

The cultural reproduction and social reproduction sociology essay



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The word 'Reproduction' as defined in dictionaries is simply the "act of copying something" whether it be a document, a sound, a culture, so that it looks exactly like the original. Reproduction can be applied to both culture and society so that it turns out to be a process by which aspects of culture are "passed on" from person to person from society to society. This happens in a number of different ways and so it is helpful to understand a small part of this 'reproduction's' history; previously people moved from different countries and places taking with them their customs, traditions, and even behaviors which were learnt by other individuals, which lead to interaction between different people and therefore resulted in the 'transfer' of this information which was accomplished through a process known as 'socialization'. From this we see that both social reproduction and cultural reproduction are very much 'connected' to each other.

Cultural reproduction is the 'transmission' of existing cultural values and norms from generation to generation. This is a process by which there is a continuity of cultural 'experience' that has been carried on across time (which often results in social reproduction).

Every society is mainly consisted of 3 classes: the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class which may all be further subdivided into smaller classes (ex: occupation, etc.) When we look further into cultural reproduction of the social class, we find two opposing views concerning this issue:

A- Culture as a set of 'class-instilled' values

B- Culture as a set of 'class-based' skills and experiences

A

Every social class (especially the poor) has a set of values unique to it:

a- Work ethic

b- Family values

c- Independence vs. dependence

These values heavily influence the day-to-day behavior of each class. They are passed along widely in whole from one generation to the next and because of the self-achievable nature of these values, the members of various classes will either seize opportunities for advancement or will not.

B

When it comes to culture as a set of 'class-based skills' and experiences, we are led to 4 different outcomes.

a- Self-promotion or self-elimination:

This means by adjusting one's goals to match real chances of success as well as embracing or avoiding situations that could be advantageous depending upon whether the individual feels socially comfortable.

b- Institutional fit or mismatch:

Children from the middle-class society are equipped with skills valued by ordinary institutions as a result of their parents' socialization and valued cultural capital. Meanwhile, individuals with less cultural income are asked to

perform at the same level as their more 'capitally-endowed' peers and thus have to work harder to keep even.

c- Informed vs. uninformed investments:

Individuals with fewer cultural resources end up in less desirable positions and get less out of their cultural investments (such as college selection) through "unwise" decisions.

d- Direct inclusion or exclusion:

Members of the middle and upper classes tend to recruit individuals from those who share the same lifestyles, tastes, and experiences, and therefore exclude those who do not share them.

On the other hand, social reproduction is rather a sociological term which refers to a process which both strengthens and preserves characteristics of a given social structure of tradition over a period of time. Even though reproduction may mean 'copying' what existed in the past, it may not occur exactly for all societies. This is due to the environmental, social, economic conditions as well as technologies and processes that keep changing over time; eventually there are new individuals who have different characteristics and so relate to others in new and different ways.

An example of social reproduction can be seen in birds such as pigeons and parrots, which sit together in a row on a wire and each facing the same direction. Even when they fly, they do so in the same direction and then come back to sit again on the same wire, all facing the same direction (like they are following something). Like them, social reproduction requires us to <https://assignbuster.com/the-cultural-reproduction-and-social-reproduction-sociology-essay/>

maintain the ' uniformity' of language as well as communication (just like the birds have to follow one direction) over time.

Communication means to " stay connected". Just as males and females need each other to biologically reproduce, we need each other to ' socially' reproduce so that we can communicate with each other and relate to experiences; but spoken language alone is not enough for communication - Social reproduction allows us to create civilizations like the famous ' Taj Mahal' and many others which can only happen when societies feel CONNECTED.

Two sociologists: Karl Marx and Pierre Bourdieu ask " What are the effects of Social Reproduction and Cultural Reproduction on schools?"

This is a question asked by many other sociologists and so the emphasis on the opinions of both sociologists about this topic of social and cultural reproduction is to answer the question above.

Karl Heinrich Marx (5 May 1818 - 14 March 1883) was a German sociologist, philosopher, historian, political economist, political theorist, journalist, and revolutionary socialist. He developed the socio-political theory of ' Marxism'. His ideas have played a vital role in the development of social science and he published various books during his lifetime, with the most famous ' The communist Manifesto' (1848) and ' Capital' (1867-1894).

Pierre Bourdieu (1 August 1930 - 23 January 2002) was a French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher and is known for inventing the term ' Cultural Reproduction'.

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Both sociologists argued in their theories about the effects of Social Reproduction and Cultural Reproduction on schools. They talk about “ the important function of education is to socialize the working class into a culture of failure so that they take up, without question, routine and dull work”. They also argue about that effects of both cultural and social reproduction on schools:

- the ideas that are taught
- the values, attitude and personality traits that are instilled in students
- the ways in which schools are organized

Bourdieu also adds that social inequality is reproduced in the educational system and therefore legitimized just as Marx said: “ Students have to pursue on the formal teaching status quo” and so therefore students rarely come into contact with ways of thinking that challenges the existing social order. They also argue that the position of the dominant class is justified by educational success and the under-privileged position of the lower class is legitimated by educational failure. Furthermore, they discuss further that schools socialize students into certain values, attitudes, and personality traits that ‘ fit’ the interest of the dominant social classes’ ways of working.

These arguments lead Bourdieu to conclude that “ the major role of education in society is to contribute toward social reproduction which is the reproduction of the relationships of power and privilege between social classes”.

Therefore after looking further into what Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction are, and after knowing the arguments both Marx and Boudieu had about their effects on schools, I ask:

HOW CAN CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION BE MORE OF A DISADVANTAGE TO SOCIETY?