

English summaries

Sara Irisdotter Aldenmyr, 2008: The ideal of diversity and the logic of the market/ Mångfald och marknad: Om möjligheterna att främja mångfald och demokrati inom en marknadsorienterad skola/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 13, No 3, pp 161–175. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

The debate on schools in the last decade has stressed freedom of choice as an ideal. Since the decentralisation wave during the 90's, the possibility for parents and children to choose their school has resulted in a climate of competition among schools. In such a climate, the question of quality is crucial. Good quality secures the survival of individual schools. But do we risk ignoring some important aspects of education when focusing only on the measurable characteristics that can be called »quality»?

Lately, another type of ideal has arisen in the debate on schools: the aims of anti-discrimination and values of diversity. But is there a reasonable possibility to promote these values when there is free competition among schools? At least two standpoints are feasible: The first says that maximal freedom of choice furthers those who are already privileged. When these people seek out each other and form groups, society becomes segregated and the values of diversity are denied. The other standpoint says that a free individual chooses his or her school, lifestyle, identity and personal expression. What the choices are about makes no real difference, since maximal freedom of choice furthers the individual's right to uniqueness, and thereby also diversity in society.

The aim of this article is to discuss whether it is possible to promote values of diversity in a marketised, decentralised school system. I also want to present three different theoretical assumptions, represented by three social scientists, concerning the relation between the logic of the market economy and democratic, ethical values of diversity. These different theoretical assumptions can, I believe, help us to identify paradoxical reasoning and inconsistent conduct within the public and political debate on schools. The different theories can also deepen our understanding of the development of today's school institutions.

Previous research

Several school researchers have paid attention to freedom of choice and competition among schools. They consider these aspects to be crucial for our understanding of contemporary school development. Educational philoso-

phers have mostly scrutinized these aspects from a critical point of view. According to this type of research, market orientation tends to result in instrumental attitudes, segregation and unjustness. In contrast, researchers from other disciplines such as business management and economics see decentralisation and the marketisation of schools as a good way of achieving better results and quality, which in the end will benefit the pupils.

Theoretical standpoints

Jürgen Habermas emphasises the difference between the rationality of the market economy and the communicative rationality of moral and political reasoning. That is why he considers the market orientation of late modern society as the greatest threat to democracy.

Norman Fairclough claims that informal language use inspired by commercial practices can flatten hierarchal positioning between people in public spaces, thereby challenging traditionally established power relations and stimulating democratic progress. But it can also help to create new asymmetrical, controlling relations, thereby serving the interest of capitalism at the expense of the unprivileged groups in society.

Quite contrary to Habermas, Michael Wohlgemuth (2005) claims, that the logic of the market economy can contribute to the development of democratic processes in society. He argues that the type of communication that precedes commercial agreements is a good example of mutual exchange and genuine dialogue.

The three theorists above represent three different standpoints concerning the relationship between democratic societies and market orientation. These three standpoints, in different ways, can also shed light on the central question in this article: Is it possible to promote diversity and democracy in a market-oriented school institution? Habermas's position precludes this possibility, while Wohlgemuth's makes it possible to interpret market orientation as a way of contributing to the democratic development of school institutions. Fairclough represents a sceptical viewpoint which calls for methodical studies of actual practices, from an open-minded yet critical point of view.

The Ideals of free choice and diversity in public documents

The public political documents that discuss the decentralization of schools include a set of keywords such as quality, goal fulfilments, freedom of choice and quality control. What may be considered in these contexts to be qualitative knowledge becomes clearer after reading the government's criticism of current teacher education for its lack of depth in specialist subjects and for being too »easy«.

As mentioned above, there is a parallel focus on the value of diversity in today's debate on schools. A new law proclaims that no child shall be discriminated or violated in any way in the school environment. If any child is exposed to discriminatory action, he or she has a right to financial compensation. The municipalities are legally responsible as the main school authority for preventing all forms of discrimination or violation (SFS 2006:67). The public political documents that discuss the new law include keywords such as

value of diversity, human dignity, security, responsibility and equal value (SOU 2004:50, Skolverket 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d).

Diversity and market orientation: a possible combination?

In some public political documents, the two ideals of diversity and free choice on the school market are combined as if they were not at all in conflict with each other. Yet, in other similar documents, the two ideals are pointed out as incompatible. I will give a few examples from this kind of document in order to show how the three theorists presented above can illuminate our understanding of the implicit assumptions stated in the documents.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket 2003) raises the question of how the new, decentralized system affects the democratic ideal of inclusion. The report in which this question is raised does not present a clear answer or standpoint. However, a positive effect is mentioned as a reason for the free choice of school. Because of the free competition among schools, the municipalities need to pay attention to the wishes of its citizens. At the same time, the question itself can be interpreted as an expression of a critical call for further investigation. The combination of both positive observations and critical questions is comparable to Fairclough's position as presented above.

Another example comes from the government's public report before the passing of the antidiscrimination law. Here, a discursive clash of interests is obvious if we interpret the text according to Habermas. The text states that the new financial responsibility, in case of discrimination or violation of human rights, can be a burden for the municipalities (SOU 2004:50 p 133). From a Habermasian point of view, this speaks for a differentiation between economics and questions of diversity, since vulnerable students can be considered as risk factors. On the other hand, an interpretation according to Wohlgemuth's reasoning is also possible. In accordance with Wohlgemuth, the new, marketised steering system for schools may be an example of how economic pressure can promote and contribute to democratic values.

With the above few examples, my aim was to show how we can deepen our understanding of the arguments in an ongoing discussion of diversity and a marketised school system.

Donald Broady, 2008: An ill-chosen title. Notes on the first Swedish edition 2008 of Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron, *La reproduction* /En illa vald titel. Noteringar till 2008 års utgåva på svenska av Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduktionen!*. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 13, No 3, pp 176–192. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

Despite being more often referenced than read, *La Reproduction* (1970) by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, has made a most significant contribution to the sociological turn of educational research. Given that it is now available in Swedish translation for the first time, it seems fitting to consider its impact and some of the circumstances behind its origin.

Bourdieu, with hindsight, regretted the title. Most people read titles, not books, he noted. The title »Reproduction» has nourished the misapprehension that the overriding mission of this one was to depict education as a centrifuge that propels the children of lower social classes into subordinate social positions and the offspring of higher social classes into dominant ones.

This kind of reception became widespread after the appearance of the English translation in 1977. To the original target audience, however, Bourdieu's and Passeron's view on the reproductive functions exercised by the education system was nothing new. Almost every reader of *La Reproduction* in the beginning of the seventies knew – or at least knew of – the famous and infamous *Les Héritiers* (The Inheritors) by the same authors from 1964. This earlier book focusing on university students in the humanities – aspiring to inherit the legitimate Culture and at the same time possessed by the very same Culture – had since its publication been a focal point for attention in the educational debate. It was condemned by some as a sacrilegious attack on the precious values of the university formation and the Culture. Others had their understanding of the social mechanisms of the education system shaped directly or indirectly by *Les Héritiers*; it was favourite reading among the students that were to bring about the rebellion of 1968. *La Reproduction* aimed at something more.

Some of the blame for the fate of *La Reproduction* should possibly lie with the authors themselves. It wasn't only the title but also the entangled style of writing that invited those who actually read the book to imagine that its aim was to portray the education system as a simple mechanical device. This applies in particular to the exposition of enumerated theses in the long opening section. The peculiar style is partly explained by the authors' rivalry with the Althusserians who, during the sixties, competed for the same audience. More generally speaking, the competition within the intellectual field, dominated by philosophers, called for conceptual and terminological virtuosity.

With regard to the terminology, today's reader should also remember that central elements were quite new. Though Bourdieu had prepared the concepts during ten years of ethnographical and sociological investigations, it was not until in *La Reproduction* and some articles from the same period that the

words *habitus* and *capital cultural* were frequently and systematically used for the first time. (The only exception worth mentioning being Bourdieu's early use of *habitus* and its Greek equivalent *Hexis* in a study from 1962 on bachelors in Béarn). No wonder that the book bears traces of an early and not yet very smooth attempt to present a more consistent and stable conceptual and terminological apparatus.

Other features of *La Reproduction* that have been lost amidst its Anglo-Saxon reception include its character of a synoptic synthesis of almost a decade of extensive empirical investigations into different aspects of the French education system, and in general different social groups' relation to Culture. This is yet another explanation as to why the style of writing was so compressed. The empirical underpinnings were put into the shade as all light fell on *La Reproduction* and a few articles with similar content – at least in the Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence, where during the years following its publication in English it was the most frequent work by Bourdieu cited in articles in social science journals (not only educational journals). Generally, it is noticeable that the empirical works by Bourdieu and his collaborators have been translated into English much later, and to a much lesser extent, than their theoretical and programmatic writings.

La Reproduction was the outcome of a first reconnaissance flight, which explains the rather high altitude point of view and the aggregated categories. An example is the predominantly vertical classification of the population into the dominant class, the middle classes and the popular classes. *La Reproduction* was not so much a program for what was to come; instead, it was more a provisional closing of the books of this early research. To a great extent the same goes for the birds-eye perspective in *La Distinction* (1979), which was more of a summing up of the findings of the sixties and first half of the seventies than the starting point it has often been regarded as. During the course of the seventies and onwards Bourdieu and his collaborators and students would descend into more multi-dimensional research, not the least explorations of the field of power and different social fields, and much more. From then on their research on education constituted a much smaller share of their undertakings compared to during the pioneering period, which does not mean that such studies have been regarded as less important. It was mainly a consequence of the expansion of the entire research endeavour.