

POWER AND AUTONOMY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

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Most sociological theories of education are based on the assumption that the school is highly dependent on the wider society — that the wider society has power over the school and over schooling. This is true of functionalist theories centered on cultural values,¹ of technical functionalist theories,² of Marxist theories based on class domination and class conflict,³ of the “new directions” sociology of education which focusses on what counts as school knowledge and on what makes it count,⁴ of Weberian conflict theory,⁵ and of Bourdieu and Passeron’s critical theory.⁶ Although these theories implicitly or explicitly give some role to the “relative autonomy” of the school, with Bourdieu and Passeron’s being the most explicit, such autonomy is seen as secondary to the power of the wider society over schooling.

These studies provide valuable descriptions of the functions the school serves for sustaining the wider society. Their explanations of why the school functions as it does, however, remain vague and unsatisfactory. This is because the term “power” has been used as if it were a taken-for-granted and unproblematic concept. By not reflecting on what is meant by power, a highly problematic concept as I will show, these theories have been unable to proceed towards specifying the nature of the school-society power relationship. Although power is one of the most important concepts in the sociology of education and has recently become one of the most widely used,⁷ it is also one of the most ill-defined terms in the field. It is astonishing to note the absence of any discussion of what is being referred to by the concept “power” by most investigators who make use of it. The ambiguity in the conception of power in these theories has enabled their critics, in particular Hurn,⁸ to claim, by using a different but equally undefined conception of power, that the functionalist and radical paradigms have both exaggerated the power of the wider society over the school. Hurn contends that the autonomous internal processes of the school lead it to be refractory to any form of external

domination and that the social organization of schools should be explained in terms of adaptive solutions to internal problems and in terms of the vested interests of educators. Many studies from the interactionist, phenomenological, and ethnomethodological perspectives⁹ also tend to treat the school as if it were autonomous in the sense that the analyses are carried out as if the wider society had no power of any explanatory value over schooling. These perspectives seek to bring out the active, creative side of teachers and pupils who negotiate and construct reality through their ad hoc practices rather than seeing teachers and pupils as being dominated by external forces. Such studies usually do not pursue the analysis of the source of the school contingencies teachers and pupils face to the wider societal context nor do they analyze the use made in the wider society of the results of classroom processes. Although these studies do not make explicit use of the concept “power,” taken-for-granted assumptions about power are essential elements upon which the rest of the theoretical approach is built.

Here, I will first show that the meaning of the concept “power” cannot be taken for granted, by examining different and highly problematic meanings which have been attributed to it. I will attempt to clarify the concept by suggesting a distinction between three fundamentally different capacities which underlie power. This distinction will then be used to analyze critically the literature in the sociology of education in order to demonstrate present inadequacies of theories assuming the dependence and those assuming the autonomy of the school, in order to discern how different conceptions of power have led to such contradictory assumptions, and in order to advance our understanding of the power relationship between schooling and the wider society.

Conceptions of Power

One of the best known and most influential definitions of power in sociology is Weber's: “we understand by ‘power’ the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.”¹⁰ Both those who claim to be working within the Weberian tradition and those who see themselves as critics of Weber perceive two essential components in this definition.¹¹ In order to have a power relationship there must be interaction which is more or less direct, as indicated by the reference to “social action,” and there must be “resistance of others who are participating in the action.” This interpretation of Weber's definition has often resulted in a focus on decision-making as a key indicator in any investigation of power.

Critics of this conception have argued that the exclusion of relations which do not involve resistance or direct interaction from the analysis of power has led to distorted conclusions concerning power relations between units in social systems. Basic structures of domination which do not become a public issue are ignored by the investigator, whereas a conflict whose outcome has little effect on the overall pattern of inequality and domination is taken as an important index of the power of the interacting units. A particularly important example of such a criticism has been made by Baldus, who advocates a much broader definition of power in which interaction and resistance are no longer necessary conditions: "power is defined as the ability of a center unit to maintain, reproduce, or reinforce over time its position with respect to a periphery unit in a structure of social inequality of which both are a part."¹² Baldus' critique of Weber is important in that it brings to light the vastly different conceptions of power which are currently in use in sociology. His critique is flawed, nonetheless, because it is based on an erroneous interpretation of Weber. Neither direct interaction nor resistance are necessary conditions in Weber's concept of power.

In his definition of power Weber does not use the term "interaction," much less Baldus' expression "direct interaction". Rather, Weber uses the much broader term "social action" which he defines as follows: "We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior — be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course."¹³ Moreover, "the 'others' may be individual persons, and may be known to the actor as such, or may constitute an indefinite plurality and may be entirely unknown as individuals."¹⁴ Thus money accumulation is social action because the accumulator takes account of the fact that others, who may well be unknown, will accept money in the future as a unit of exchange. Neither is resistance a necessary condition in Weber's concept of power. His expression "even against the resistance of others" is not equivalent to an assumption that there must be resistance. Furthermore, authority is characterized precisely by a lack of resistance, and is seen by Weber as a special case of power, the broader meaning of domination. Hence power includes cases which do not involve resistance, an example being cases involving authority. After all, a special case of a more general phenomenon and the phenomenon as a whole cannot be mutually exclusive, and Weber never suggested that they were.

Another difficulty concerns Baldus' definition of power. It is so all-encompassing that it promotes tautologies and circular arguments of the following type. Question: what enables privileged groups to maintain the present pattern

of social inequality? Answer: that they have power. Question: how do we know they have such power? Answer: by the fact that the present pattern of social inequality is maintained. By defining power globally in terms of the capacity to maintain social inequality without any further refinement, one is prevented from using the concept “power” to explain, in a way which does not become a tautology, why social inequality is maintained. It is necessary to define power and social inequality independently in order to use one to explain the other. Baldus managed in his illustrations to avoid turning in semantic circles and to present plausible explanations only because he distinguished between the very different capacities incorporated into his all-inclusive definition. The lesson is that a global, unrefined conception of power, defined in terms of the capacity to maintain inequality, is not helpful for advancing our understanding of the relationship between power and social inequality. Delineating the fundamentally different capacities included in the concept of power, however, is an essential step towards advancing our understanding of that relationship.

Capacities Underlying Power

I will start from Weber’s definition of the general concept of power, but I will not interpret it as many followers and critics (e.g., Baldus) of Weber have done. Power in this general sense may involve direct interaction and/or resistance, but the presence of one or both is not a necessary condition for the manifestation of power. Furthermore, the power of actors is revealed by their chances of realizing their will, but evidently this depends on what their will is. Slaves who desire nothing more than a bowl of soup, and who get it, are not, according to Weber’s or any sensible definition, more powerful than megalomaniacs who are incapable of realizing their desire of conquering the world and can only conquer Europe. Weber’s general concept of power is, however, less important for my purposes in this paper than its subdivisions.

Weber pointed out the difference between this general notion of power or domination and the subcategory “*Herrschaft*,” which he referred to as the narrower, technical sense of domination. The Parsonian translation of Weber interpreted this latter term as leadership or authority, depending on the context, and referred to it as legitimate power. Other translators, such as Roth,¹⁵ claim that such translations overemphasize the role played by legitimacy in Weber’s concept “*Herrschaft*”. According to their translation Weber refers to this subcategory of power as the “authoritarian power of command” where “the performance of the command may have been motivated by the ruled’s own conviction of its propriety, or by his sense of duty, or by fear, or by ‘dull’ custom, or by a desire to obtain some benefit for himself.”¹⁶ I will

refer to this, my first subcategory of power, as simply *power to command* and define it as does Weber: “the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons.”¹⁷ It is the capacity to elicit obedience to a command, no matter what the basis for that obedience. The important element is a command in some form or other.

This first subcategory of power contrasts with a second, which Weber calls “domination by virtue of a constellation of interests.”¹⁸ Weber does not give an explicit definition of this second type of power, but its meaning is clear from the illustrations he presents and the statements he makes. One concrete illustration is of a large banking institution which, because of its quasi-monopolistic position in the capital market, can impose terms in its own interests for granting credit. Under this type of power the dominant group (quasi-monopoly bankers) does not command the action of the dominated group (people who need money) and the dominated group is not obliged to obey. The former merely pursues its own interests and in doing so has the capacity to constrain the possibilities open to members of the latter, who nonetheless remain “formally free,” to use Weber’s expression, to choose the best means which remain available (accept the terms, search for a better bank, save and wait, form a cooperative, etc.) to attain their goals. I will refer to this subcategory of power as the *power to constrain* and define it as the capacity of a unit to constrain the action of others while pursuing its own interests without having to command the action of others. The terms “unit” and “others” are meant to refer to individuals, groups, or structures, depending on whether one chooses to work at the individual, collective, or structural level of analysis. In capitalist society the power to constrain is, as Weber states, based mainly on the possession of goods (especially the means of production) or marketable skills.

A third subcategory of the general concept power is what I will call the *power to profit from*. I will define this as the capacity of a unit to profit, in order to realize its goals, from the autonomous actions of others, which the unit did not itself initiate and which may be oriented to goals different from its own. Whereas power to constrain involves the capacity to affect the possibilities open to others, power to profit from involves the capacity to take advantage of possibilities oneself which are presented by others – a subtle but important distinction for understanding the power relationships between the school and the wider society, as will be seen. Power to profit from includes what Baldus refers to as the use by the center of “complementary periphery behavior.”¹⁹ I am arguing, however, that if complementary periphery behavior which does not result from the initiative of the center is to be incorporated into the definition of the power of the center over the

periphery, then, in order to avoid obscuring the divergent processes involved, one must admit that such power is of quite a different type than power which requires center initiative to produce periphery behavior. It is not clear whether Weber ignored this third subcategory of power or whether he intended to include it in his subcategory "domination by virtue of a constellation of interests."

I will suggest an hypothesis similar to Baldus' concerning the cost to the power holder of the use of the different types of power. Power to command requires more elaborate and costly procedures than does power to constrain, since the latter, unlike the former, does not attempt to oblige members of the dominated group to obey and leaves them their formal freedom. Power to profit from involves the least cost of all, for the dominant group does not even have to initiate the action, which accrues to it as a windfall gain if it has the capacity to take advantage of the action. Thus dominant groups in a market-oriented capitalist society will tend to prefer to use the third, second, and first types of power in that order, with power to constrain and especially power to command being used only to the extent that power to profit from does not suffice to attain their goals. Of course, in any concrete case the presence of several of these types of power in combination can be detected, although one is usually most prevalent. They are presented here as analytic concepts which, although not often found in pure form in concrete cases, will increase our understanding of concrete phenomena. I will now attempt to demonstrate this by showing that the differentiation of the capacities underlying power is particularly important for understanding the power relationship between the school and the wider society.²⁰ I will show this through a critique of existing theories of that relationship: first, of theories which emphasize the dependence of the school on the wider society, and then of theories which treat the school as being more or less autonomous.

Dependence and Power

*a) Functionalism*²¹

Functionalist theories of the relationship between the school and the wider society tend to make use of an argument which has the following logical structure. They postulate that society has certain needs. The school is the most obvious institution capable of satisfying some of these needs. To this point the argument is at best a description or at least an assumption of the needs of society and the consequences of the functioning of the school. Nothing as yet has been explained. Needs are not always met: humans need food, yet some humans starve; hierarchical societies need masses who accept

the hierarchical structures, yet revolutions occur. So still another assumption is made, that if society continues to exist, then society has the power and uses that power to ensure that its needs are met. Behind explanations based on needs and functions one finds assumptions about power. I will refer to this argument based on needs as the functionalist mode of analysis. Although various synonyms for needs are used, such as requisites, prerequisites, and demands, the wider society is always seen as having the power to shape the school so as to meet society's needs. For example, the version of functionalism which emphasizes cultural values²² argues that society's values become embodied in the structure of the school which then functions so as to satisfy the essential prerequisites of the adult role structure, those of allocation and socialization. Moreover, the requisites of the ongoing structural differentiation of American society are claimed to have resulted in the increasingly vital role of the educational system and in the process of academic upgrading. Proponents of the technical version of functionalism²³ claim that the demands of the economy and of the changing occupational structure, which resulted from technological development and industrialization, for expert knowledge and cognitive skills have shaped educational institutions.

The functionalist mode of analysis involves a teleological argument because the ends, well-selected and socialized workers, are assumed to have caused the means – the school – which bring about those ends.²⁴ Teleological arguments can be legitimate, but only if they specify the processes by which the ends produce the means in order to document those processes. If this is not done, the teleological argument is illegitimate because it remains theoretically vague and vacuous. The terms of the argument can be defined so globally and imprecisely that the argument is true by definition and cannot possibly, even in principle, be refuted. It can all too easily degenerate into circular reasoning such as the following. Why has the school become an increasingly important institution for selection and socialization? Because of society's increasing need for selection and socialization. How do we know that the school satisfies these needs of society? Because society persists, indicating that its needs are satisfied, and because the school is obviously the most important institution of selection and socialization in society. A teleological argument obscures alternative possibilities: that the school system may serve society's needs yet be maintained by something else, for example, by the school system's own internal organizational dynamic (a consequence cannot be assumed equivalent to a cause); that the school system may be dysfunctional for the existing society in an important way; that structures other than the school system may satisfy the assumed needs of society; or that society does not have the assumed needs. Accounting for the association between the functioning of the school system and the structure of the wider society in terms of the needs

of society has diverted attention away from the specification of the causal connection between the two. "To pronounce at once upon the ultimate functions subserved by social facts is to short-circuit explanation and reduce it to generalities which, so prematurely stated, have little significance."²⁵

In order to go beyond insignificant generalities and develop explanations it is necessary to specify not only the processes by which the school system meets the needs of the wider society but also the processes by which the wider society ensures that the school system meets its needs.²⁶ Such an analysis of the power of the wider society over the school requires a clear and precisely defined concept of power, one which carefully distinguishes the different capacities underlying power. Parsons did not use the term "power" in his analysis of the functions of the school class,²⁷ yet from the definition he gives it elsewhere it is evident that power is implicitly involved in his analysis. "Power we may define as the realistic capacity of a system-unit to actualize its 'interests' (attain goals, prevent undesired interference, command respect, control possessions, etc.) within the context of system-interaction and in this sense to exert influence on processes in the system."²⁸ Parsons' description of the way the needs and interests of the wider society are met by the structure and functioning of the school class is, according to his definition of power, a description of the power of the wider society over the school.

Parsons' definition of power is remarkably similar to Baldus' except that the critical terminology is absent: the capacity of a unit to maintain a pattern of social inequality is replaced by the capacity of a unit to actualize its interests. Parsons' definition²⁹ is so global and unrefined that it has diverted him from analyzing the causal processes through which the wider society sees to it that the school satisfies society's needs. When power is given such a global and unrefined definition it is of little use to the theorist for understanding and explaining phenomena. Technical-functional theories for their part only skim the surface of the question of why and how the school was transformed to meet the demands of the economy they assume. In fact, such a claim is premature until one specifies and documents the respective roles played by the obedience of the educational system to commands coming from the economy (perhaps through government), by the constraints brought to bear on the educational system as a result of the needs of the economy, and by internally produced developments in the school system which the economy simply took advantage of to meet its own needs. Here too analysis remains at the level of vague generalities until the causal processes by which the needs of the economy produce changes in the school system are specified. Distinguishing between the three types of power would force the investigator to go beyond merely equating an association (concomitant variation) between developments

in the economy and those in the school system with a cause and to specify the causal processes involved.

b) Marxism

Marxist theories appear at first sight very different from functionalist theories. Nonetheless, Marxists too resort to the functionalist mode of analysis, but with the difference being their claim that the functioning of the educational system is determined by the needs not of society as a whole but of those of the bourgeoisie, of capital, and of the reproduction of the conditions necessary to extract surplus value from the proletariat. For example, they speak not of the need for expert knowledge nor cognitive skills but of the need to divide in order to conquer. Bowles and Gintis' study is filled with statements such as the following: "The emerging class structure evolved in accord with these new social relations of production: an ascendant and self-conscious capitalist class came to dominate the political, legal, and cultural superstructure of society. The needs of this class were to profoundly shape the evolution of the educational system."³⁰ The work of Althusser and Baudelot and Establet³¹ are other examples of Marxist analyses which conceive the structure of the school system as being the result of the functions it serves for satisfying the needs of the capitalist mode of production. Changes in the structure and the form of schools are seen as the result of the changing needs of the capitalist mode of production during its transformation from entrepreneurial capitalism to monopoly capitalism.

Most Marxists³² content themselves with hypotheses concerning structural correspondences between the educational system and the capitalist mode of production, with hypotheses of the functions the former serves for the latter, and with hypotheses of the causal priority of the latter, usually presenting their hypotheses as matter-of-fact assertions. Thus their analyses exhibit the weaknesses I described earlier common to the functionalist mode of analysis. Bowles and Gintis³³ have emphasized structural correspondences and functions but they have gone further than most Marxists in specifying and documenting the causal processes involved. They specify two processes by which the educational system is adjusted to correspond to the capitalist economy. The first they call "pluralist accommodation," which operates through the pursuit of interests by millions of parents, students, and groups. Although this decentralized process appears to defy control by an elite, it is led by the changing economic structure, which in turn is dominated by capitalists and their interests. The second process of adjustment is of political struggle in terms of class interest during periods of crisis. In these periods forward-looking capitalists respond to popular unrest by reforming the educational

system. In the case of each process “the capitalist class . . . has been able to loosely define a feasible model of educational change In a relatively decentralized decision-making framework, this preponderant control over information, educational values, and the articulation of programmatic ideas — [is] exercised by the capitalist class.”³⁴ Business interests “were highly successful in maintaining ultimate control over the administration of educational reform” in order to smother discontent, to legitimate capitalist exploitation, and to minimize the erosion of their power and privilege.³⁵

Certainly, capitalists, as they pursue their economic interests, have the power to constrain the school system, and this usually exerts its effect through pluralist accommodation. It is also true that there have been instances of direct intervention by capitalists in the school system, instances resembling what I have referred to as power to command, and that these occurred especially during times of crises. In order to specify correctly the causal processes involved, it is important not to confuse the two, as Bowles and Gintis proceed to do after making their distinction. It is important not to interpret the constraints on the school system (and subsequent educational reform) which result from the profit-making economic activities of capitalists as if they were commands coming from a capitalist class that defines a certain model of educational change and exercises control over educational values and over the administration of educational reform.

It is equally essential not to confuse power to profit from with either power to constrain or power to command. Marxists have typically shown that the school functions in a way which serves the interests of the capitalist class and have often implied that the capitalist class has therefore made the school function that way. Such an argument involves a non-sequitur because it equates consequence and association with cause. For example, the correspondences between the school and the factory and the functions the school serves for the factory shown by Bowles and Gintis are fascinating. It must be remembered, however, that a correspondence is nothing more than an association, and a function nothing more than a consequence. The important sociological questions are why there are such correspondences and why the school serves these functions. The answers cannot be taken for granted as self-evident. The capitalist class may have the power to use school diplomas and the surpluses of graduates to divide and conquer the working class, the power to use the perseverance, dependability, and competitiveness learned in school to subordinate and motivate workers on jobs, and the power to profit from the products of the latest educational innovations, such as progressive education, open classrooms, minimization of grading, and free schools, to enhance its control over its enterprises. That the capitalist class has the power

and uses it to command or even to constrain the content, processes, form, or structure of the school, however, does not necessarily follow from the fact that it has the power to profit from the functioning of the school. It may simply have the power to take advantage of the autonomously produced complementary behavior of the school, behavior which may have resulted from sources having as much to do with the internal organization, dynamics, or tradition of the educational system as with commands or constraints coming from external sources.

To take one specific example, the correspondence between the hierarchical structure (and orientation towards rules) of profit-seeking enterprises and of the school focussed on by Bowles and Gintis does not enable us to conclude that the school has become hierarchical in structure (and oriented towards rules) because profit-seeking capitalists had the power and used it to command or even to constrain the school to copy the organizational structure of their enterprises. These features of the school may well have developed in part for reasons of internal organizational dynamics, yet capitalists have the power in their enterprises to profit from such a correspondence in order to motivate and control former students who are now their workers. In fact, the use of the power to profit from the autonomous activities of other institutions will be preferred by capitalists since it does not involve the cost of initiating those activities which is implied in the use of the power to command or to constrain. Even Bowles and Gintis, then, fail to specify and much less document adequately the causal processes involved between capitalism and schooling. Instead, their analysis involves the use of an imprecise language to describe the relationship, a language characterized by terms such as “correspond,” “echo,” “ushered in,” “replicate,” “mirrors,” “reflects,” and “compatible with”. Although this language suggests causality, it is merely based on association.³⁶ Assertions about correspondences between economic and school structures added to a focus on isolated instances of commands from capitalists being obeyed by the school system may decrease rather than increase our understanding of the causal processes involved in the relationship between the economic system and the school system in capitalist society by misleading us as to the nature of those processes.

The preceding critique of the Marxist conception of the relationship between the economic system and the school system is not meant to deny that the development of the economic system and the pursuit of profit by economically dominant groups indirectly exert constraints on the school system, that the school system usually adapts itself to those constraints, and that economically dominant groups have the power to profit from the adaptations. It is, however, analytically misleading to conceive of this process in either an

authoritarian or a purely mechanistic fashion. Even though the constraints limit a unit's alternatives by facilitating the attainment of certain goals and rendering others particularly difficult to attain (socialism being an extreme example of the latter), the constrained unit can still choose among the alternatives and initiate its own peculiar response to the constraints. This absence of a formal obligation to obey commands is what Weber meant by the "formal freedom" characteristic of relationships in a capitalist economy and it is also characteristic of the relationship between economic institutions and the school system in capitalist society. Although there is often a feedback process in which power to constrain and power to profit from are found together in concrete cases, even in those cases it is important to distinguish analytically between the two in order to understand that process, in order to avoid mechanistic or authoritarian explanations which ignore the active response of the constrained unit in initiating activities, and in order to perceive the important role of the formal freedom and formal autonomy of the school system in advanced capitalist society.

c) New Directions

Young,³⁷ who drew his early inspiration from Bernstein,³⁸ argues that the affirmations of functionalism and Marxism are pitched on a level so general that they do not point to explanations of the dynamics involved in social relations and are therefore of limited value as points to begin analysis. Young begins "by starting with the assumptions that those in positions of power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge, how accessible to different groups any knowledge is, and what are the accepted relationships between different knowledge areas and between those who have access to them and make them available. It is thus the exploration of how these processes happen . . . that should form the focus of a sociology of education."³⁹ Much "new directions" research emphasizes the investigation of face-to-face interaction and has interpreted Young's discussion of power to mean the power of teachers to impose meanings on students, perhaps because such power to command is highly visible during face-to-face interaction. Unfortunately, this research glosses over the power of the wider society to impose constraints on teachers, an important constraint being in the form of meanings. For example, Keddie⁴⁰ explicitly admits these limitations of her study. This has led new directions research to be criticized for doing little more than blaming the teacher,⁴¹ for being education-bound,⁴² and for only describing how but failing to explain why social inequalities are perpetuated by schools.⁴³

An opposite interpretation of Young's starting assumption is given by Ahier who claims it implies the "false idea that it is the bourgeois class or a power

elite that produces ideas, as opposed to the whole of bourgeois society.”⁴⁴ The source of the confusion is that the new directions current of thought has not carefully specified what the positions of power being referred to are, which would require in turn that distinctions be made among the different types of power these positions have with respect to the school. If positions of power are meant to refer to the positions of teachers and educators, then Young’s new direction leads, as it has led, to education-bound research which fails to analyze the power of the bourgeois class to constrain the school and its power to profit from it. On the contrary, if Young meant, as Ahier assumes, that only the bourgeois class produces educational knowledge and has the power to command the school to inculcate it, then Ahier is correct in seeing this as a particularly mechanical and false assumption. It is much more plausible to conceive of the bourgeois class as having the power to profit from educational knowledge and the power to constrain in the course of economic activities the definition of what counts as educational knowledge, without having directly to produce that knowledge or to command that it be taught in schools, which can be left to the intellectual elite and to educators (in particular, teachers). Teachers, then, are in positions of power, for example over students, but it is power of quite a different kind and scope than that of the bourgeois class.

Young’s⁴⁵ claim that the destratification or restratification of educational knowledge by teachers could bring about a redistribution of society’s wealth, prestige, and power also runs up against two fundamental difficulties: the power of the bourgeois class to exert constraints which produce resistance to such a change in the school, and the power of the bourgeois class to continue to profit outside the school from the educational knowledge that would be restratified or destratified within the school. The educational conceptions of teachers sustain hierarchies in society not because the particular conceptions are necessary conditions for maintaining societal hierarchies, but rather because society’s dominant groups have the power to profit from educational conceptions in order to maintain the hierarchies they dominate.

Revealing educational knowledge as socially constructed and relative, as new direction sociologists seek to do, will not necessarily undermine the hierarchical structure of society if the bourgeois class continues to have the power to profit from the socially constructed, relative knowledge. Showing that the content of M.B.A. programs is relative rather than absolute knowledge and socially constructed may be not at all subversive to the bourgeois class if it continues to have the power to impose M.B.A. diplomas as criteria for selection for and exclusion from the positions of privilege it controls. Whitty⁴⁶ argues that a socially constructed and relativistic view of knowledge does not

necessarily imply a threat to the establishment and is in fact liable to be profoundly conservative. The distribution of power in society is more fundamental for sustaining social hierarchies than are the issues of whether educational knowledge is absolute or relative, or whether it is factual or socially constructed. Rather than assuming that beliefs in the superiority of certain kinds of knowledge, such as knowledge of Shakespeare's plays, has been imposed on schools by the bourgeois class, research should be directed to investigate the power of the bourgeois class to profit from that knowledge; for example, to investigate the processes by which the bourgeois class uses school diplomas based in part on the learning of Shakespeare's plays as mechanisms for excluding the working class from positions of privilege controlled by the bourgeois class.⁴⁷ Focussing attention on the power of the bourgeois class to profit from school knowledge and to constrain, rather than define, what counts as knowledge avoids many of the thorny problems involved in a view which sees all knowledge as relative and of equal value.

Young now sees the limitations of his early new directions and he has begun to direct research towards the investigation of the processes by which society's dominant groups constrain the school through educational publishers, examination boards, and curriculum development agencies.⁴⁸ Research on education will remain incomplete, however, unless it is also directed towards the study of the processes by which society's dominant groups have and use their power to profit from the school to maintain and reinforce their privileged position.

d) Weberian Conflict Theory

Collins⁴⁹ has advanced a Weberian conflict theory arguing that educational requirements for work positions reflect the interests of organizational elites which have the power to set such requirements rather than reflecting technical requirements of jobs. In order to maintain control of their enterprises, employers use school credentials to hire only people who have internalized the employers' status culture or at least respect for it. Collins argues that the belief that schooling provides necessary job skills tends to legitimate this process of exclusion in the eyes of the population. He demonstrates that this belief is in large part an unfounded mythology. The value of Collins' theory is that, according to the distinctions I have suggested, it focusses attention towards the power of employers to profit from the functioning of the school. It does not assume that educational requirements for jobs are technically based – the assumption of technical correspondence made by functionalist theorists – nor does it focus only on the adjustment of the school to the capitalist economy – the assumption of capitalist correspondence made by

Marxist theorists. Rather, it draws attention to the adjustment of capitalist enterprises to the functioning of the school system, a direction of adjustment which is ignored in most of the other theories. Employers have the power to change their job requirements in order to profit from autonomously produced school credentials seemingly based on necessary cognitive skills as superior criteria for legitimating exclusion from jobs they control and as a means of increasing the prestige of these positions and of their companies.

e) Critical Functionalism

Bourdieu and Passeron⁵⁰ have advanced the most systematic and elaborate analysis in terms of power relations in society of what they refer to as the relative autonomy yet hidden dependence of the school system. Unfortunately their expression “the relative autonomy of the school” is, like the expression “the relative height of a person,” characterized by imprecision and ambiguity. It fails to advance our understanding of how the school system can be autonomous and yet at the same time obey the external imperatives which require that the school system reproduce and legitimate the existing social class structure of society. It does not illuminate the processes involved in what Bourdieu and Passeron vaguely refer to as the tacit delegation of power from society’s dominant classes to the school system.

Once one recognizes the relative autonomy of the school system, one must refine the concept “power” in order to analyze the relationship between the school system and the wider society. Because the school system is relatively autonomous, it is essential to conceive of society’s dominant classes as having not so much the capacities to command or constrain the school system in their interests, these being the only forms of power analytically necessary if the school system were not relatively autonomous, but especially the capacity to profit from the autonomously produced results of the school system. For example, holders of economic and cultural capital have the power to place their offspring in a privileged position for acquiring autonomously produced school credentials, and the cultural capital and linguistic codes which underlie them, as well as the power to place their offspring in the social networks necessary to take full advantage of the diplomas received.⁵¹ Conceiving the power to profit from the school system as varying among classes in society yet being quite different from the power of these classes to command or constrain the school system reveals the secret of the “misrecognition”⁵² of the underlying power relations upon which schooling is based, the secret of the misrecognition of scholastic hierarchies as hierarchies of innate ability, and therefore the secret of the school system’s success as a mechanism for legitimating the transmission of inequalities. Precisely because the outcome of the

school contest appears not to be influenced by the commands or constraints of those who will eventually profit from the outcome, individuals accept the school contest as a more or less legitimate means of selection for unequally rewarding adult roles and are thereby led to accept the transmission of inequalities by the school.

When one distinguishes between the three types of power specified here and, in particular, conceives of the power to profit from, one can understand better how the school system can be autonomous and yet at the same time contribute to the reproduction and legitimation of the existing social class structure of society. Since society's dominant classes have the power to adapt themselves to the school in order to profit from it, the school system can remain autonomous and appear fair to all, which is the key to the successful legitimation of the process of social class reproduction by the school. It becomes no longer necessary to assume that power is delegated from society's dominant classes to the school system (as it is delegated within a formal organization) in order to explain that society's dominant classes profit from the functioning of the relatively autonomous school system. The affinity between the "habitus,"⁵³ or predisposed relationship to culture, of society's dominant classes and the school system may, if the school system is relatively autonomous, be more the result of the power of those classes to acquire the culture of the school than it is the result of the power of those classes to impose their culture on the school. Bourdieu's thinking seems to have evolved from an emphasis on the first to an emphasis on the second of these very different processes,⁵⁴ yet he does not explicitly and carefully differentiate the two.

Autonomy and Power

a) Pluralist Consensus Theory

Whereas Bourdieu and Passeron⁵⁵ argue that the relative autonomy of the educational system is the counterpart of a hidden dependence on other subsystems which must be examined in terms of social class relations, Hurn⁵⁶ claims on the contrary that the functional and radical paradigms have both exaggerated the dependence of the school system on other institutions. He contends that the autonomous internal processes of the school lead it to be refractory to any form of external domination. The social organization of schools is explained not in terms of the functions it serves for the wider society or society's elite groups, but rather in terms of adaptive solutions to the internal problems of motivating, controlling, and coordinating the activities of a captive group and in terms of the vested interests of educators in preserving traditional solutions.

Those who conceive of the school as a more or less autonomous institution or who treat it as such when carrying out their analyses do not often use the word “power”. They do, nonetheless, have a conception of power which can be inferred from statements in which it is implicitly involved. For example, Hurn argues that the error which functionalist and Marxist analyses share is that they portray schools as institutions which “carry out the orders” of the wider society.⁵⁷ He interprets neo-Marxists as claiming that “if schools perpetuate inequality . . . , this is ultimately because they serve the interests of a society that insists on a permanent underclass.”⁵⁸ To prove their point, Hurn argues, neo-Marxists “must also show that the obstacles to less repressive schooling lie . . . in the demands of elites that particular qualities be taught and other qualities not be taught.”⁵⁹ Hurn, then, conceives of power in terms of only one of the three types of power, what I have called the power to command.⁶⁰ This is what leads him to say in effect that functionalists and neo-Marxists have been unable to demonstrate that the wider society or its elites have the power to command the school and that the school carries out their orders.

Hurn fails to elaborate a conception of the power of the wider society, particularly its economic elite, to impose indirect constraints on the school. For example, he does not analyze the fact that students and parents through choice of courses put pressure on the educational system to provide them with the type of education imposed by employers as job requirements, and that educational administrators respond to that pressure as indicative of the power of employers to constrain the educational system. He also does not conceive of the differential power of units in society to profit from the functioning of the school as being an integral part of the power relationship between the school and the wider society. Hurn, unlike Collins, does not conceive of the relationship between educational status and occupational status as a power relationship — one highly dependent on powerful elites in society’s work organizations. By employing a much too restricted conception of power and thereby losing sight of the power relationship between school and society in which society’s organizational elites have the power to use autonomously produced school credentials to practice exclusion in their own interests, Hurn has weakened rather than strengthened Collins’ theory which served as the departure point for his own ideas.

Hurn proposes instead a value consensus theory to account for the school’s function of allocating individuals to different status positions. He emphasizes the role of the shared beliefs of individuals that schooling is a fair way to allocate status, and it is clear that Hurn shares this belief. “I think it is fair to say that since societies must ration access to the most desirable jobs

on some basis, reliance on educational credentials is probably a sensible and humane procedure. If many people who do not have such credentials could perform in a perfectly creditable manner on the job in question, restricting access to those with such credentials at least increases the likelihood that those who hold high status jobs will have been exposed to the world of ideas and the enduring values of our culture."⁶¹ He emphasizes the convictions of employers that school credentials indicate talent and motivation,⁶² and the "shared beliefs that people who have a lot of schooling are 'high quality' people."⁶³ He stresses the inevitability of the increase in educational credentials required for jobs.⁶⁴ Notwithstanding his consensus theory, Hurn also uses a plural values theory in terms of competing objectives of schooling to account for what he sees as the small effect the wider society has on the school system and for the unresponsiveness of the school system to the interests of particular groups in the wider society.⁶⁵ Hurn does not ask the question of why individuals and employers have the shared beliefs and convictions, nor that of the source of the inevitable increase in required credentials, nor the source of the competing objectives of schooling. The favorable consequences that the functioning of the school have for society's dominant groups do not lead Hurn to advocate the investigation of why the school functions in favor of their interests, since this would require a more elaborate analysis of the type of power that these groups have with respect to the school. His narrow conception of power as the authoritarian power to command leads him to ignore and to obscure the power and exclusion involved in the school-society relationship. This narrow conception of power leads not only Hurn but more importantly, subordinate groups, since they too share such a common sense conception, to believe that the school contest is independent of the power of society's dominant groups.

b) Interaction Theory, Phenomenology, and Ethnomethodology

What is striking about much research from these perspectives⁶⁶ is the absence of an analysis of the relationships between the school and other societal sub-systems in terms of social class relations. Classroom interaction is analyzed as if there were no social class differences among students and as if the division of the wider society into social classes exerted no constraints of any explanatory value. By assuming that the school is an autonomous laboratory, Cicourel can claim that he and his associates were able in their study "to approximate a kind of quasi-experimental control in the field setting of the school."⁶⁷

Interaction theory, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology tend to treat the school as if it were autonomous, in that they limit their focus to face-to-face interaction, to the immediate classroom context, and to the ad hoc practices

of teachers and students. Thus ethnomethodologists such as Leiter argue that the everyday routine activities of teachers consist of ad hoc practices which form teachers' "seen but unnoticed . . . methods for locating and producing students of different abilities."⁶⁸ The tracking systems of schools are also conceived as being the product of the ad hoc activities of school personnel. These perspectives usually do not pursue the analysis of the source of the school contingencies teachers and students face to the wider societal context. Whereas the functionalist mode of analysis views teachers as passive agents who are delegated power by the wider society, these perspectives usually fail to analyze the power of groups in the wider society, in the course of their interactive activities, to create contingencies for teachers in schools and by that very fact these approaches tend to treat teachers as if the wider society had no power to constrain their actions, which are conceived as being entirely ad hoc. Neither do these perspectives analyze the use made in the wider society of the micro level processes of schooling and testing for creating and maintaining macro level social structures. At most one finds only rare and brief allusions to this effect. For example, MacKay presents several examples of misinformation provided by standardized tests in the kindergartens of two American schools and concludes that "hanging on this thin thread is the entire occupational and status structure of society."⁶⁹ A more elaborate and rigorous approach would pursue the analysis of the differential power of social classes to profit from the misinformation, typifications, and taken-for-granted assumptions of schooling and testing, and would likely find something much more substantial than such a "thin thread". Given its macroscopic and historical implications, an analysis of the power relationship between the school and the wider society would be difficult, although not impossible in principle, using an approach which advocates the direct observation of face-to-face interaction. Nonetheless, the focus on the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices of everyday classroom interaction should not be allowed to obscure the wider context of power relations which underpin those assumptions and practices and lead them to be taken for granted.

I have distinguished most studies carried out from the interactionist, phenomenological, and ethnomethodological perspectives from the "new directions" of Michael Young and his associates because Young does not treat the school as if it were autonomous. Indeed he has recently become quite critical of studies from those perspectives which adopt such an approach. He cites the studies in Cicourel et al.⁷⁰ as examples of what he calls the "curriculum as practice" approach which is theoretically misleading because "teachers are thereby given a kind of spurious autonomy and independence from the wider contexts of which their activity is a part."⁷¹ He claims that such an approach is limited because it has become abstracted from the constraints teachers face

and therefore does not enable us to understand the nature of those constraints. Although Young analyzes teachers' classroom practices and sees teachers as potentially active agents of change, he seeks, especially in his recent publications, to promote the explicit analysis of the power of groups in the wider society to constrain teachers and the school.

Summary and Conclusions

This critical analysis of the literature in the sociology of education has shown that investigators who emphasize the dependence of the school on other structures in society or on their elites tend to have a much more global conception of power than do investigators who treat the school as autonomous. The deficiencies in the conception of power of these two groups, although different, have led both to serious problems in their analyses and conclusions.

The first group lumps together power to command, power to constrain, and power to profit from. It fails to distinguish between these fundamentally different capacities which are included under its broad, imprecise, and usually undefined rubric "power". Although it has been able to show the functions the school serves for sustaining the wider society or its dominant groups and show the correspondences between school structures and other social structures in society, it has not much advanced our understanding of the causal processes which have resulted in those functions and correspondences. This has at times led members of this group to a quasi-mechanistic conception of the subordination of the school to other social structures. It has at other times led to a sliding between meanings of the concept "power" which has promoted undemonstrated implications of a successful ongoing conspiracy by economic elites to command that a particular content and process of education be imposed on schools. Both of these consequences obscure the important role of the formal autonomy of the school system in legitimating inequalities in advanced capitalist societies. If the paradox of the school being autonomous and yet serving the interests of society's dominant groups is to be understood, and if the autonomy of the school is to be seen as something more meaningful than that of a service station delegated power by a large company, then it is necessary to distinguish clearly the power of society's dominant groups to command the school from their power to exert constraints on the school through their other (e.g., economic) activities and it is necessary to distinguish both of these capacities from the power of such groups to profit from the consequences of a school system which is autonomous in a sociologically significant sense.

Investigators who treat the school as more or less autonomous, on the contrary,

conceive of power as if it referred mainly to what I have called power to command. They tend to ignore power to constrain and power to profit from as essential dimensions of power when carrying out their analyses. Because they observe that the school and its members are rarely obliged to obey commands coming from other structures or their elites, for example from the economic elite, these investigators conclude that the wider society has relatively little power over the school or they carry out their studies as if this were the case, by largely restricting their analyses to ad hoc practices within the school. Their narrow conception of power has led them to ignore relationships between the school and other structures which should properly be seen as power relationships and which must be included in the analysis in order to understand what occurs in the classroom.

Curiously, then, both the global, unrefined and the narrow conception of power have led to much the same result, of failing to direct attention to the causal processes involved in the relationship between the school and the wider society. The first conception has tended to assume that the description of the structural correspondences between the school and the wider society and the description of the functions the school serves for sustaining the wider society demonstrate the power over the school of the wider society whose needs are met. The specification of the causal processes which have brought about the correspondences and functions is reduced to the rank of a detail of secondary importance. The second or narrow conception of power has promoted the description of everyday, face-to-face, ad hoc, classroom interaction and its taken-for-granted assumptions, which in turn has similarly resulted in a failure to analyze the power relations and causal processes by which the wider society constrains and profits from classroom interaction and leads its assumptions to be taken for granted. The distinctions between the three different types of power have been proposed here in order to direct research towards specifying and investigating the causal processes involved in the power relationship between the school and the wider society.

Two causal processes particularly important for understanding that relationship have to be differentiated. The power of the bourgeoisie to impose arbitrarily its bourgeois culture on the school, seen as so important by Marxists,⁷² must be analytically distinguished from the power of the bourgeoisie to acquire the scholastic culture of the school and profit from it in order to reproduce and legitimate social classes. Scholastic culture in the latter sense does not have to be assumed universal and absolute. It may in large part be the arbitrary imposition of the educational and intellectual elites. The bourgeoisie will have little need to adapt the school to itself if it has the power to adapt itself to the school. The latter enables the school to remain autono-

mous and appear fair to all, which is the key to the successful legitimation of the process of social class reproduction by the school. Distinguishing the different capacities underlying power makes it possible to understand how the school can be autonomous and yet at the same time contribute to the reproduction and legitimation of the existing social class structure of society.

Although the autonomy of the school is mutually exclusive with the power of society's dominant groups to command the school, it is not mutually exclusive with their power to profit from the school or to constrain it in the course of their other activities, e.g., their economic activities. External constraints on the school may make certain alternatives appear less sanguine than others to educators, students, and parents, and thereby influence their choices and subsequent actions, without denying them the possibility of choosing and taking independent initiative, and without obliging them to obey commands from external sources. The process involved will be incorrectly analyzed if the constraints are seen to determine in a mechanistic or authoritarian fashion the functioning of schools or if the external constraints are ignored.

The autonomy of the school is of course only formal, in the sense that the school is not formally obliged to obey the commands of society's dominant groups, such as the economic elite. This does not mean that its autonomy is unreal — indeed, its reality is crucially important in legitimating inequalities. The school is, however, far from being fully autonomous because it is informally and indirectly subject to constraints which result from the actions of society's dominant groups and because the school does not have the power to control the use that will be made of the consequences of schooling. In a capitalist society it is especially owners of large enterprises in the marketplace who have the power to constrain and to profit from the school. The content, structure, and processes of the school are subject to the constraints resulting from the development of an advanced capitalist economy. It is precisely the fact that power to constrain and power to profit from are less visible forms of power than power to command that leads dominated groups to misrecognize the power relations involved between the school system and the wider society, and this makes the formal autonomy of the school system an effective mechanism for legitimating and transmitting inequalities in capitalist society. Thus the key element for understanding the contribution of the school system to the transmission and legitimation of inequalities in advanced capitalist societies is its formal autonomy, according to which society's dominant groups have the power to constrain the school in the course of their activities, especially economic activities, and the power to profit from it without having to resort to the power to command the content, structure, processes, or form of schooling.

Although authoritarian power to command may characterize the relationship between the school system and the political system in existing societies which call themselves socialist, I would suggest that it is power to constrain and power to profit from which characterize the relationship between the school system and the economic system in capitalist societies. The three-fold distinction presented here among the types of power is essential for understanding the relationship between the school system and the economic system in capitalist society.⁷³

NOTES

1. For example, Talcott Parsons, "The School Class as a Social System: Some of its Functions in American Society," *Harvard Educational Review* (1959), 297–318.
2. See Martin Trow, "The Second Transformation of American Secondary Education," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* (September, 1961), 144–166; Burton R. Clark, *Educating the Expert Society* (Chandler, 1962); Clark Kerr, ed., *A Digest of Reports of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education* (McGraw-Hill, 1974); Thomas Juster, ed., *Education, Income and Human Behavior* (McGraw-Hill, 1975); and Garry Becker, *Human Capital* (National Bureau of Economic Research, (1964).
3. See Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (Basic Books, 1976); Louis Althusser, "Ideologie et Appareils Idéologiques d'Etat," *La pensée*, Vol. 151/juin (1970), 3–2; Roger Dale, Geoff Esland, and Madeleine Macdonald, eds., *Schooling and Capitalism: A Sociological Reader* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); Madan Sarup, *Marxism and Education* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Claude Escande, *Les Classes Sociales au CEGEP* (Montréal: Parti Pris, 1973); and Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet, *L'école capitaliste en France* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1971).
4. See Michael F. D. Young, ed., *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (Collier-MacMillan, 1971); Geoff Whitty and M. F. D. Young, eds., *Explorations in the Politics of School Knowledge* (Nefferton, England: Nefferton Books, 1976); Michael F. D. Young and Geoff Whitty, eds., *Society, State, and Schooling: Readings on the Possibilities for Radical Education* (Ringmer, England: Falmer Press, 1977); and for their early source of inspiration see Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).
5. For example, Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification," *American Sociological Review* (1971), 1002–1019; and Randall Collins, *The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (Academic Press, 1979).
6. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Sage, 1977).
7. See for example, Bourdieu and Passeron; Bowles and Gintis; Jerome Karabel and A. H. Halsey, eds., *Power and Ideology in Education* (Oxford University Press, 1977) Bernstein; Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories"; Young, ed., *Knowledge and Control*; and Young and Whitty, eds., *Society, State, and Schooling*.
8. Christopher J. Hurn, *The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling* (Allyn and Bacon, 1978).
9. See for example the studies in A. Cicourel, K. Jennings, S. Jennings, D. Leiter, R. Mackay, H. Mehan, and D. Roth, *Language Use and School Performance* (Academic Press, 1974).
10. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (University of California Press, 1978), 926.
11. For a summary of the literature see Bernd Baldus, "The Study of Power: Suggestions for an Alternative," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* (1975), 179–201.
12. *Ibid.*, 188.
13. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 4. 14. *Ibid.*, 22. 15. *Ibid.*, xxix, lxxxiv, 61, 62.
16. *Ibid.*, 946–7. 17. *Ibid.*, 53. 18. *Ibid.*, 943. 19. Baldus.
20. In order to sort out the three subtypes of power it is necessary to keep in mind the objects of analysis and the direction of effect between those objects of analysis. In a general sense every unit in a society characterized by interdependence has some

power to constrain and to profit from other units: that the working class must eat to survive constrains employers to pay workers at least a subsistence wage to ensure the existence of a labor force. The task of theory, however, is not of drawing up an exhaustive list of all possible power relationships regardless of their importance or unimportance. Rather it is of illuminating key power relationships. In this paper I will focus on the objects of analysis (the educational system and the wider society) and the direction of effect between those objects of analysis (the power of the latter to command, constrain, or profit from the former) which have been central to the sociology of education. These objects of analysis and this direction of effect must be kept in mind in order to understand the illustrations of the three types of power I will present.

21. See Raymond Murphy, *Sociological Theories of Education* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979) for a detailed analysis of the various perspectives.
22. See Parsons.
23. For example, Trow; Clark; Kerr; Juster; Becker.
24. See Jonathan Turner, *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Dorsey Press, 1974) for a good discussion on the level of general theory of the problems of teleological arguments and tautologies.
25. S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology* (Free Press, 1951), 375.
26. The former processes can of course be an important initial clue to detecting the latter ones. My criticism of functionalist analysis is that it usually stops the search after that initial clue has been found, which results in a truncated theory.
27. See Parsons.
28. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, rev. ed. (Free Press, 1954), 391.
29. In a later article, Parsons conceives of power as a generalized medium in the political process in a way parallel to the role of money as a generalized medium in the economic process. This later conception, however, plays little part in his earlier analysis of the functions of the school class in American society. Compare Talcott Parsons, "On the Concept of Political Power," in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, eds., *Class, Status and Power* (Free Press, 1966), 240–265 with Parsons, "The School Class".
30. Bowles and Gintis, 157.
31. Althusser, and Baudelot and Establet. 32. *Ibid.*
33. Bowles and Gintis. 34. *Ibid.*, 238. 35. *Ibid.*, 240.
36. I have only had the space here to show this in detail with respect to Bowles and Gintis. The reader can confirm that this is a general problem of Marxist analysis by referring to Althusser; Dale, Esland and MacDonald; Sarup; Escande; and Baudelot and Establet. A summary and critique in English of the latter two untranslated French studies can be found in Murphy.
37. Young, ed., *Knowledge and Control*, 28–29.
38. Bernstein, 241, claims that power relationships resulting from the system of production in society determine access to symbolic systems: "it has always been clear to me that the class structure affected access to elaborated codes through its influence upon initial socialization into the family *and* through its fundamental shaping of both the organizational structure and contents of education." Unfortunately, he does not analyze the nature of those power relationships nor does he specify what he means by power.
39. Young, ed., *Knowledge and Control*, 31–32.
40. Nell Keddie, "Classroom Knowledge," *ibid.*, 133–160.
41. See J. Simon, "'New Direction' Sociology and Comprehensive Schooling," *Forum* (1974); and Simon Frith and Paul Corrigan, "The Politics of Education," in Young and Whitty, eds., *Society, State and Schooling*, 261.
42. John Ahier, "Philosophers, Sociologists and Knowledge in Education," in Young and Whitty, eds., *Society, State and Schooling*, 59–72.
43. Douglas Holly, "Education and the Social Relations of a Capitalist Society," *ibid.*, 187.
44. Ahier, 68. 45. Young, *Knowledge and Control*, 38–39.
46. Geoff Whitty, "Sociology and the Problem of Radical Educational Change: Notes Towards a Reconceptualization of the 'New' Sociology of Education," in Young and Whitty, eds., *Society, State and Schooling*, 36–38.
47. The bourgeois class has the power to command the job requirements for positions in enterprises it controls. If employers have to modify their job requirements in order to profit from autonomously produced school credentials, then this could be seen not only as the power of the economic system to profit from the school system but also as the power of the school system to constrain the economic system. I would suggest, however, that the latter is of little theoretical importance compared to the former. See note 20.

48. See Whitty and Young, eds., *Explorations in the Politics of School Knowledge*; and Young and Whitty, eds., *Society, State and Schooling*.
49. Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories".
50. Bourdieu and Passeron. The reason for treating Bourdieu and Passeron as critical functionalists is given in Murphy. I am discussing their work separately because it is very different from other versions of functionalism, being much more critically oriented and giving much greater importance to the relative autonomy of the school and to the differential power of social classes.
51. See Pierre Bourdieu, "L'école conservatrice: Les inégalités devant l'école et devant la culture," *Revue Française de Sociologie*, Vol. 7 (1966), 325–347; Bourdieu and Passeron; Bernstein; and Marion Porter, John Porter, and Bernard Blisshen, *Does Money Matter?* (Toronto: Institute for Behaviour Research, York University, 1973).
52. Bourdieu and Passeron. 53. *Ibid.*
54. Compare Bourdieu, "L'école conservatrice" with Bourdieu and Passeron.
55. Bourdieu and Passeron, 197. 56. Hurn.
57. *Ibid.*, 260. 58. *Ibid.*, 259. 59. *Ibid.*, 77.
60. About the only place where Hurn explicitly uses the concept power is when referring to what occurs within organizations; for example, to educational elites who have the authoritarian power to command students to have studied certain subjects in order to gain entry to universities. See Hurn, 206.
61. *Ibid.*, 263–264. 62. *Ibid.*, 263. 63. *Ibid.*, 261. 64. *Ibid.*, 263;
65. *Ibid.*, 211–212. Hurn's pluralist consensus approach can be seen as a re-entry into the sociology of education after a decade's absence of the Parsonian emphasis on societal consensus at the level of the most general values, on cultural pluralism due to societal differentiation, which in turn results in a certain amount of conflicting expectations concerning particular roles (role conflict), and on an acceptance by the sociologist of the status cultural exclusion as well as the technical exclusion carried out by the school (see quotation, 30–31). Thus Hurn's analysis of the school bears a strong resemblance to that of Guy Rocher, *Le Québec en mutation* (Montréal: Editions H. M. H., 1973), 159–187, a Parsonian who examined the effect of conflicting expectations on the school and on the teacher, with the exception that Rocher appears more critical of the school's role than does Hurn.
66. For example, Cicourel, et al. 67. *Ibid.*, 3.
68. D. C. W. Leiter, "Ad hocing in the Schools: A Study of Placement Practices in the Kindergartens of Two Schools," *ibid.*, 73.
69. R. Mackay, "Standardized Tests: Objective/Objectified Measures of 'Competence'," *ibid.*, 247.
70. Cicourel, et al.
71. Michael F. D. Young, "Curriculum Change: Limits and Possibilities," in Dale, Esland, and MacDonald, 188.
72. For example, Baudelot and Establet.
73. I have limited my discussion to the school here. I would suggest, nevertheless, that these distinctions among the types of power could lead to a constructive critique of theories of the "relative autonomy" of other apparatus of the state in capitalist society and to directing research towards the more precise specification of the meaning of the concept "relative autonomy" in the case of each state apparatus.