


A discussion on the new critical convergences towards the centrality of knowledge in school: the theories of the relation to knowledge of Bernard Charlot and the return of Michael young's powerful knowledge

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Abstract

In the late 1960s, driven by the increasing capacity of computational data processing, statistics that linked school success with students' social backgrounds became the main argument in favor of the idea that schools -even the public ones- did little more than reproduce class inequalities and legitimize them by attributing school failure to the poor intellectual abilities of subordinate class students. Both in England and in France, critical theories about education questioned the curriculum, which they saw as arbitrary and related to the interests and tastes of the privileged classes, as well as the authority of the teacher, transmitter of these contents and legitimizer of educative but especially social failure, of children from low strata. This apparent consensus is explicitly broken with the turn of the century, and authors such as Bernard Charlot in France and Michael FD Young in England, converge on pointing to knowledge as the central factor in educational work. The objective of this article is to examine the approaches of the two authors on this point, to compare both perspectives, and to propose overcoming visions of some distances that separate them. It concludes with a theoretical critique of both perspectives, an attempt of an overcoming synthesis, underlining the value of knowledge as a central factor in educational action.

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Resumo

Uma discussão sobre as novas convergências críticas para a centralidade do conhecimento na escola: as teorias da relação ao conhecimento de Bernard Charlot e o retorno do poderoso conhecimento de Michael Young

No final da década de 1960, impulsionada pela crescente capacidade de processamento de dados computacionais, as estatísticas que ligam o sucesso da escola às origens sociais dos alunos se tornaram o principal argumento em favor da ideia de que a escola Até o público fez pouco mais do que reproduzir as desigualdades de classe e legitimá-las, atribuindo o fracasso escolar às fracas habilidades intelectuais dos alunos de classe subordinada. Tanto na Inglaterra quanto na França, teorias críticas sobre educação questionavam o currículo, que consideravam arbitrário e relacionado aos interesses e gostos das classes privilegiadas, bem como à autoridade do professor, transmissor desses conteúdos e legitimador do fracasso. escola, mas principalmente social, de crianças de camadas baixas. Esse consenso aparente é explicitamente quebrado com a virada do século, e autores como Bernard Charlot, na França, e Michael FD Young, na Inglaterra, convergem em apontar o conhecimento e o conhecimento como o fator central no trabalho educacional. O objetivo deste artigo é examinar as abordagens dos dois autores nesse ponto, comparar as duas perspectivas e propor visões de superação de algumas distâncias que as separam. Conclui sublinhando, com a ajuda da teoria sociológica contemporânea, os aspectos teóricos que sustentam o valor do conhecimento como fator central na ação educacional.

Palavras-chave:

Conhecimento;
Relacionamento com o conhecimento;
Educação formal.

Resumen

Una discusión sobre las nuevas convergencias críticas hacia la centralidad del conocimiento en la escuela: las teorías de la relación con el saber de Bernard Charlot y el regreso del conocimiento poderoso de Michael Young

A fines de los años 60, al impulso de la creciente capacidad de la procesamiento computacional de datos, las estadísticas que vinculaban el éxito escolar con la procedencia social de los estudiantes, se convirtieron en el principal argumento a favor de la idea de que la escuela, aún la pública, hacía poco más que reproducir las desigualdades de clase y legitimarlas a través de la atribución del fracaso escolar a las escasas habilidades intelectuales de los estudiantes de clases subordinadas. Tanto en Inglaterra como en Francia, surgieron teorías críticas sobre la educación cuestionadoras del currículo, al que veían como arbitrario y afín a los intereses y gustos de las clases privilegiadas, así como de la autoridad del docente, trasmisor de esos contenidos y legitimador del fracaso escolar, pero sobre todo social, de los niños provenientes de estratos bajos. Este aparente consenso se quiebra explícitamente con el cambio de siglo, y autores como Bernard Charlot en Francia y Michael FD Young en Inglaterra, convergen en señalar al saber y al conocimiento, como el factor central de la labor educativa. El objetivo de este artículo, es examinar las aproximaciones de los dos autores sobre este punto, comparar ambas perspectivas, y proponer visiones superadoras de algunas distancias que las separan. Se concluye subrayando, con el auxilio de la teoría sociológica contemporánea, los aspectos teóricos que permiten sustentar el valor del conocimiento como factor central de la acción educativa.

Palabras Clave:

Conocimiento,
Relación con el saber, Educación formal..

Introduction

In his famous methodological essays on the objectivity of the social sciences, Max Weber uses the expression "reference to value", to note that every social phenomenon depends, for its construction as an object of study, on the interest that the epoch attributes to it, and how the researcher, in turn, perceives it, strips it of its assigned cultural significance and reconstructs it in the process of its reformulation as something worthy of being studied and interpreted. Evaluative references, as Habermas says interpreting Weber, are methodologically inevitable, but objectively non-binding. Hence the social sciences are obliged to make explicit the dependence of basic theoretical assumptions on such normative assumptions. This is what the postulate of value neutrality refers to. (HABERMAS, 1988, p. 95)

These considerations, which are methodological and epistemological, also refer to a field that exceeds the limits of this article but that it is pertinent to underline: that of the sociology of knowledge. What is relevant to social researchers and in what context is it? How is it possible that certain phenomena that acquire a particular social relevance at a given time, appear, disappear and reappear in the field of vision of contemporary researchers, without raising serious questions about the way researchers construct their theories? Furthermore, how is it possible that the same researchers, in light of the sociohistorical relevance of a certain phenomenon, elaborate their theories and discard them later, proposing just the opposite, without questioning the methods or the epistemological solidity of their conceptual constructions? These are questions that arose as a consequence and not because of the elaboration of this work, which was intended to account for convergence between theories of different origins and tradition, - that of "the relationship with knowledge", by Bernard Charlot and that of Michael FD's "mighty knowledge" Young-, in an academic context of the educational field crossed by the coexistence of two equally devaluing currents of school knowledge: sociological reproductivism / constructivism on the one hand, and postmodern relativism that, by the way, contributed in everything possible to erode the claims of the scientific character of the social and human sciences.

However, during those same decades, sociological theories abounded that focused with singular sharpness on the relevance of knowledge, the conditions of its production in research centers, its importance for the democratization and development of societies, as well as economic conflicts, of power and the inherent contradictions that could be seen as a consequence of these processes. Were these theories unknown to those who now denied and now affirm, supposedly from the scientific construction of sociological knowledge, that knowledge matters? How should be evaluated, from a sociological and educational perspective, the new valuation of knowledge by those who, trying to build it, denied it as valuable? These are questions that, as will be seen, arising from the analysis of the theories presented and the discussion of their relevance for the contemporary study of the school institution at all levels, up to the

creation of knowledge in higher education institutions. Perhaps the most relevant key to answering these questions is foreign to the exposition of this article and should simply be sought in the biography of its authors.

Knowledge and education during the 20th century

The first decades of the last century were guided, in the West, by the impulse of the penetration of the “modern” school model, installed at the end of the 19th century based on the Enlightenment ideas that saw reason and letters as the basis for the constitution of suitable citizenship for democratic exercise and of a working mass capable of industrial work, which would include them. The crisis of 1929 and its global impact, as well as the two world wars, gravitated negatively in the reflection on the role of the school in the still-new national states. The first half of that century closed with the strong criticism of the first generation of the Frankfurt school to instrumental rationality and technical-scientific knowledge as a means of mass extermination of people.

About the end of the fifties and during the following decades, it was when the starting point for the emergence of the two great trends -although not unified theories- which can be identified as antagonistic can be located: On the one hand, the one that it maintained the centrality of knowledge within educational projects and plans at the level of elementary schooling up to the University level, as part of projects for the development and democratization of societies, as well as a realization by the population, inherited from the Illuminist Project of the western modernization. On the other, the one that questioned the transforming role of school knowledge within formal education and attributed to the school the quality of space of legitimizing the social inequality characteristic of the capitalist society. We will treat them in this order. Among the first views, supporting favorable visions of scientific, technological, and humanistic knowledge in the future of societies, the most famous - or rather infamous, judging by its reception in the academic community dedicated to education - was Theory of Human Capital, formulated from the University of Chicago School of Economics by Gary Becker (1993), Jacob Mincer (1981) and Theodore Schultz (1961). The theory, of an economic and non-sociological nature, assumes that individual investments in education (in time and money) yield monetary returns that benefit subjects, and simultaneously with the economic growth of nations due to increased productivity in places of job. The theory, inspired by the neoclassical assumptions of free and rational individuals who make decisions in conditions of transparent markets, explains the economic growth of the United States, a legitimation to the differential appropriation of the benefit and justifies the wage differences to the detriment of immigrants and women, on the basis - hardly sustainable - that wages are an exact expression of productivity.

But the theories of Human Capital were not the only ones that highlighted the role of knowledge, as seems to indicate the persistent view that emphasizing knowledge is indissoluble with the defense of the established economic interest. In the early 1960s and 1970s, sociological theories of the "post-industrial" or "service" era proliferated, installing the idea that knowledge and information are central to new societies: science, technology, and Human knowledge are both descriptors of the economic dynamics of central countries and the key to development for poor countries. The repertoire of authors and trends is very varied: neocons, like Daniel Bell; "Post-industrial utopians" (FRANKEL, 1989), such as Alvin Toffler and André Gorz; and others such as Alain Touraine, Alvin Gouldner, Manuel Castells, and Juan Carlos Tedesco among many others. Already in 1959, Peter Drucker (1968) in a pioneering work, introduced the idea of "educational revolution" due to a "sudden and radical change in the meaning and effects of knowledge for society" that entails the hierarchization of work conceptual over productive (DRUCKER, 1968: 216), based on what can be expected that there will be an increasing number of people dedicated exclusively to the production and transmission of knowledge. For his part, in "The advent of post-industrial society" (BELL, 1976), Daniel Bell defines knowledge as "a set of ordered expositions of facts and ideas, presenting a reasoned judgment or an experimental result, which is it transmits to others through some means of communication in a systematic way" (BELL, 1976, p. 206). Theoretical knowledge -a source of innovation and political formulation- is the axial principle of the new societies, and augurs a pre-eminence of professional and technical classes, within which the "intellectual" work for decision-making occupies a central place (BELL, 1976, p. 30). This implies the expansion of a new intelligentsia in universities and research institutes, the professions, and the government, capable of planning the future and being guarantors of social welfare systems: "it is the simple awareness of the nature of innovation that turns theoretical knowledge on something crucial" (BELL, 1973, p. 37).

On the embers of the student revolt in France, Alain Touraine published, in 1969, "The post-industrial society", and also points to knowledge as a defining aspect of a new type of society, where the newest "is that it depends much more directly than before knowledge, and, consequently, of the capacity of society to create creativity" (TOURAINÉ, 1973, p. 7). With this, a new class emerges defined, not by the property, but by knowledge: a new meritocratic and sometimes technocratic aristocracy (TOURAINÉ, 1973, p. 56), which dominates through the management of information and the ideology of the absence of conflict derived from the accumulation of knowledge. Also Alvin Gouldner, in "The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology" of 1976 and "The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class" of 1979, goes one step further in this direction and rewrites the classical Marxist theses to announce the advent of a new era characterized by the rise of intellectuals as a universal class. This new class "is the most progressive force in modern society and the center of all human emanation that is possible in the foreseeable future";

"He has the scientific knowledge and technical skills on which the future of modern productive forces depends"; it is sensitive to ecological problems derived from technical development; and it also constitutes a center of opposition to almost all forms of censorship, thereby embodying a universal social interest in a type of rationality broader than that invested in technology; It is the most internationalist and universalist of the social strata; it is the most cosmopolitan of all the elites" (GOULDNER, 1980, p. 112).

More recently, Alvin Toffler and André Gorz (along with Barry Jones and Rudolf Bahro), gave a radical turn regarding the place of the conflict as a phenomenon inherent to the generation of knowledge. As Boris Frankel points out, what these "post-industrial utopians" share is, above all, "the desire to create a more egalitarian, democratic and enlightened world" (FRANKEL, 1989, p. 25). In them and their followers (such as Juan Carlos Tedesco, 1995, 1999), the accent is very often placed directly on knowledge (TOFFLER, 1990), starting from the premise that unlike other sources of power, knowledge has intrinsically democratic virtues, rather than elitizing or conflictive since its application does not wear it out, but multiplies it and its production requires the same qualities of democratic functioning, such as creativity, freedom, and exchanges. In this society, the proletariat will become a minority, which will be gradually replaced by specialized workers. (TOFFLER, 1990). Within this framework, Tedesco (1995, 1999) emphasizes the role of "symbolic" work as that performed by someone who is not only able to abstract, think systemically, and experiment but also works as a team, spends a lot of time communicating concepts and seeking of consensus. A prominent place also occupies the role attributed to knowledge by the most relevant representative of the second generation of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas (1973, 1989), who analyzes multiple aspects of the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge in the role of social criticism and political action, problematizing and reformulating the role of technicians in the construction of decisions in the political leadership of societies within capitalism.

On the other hand, constituting a wide range of critical positions, the "skeptical" way of conceiving the possibilities of access to knowledge through school traffic is configured. Broadly speaking, it is a sociology that mainly draws from a Marxist tradition strongly related to the division of classes in the capitalist system, and that places the school within a space of an "ideological" character destined to justify, legitimize and maintain capitalism's order of exploitation, through two complementary mechanisms: a) the elimination -through induced failure- of students from working classes and their redirection towards manual training paths that would condemn them to their original class situation, b) the legitimization of the order resulting from that selection of the students by the self-responsibility of the students of low classes for their low performance and abandonment.

The defense of this "reproductive" function of the school had, as a philosophical foundation, a "weak" conception of knowledge, as something merely built to the measure of the interests and tastes of

the exploiting and ruling classes, in need of a poor working-class, very low qualified or specialized in manual trades, but interested in maintaining for themselves the educational privileges originated and derived from their class condition. Its empirical support consisted of statistical evidence - only obtained from the possibility of computerized data processing that occurred at that historical moment - of the uneven school performance of children and young people from different social backgrounds.

One of the most explicit formulations of this aspect is, for example, that of Althusser (1970), who places the school institution as an "ideological apparatus of the state" that, along with others such as family, religion, and law, fulfill with the role of reproducers of the conditions for capitalist production, that is, the division of social classes and the acceptance of it, ensuring the stability of political domination. Also in France, they embody this "New Sociology of Education", Baudelot and Establet -especially "The Capitalist School in France", from 1971, where they examine the dead ends and return to where vocational training for the lower classes leads- and above all, Bourdieu and Passeron, with two fundamental works: "The Inheritors", from 1964 and "The reproduction", from 1970.

It was above all Bourdieu, who over the decades elaborated the most sophisticated theory about the role of education in the reproduction of the relations between the different social classes, clearly abbreviating Marxist theory, but without renouncing to key concepts of French positivist classical sociology, and also Weberian. Unlike other theorists of this school, he relied heavily on statistics, which he combined with qualitative methods, to support the central hypotheses of his theory. The school, the learning processes, the degrees or certificates that it grants, are subsumed in the Bourdian theory, within the Marxist concept of "capital", generally understood as accumulated work, and it is dynamic of accumulation and circulation, where it assumes the form of "cultural capital". To the extent that, in welfare societies, when the state hinders the direct family inheritance of financial capital, it must be transformed into other forms of capital - cultural and social - to disguise the intergenerational transmission of capital, which occurs anyway. Investments in education, through the payment of elite institutions, have a significant cost in financial capital, despite which it will be compensated and transmitted to the next generation, for the monetary benefits derived from institutionalized cultural capital in prestigious titles that led to professional successful practice, and for the economic performance of the network of relationships established within those institutions. Despite this dynamic of capital transmission, and the role of education in it, Bourdieu, finally heir to the French Enlightenment tradition, proposes a "rational pedagogy" that overcomes "abstract universalism": Far from applying a universalism that assumes in the students a non-existent starting equality, all sources of inequality that generate cultural distances at the starting point should be taken into account, to ensure, universally, to all students, access to the universal, that is, to what it is not characteristic of each particular social class.

In England, “Learning to Work”, by Paul Willis, focuses on the reproduction of inequality from a unique ethnographic perspective, putting his attention on the subjectivities of English working-class youth who, educated in the cultural universe of the value of male manual labor in the factory as a generator of prestige and immediate income, end up taking sides to enter it, symbolically distancing themselves and rejecting school knowledge, characterized by passivity, stillness and the postponement of rewards. Placed in the “loser” perspective, Willis also does not show school knowledge as a value that can be appropriated by working-class youth.

Within these currents, we leave for the end, not by chronology, but by relevance, the works of two British theorists, Basil Bernstein, who in 1970 published his classic work "Classes, Codes and Control", and his disciple, Michael FD Young, with “Knowledge and Control”, from the year 1971. Bernstein, who along with Bourdieu is seen as the founder of the “New Sociology of Education”, uses sociolinguistics to identify the factors that determine the abandonment of students from working classes. The notions of “restricted code”, typical of the lower classes, and highly dependent on the contexts of its application, and of “elaborated code”, typical of the middle classes and universal in scope, and its radical distinction, together with a conception of Durkheimian sociology of knowledge based on the centrality of “classification” were the starting points of what turned out to be an elaborate theory of codes and types of pedagogies, according to their effects on the reproduction of social inequality. Michael F.D. Young, guided by Bernstein, also followed the path of the New Sociology, although he put his main attention on the curriculum and its contents, which he called “Knowledge of the powerful” in “Knowledge and Control”, alluding to the constructed character of the curriculum and the interested and intentional selection of its contents by the elites.

From "Knowledge of the powerful" to "Powerful knowledge" and its tensions in Michael FD Young's theory.

Michael FD Young's “Bringing knowledge back in” was published in 2008. To the surprise of many, the author of "Knowledge and Control" retraced his steps and set a thesis opposite to that which had made him famous in the 1960s: Far from being simply the "knowledge of the powerful", the school curriculum based on subjects, it was the core of a “powerful knowledge” that the school was obliged to grant and to which every child had the right to access.

The text, which consists of a rereading and reworking of the theories of Vygotsky and Durkheim, as well as of his former mentor, Basil Bernstein, Young defends the clear separation and differentiation between school and non-school knowledge, which comes from the installation of modern 19th-century school systems: “This book has argued that improving education relies on a curriculum that is explicitly based on the differentiation of school from non-school knowledge” (Young, 2008, p. 198).

To show his arguments, Young intends to discuss simultaneously with the “conservatives” who belittle the socially and historically constructed character of knowledge and consider it as something given and before its inclusion in the curriculum, and with left-wing critics, among whom it was found in the past, according to which the educational processes in the school are always linked to the interests and preferences of the elites. They both forget Young says, “...that there may be crucial conditions for knowledge acquisition and production that are independent of the specific social contexts in which they are located” (YOUNG, 2008, p. 85).

To base the new emphasis on the role of school knowledge and on what he has called “powerful knowledge”, Young must return to the modern project of the nineteenth-century school system, and rescue those elements that, although they were not sufficiently explicit at the time, seem to take on now a new value, in the light of the new cognitive interest that guides it: the denial that the only value of that knowledge rested in its connection with the knowledge of the elites.

The subject-based curriculum of nineteenth-century schools did not base its credibility exclusively on its relationship with elite institutions, as it had stated in *Knowledge and Control*, but three fundamental principles to which it now gives special relevance. They are A) A clear separation between the knowledge that can only be acquired at school and the knowledge that is learned in everyday life. B) The assumption that school knowledge was superior to that of daily life, in the sense that it could be able to take people beyond their daily experience to understand phenomena of a universal nature, not linked to their environment. C) Rather than being linked to the teaching professions, the subjects were linked to disciplines that were cultivated within communities of researchers from university centers or knowledge generation. (YOUNG, 2008, p. 85)

On these bases, he reformulates an alternative approach that seeks to reconcile these contributions of traditional schooling with some remnants of old constructivism, within a realistic sociological theory of knowledge. This alternative is based on some points that, although they are stated as such, do not explicitly refer to any specific theoretical construction: A) the rejection of a conservative vision of knowledge as something given and independent of the conditions of its construction. B) A conception of knowledge as socially produced and dependent on private interests and power struggles, although with emerging qualities that allow its value to exceed that of the conditions of its production. C) Along with Bernstein and others, based on Durkheim, he maintains the clarity of the classification between theoretical knowledge and daily knowledge as the fundamental to define the purpose of education, even in variable historical and social contexts. This leads to rejecting postmodern views that knowledge is nothing more than a set of practices and representations similar to any other. D) The reaffirmation that what he calls “the curriculum of the future” must treat knowledge as a distinctive and fundamental element, not reducible to any other, to which

people, under changing conditions, need access to understand the world in which they move. (YOUNG, 2008: 89)

Within any formulation of the curriculum, a set of distinctions must be maintained, showing a classificatory desire that goes far beyond any Durkheimian theory of knowledge in different types of societies: between school and non-school knowledge, differences and boundaries between each of the disciplines with the others, between the pedagogical knowledge and the knowledge of the specialist in the discipline, and, going through all of the above, the primary distinction to Young's thought: the distinction between two types of knowledge: On the one hand, the knowledge that is context-dependent and is trained daily for problem-solving. Although he refers to these types of problems as “practical”, he nevertheless assigns them examples that belong to the field of technology (fixing a car or a power failure). The specifically practical problems, related to the significant action of subjects in interpersonal relationships, do not occupy any role in this type of everyday and contextual knowledge either. It is a knowledge that does not generalize or explain, and only specifies how to do certain things (YOUNG, 2011, p. 151). On the other, the theoretical or independent knowledge of the context: “This is the knowledge that is developed to provide generalizations and makes claims of universality; it provides a basis for making judgments and is usually but not solely, associated with the sciences”. (YOUNG, 2011, p. 152)

This is what "powerful knowledge" is all about.

This means that the school, which in the early seventies was described as a form of selection and rejection of those students who did not already bring the knowledge of the power to the classrooms, changes, with the century, of function: What are schools for? “... Schools enable young people to acquire the knowledge that for most of them cannot be acquired at home or in the community, or, for adults, in workplaces” (YOUNG, 2011, p. 150), that is, to acquire that type of knowledge that he calls "powerful".

Although his treatment of the conception of the importance of knowledge in modern societies is notoriously more superficial than in some of the approaches we showed before, Young does not differ much from them in terms of some of its features, including the trend of increasing specialization, which was already pointed out by the classic economy and sociology, a couple of centuries ago. But it may result surprising some of the practical consequences that the application of this perspective could have in the classroom in particular two: 1) The relationships between teachers and students must differ from any other type of relationship because they must be hierarchical, and 2) the subjects that constitute the curriculum should not be the student's choice, since the student, by definition, lacks the cognitive bases that would make sense of that choice. The very simple authority of imparted knowledge, which should naturally follow from a strong conception of knowledge as the core of the curriculum, is not part of the foundation of the school order anymore, because it's substituted by the preeminence of the figure of the teacher. Curiously,

hierarchization returns, as in the distant past, to be inherent in the relationship between a teacher, for his role as teacher, and his student, for his role as such. The curricular rigidity that it is proposed also seems to return to the nineteenth-century matrix of knowledge without bases in the sociohistorical construction of which it is the object. As much as the students lack knowledge about the particular subjects, and although certain subjects are basic for the acquisition of any other form of knowledge, this does not have to exclude, especially in more advanced cycles of the school year, the role of cognitive interest of the student in orienting himself to such or such curricular contents instead of others.

The question arises naturally: Isn't this vision of the curriculum based on "powerful knowledge" another way of presenting a "curriculum of the powerful", that is, of those who formulate the curriculum, appoint teachers, and regulate relations with students from a one-way and vertical direction? The powerful will no longer be, possibly, the social elites within a highly hierarchical class system such as British, but the curriculum specialists result to be so, as reluctant to recognize the variable nature of knowledge and the different interests that students show on it.

Peter Wilby says, in an interview with Michael Young for the British newspaper *The Guardian* (Wilby, 2018), that like Bernstein, Richard Pring, who was later a professor of education at the University of Oxford, considered that "Knowledge and Control", represented such a radical approach, that he even produced a text in which he asked, ironically to Young, whether his critical theory of subject-based knowledge could also constitute the construction of the ruling class. For Pring, Young now makes the same mistake, but in an opposite direction: You can't just dismiss everyday knowledge. "A lot of people develop important and intelligent views of the world through practical engagement (...) Why isn't that 'powerful knowledge?'" (Wilby, 2018)

Because furthermore, how powerful is the "powerful knowledge" that would characterize the structure and curricular content of schools? If the theory of the early 1970s denied working-class youth any access to the "curriculum of the powerful," and thus all hope of school success, how would a knowledge-based curriculum benefit those same youth? How does this type of curriculum based on the power of theoretical and universal knowledge fulfill the school's promise to provide it to all? After this fiery defense of a type of knowledge that all of us, academics and educators, generate and defend, the author simply points out, in the same article that:

"Inevitably schools are not always successful in enabling pupils to acquire powerful knowledge. It is also true that schools are more successful with some pupils than others. The success of pupils is highly dependent on the culture that they bring to school" (YOUNG, 2011, p. 152).

Although he maintains that, for poor students, going to school is the only hope of acquiring that knowledge, since only within the school it takes place, the author seems to maintain a conception almost

as skeptical as in the past about the possibilities of that the strong borders that separate all the human and cognitive domains, especially that of the social classes, can be overcome by school action. Again, in his words:

“That does not mean that I do not now consider how schools in capitalist societies reproduce social class or other inequalities. However, the fact that some boys from working-class families succeed in school, despite their cultural disadvantages, and that in many countries girls perform better than boys (Marrero, 2008), despite gender discrimination in society, suggests that the role of schools and subject-based curriculum is more complex (...). In unequal societies like England, any curriculum will maintain these inequalities” (YOUNG, 2016, p. 8)

As for the practical consequences of adopting one or another theoretical model, it does not seem to have moved such a long and radical path. Ultimately, the capitalist school will reproduce class differences. In the first constructivist perspective, the success of some young people from the working classes only had the function of legitimizing the curriculum of the powerful as a way of maintaining the domination and class division on which it was based. In the perspective of social realism, despite the emphasis on powerful knowledge, it does not prove to be sufficient to ensure equitable access of young people from all social classes to the benefits of universal culture, because once again, the class system stands between some children and their ability to access an education based on solid knowledge that allows them to go further.

From this perspective, everything has changed, so that everything continues as it is. The theoretical change Young claims have done, does not seem to be due either to the dynamics of knowledge that tests itself according to the rules of normative epistemologies or to the inclusion of educational and ethical considerations that take into account the consequences of simply accepting the social reproduction operated through the school. In Young's case, the paradigm shift has a cause that is both more trivial and - using his terminology - more dependent on the context fact, fortuitous fact, within his biography. Let's go back to Wilby's interview, who asks him, without further ado, why his change of perspective was due. Young's answer leaves no room for doubt: "Becoming a parent," he simply said to Peter Wilby (Wilby, 2018).

“Before my elder daughter was moving to secondary school, I had a typical left position about selection, private schools, and all that. But then, as a parent, you have to come to terms with the fact that this is your child and this is her only chance. You worry about what kind of school she's going to and whether it has enough middle-class children.” (WILBY, 2018)

As readers of Bernstein, and Young himself, this could indicate that everyday experience has a theoretical efficacy, in terms of hypothesis revision, reformulation, and elaboration of new theories and knowledge that could be unthinkable to maintain, knowledge, confined within from the limits of the universal. Cognitive interest and the researcher's experience, as Weber pointed out above, are also determining factors in the construction of sociological knowledge. Even following Popper, it's quite clear that the origins of the hypothesis are not relevant for the evaluation of the theory. But the method for proving the validity of the theory is another issue. If we establish the clear and impassable boundaries that Michael

FD Young proposes to distinguish context-dependent knowledge from not context-dependent knowledge, and without evidence of how the last one can make any difference for poor youngsters, could we not affirm that both his constructivism of the 1970s and his current social realism have been forms of “context-dependent knowledge”?

In sum, are not Alvin Gouldner's equally critical approaches to the importance of knowledge and the contradictions of economic distribution and power that they entail more consistent and powerful in a theoretical sense? And within the sociology of education, if we wish to preserve Young's macro and universalizing vision, is not the Bourdian theory that has not required drastic reformulations to maintain its validity and its critical potential, while offering pedagogical alternatives, much more powerful for overcoming the reproductive character that school sometimes has?

Bernard Charlot and “The relationship with knowledge”

The recovery of the place of knowledge in school as a structuring factor that enables the progress of young people within the school journey, finds a new and innovative formulation with Bernard Charlot's theory about the "relationship" with that school-type knowledge. Originally an elementary school teacher, drawn from the pedagogical tradition and the primary interest in student learning, Charlot takes a sociological perspective, seeking to overcome the skepticism and inaction inevitably led by constructivism and the theory of reproduction. Charlot does not doubt the opportunities it offers and always provided access to school knowledge to all social sectors, particularly the popular classes, where he comes from. In this sense, as it will be seen it is convenient to attend to the cognitive turn that this theory installs in the educational field, putting knowledge at the center of school work.

His theoretical approach also includes the adoption of techniques based on the identification of learning processes and the construction of constellations, configurations, and ideal types, which distance this perspective from quantification strategies and categorization of individuals according to their social or family origin (CHARLOT 2001, p. 22).

Distinguishing himself from the theories of a psychological nature, Charlot argues that the human subject is, above all, a product of the species, rather than the parental or filial relations which he or she comes from. Unlike other species of animals, human breeding is born unfinished and does not become properly human if he or she does not appropriate, with the help of others of its kind, that "humanity", which is, at first, outside the individual (CHARLOT, 2008, p. 57). In Charlot's words:

“l'enfant naît inachevé et, par l'éducation, il va s'approprier une partie de ce que l'espèce humaine a construit au cours de son histoire et, ainsi, advenir à la fois comme humain, sujet et membre d'une

société et d'une culture. En ce sens, «le petit d'homme est obligé d'apprendre pour être». (CHARLOT, 2006)

The unfinished human subject is born, however, with the desire to learn, to be. It is important to distinguish here "learning" from "knowing." The child learns the social practices, cultural values, and local patterns with which he comes into contact through others, but also generates a peculiar learning relationship, of a proactive nature, which is specifically school. The relationship he establishes with that kind of knowledge is what it is called, in Charlot's theory, the relationship with knowledge. Learning is, therefore, a broader phenomenon than knowledge, which has its own rules - institutional and cultural - its relevance criteria - the best expressions of human culture - and its means of expression, which are mainly language and abstraction.

In addition, that child, driven by his desire to learn, exercises an activity that is born of himself: he moves towards the object of his learning and his knowledge. Mobilization goes beyond the intentionality of consciousness: It is a significant activity whose sense is to appropriate that knowledge and makes it his or her own. The mobilization, internal to the subject, is thus distinguished from motivation, which comes from outside it. If parents or teachers can motivate children, only they can mobilize their abilities and undertake an activity aimed at acquiring that knowledge.

In this active process of mobilization, the subject establishes a relationship with meaningful knowledge, which implies for him a triple process that must be developed throughout life: that of hominization, it is to say, that of becoming a full member of the human species; that of socialization, by which he or she becomes a right-handed member of his society, and of individuation or singularizing, by which he or she becomes a singular person, with his or hers own and defined characteristics, different from any other member of the species, and society. By the very nature of desire, it cannot be satisfied, so the subject remains mobilized in his relationship with learning to be human, belonging to a society, and developing his uniqueness. In his words: "To be complete would be to become an object. In that sense, education is endless, it will never end." (CHARLOT, 2008, p. 57).

However, introducing the human subject as the center of the process of education -from pre-existing humanity, but from an inner movement-, in this triple operation of becoming human, social and singular, inevitably brings the consideration of how the relationship with the others affect and model the characteristics of the activity that the individual develops to complete himself.

Relationship with others is never a relationship that is limited to the social. At the same time that learning relationships are established with the social world, relationships are established with the objective world and with the subjective world. In the interaction, that unfinished child will learn how the social world in which he moves is, how the others are, but also how the world is, and how he or she is.

To put it in usual sociological terms: The subject is immersed in a socially structured situation in which he acts reflexively; transforms and is transformed by it. The social structure provides both rules and resources that, although limiting their action, also enable individual agency. How do subjects perceive these rules and resources and conduce their activity towards knowledge? Are there tensions and contradictions in the perceptions of obstacles and opportunities by the subject and others? What kind of contradictions and with what entity? How do these contradictions affect the perception of the subject of himself and the ability to mobilize capacities and efforts in the relationship with knowledge?

These questions are of interest for the interpretation of the behaviors of children and young students within a structured social and school space. As Charlot warns, it is not about generating categories of students, defined by the existence or lack of something, and in particular, a relationship with knowledge. But it can be said that, in that same structured space, different young people can establish different "types" of relations with knowledge, because the meaning they attribute to it is different. This difference can also be interpreted from his previous experience at school, from the greater perception of limits or opportunities, and in any case, from the contradictions and tensions, he maintains between how the subject thinks he or she is and how he or she projects to be. This is far from the construction of a theory of school predictions from the social. The subjects often behave surprisingly and innovatively, even transformative of the structure in which they move, and the reasons (understood as motives) are never entirely social. The individual subject, in his uniqueness, has everything to say about his choices and his behaviors, especially, in addition, because he can interpret, both his motives and the material and social conditions in which he moves.

That is why, although for Charlot the notion of "desire" from psychoanalysis is useful in explaining the innate urge to learn from the child, that this relationship with learning later becomes a relationship with longer-range knowledge, also depends on what can be understood, from the subject's point of view, as a "project" of life.

These additional considerations to the theory of Charlot about the relationship with knowledge, facilitate the interpretation of ways of being in a school of different types of students, and the explanation of how, even students who could be seen as belonging to different "categories" of students, may have very different ways of being in school, and very different school results. Since they have their projects and in their internal conversations, they evaluate differently the obstacles and opportunities they have, in the light of their concerns and dispositions, their courses of action and their school results are hardly predictable. They are often surprising and transformative.

Conclusion

The analysis of the positions of two theories that could appear, at first instance, as coincidental and complementary, ends up leaving doubts about the real existence of this convergence.

On the one hand, in Michael FD Young, his 180-degree turn relative to his theoretical postures from the 1970s seems to be more apparent than real. Despite the recent incorporation of the concept of "powerful knowledge" within the curriculum, as something that does not depend solely on the interests of the "powerful", with the characteristics that have just been examined, it leaves the important question of how it exercises its power that kind of knowledge within the school space and outside it, and what is its role in the reproduction of social inequalities. If the powerful knowledge of the school is independent of the context, what role does it play in the rescue of young people who do not access it outside the educational institution? If he plays one, why doesn't Young explain how he plays that role, and how, despite that, he is skeptical about the chances of children from poor classes achieving school success? From Young's theorizing and conviction of the insurmountable performance differences between children of different classes, the idea seems to emerge that "powerful knowledge" is not, within this theory, an effective theoretical instrument to escape the vicious circle of reproduction.

The whole theory seems to change, but the logical consequence is the same: disadvantaged young people will fail because their knowledge is dependent on the context in which they live, and at school, they find strong boundaries that separate them not only from the knowledge of a different nature but with many other borders that will hinder their school transit: the clear division by subjects, the verticality of the relationship with their teacher, the prohibition of identifying their inclinations and aptitudes for the selection of the curriculum, etc.

Moreover, if powerful knowledge does not seem to help poor young people, why should it be useful for young people from privileged classes? Do they not also come from a singular "context" unrelated to that rigid structuring of subjects whose contents are defined by specialists in each of the disciplinary fields? Or does Young suppose that the privileged classes are deprived of "context", and the "powerful knowledge" that characterizes the school would govern within them? If so, what then would be the true difference between "powerful knowledge" and "knowledge of the powerful"? As a non-contextual knowledge, "powerful knowledge" should be as far from the experience of the poor as of the rich, because neither of them has the specialized knowledge that school is characterized for.

In this, Young seems to remain attached to the idea of the 1970s, according to which the curriculum taught in schools is made up of what the ruling classes already dominate, in their claim to assert their particular interests, such as universal interests. But with the difference that now abdicates its critical

position in the face of these claims of universality, accepting and legitimizing them by ceasing to perceive that the place of privilege is also a "place", a "locus" as subject to its context as any other.

The author admits that works such as Marrero's, which show that "some" young people, such as women, succeed in school despite discrimination and their class background, have led him to think that the process of reproduction is more complex than what your theory contemplates. However, it ends up discarding the empirical evidence of these contributions: in Marrero's work "some" women are not just a few since it is shown fact that in a third-world country, despite discrimination of girls, they could get to be the 70% of the postgraduate students; a very large figure, difficult to dismiss. Could be this phenomenon attributed to the access of women to "powerful knowledge? Why not? It seems quite likely to say that women find in school some kind of knowing different from the homes they come from, that they like more than their brothers do, following a similar hypothesis as in Paul Willis' approach. If it is so, how does "powerful knowledge" contribute to improving the level of learning of young people, regardless of the social class to which they belong? Could it not be, as Marrero proposes, that the students who enter the school, wherever they come from, really want to appropriate that powerful knowledge because it is different from that of its context? Is it not that both types of knowledge coexist in the school space generating forms of structuring that not only restrict, but also enable the deployment of strategies that favor even those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds? Could it be that there is also living within the schools?

It is that Michael FD Young's approach lacks a theory of action that takes into account the human subject. It offers a set of rigid distinctions and boundaries between almost everything that can be distinguished. But, like the postmodern theory, from which he tries to distance himself so much, he is blind to the notion of the subject, to the reflexivity of the action, and the capacity of agency within socially structured spaces. Paul Willis had perceived this perfectly, in his ethnographic studies of English schools in the late 1970s and had managed to articulate the structural limitations of the school, with the subjects' ability to interpret and act accordingly, even if the result was to end up anchoring themselves in the social class from which they came.

Students, as subjects, act reflexively, adhering to the limitations of the rules that characterize the structure, but also taking advantage of the enabling resources and the liberating and transformative possibilities that they offer. Young, ignore them. Focused on the knowledge that has changed its name, he does not perceive that social actors are necessary for the knowledge to get to have any meaning. If we go deeper into the educational sense of the school institution, how can a curriculum such as the one proposed, subject-centered, vertical, specialized, provide what only the school can and should give: emotionally rich and consistent living conditions that allow young people, the construction and valorization of personal identity, and the incorporation of ethical principles beyond the intellectual learning of the disciplines?

Charlot, on the other hand, together with a notion of knowledge that draws from the enlightened tradition, offers us everything absent in Young's theory: the young human being who has always wanted to learn and who have, within the school, the possibility of establishing a relationship with the knowledge that has not been accessed outside of it. The relationship with knowledge is, as Charlot shows, inherent to the human being as a species, and thanks to it are that he becomes not only human but a member of a society and a unique person. Throughout the period before schooling, the child has been learning and has generated a meaningful relationship with learning. It is this relationship that suffers and transforms when it is confronted, for the first time, with school knowledge, which sometimes confirms, but often contradicts, - because it is a different type of knowledge- the knowledge that is characteristic of their previous experience. The school can also create unnecessary obstacles to the establishment of this new relationship of children with school knowledge, precisely by sticking to programs and curricula that do not attend to the questions and concerns that students are experiencing in this new learning process, but to the preferences of the curriculum designers. And this is precisely Charlot's approach: given a necessary anthropological relationship between the need to know and the constitution and reproduction of humans as a species, how does the school manage, re-signify, and empower it so that the student's relationship with the knowledge may last for a lifetime.

In the context of this balance, one might wonder if it is strictly necessary for Charlot to refer to this natural impulse of the child to know, with the term "desire", a concept derived from Lacanian psychology. Current scientific knowledge in the field of neuroscience, especially after the discovery of the so-called "mirror neurons", could render the Lacanian concept of "desire" superfluous. This discovery has not only demonstrated the existence of this impulse and its natural character but has also shown how the imitation learning process occurs at the neural level. More importantly, it is the discovery that during imitation, the learner can empathize with the feelings and sensations experienced by those who develop that behavior while doing it. If the child sees an adult read with pleasure, not only the neurons responsible for reading will be activated in his brain, but also those of pleasure. The implications of this discovery for the study of the relationships with knowledge within the classroom are, for sociology, very relevant heuristically, as well as potentially powerful in the definition of educational policies and novel pedagogical practices.

When the actor is introduced, the relationship between everyday knowledge and powerful knowledge can be seen within the school as a struggle for the acceptance and compatibility of different logics. The child who wants to learn must not only be willing to learn the powerful knowledge Young refers to but something much more difficult, which is to abandon the daily knowledge that he transports from his home when the latter is alien or inconsistent with what comes from disciplinary knowledge. As long as we use the school institution or disciplinary barriers as criteria to distinguish the powerful knowledge or that

which must be taught in schools and that which is learned in the streets, with the diversity that this implies, we will be simplifying the internal problems of the human factor that is forced to start and resolve a fight between at least two universes of knowledge and meaning. Learning is not only wanting to learn and wanting to learn disciplines but wanting to get rid of, detach from, the daily baggage that has entered with him, at school. In light of what we know, having teachers who handle knowledge first hand but who are enthusiastic about it at the same time, is more important and surely more favorable than worrying about the verticality of relationships with their students; that knowledge, in a strong sense, can be learned in a meaningful and integrated way to the student's cognitive and symbolic previous universe, much more valuable than dealing with the dissection of nature and culture to distribute it in the corresponding boxes.

The relevance of knowledge and reason for the achievement of humanity and subjects freed from the determinations of their natural world built themselves as wise, free, reflective, ethically responsible, and aesthetically creative beings, has been the north of the compass Enlightenment that guides us, until now, to all the educators of the world. Criticism of deviations from reason and questioning the validity of the project do not deny, but rather affirm, the validity of the value of the type of knowledge that is cultivated in modernity, because the need to review and correct itself, is what defines it. But the construction and amendments of scientific theories must also be governed by the norms of knowledge within which they are generated.

As stated at the beginning, it is the object of the sociology of knowledge to determine which theories remain and which disappear or are unjustly forgotten. This article was an attempt to show how sociology has been fruitful in theorizing about knowledge and the multiple consequences of its production, circulation, and application in modern societies. Like all scientific theories, they must be revisited and re-evaluated, and others, such as Charlot, still insufficiently known, disclosed, and taught.

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