

Education, Legitimation, and Crisis

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Both the functionalist and the “reproductive” radical paradigms of formal education, though rooted in divergent ideologies, proclaim that the system of education helps to legitimate the socio-political status quo. We noted, however, that the assumption by both paradigms that students passively internalize the dominant norms and values which the school teaches is not invariably tenable. Alternatively, it was suggested that students quite often only selectively internalize from various diverse cues pertaining to the dominant norms and values presented by educators along with other agents of socialization. Therefore, it was argued that the factor of “selective internalization” coupled with the social axiom of the discord between reality (what is) and ideal (what ought to be) conduce to crisis.

The body of evidence demonstrates that, in addition to its role as an agent of legitimation the system of education (the primary emphasis is on higher education) mediates the dialectical relationship between legitimation and crisis.

Les principes fondamentaux des modèles de fonction et de reproduction inhérents à l'éducation conventionnelle, bien que s'appuyant sur des idéologies opposées, proclament tous deux que le système scolaire contribue à légitimer le statu quo social et politique. Nous notons cependant, que l'hypothèse voulant que par ces deux modèles, l'élève s'approprie “passivement” les normes et les valeurs véhiculées dans l'enseignement, ne fait pas l'unanimité. Il semble que très souvent, l'élève sélectionne seulement les normes et les valeurs qui, parmi l'éventail proposé par les enseignants, sont liées à d'autres agents de socialisation. Par conséquent, il est prouvé que les facteurs de sélection et d'intégration joints au principe de la distanciation entre le réel (ce qui est) et l'imaginaire (ce qui serait idéalement) conduisent vers une prise de conscience (conscientisation).

L'accumulation de preuves démontre qu'en plus de son rôle comme agent de légitimation, le système scolaire (l'accent est mis sur l'enseignement supérieur) établit un rapport dialectique entre la légitimation et la conscientisation.

INTRODUCTION

[U]niversities both reproduce and subvert the larger society. We must distinguish between the functions universities publicly *promise* to perform – the social goods they are chartered to produce – and certain of their actual consequences which, while commonly unintended, are no less real: the production of dissent, deviance, and the cultivation of an authority-subverting culture of critical discourse. (Gouldner, 1979, p. 45)

[O]ne of the most important theoretical elements missing from the hidden curriculum literature is a view of schools as sites of both *domination* and *contestation* (Giroux, 1983, pp. 62–63).

Although travelling via different paths, both the functionalist and “reproductive” radical paradigms of educational theory suggest that the

system of education enhances the perpetuation (or legitimation) of the socio-political status quo. As will be demonstrated, the process of legitimation is not a static phenomenon as both paradigms suggest. Rather, crisis quite often stands in a dialectical relationship to legitimation (cf. Giroux, 1981, 1983; Apple, 1979, 1982; Willis, 1977). Not only does education² enhance the legitimation process, but it also acts as a significant medium through which crisis unfolds.³ The dynamics of crisis tendencies have been conspicuously ignored by both the functionalist and neo-Marxist paradigms. It is this deficiency that has led Archer (1972, p. v) to render justifiably the following observation:

As the crisis developed in higher education throughout the sixties nothing became more obvious than the inability of the sociology of education to provide a framework for the interpretations of events taking place. ... In other words there was no macrosociology of education, although its development is indispensable to an understanding of the complex interrelations of students, university and society which underpin the crisis.

The body politic seeks to gain the allegiance and loyalty of its citizenry, and in the process to make the people adhere to the dominant value system and norms. The general social process of legitimation allows for the relative perpetuation of the status quo. In the words of Seymour Lipset:

Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society. ... Groups regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to the way in which its values fit with theirs (1960, p. 77).

In trying to overcome the deficiencies of both the functionalist and neo-Marxist paradigms, one necessarily has to take into account the following set of factors. First, different agents of socialization alongside the system of education, e.g., the family, church, body politic, news media, peer groups, etc., mean that students, during the course of their education, are faced with conflicting choices concerning what is both attitudinally and behaviourally in line with the dominant norms. By virtue of the existence of various agents of socialization, what constitutes the dominant acceptable normative standard is inherently ambiguous. Hence, the problem of choice among conflicting alternatives is compounded. Secondly, there is the incidence of geographical mobility with the concomitant population shift which creates disjunctions between various socializing agents. Again, these act to inhibit consistency with respect to socializing cues (Crysdale et al., 1980, Ch. 1, *passim*). This set of factors, along with some of the immanent socio-cultural contradictions that I shall later outline, render problematic both the functionalist and radical presupposition of an unimpeded internalization through education of societal norms and values.

A crisis exists when there is a mismatch between “what is” (reality) and “what ought to be” (ideal). Whereas the former is structural the latter exists as the viewpoint of the people experiencing certain social realities. That is to say, crisis exists when a significant number of people perceive a discrepancy between what is considered to be “right” and the actual state of affairs. Under this condition people are apt to question and challenge the legitimacy of the social and political arrangements producing such inimical conditions. The civil rights movement, for example, championed by blacks in the United States is essentially a quest for reconciliation between the ideal of universal egalitarianism and both *real* and perceived racial inequalities.

An important structural component of crisis would be what Daniel Bell has classified as an aspect of the constituent cultural contradictions under capitalism, viz.: “... the disjunction between the kind of organization and the norms demanded in the economic realm, and the norms of self-realization that are now central in the culture” (1978, p. 15). As it will be argued, the cultural contradictions that exist in the larger society are reflected in the system of education (as expressed especially, but not exclusively, in student movements and the critical posture of the intellectuals). It is important to note that crisis does not necessarily culminate in a revolutionary transformation of the social order, but often produces social changes. In this connection, Habermas observes that “legitimation crises result from a need for legitimation that arises from changes in the political system (even when normative structures remain unchanged) and that cannot be met by the existing supply of legitimation” (1973, p. 48).

The discussion thus far suggests that the dialectical relationship between legitimation and crisis, as mediated by education, has far-reaching implications for social changes. The task at hand, then, is: (1) to briefly highlight some of the functionalist and neo-Marxist contributions that tacitly or explicitly link education to the legitimation process; (2) to present a theoretical framework within which to understand crisis tendencies; and (3) to articulate some of the materials bearing on the expressions of crisis.

MODES OF LEGITIMATION

Functionalist perspective

Parsons maintains that the school system is a social microcosm *sui generis*. For him, the school functions to internalize in the students “both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles”; and that it “functions to allocate these human resources within the role-structure of the adult society” (1959, p. 297). In other

words the educational system acts as an agency of socialization. Chiefly by means of the curriculum design and teaching, the school inculcates, argues Parsons, the dominant social norms and values in the students. He leaves no doubt as to the kind of norms and values that get inculcated into the students – notably those pertaining to work roles. He holds that the system of education not only allows for the development of capacities to execute work-related roles in students, but also enables them to acquire interpersonal skills. To use his own analogy: “Thus a mechanic as well as a doctor needs to have not only the basic skills of his trade, but also the ability to behave responsibly toward those people with whom he is brought into contact in his work” (p. 298). The process by which work-related values, norms, and dispositions (e.g., punctuality and obedience) are tacitly taught is referred to as the hidden curriculum, as opposed to the overt curriculum which includes arithmetic, languages, biology, and other subjects that are explicitly and formally taught (Dreeben, 1968).

Functionalists following Parsons recognize that having a “high status” background helps the mobility from high school to college (Parsons, 1959; Davis and Moore, 1945; Alexander et al, 1979). However, they hold that the school, by means of a selection process based on “rational” achieved, rather than ascriptive qualities, allows for “equal” chances for job attainment – a tenet that is often referred to as the “meritocratic” thesis. Granted that educational credential is in part a means of “upward” social mobility (a view that is empirically contentious), we do know, nevertheless, from numerous studies in the area that the stratified organization of the system of education facilitates the perpetuation of the stratification of the macro-societal level (Coleman, 1966; Crysdale et al, 1980).⁴ For instance, in a recent study by Crysdale et al., one of the many important conclusions drawn from their findings that have implications for social inequalities include the following: “... So the thread of success runs from father’s education through school program or track – as well as through measured intelligence – to youth’s education. Further, the strongest predictor by far of job level is education level. Thus, stratification is perpetuated by the school system” (p. 236).

To be sure, some scholars working within a nuance of the functionalist paradigm (not strictly speaking Parsonian) have pointed to the existence of inequalities with respect to educational opportunities, cognitive skills, educational credentials, income, etc. (e.g., Jencks, 1972; Perrenoud, in Murphy, 1979). However, they have not come to terms with the fact that the inequalities are gestating grounds for crisis – fostering challenge and even threat to the legitimacy of the status quo.

A caveat is here in order. Robert Merton (1968, 1972), who is a leading functionalist, in his reformulation of the Durkheimian conception of anomie, considers how social stratification immanently produces crisis.

However, this reformulation is of the “grand-theory” type; and not of the “middle-range” type that is categorically oriented towards the formal system of education and politically emancipatory interest.

Radical “reproductive” perspective

This perspective is primarily (but not exclusively) embraced by neo-Marxists. The thread of “dialectical materialism”⁵ that runs through Marx’s work has been an enormous source of influence to the neo-Marxist approach to education. It should be mentioned that Marx’s formulation in this respect, even though it has been very enlightening, is also tinged with inconsistencies. I shall return to this point.

In contrast to the Parsonian functionalist perspective which suggests that the school promotes equality, the correspondence thesis essentially claims that the social relations, values, norms, structures, and processes of schooling reproduce those found in bureaucratic and hierarchical social arrangements in workplaces. Gintis (1972), a self-proclaimed radical political economist, who first advanced the correspondence thesis incisively, argues that:

[T]he hierarchical structure of schooling itself mirrors the social relations of industrial production: students cede control over their learning activities to teachers in the classroom. Just as workers are alienated from both the *process* and the *product* of their work activities and must be motivated by the external reward of pay and hierarchical status, so the student learns to operate efficiently through the external reward of grades and promotion, effectively alienated from the process of education (learning) and its product (knowledge). Just as the work process is stratified, and workers on different levels in the hierarchy of authority and status are required to display substantively distinct patterns of values, aspirations, personality traits, and modes of “social presentation” (dress, manner of speech, personal identification, and loyalties to a particular social stratum), so the school system stratifies, tracks, and structures social interaction according to criteria of social class and relative scholastic success. (Gintis, 1972, pp. 87–88)

Bowles and Gintis (1976) have argued that the early expansion of schooling (especially compulsory attendance) was not directly in response to popular demands, but rather to the demands of the factory system. They maintain that employers were especially interested in schooling because it was believed that it would serve as a training ground for reliable, industrious, and obedient workers. For example, Bowles and Gintis point out that the transition period from 1890–1920 from entrepreneurial competitive capitalism to corporate capitalism witnessed labour unrest (notably violent strikes). It was during this period that an industrialist by the name of Carnegie founded the “Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.” The authors go on to point out that “Carnegie’s advocacy of schooling as the solution of the all-too-evident social ills of his day was echoed by other corporate leaders by university

presidents, trade union officials, and politicians; education quickly became the chosen instrument of social reformers" (1976, pp. 18–19).

Contrary to the functionalist "meritocratic" thesis and with the oversupply of university graduates, educational credentials have become screening devices used by potential employers. That is, the relatively greater demand for academic credentials does not necessarily correspond with an actual increase in occupational complexity (Berg, 1970; Collins, 1979; Hurn, 1978). After an extensive review of the pertinent literature Bowles and Gintis (1976:114) concluded that "the available evidence seems to support our legitimation hypothesis. The meritocratic orientation of the educational system promotes not its egalitarian function, but rather its integrative role." A similar conclusion has been echoed recently by Jean Anyon (1980). She develops empirical evidence which suggests that pupils in working-class schools are socialized to follow procedures (e.g., rote learning) thus preparing them for extra-school submissive roles, whereas more affluent schools emphasize more creative, expressive, and independent activities – that is, decision-making roles.

Without doubt, Gintis (1972), Bowles and Gintis (1976), and Althusser (1971) have shed some light on the dynamics of structural class relations as mediated by the education system. However, as intimated earlier, they have overly emphasized a simple economic determinism in their analysis of education, and Marx, himself, is partly culpable. For example, consider the following passage from the *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (1969a, p. 503)

In that the foregoing passage does not spell out some of the important ways by which elements of the superstructure – the state, ideology, law, etc. – actually influence the economic infrastructure in a reciprocal causal pattern, Marx's formulation here is conspicuously undialectical. It is almost banal to note that the need for collective action towards transcending deleterious ontological human conditions is articulated at the ideational level⁶ (see Gramsci, 1971; Lukacs, 1971).

Elsewhere, Marx did explicitly acknowledge the reality of reciprocal determinism: "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men

who change circumstances and that the educator himself needs education" (Marx, 1969b, p. 13). Engels, in one of the series of letters on historical materialism, left no doubt as to the dialectical influence of both the economic base and the superstructure on each other, albeit the former ultimately predominates in the causal equation:

The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure: political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their future development into systems of dogmas, also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. (1972, p. 640)

In effect, a more dialectical reading of the base/superstructure model gives insight into the ways by which the system of education enhances the process of legitimation, and also how this very process is challenged, threatened, and further reproduced.

In sum, both the functionalist and "reproductive" radical paradigms, though rooted in divergent ideologies, reach similar conclusions about the formal system of education as a legitimating apparatus for the dominant socio-political status quo. They both, however, virtually neglect the anti-establishment sentiments and actual protest behaviour among students and intellectuals. Functionalists of the Parsonian persuasion, while recognizing larger structural inequalities, maintain that through a selection process based on *achieved* (as opposed to *ascribed*) criteria, the education system promotes "upward" social mobility. The neo-Marxists à la Bowles and Gintis (1976), of course, reject this view. Instead, they maintain that the system of education helps to uphold and perpetuate class relations and hence inequalities both within it and the larger society. This view is also shared by critical functionalists (Bourdieu, 1977; Jencks, 1972).

THE DIALECTICS OF CRISIS TENDENCIES

Social agents are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation and a partial penetration of those structures. (Willis, 1977, p. 175)

A useful starting point for understanding the interpenetrations of legitimation and crisis as mediated by education is the concept of ideology. There are many meanings of ideology. For the present purpose, ideology⁷ denotes, on the one hand, a system of ideas whereby people's perceptions are manipulated and distorted in order to serve the interest of the dominant class – that is, false consciousness (Marx, 1969c). On the

other hand, following Marx, ideology is a critique of domination and a guide for emancipatory political action (Gouldner, 1976). In the latter sense, ideology represents a moment in contradictory class interests. That is, members of the subaltern class being conscious of the roots of their social conditions, articulate and/or implement strategies towards changing the status quo. Before drawing on some concrete examples, let us take a look at the concept of hegemony, for it is conceptually broader and more dynamic than ideology as a concept.

Though Gramsci (1971), writing under difficult circumstances in an Italian Fascist prison between 1929 and 1935, never fully developed the concept of hegemony, it is from him that we begin to understand the concept in its complexity. The interpenetration of the process of legitimation and crisis as mediated by education is eminently captured by the concept of hegemony. Hegemony denotes an ongoing process (not a static moment) of ideological control whereby dominant codes of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and values are reproduced in any social formation. Social institutions such as the school, family, mass media, law, work organizations, etc. are vehicles through which hegemony is reproduced. It is crucial to note that hegemony is more than simply a process of ideological manipulation, it also involves “lived” experience of subordinate groups. That is, it is not a monologic process but rather dialogic, involving ways in which people interpret and inculcate dominant hegemonic forms. Raymond Williams (1976, 1977) captures the intricate process of hegemony in the following passage:

[Hegemony] is a whole body of practices and expectations, of the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a “culture”, but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes. (Williams, 1977, p. 110)

Consistent with the conceptualized notion of crisis is the existence of “counter-hegemonic” moments within the dynamics of hegemony. That is, quite often people actively challenge the moral basis of dominant hegemony, and, contrary to what the hidden curriculum literature would suggest, they contest rather than passively inculcate the dominant system of values, beliefs, and norms. In other words, domination is not total in practice. There are moments such as when subaltern classes would perceive a rupture between “what is” and “what ought to be” and consequently either engage in ideology critique and/or political action in a bid to ameliorate ontological social conditions. Such moments would constitute instances of “counter-hegemonic” activities. Again, Williams (1977, pp. 112–113) explains:

In practice ... hegemony can never be singular. Its internal structures are highly complex, as can readily be seen in any concrete analysis. Moreover (and this is crucial, reminding us of the necessary thrust of the concept), it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. We have then to add to the concept of hegemony the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony, which are real and persistent elements of practice. ...

The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society.

The following illustration of a concrete condition within the *status quo* may help to illuminate the preceding dynamics. Consider the culturally-immanent contradiction in the materialist ideology of possessive individualism. A family or an individual person aspires to have a home with one or two cars in the garage, preferably a boat, vacation in distant places, *ad infinitum*. However, because of structural inequalities and the relations of private property, only a minority is able to realize such lofty culturally consistent aspirations. Because individual material possessions serve as status and prestige symbols, they heighten the pressure on an individual to strive for such measures of success. Furthermore, the extent to which an individual acquires material possessions comes, in a general sense, to be socially perceived as an index of "making it" – of upward social mobility. Similarly, an individual student comes to school with the expectation and aspiration of "making it" with educational credentials. However, as we saw earlier, these aspirations are not invariably realized. Such factors as race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background partly determine upward social mobility or lack of it.

Real "lived" circumstances of structural inequalities provoke ideology critique and counter-hegemonic action among subordinate groups who seek to dissolve the gap between their perceptions of "what is" and "what ought to be." In essence, power does not exist only in the form of domination from the political and economic elites, it also exists as a mode of resistance to domination by subaltern groups. That is, oppositional behaviour is a way of exercising power by the otherwise powerless (cf., Giroux, 1981, 1983).

Paul Willis's (1977) insights from his ethnographic study of "counter-school culture" in an English all-male high school in a working-class district is also instructive. He observes that dominant hegemony is not just passively accepted but is contested by some of the working-class kids, and in the process a working-class ideology is enacted – a process Willis refers to as "penetration." For instance, some of the kids had rejected the value of conformism and obedience, in part, involving a deep-seated skepticism about the value of educational credentials, since members of the working

class are already at a disadvantage in terms of “making it.” Consequently, instead of the value of delayed gratification, they have come to adopt that of immediate gratification (Willis, 197, p. 126). However, the cultural “penetration” of unfairness and the adoption of immediate gratification also paradoxically involves a general rejection of mental activity, which is associated with unjust authority and also considered effeminate – that is, sexism is also reproduced. “Manual labouring comes to take on, somehow, a significance and critical expression for its owner’s social position and identity which is not part of its own proper nature” (Willis, 1977, p. 146). These paradoxical moments Willis had characterized as “limitations.”

Contrary to the unilateral determination engrained in the correspondence theory, economic social relations interpenetrate the socio-cultural, that is, there are interconnections between productive forces and the ideological sphere:

[E]conomic activity like any other activity constitutes a social relationship infused and shaped by different forms of consciousness and ideology. To separate the ideological realm from the workplace is to lose sight of how the cultural and economic interpenetrate each other. (Giroux, 1981, p. 96).

Numerous studies have underscored work organizations as political sites where domination is actively resisted. In Britain, for example, it has been demonstrated that apart from wage demands, most strikes have concerned issues broadly related to “control,” that is, challenges to domination (Pateman, 1979, p. 51). In Canada, some of the key issues that have galvanized workers into unionization and collective action have to do with quest for autonomy in the workplace (Lowe, 1980; Marchak, 1977; Ninalowo, 1983). Moreover, links had been uncovered empirically between intra- and extra-organizational expressions of class contradictions in terms of worker protest attitudes and collective action (Ninalowo, 1983).

CONTINUITIES ON THE PATTERNS OF CRISIS

Student counter-hegemonic activities

The propensity of higher institutions of learning to be *loci* of radical and renunciatory activities is not an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. Thomas Hobbes writing about the “Causes of Civil Wars” in the middle of the seventeenth century stated unhesitatingly: “The Universities have been to this nation (Britain), as the wooden horse was to the Trojans. ... The core of the rebellion, as you have seen by this, and read of other rebellions, are the Universities. ...” (quoted by Lipset, 1971, p. 751). The truth of this observation is attested to by numerous historical instances of university-based revolts, *avant-garde* activities, or rebellious modes of behaviour. As far back as the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there

were sporadic student civil rights movements in Japan, demanding freedom of speech, a free press, the constitution the institutionalization of a parliamentary process and universal suffrage (Fusé, 1972, p. 223). The nineteenth-century Russian revolution was almost exclusively based in the university (Lipset, 1971). According to a contemporary Marxist historian of the Paris commune, students had played a major role "in all of the preceding French revolts during the centuries" (cited in Lipset, 1971, p. 753). There have been many reports of dissident activities and political protests by American students and intellectuals, including the participation in anti-British activities as far back as 1770 (Lipset, 1971, p. 754). C. Wright Mills (1960, pp. 256–59) has drawn attention to the global tendencies of student leadership role and mass support for antisystem movements during this century. We might add that these student unrests are almost invariably accompanied by renunciatory modes of behaviour, such as expressed in the "psychedelic culture" during the sixties. "Psychedelic culture" has been described as:

... the emergence of "dropout" strata who are "into" the expansion of consciousness, who are also partly in the business of buying and selling, consuming and experimenting with a changing variety of drugs, music, microbiotic foods, television, clothing, travel, new religions, community-formation experiments, and the reorganization of sexual roles. (Gouldner, 1976:189)

In the United States, the student uprising that sprang from the University of California at Berkeley (1964–66) has commanded perhaps more attention than any other of its kind in modern history. The Berkeley revolt was to serve as a prototype to other university-based revolts – such as at Michigan and Columbia. While the issue at stake was the freedom of speech and de-bureaucratization of the university, there were political and social issues beyond the university that galvanized the left-wing student into action. First, the black civil rights movements that had been underway a decade before the turbulent sixties and the concomitant sit-ins in such places as white-dominated lecture halls, department stores, and other places served as catalysts to the general student movement. The contradiction between the American professed creed of egalitarianism and the social realities of racial injustices was repugnant to the moral sensibilities of the student activists (Feuer, 1969; Lipset, 1971, 1972).

Second, the Vietnam war, which the United States was losing, was perceived as fundamentally imperialistic in motive and, therefore, unjust. A survey taken in the winter of 1969 across college campuses in the United States asked: "People are called 'hawks' if they want to step up our military effort in Vietnam. They are called 'doves' if they want to reduce our military effort in Vietnam. How would you describe yourself – as a 'hawk' or as a 'dove'?" Doves constituted 69% of the survey; hawks were 20%, and 11% were undecided (Lipset, 1972, p. 43). Clearly, there was a pervasive anti-Vietnam sentiment among the students at the time.

Other places across the globe were also experiencing student revolts during the sixties. Archer (1972, p. 121) has observed a new phase of student revolts that developed in France in 1966 – primarily as an outcome of the intensification of Vietnam. The pro-Chinese groups during the French riots, noted Archer, received financial aid from their counterparts in Peking as a protest against the war. There were films from the West German wing of the Student for Democratic Society (SDS) on street fighting techniques, and supplies of ammunition from the German Democratic Republic towards the cause they shared with their French student allies.

During the spring of 1978, students in Nigeria staged protest demonstrations against increased board and tuition fees. In February 1983, students at the University of Lagos in Nigeria staged a violent protest demonstration against what they perceived as ineptitude on the part of the ruling class in managing the country's social and economic affairs. This particular collective protest was to have national implications involving students from other parts of the society until it was forcefully suppressed by the police. In Canada on various occasions from the mid-1970s up to the spring of 1982 students have collectively agitated against the state over cutbacks in college and university funding perceived as unjust and unreasonable.

These protest activities do not, of course, reflect absolute benign tolerance on the part of the state. Rather, they serve to reproduce legitimacy for the status quo by ostensibly demonstrating its "permissiveness." However, the limits and terms of protest activities are determined by the state as embodied in law. In the event of the legal conditions being violated, repressive state apparatuses, i.e., the police and/or the military, are mobilized for active repression. It was partly these circumstances that Herbert Marcuse (1965) had aptly typified as "repressive tolerance" to suggest that ostensible permissiveness by the state actually helps to reproduce dominant hegemony.

In discussing the patterns of crisis in connection with the system of education, there are technological factors and the density of the student population per se which must be considered. They latently serve to facilitate the student unrest. First, technological improvements in the means of communication, particularly via the mass media, imply that student protest in any part of the world, barring political censorship, can almost instantaneously serve as a practical model in other geographic locations. The television medium is especially effective as a means of vicarious learning (cf., Bandura, 1977). In the case of the student movements, the television medium presents operational techniques used in one series of revolts to others. Also, the news media inadvertently raise consciousness among students and their intellectual mentors (and also the public).

Second, the spatial concentration of students at any particular point in

time is especially conducive to mobilization. A concept that is often used to account for collective behaviour is *contagion*. This is a process by which individual sentiments and reactions spread from one social actor to another during the course of collective behaviour (Gergen et al., 1974, p. 591). Floyd Allport has introduced the notion of *circular reaction* to describe the social interactional process that ensues when an individual's behaviour is patterned after a model and *vice versa*, and thereby higher levels of activity and excitement are engendered. It is no wonder, then, that: "Various studies suggest that mobility, particularly geographic mobility in which one becomes a stranger confronted by an unfamiliar social context, tends to make individuals available for causes which demand intense commitment" (Lipset, 1971, p. 781). Both the phenomena of contagion and circular reaction are at work during the student uprisings to redirect the effects of the events away from the points of origin.

With time, some students move on to nonacademic careers, others to graduate schools and an apprenticeship or internship for the professorial role. The succeeding subsection examines how the relationship between legitimation and crisis is mediated by the intellectual *qua* intellectual.

*Counter-hegemonic activities and critical intellectuals*⁸

Without going into the definitional complexity of the term intellectual,⁹ for the present analysis, critical intellectuals are those who, in their capacity as scholars, are humanistically and critically oriented. They comprise those who with their expert and specialized knowledge and training are actively engaged in formulating innovative ideas. Their *modus operandi* sensitizes them to perceive the discrepancy between the ideal and the real within the social context. They are, therefore, predisposed to suggest what can and should be done about immanent contradictions within the status quo. In other words, critical intellectuals by virtue of their progressive politico-ideological propensities are committed to alternative social arrangements.

It should be emphasized that intellectuals' commitment to ideology critique and political action is generally the exception rather than the rule. Hence the term "critical intellectual" is more appropriate here. Even among critical intellectuals, there are structural constraints that tend to dissipate and/or inhibit the force of their critical posture.

Edward Shils' (1972) delineation of the various intellectual traditions (or "cultural formation") is useful at this point. While the dynamics of hegemony that we saw earlier would partly explain counter-hegemonic activities of critical intellectuals, the various intellectual traditions augment that understanding. They are as follows: *Scientism* – which insists on the principle of falsification for every proposition that is advanced. In other words, it stipulates that each proposition should be testable and thereafter, either accepted or rejected, depending on whether or not it

finds palpable empirical support. *Romanticism* abhors ratiocination and externally imposed rules that impede the spontaneous expression and creativity of the individual. *Revolutionary millenarianism* stresses the belief that all the despicable conditions of the present, with time, will wither away and be replaced by a "pure and better world." Finally, *populism* is the belief in the superior moral worth and the creative potential of the laity (Shils, 1972, pp. 18–21).

Let us now turn to some of the concrete cases of the intellectual's mediative role between the dialectical relationship of legitimacy and crisis. Chairman Mao, one of the heroes of Chinese communism, once proclaimed himself as the "scholar of his family." The Chinese Communist Party was inaugurated with Ch'en Tuhsiu who taught at Peking University. The School of Foreign Languages in Shanghai whose primary function was to prepare young radicals to study abroad was the brainchild of Ch'en. "In traditional Vietnam the leadership of wars of resistance against foreign invaders was provided by Confucian scholars who had remained in their villages instead of accepting official posts as mandarins. ..." (Gouldner, 1979, pp. 54–55).

In the United States, faculty involvement in the master-minding or support of various student disturbances during the sixties has been reported by numerous surveys. An in-depth analysis of the uprisings which took place in 181 institutions between 1967–68 found that the professoriate were involved in the strategies and techniques used in over one-half of the student protests. Nearly two-thirds of the disturbances had faculty approval (Lipset, 1972, p. 198). The Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Berkeley gratefully acknowledged before a large student gathering the significance of their cause for freedom (Feuer, 1969, p. 463).

It is noteworthy that whereas Western critical intellectuals tend to be from the humanities and social sciences, in the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, the Middle East, they tend to come from the physical and natural sciences. In the latter geographic locations, intellectuals from the humanities and social sciences, because of the relatively critical and renunciatory character of the disciplines, are put under special surveillance and censorship. Consequently, it is scholars from the physical and natural sciences that tend to take overtly critical postures. Hence there are such individuals as the Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, who is a physicist, the PLO leader, Yasir Arafat – an engineer by training, and Che Guevara, who with Fidel Castro masterminded and led the Cuban revolution – was a medical doctor.

Notes on ideological ambivalence

In societies where there is at least in principle some degree of institutionalized autonomy within the intelligentsia, however, such autonomy does not entirely avoid external constraints. Quite often, the intellectual

needs research funds and it is the government agencies and corporate foundations that usually provide such financial support. Scholars are thereby implicitly obliged to keep their ideological deviation within the acceptable limit ambiguously demarcated by the structures of power (also see Gouldner, 1970; Apple, 1979). For example, a study which points out political and corporate mismanagement and boorish lack of foresight as responsible for the current dismal political/economic conditions, even though possibly accurate, might not be taken kindly by political and corporate elites.

Edward Shils (1972, p. 311) presents the case of a scholar who:

... had completed a series of studies on state tax problems which indicated that the mining enterprises bore a disproportionately small share of the state tax burden. Although he had had the support of the university administration and a promise of university assistance in publication, he was informed that it would be inadvisable to publish the results of his research.

A Marxist scholar was recommended by a subcommittee to head a department at the University of Maryland in 1978, only to be refused by the university senate. Similarly, a Marxist sociologist with a full-time appointment at a university in Ontario was invited to teach by a Quebec Department of Sociology during the summer of 1979, but was prevented from doing so by the senate.¹⁰

Even the course content is sometimes subject to scrutiny. The author of a meritorious book on divorce had the following to say from his personal experience:

The president has objected to any discussion of sex matters in my courses on "Social Pathology" and "The Family." For example I was asked if I could not omit the chapters in the text by Queen and Mann, *Social Pathology*, entitled "Prostitution" and "Illegitimacy." The President took out of the college Library last year several books which I had the Library order for parallel reading in connection with these two courses, because he considered them improper for students, especially girls. (quoted in Shils, 1972, p. 313)

The foregoing set of factors inherently generate further contradictions. Admittedly, some intellectuals who ordinarily would take a critical or "deviant" posture might desist from or be ambivalent about such inclinations for fear of reprimand or "professional sterility." These structurally produced impediments to intellectual work, however, create psychological tensions and anxiety, which, with time, become unleashed at the very system of domination that seeks to ideologically overshadow epistemic productions, albeit counter-hegemonic activities would still be within the confines of repressive tolerance *à la* Marcuse (1965). Recall that the various modes of renunciatory and rebellious activities are expressions of immanent socio-cultural contradictions.

CONCLUSION

It is understood that in a developed society, needs are not only quantitative: the need for consumer goods; but also qualitative: the need for a free and many-sided development of human faculties; the need for information, for communication, for fellowship; the need to be free not only from exploitation but from oppression and alienation in work and in leisure. (Gorz, 1967, p. 12–13)

It was originally pointed out that both the functionalist and the radical paradigms in education maintain that the system of education, through the process of “mass” socialization, allows for the perpetuation of the social order. The assumption of both paradigms, however, that students invariably internalize the dominant norms and values the school teaches is not tenable. On the contrary, students quite often only selectively internalize from various diverse cues pertaining to the education system’s dominant norms and values along with other agents of socialization. This factor of “selective internalization” coupled with the social axiom of the discord between reality (what is) and ideal (what ought to be) conduce to crisis. Some evidence presented suggests that, in addition to its role as an agent of legitimation, education also mediates the dialectical relationship between legitimation and crisis. Indeed, this latter role is necessary for ameliorative social change.

NOTES

- ¹ Thanks to Stewart Crysdale and Paul Meadows for their invaluable suggestions. I also wish to thank Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Donald Power and a *CJE* anonymous reviewer for their various contributions to my rethinking on the paper.
- ² Education, for the present purpose, refers principally to students and intellectuals in higher institutions of learning, and to the general organization of academic instruction and learning. Although the lower system of education plays a role in the dialectical relationship between legitimation and crisis, in the final analysis, it is elements within the higher institution of learning that play the overriding role. Hence the predominant emphasis on the latter.
- ³ To be sure, other social institutions such as the church, the body politic, and the trade unions also bear implications for legitimation (see e.g., Miliband, 1969; Althusser, 1971; Grayson and Grayson, 1980). For some insights into the immanent socio-cultural contradictions that are gestating grounds for crisis see Bell (1978). For the ways in which state fiscal policies generate crisis see O'Connor (1973).
- ⁴ For an elaborate synthesis of the *corpus* of evidence against the “meritocratic” thesis see Hurn (1978).
- ⁵ The conception of dialectical materialism, in its simplest form, stipulates that the forms of social relations which people enter into within the economic infrastructure determine the superstructure – mental processes and social institutions (e.g., education and the polity). However, a caveat is in order. While one tends to get the impression of monistic causality flowing from the economic infrastructure to the superstructure, so also would one correctly get the meaning of reciprocal determination at various points in Marx and Engels’ works; hence the legacy of confusion. In the final analysis, both from a logical and a dialectical standpoint, we would opt for the consistent interpretation of reciprocal determination.

- ⁶ Cf.: "To ignore the role of values in shaping a group's behaviour is vulgar materialism; to omit analysis of the conditions under which persons conform with or deviate from their values is vulgar idealism" (Gouldner, 1979:59). It is interesting to note in this connection that some scholars have recently demonstrated that rationality is not restricted to predetermined or formally prescribed criteria, but rather is constructed by social actors *ad hoc* in everyday social interactions (e.g., Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Garfinkel, 1967; Jehenson, 1973; Schutz, 1967).
- ⁷ For some of the other various conceptions of ideology, see Giroux (1981), Gouldner (1976), and Williams (1977).
- ⁸ The term intellectual is here used interchangeably with that of intelligentsia.
- ⁹ For a more elaborate treatment of the notion of the intelligentsia see Brym (1980), Gouldner (1979), Lipset and Dobson (1972), and Shils (1972).
- ¹⁰ Information obtained through personal conversation.

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Sowohl die auf Funktion ausgerichteten als auch die "alten" Vorbilder der Schulausbildung problematisieren, daß das Erziehungssystem, obwohl es auf verschiedene Ideologien aufbaut, dazu beiträgt, den sozial-politischen *status quo* zu legitimieren. Es fiel uns auf, daß die Annahme, daß Studenten die in der Schule vermittelten vorherrschenden Normen und Werte unweigerlich annehmen, nicht immer haltbar ist. Eine andere Erklärung, wonach Studenten ganz oft wahlweise vorherrschende Normen und Werte aufnehmen, wobei sie sich auf Hinweise von Erziehern und anderen Repräsentanten des Sozialisierungsprozesses ausrichten, wurde vorgeschlagen. Das Argument geht somit dahin, daß das 'Auswahlprinzip der Annahme' zusammen mit dem gesellschaftlichen Grundsatz des Mißverhältnisses zwischen Wirklichkeit (dem was ist) und Ideal (dem was sein sollte) zur Krise führt.

Das Beweismaterial beweist, daß das Erziehungssystem auf dem Niveau der Hochschul-ausbildung außer seiner Rolle als Legitimationsvertreter in dem dialektischen Verhältnis zwischen Rechtfertigung und Krise vermittelt.

Tanto el paradigma funcionalista como el paradigma radical "reproductivo", que se refieren a la educación formal, si bien enraizados en ideologías divergentes, proclaman que el sistema educativo ayuda a legitimizar el *status quo* socio-político. Notamos, sin embargo, que la presunción de ambos paradigmas de que los estudiantes internalizan pasivamente las normas y valores dominantes que la escuela enseña no puede ser siempre fundamentada. Alternativamente, se ha sugerido que los estudiantes a menudo sólo internalizan de forma selectiva las varias pautas pertenecientes a las normas y valores dominantes presentados por los educadores, conjuntamente con otros agentes de socialización. Por lo tanto, se arguye que el factor de "internalización selectiva" junto con el principio social del desacuerdo entre la realidad (lo que es) y el ideal (lo que debería ser) lleva a la crisis.

La mayor parte de la evidencia demuestra que, además de su papel como agente de legitimización, el sistema educativo (el énfasis principal es sobre la educación superior) media la relación dialéctica entre legitimización y crisis.