Education economics
Curriculum, ideology and fetishism

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M2 EPOG+
1. Curricula and pedagogies in a capitalist school
2. French regulation: education as a sector
3. Marx’s fetishism: academic work as surplus value producer
Curricula and pedagogies in a capitalist school

- A capitalist school?
- Alternatives pedagogies
A capitalist school?

Baudelot & Establet (1971) *Capitalist school*

The school system reproduces\(^a\) the society: not because you “inherit” your parents position, but because it reproduces a hierarchical society. Working class schools teach submission.

\(^a\)Not in the sense of the feminist “social reproduction” critic to the productivist view on economy
A capitalist school?

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Laval *et al.* (2012) *The new capitalist school*

Neoliberal version of the previous one.

- Public school system is undermined.
- Goal are instrumental, narrowly economist, aiming to employability
- Encourage individualism and competition → individual responsibility
Reproduction of the capitalist society


The reproduction of labor power requires a reproduction of its qualification [but also] a reproduction of its submission to the dominant ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of its capacity to well handle the dominant ideology for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they assure “verbally” the domination of the dominant class.
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**Poulantzas *Les Classes sociales dans le capitalisme aujourd’hui*, p. 31 (1975)**

Even in the absurd supposition that, from one day to the next (or from one generation to the next), all the bourgeois would occupy the places of the workers and vice versa, nothing essential would be changed in capitalism, because there would always be places of bourgeoisie and proletariat, which is the main aspect of reproduction of capitalist relations.
The French school system is not anymore dual (until 16 y.a.) but still very effectively reproductive.
Socially situated curriculum

School standardization and legitimate knowledge

Bourdieu’s “legitimate culture” (Les héritiers)

- French school system is supposed to be “indifferent to differences”
- good student as a socially situated norm
- taught knowledge are the legitimate ones, useful for or interesting according to the dominant classes
- Hidden curriculum
### 3 sorts of curricula

**Formal curriculum**

What must be officially transmitted to students (programs, official instructions). A selection of all the accumulated social knowledge, the most legitimate according to the social hierarchy in force.

**Real curriculum**

What is actually taught. The teachers adapt to the teaching conditions and their beliefs.

**Hidden curriculum**

What is transmitted without prescription or explicitation: values inscribed in school routines

- individual work, competition
- appreciation of intellectual work, written expression and “aesthetics”
- Fields hierarchy
Implicit instructions

Bonnery (2011) “Les enjeux d’une sociologie de la pédagogie”, Savoir/Agir n°17, p.11-20

“implicit prerequisites have been identified [...] as early as kindergarten. It has been shown that worksheets, textbooks, and and more generally the pedagogical devices engage the pupils in activities which must be taken in the second degree, because they call upon, in addition to the formal demands of of tasks, to implicit solicitations: invitation to identify and build a knowledge, to conclude, to generalize, to decontextualize and recontextualize the knowledge in different situations, etc. These are all cognitive dispositions whose difficulty is minimized and devalued”

To “learn” [...] as a homework

“Prescribing teachers can expect quite different cognitive activities from it. It may be a matter of ‘learning by heart’, ‘fixing’, ‘being able to apply’, ‘to repeat in one’s own words’, ‘to reuse’, ‘being able to rewrite without a model’ or a mixture of several of these meanings.”
Implicit instructions


“the relationship to language, constituted in a written culture [is] at the principle of ‘school success’. The school develops a specific relationship to language, assuming that this one is put at a distance, considered per se, as an object that can be studied in itself [...]. Everything happens as if the students who ‘fail’ refuse to consider language as something dissociable from what it allows to evoke, to do, to say”
A capitalist school?

Education as a sector

Academic work as surplus value producer

Alternatives pedagogies

Different goals, different pedagogies

Pédagogies alternatives

- Montessori
- Neill
- Decroly
- ...

Pédagogies émancipatrices

Mouvement Freinet

Pédagogie institutionnelle
Aïda Vazquez & Fernand Oury

Pédagogies critiques de la norme

Pédagogies féministes

Paulo Freire
bell hooks

Pédagogies critiques de la race

Pédagogies antiracistes

Pédagogies décoloniales

Pedagogies for the liberation, change school to change the world, A. Chapuis conference (2019)
Montessori pedagogy


“Montessori’s pedagogy corresponds well to the expectations of the institution, parents and society. While being a ‘new pedagogy’ which emphasizes autonomy and development, this pedagogy favors the early learning of writing, reading and mathematics [...] It thus responds to the demand of parents and, more and more, of a kindergarten which urns into an early school.

Individual learning and the attention given to the respect of the singular rhythms of each child also have a central place in the Montessori classes, which corresponds to an evolution of our society where the taking into account of the singularity of each one has much more importance than the belonging to the collective. Freinet teachers, on the other hand, are characterized by the importance they give to collective work and projects, to socialization within the group.”
Freinet: a new education

Elise Freinet (1974) *L’école Freinet, réserve d’enfants*

“We have taught our children to express themselves freely, to edit their newspapers, to replace their conventional and scholastic tasks with real intelligent and profitable work. We now accustom our students to educate themselves on the level of adult societies based on community effort and responsibility.”
Freinet: a new proletarian education

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“It is the duty of the teacher to put the economy and the activity of the class into the hands of the children [...] the first vital step in school cooperation, which will one day blossom in all schools liberated by the liberation of the proletariat.”
Freire: Pedagogy of the oppressed

P. Freire (1997) *Pedagogy of freedom*

“the teacher, or more broadly the school, is obliged to [...] respect the knowledge with which learners arrive, especially those from the working classes - knowledge socially constructed in community practice. [...] Why not take advantage of the students’ experience of living in urban areas abandoned by the public authorities, to discuss, for example, the pollution of streams [...], garbage and the risks it poses to people’s health? ”
bell hooks, feminist pedagogy


“When education as the practice of freedom is implemented in schools and universities, we can move beyond the feeling of shame to the recognition of what is humanizing. Shame dehumanizes. [...] As teachers, we can transform the classroom into a place of support for students to overcome the feeling of shame.”
2 French regulation: education as a sector
- Regulation theory
- Education as part of the wage relation
- Education as a tradable service
Regulation theory

- Institution: expression of a political settlement
- Organization: formal characterization of a collective effort
- Accumulation regime: set of regularities ensuring a global and relatively coherent accumulation of capital
- Mode of regulation: set of procedures/behaviors maintaining and driving the current accumulation regime
The page contains a section titled "Regulation theory," which discusses various aspects of the capitalist school. The page also includes a table titled "Five institutions (Boyer, 2004)" that outlines different institutional frameworks and their relationships with monetary, wage, and state-economy relations. The table lists the following points:

- **Monetary regime** (cash, reserve, exchange) and credit (creation and destruction).
- **Forms of competition** as real process of price formation.
- **Wage relation** as sale and subordination; role of the State.
- **State/economy relations** law, central bank, fiscality, social security, ...
- **Insertion in the international regime** Trade, finance, plurality of legal systems.
Education as part of the wage relation

B. Amable (2003)

- No clear empirical proof of economic returns of education
- Depends on the structure of the educational system (history, values...)
- Institutional complementary with the job market
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Essentially education as part of the reproduction of the work force.
Regulationist approach of a sector

T. Lamarche (2003 & 2011)
Studies telecommunications and higher education, both under strong changes in regulation
- Privatization
- Globalization
A system...

**Political and social settlement** right to education, reduction of inequalities, education of citizens...

**Institutional logic** general skills for social return; external structuration of the job market according to qualifications...
A system...

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Evidences

- Controversies about history curriculum, French “laïcité”
- Basic skills oriented education, national evaluations
- Employers in national curricula committees, qualification assessment boards
Education as part of the direct economic production

...or a sector?

Service provider  Curricula based on solvable demand identification
Merchantilisation of labour  department profitability targets

D. Harvey, 2003, p. 141

capitalism can [...] make use of some pre-existing outside [...] some sector within capitalism - such as education - that has not been proletarianised.
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Evidences

- Humanities departments closed, International students, Business and law masters...
- consumer satisfaction surveys → quantitative evaluation of labour
- Employers as partners
System and sector

Materialisation can be mixed, with STEM subsidized to produce skilled labour force for the local job market and other fields organized on profitability.
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Public service delegation

For primary education, in particular in development countries, private for-profit schools can operate on public or charity funding.
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Territorialization

Lamarche (2011) works on the delegation of HE to French regions, that undermines a planned public service view. It differentiates: local job market vs international visibility, importance of Bachelor vs Master.
Globalizations

(re-)Globalization under neoliberalism

- Globalization comes with neoliberal properties (ranking, tuition fees...)

H²K - Education economics
Curriculum, ideology and fetishism
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- Erasmus is a former internationalization, citizenship oriented
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(re-)Globalization under neoliberalism

- Globalization comes with neoliberal properties (ranking, tuition fees...)
- Erasmus is a former internationalization, citizenship oriented
- Erasmus mundus is mixed: aims economic self-sustainability

Which countries, which fields?
## 3 Marx’s fetishism: academic work as surplus value producer

- Ideologies
- Effects
Traditional ideology: academic enchantment

Secularisation of the university with the enlightenment
⇒ academic values:

- Autonomy of Reason,
- Knowledge,
- academic autonomy,
- equality and evaluation among peers...
Traditional ideology: academic enchantment


“University is defined by it’s relative autonomy, from the State as well as from the market (and of course church). This means that it’s academics themselves -autonomously organised- and not State or Market’s representatives, that define the criteria of legitimacy and the value of knowledge, [...] it’s the condition for scientific fruitfulness and democracy”
Disenchantment

Marx & Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848

For exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, [the bourgeoisie] has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation [...] all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.
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Evaluations, rankings and benchmarks appear as “objective” (since quantitative) valorisations of research and teaching, as opposed to subjective peer judgement.
Quantification and monetization

Marx, *The capital* (I), chap 3.1

It is not money that renders commodities commensurable. Just the contrary. It is because all commodities, as values, are realised human labour, and therefore commensurable, that their values can be measured by one and the same special commodity, and the latter be converted into the common measure of their values, i.e., into money.
Quantification and monetization

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For education to be a tradable service, exchangeable on a market against money, academic work must be “abstracted”.
Research Excellence Framework (REF)
Funding distribution

Papers’ evaluation

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⇒ Synthetic score

\[ \text{Subventions} = \left( \frac{\text{synthetic score}}{\text{assessed researchers}} \right) \times (\text{Market share}) \times (\text{cost coef.}) \Rightarrow \]

Monetary expression of research
And have you seen change in how the REF results are used either by the university or within the department? (Boulet, 2013)

Yes. So they are much more... they are regarded now as measures of individual performance in ways which can lead to HR, human resources, discussions with individuals. And that was also the case in the previous RAE, in 2008. It wasn’t the case in previous RAES [before 2008]. (academic)
Rankings

USN ranking of Law schools (Espeland & Sauder, 2007)

USN’s goal in creating rankings was [...] to provide accessible information to educational consumers.
Ranks according to reputation (40%), selectivity (25%), employment (20%) and budget (15%)

French R&HE ministers

le classement de Shanghai [est] certes critiquable mais [...] nous devons gagner des places (2007)

les critères qui sont utilisés pour le classement de Shanghai sont des critères absolument partiels, malgré toutes ces réserves, la France ne s’en sort pas si mal [et] grignote des places (2015).
Benchmarking

Open Method of Coordination (Bruno et al., 2010)

European integration by means of numbers instead of law: statistics on R&HE are defined at the EU level and therefore induce comparability and rankings.

This also works within countries and even within universities, inducing competition among departments of laboratories.
Reenchantment:

Artous, *Le fétichisme de la marchandise*, 2006

Capitalist modernity is not only characterized by the “world disenchantment” [...], it is locked in the enchanted world of the commodity.
Reenchantment:

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Lisbon strategy (2000)

Aims to make the EU “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

Human capital, Becker, 1962, p. 9

Activities that influence future real income through the imbedding of resources in people. This is called investing in human capital.
Authority

- Quantification needs and expresses power
- Simplification makes information more authoritative
- “Objectivity lends authority to officials who have very little of their own.” (Porter, 1995)
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- Simplification makes information more authoritative
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⇒ Self-realisation: rankings reproduce and intensify the stratification they are designed to measure (through recognition and funding)
Redefinition

Quantification is always a redefinition and an homogenization.

**USN Law school ranking**

LSAT tests are available to quantify the quality of the student body. It eliminates specifics criteria and social grants.

**REF**

Research quality is quantified as articles production $\times$ journals citations. Researcher value is given by the among of funding her REF scores brings.

Ranking universities produces a common norm, the best.
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And a segmentation: in and out of the ranking.
Reification

Marx, *Productive and Unproductive Labour*

the means of production, the objective conditions of labour, do not appear as subsumed under the worker; rather, he appears as subsumed under them. Capital employs labour. Even this relation in its simplicity is a personification of things and a reification of persons.
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- Low wage teachers, specially content producers for MOOC, do not control syllabus nor organisation of teaching
- Large research programs are organised as sets of scheduled deliverables
- Patents are university or company properties

⇒ Taylorisation of labour by legal frame and quantitative management
Abstraction of academic labour

Quantification commensurate different fields and activities:
to improve a score or a ranking, actors move efforts and funding from
an activity to another (close the philosophy dpt. to extend the
chemics dpt; social grants → merit-based grants). REF costs indexes
are conversion factors

Deepening quantification: REF

Measure is more precise: from 5% (2008) to 1% (2014).
commensurability is extended: from 67 fields (2008) to 36 (2014)
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### Laval et al., La nouvelle école capitaliste, 2012, p. 13

La forme valeur de la connaissance est l’effet de la normalisation qui lui est appliquée par les outils managériaux de sa gestion et de son évaluation.

First abstraction: Academic labour loose it’s individuality, it’s field specificity.
Monetisation

Second abstraction: commensurate academic labour with general labour. Once the production is quantified, it just lacks a conversion in money.

Human capital (Gazier, 1992)

“Human capital is of productive capacities [...] : knowledge, skills, experience, [...] as valued on labour market.”

- Fees ⇒ teaching monetisation
  ⇒ split among dpts according to CATS
- REF expected funding ⇒ research monetisation
Profitability

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Profitability = \( \frac{\text{first wage}}{\text{last year tuition fees}} \)

: l'Étudiant.fr, 2013
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| Enlarge reproduction of capital | C | M | C’ |
| human                          | investment | production | realisation |
| Tuition fees                   | higher educ. | wage       |
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Misleading scheme: le fetishism obscures the exploitation.
Anticapitalist value? (Casta 2017)

Students produce value as they study. Not as an investment for later (Becker) immediately.

Commission de l’éduc. nat. de l’assemblée (12/05/1951)

[...] as a direct increase in population’s standard of living.