

Comparing and contrasting – Functionalism, Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Liberal.

DURKHEIM and BOWLES & GINTIS - comparisons

Similarities of approach:

- both are **structuralist** – they argue in a “top-down” manner
- both tend to talk of students/pupils as the **passive** products of the system – they are simply “acted upon”
- both stress the need for a “**fit**” between their conception of the social system and the educational system
- both emphasise the demands of the **economy** in particular upon the education system
- both are concerned with the **skill base** provided for the workforce
- both emphasise the **socialising** function of the education system

But differences persist largely based on theoretical preconceptions

	Durkheim	Bowles and Gintis
Location	French educational system (in general!) 20 th century	American educational system - coeducational junior high school – mid 20 th century
Methods used	Non empirical study, theorises about the education system rather than studying it	Official educational records and scores - IQ testing
Assumptions about social system and stratification	Essentially benign – society is based ultimately upon the consensus of all. Stratification is inevitable and functional	Essentially repressive – based upon the domination of one class by another. Stratification is inevitable in capitalism and useful to those in power
Meritocracy	The aim of an education system, if not meritocratic then dysfunctional?	A myth, legitimising hidden inequality within and because of the education system
What is learnt	Pupils are socialised into adult life and work roles Cooperative life begins in the school	Pupils learn relations of dominance and submission through the hidden curriculum Students are fragmented and divided from one another by the system
Skills for the economy	Essential – necessary basis to modern economy	Useful - taught to as many as possible to drive down wage rates

BOWLES & GINTIS and ILLICH - comparisons

Similarities of approach:

- neither are prepared to accept the education system uncritically
- both see the system as a means for the few to oppress the many as an essential part of an oppressive economic order
- both see the system as encouraging work discipline and the ALIENATION of those who pass through the system
- both refer to the concept of the HIDDEN CURRICULUM to explain the school system
- both make a clear distinction between EDUCATION and SCHOOLING
- both have a particular place for qualifications as extrinsic rewards in the negative processes which dominate schools

But **differences** in theoretical basis and expectations:

	Bowles and Gintis	Illich
Location	An analysis of a particular school in an advanced capitalist economy (USA)	Theorising largely based on experience of the demands of the education system in developing countries
Theoretical context	Academic researchers of education system - Marxist economists	Popular writer on issues connected to education and development ex- RC priest
How to change the situation	Wider social change is necessary before the education system can be reformed - schools are as they are because of the existing social order, not <i>vice versa</i>	Changing the educational system can be an effective means for changing society - the schools we have shape the society in which we live

BOWLES & GINTIS and WILLIS - comparisons

Similarities of approach:

- influenced by the works of Marx
- both concerned with the process by which "*working class kids get working class jobs*"
- both concerned with the parallels between the workplace and the school classroom and, in particular, how the practices within the school encourage habits useful to capitalism
- explanations refer to the concept of the **HIDDEN CURRICULUM**

But **differences** in method and expectations:

	Bowles and Gintis	Willis
Location	American educational system - coeducational junior high school	British educational system - West Midlands boys' secondary school
Methods used	Official educational records and scores - IQ testing POSITIVIST	Interviews in the school and the home Observation of classrooms PHENOMENOLOGICAL
Conclusions about the working class	Working class " <i>cooled out</i> " of the education system - docile workforce which has only learned how to obey not how to think for itself Victims of schooling	Self-defeating - own (partial) understanding of the lack of chances from the education system leads to non-cooperation from pupils (having a "laff") Resistance to schooling
The workplace	Characterised by conformity and subservience - work discipline	Characterised by working class culture - getting through the day

Q: What is distinctive about the Marxist approach to education?