (1975), Illich and Bowles with Gintis concern rather with the expressive order at school and give little attention to the instrumental order (in other words, with moral order and hidden message that with the formal curriculum). But while Illich insists on necessity and capability of educational system to change itself in order to approach the actual goals of learning, Bowles and Gintis claim that education as an institution cannot change itself but can only follow wider social changes.

Bernstein (1971, 1975, 1990) joins the discourse with a notion that society indeed determines the flow of educational process and helps to conserve the social inequalities. He points out on concrete examples of how educational system transforms in correspondence with changes in larger society. Unlike the previous authors, Basil Bernstein devotes much more attention to the content of education (instrumental order) and the means of its delivery (pedagogical methods), and that fact is also reflected in his analysis of the changes in the system of education. There he points to gradual transitions as to solidarity (from mechanical to organic), as to pedagogy (from visible to invisible), as to the curriculum (from subject to idea-oriented). He notes the probability of the unstable instrumental order in the society that is undergoing rapid technological change, when some subject gets more attention and the others

are removed from the curriculum. The expressive order becomes more unstable in conditions of fast technological growth.

“The expressive order of the school is legitimized by notions of acceptable behavior held outside the school, but these notions of acceptable behavior may not be equally held by all groups within a society. This may be complicated by the fact that in a fluid, changing society, the very image of conduct, character and manner, the moral order itself, may be unclear and ambiguous” (Bernstein, 1975, p. 39)

Even though he writes in the context of Britain, he argues that these analyses could be broadened to other countries without complications. Bernstein balances between the social determination of education and the role of individuals within the system (both pupils and teachers).

The main points of these three perspectives (Bowles and Gintis, Illich, Bernstein) are well synthesized in the Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction. Together with Passeron, Bourdieu (1990) talks about social and economic gaps that education helps to transfer from generation to generation. They don't aim to ignore the inherent differences between the individuals, but they argue that social inequalities cannot be omitted as well, even (or moreover so) when they are reproduced in hidden way. Bourdieu and Passeron thus incline to the theory of symbolic violence that is present in schools. The extent of social determination over educational system is according to them quite large, but not absolute.

As the sociologists incline to the opinion, that school with different extent reflects the changes in larger society and does not appear itself as a source of societal changes, it rather preserves the existent social order. Concrete means and mechanisms by which reproduction of social inequalities occurs and hidden message is inculcated at school differ in each of these approaches as well, and it is important to develop a comparison on that level.

Conflict theorists and Illich blame the structure of educational system itself that helps to reproduce inequalities. The content of education is not really covered in their theories, probably because they argue that the content is not far the main thing that pupils learn at school. They put stress on something that occurs beyond the academic curriculum, like learning to submit to authorities and comply with certain rules. And that is how according to them educational system functions as a standardizing instrument in the society.

A different view is proposed in the theories of Bernstein and Bourdieu with Passeron, and there is a bright parallel possible between their theories. All of them consider language as a mechanism by which social and cultural reproduction takes place. Bernstein's theory of language codes was created at the same period as papers of Bourdieu and Passeron, and there is a clear parallel between their concepts. The language codes of the former and the language capital of the latter have much in common, where the restricted code corresponds with lower scope of language capital (primarily handling the practical logic) and the elaborated code corresponds with bigger language capital (the theoretical/formal logic). So, they share an opinion that while the educational system is formally democratic, its flow and selectiveness is still being under the influence of social inequalities, due to the hidden and invisible means of reproduction, like it is in case of language. Two theories though differ in the scope of analyzing, with Bernstein more inclined to the micro level, which allows him to see more details inside the school.

As it was mentioned in the chapter devoted to Bourdieu and Passeron, there is a vast critique of the cultural (linguistic included) capital which they offer as explanation for the reproduction of economic and cultural inequalities. Critics (Sullivan, 2002) do not consider cultural capital as a enough explanation due to the fact that this theory is not corresponding with any larger quantitative research's results. However, they also pointed out that they are not arguing with the fact that reproduction takes place at school, but they deny cultural capital as a mechanism by which the inequalities are being transmitted. The reproduction through schooling itself has been approved in a few researches in many countries, e.g. Bills (2004), Moran-Ellis (2010), reamer and Pollak (2009), including Czech Republic, e.g. Bočková et al. (2018) or Slovakia (Hroncová, 2010).

Tomáš Katrňák (2004) in his research was occupied particularly with intergenerational transition of economic inequalities in papering class families that is being reflected by the system of education. Katrňák proves the hypowork with statistical data from the research in Czech republic. One of the notions he does in his argumentation is that parental social position influences their children's educational aspirations and occupational ambitions. The author also uses concepts of cultural as well as

economic capital to explain these influences, but he does not aim to build a linear connection between the mentioned capitals and reproduction. Rather he claims that relation between economic capital of the family and a child's school success is mediated by the family's lifestyle, and the attitude of parents towards school. He founds this argumentation on the base of researches conducted in the other than Czech populations (Britain and the United States for example) in the second half of the twentieth century (Katrňák, 2004). This line in his theory is closely related to Bernstein's (1975) classification of families' and children's attitudes towards school (particularly understanding the means and acceptance the ends of both instrumental and expressive orders). Though the family's perception of school culture has a great effect in the pupil's involvement in school, Bernstein argues that school itself can influence a pupil's involvement as well. It aims towards improvement of each pupil's role type towards commitment type that is towards understanding of means and acceptance the ends (goals) of educational process. *"It is well known that the school transforms the identities of many of the children: transforms the nature of their allegiances to their family and community and gives them access to other styles of life and modes of social relationships"* (Bernstein, 1975, p. 37). The process of transformation occurs in the context of school culture itself through the agency of pedagogical stuff. This leads us to the next level of comparison we would like to cover in the discussion – the pedagogical discourse.

The other thing that Bourdieu with Passeron and Bernstein have in common is their concern with pedagogy, which is the third level of analysis we would like to devote some attention to. We consider the discourse about pedagogy as relevant to our topic as teachers and educators are the social agents that carry out the whole process inside the institution of education. The possible changes in the educational system would also be realized through the agency of pedagogues. Ivan Illich might not agree with that. As it emerges from his theory, he underestimates the role of teachers in the educational process. More precisely, he argues that the role teachers play in the existent system of education is teaching children the principles of behaviour, but he doesn't consider pedagogical skills as necessary for the actual delivery of knowledge and skills. The model of education that he proposes is the education through the agency of everybody without professional teachers. This vision though seems very arguable and should be a subject to a separate discussion.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) place high emphasis on the role of teachers in the educational system. But as central concern in their common theory of education is social and cultural reproduction, they see the role of teachers in contributing to that reproduction through implementation of symbolic violence over the pupils. At least there is how it goes in traditional pedagogy. On the contrary, in their vision of rational pedagogy there is chance to prevent the reproduction of inequalities thanks to giving much more attention to pupils' social background and performance of much bigger variation of pedagogical techniques. Basil Bernstein also tells apart two types of pedagogy, visible and invisible pedagogy. The parallel between these categories and those of Bourdieu and Passeron is possible (traditional and visible, rational and invisible), but is questionable in the point of reproduction. Bernstein in his categorization concerns rather with the delivery of curriculum than of the hidden message of the expressive order.

Reflection

In this part we would like to finally specify the created framework into the answer to the research question, which was the following: can education, according to sociologists, change society? We aimed to provide the diversity of perspectives in order to have a comprehensive view over education in sociological discourse and not to get an answer just from one single theoretical framework but look over the different alternatives offered by sociology of education. That aspiration also led to the fact that one unambiguous answer is not possible, because there are contradictions between the theories that do not allow to make a coherent synthesis of the ideas. That is why we cannot answer strictly positively or strictly negatively on the question of whether education is capable of provocation of wider societal changes. However, some common lines are presented, and some parallels are possible to construct between the theories, as the first section of Discussion shows. Sociological perspective incline to the conclusion that educational system has secondary role in societal changes and itself functions and changes in wider context of the other institutions. Thus, an offer of alternatives allows to choose the extent of autonomy that is left for educational institution in this scheme.

It is necessary to consider the question of whether the theories and approaches covered in the paper are still applicable to the current situation, alternatively to what extent they are. The situation has

already changed somehow since the time these theories emerged. And if the main idea might remain relevant – the superiority over the educational institution by complex society, there is a shift in the attitude towards the educational system, which corresponds with wider social changes. The changes in economic sphere, technological progress, globalization, increasing accent on individuals and the other changes that occur nowadays are somehow reflected in the system of education, both in its structure and in its content. And if the requirements on employees are changing with more stress on ability to learn, critical thinking and creativity, educational system is gradually adapting to those changes. So, there is no contradiction with the statement that school is an instrument for preparing new generation to enter the labour market. But if before this preparation consisted primarily in teaching discipline and hierarchy, today it is different.

Conclusion

This paper dealt with a matter typical for the sociology of education, with the role of the system of education in society. The main question was whether the system of education is capable of changing society or whether it just follows the changes that occur outside the institution. This question was divided into three smaller questions: the first one concerned directly with the extent to which education can change or influence the developments in broader society, the second one concerned with actual means through which school helps to preserve the existent social order, and the third one with the role of teachers in these processes (though not every sociologist represented in the paper was concerned with pedagogical question).

The essential of the paper was to answer these questions from different sociological perspectives. In that way it was meant to create a theoretical framework for the analysis of what is happening now in the educational system from the sociological point of view. For the achievement of that essential the authors were chosen in order to represent the diversity of opinions within the discourse.

The research showed that all represented authors agree on the fact that the institute of education depends in its development on the changes that emerge from the other spheres of society. But they hold different positions as to the extent of the autonomy of educational system and the means by which existent social order is preserved in schools.

It was difficult to keep the narrow line of sociologists that were chosen as basic for this paper. Thus, the other authors were also included in the course of writing in order to make a final picture more coherent. Still there are many connections and related issues that could not be covered in one paper, but the defined framework creates a good base for the further research. At the same time those who work in educational sphere, the agents of potential changes, can be inspired by sociological perspectives on education, including those that were partly covered in this paper.

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