

Tracing the relationship between the sociological of Emile Durkheim and Pierre Bourdieu

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الملخص: يهدف هذا المقال إلى إبراز العلاقة بين الأفكار الاجتماعية والانتروبولوجية للكاتبين اميل دوركايم وبيار بورديو. اعتقد أن العلاقة التي تربط أفكارها لا تخص طبيعة الموضوعات التي عالجاها بل تنحصر في المنهج المستخدم لتأويل وتفسير الظواهر الاجتماعية. لهذا بدأت بتعريف مختصر للمذهب التركيبي في العلوم الاجتماعي و أبرزت بعد ذلك فكر الكاتبين وركزت في الأخير على العلاقة التي تربطهما من ناحية استعمالهما لنفس المنهج وهو "الاتجاه التركيبي في العلوم الاجتماعية".

Introduction:

The aim of this essay is to trace the relationship between the sociological and anthropological ideas of Durkheim and Bourdieu. I believe that this relationship is not within the subject-matter that they have been dealing with, but it lies within the approach which they have been using in their interpretations of the social phenomena. We can say that both, Bourdieu and Durkheim are structuralist in the first place.

In this essay, I start by giving a brief outline about the structuralist position in social sciences. After that, I set out an account of the ideas of Durkheim and Bourdieu. The last subject is focusing on the relationship between Durkheim and Bourdieu in terms of their use of the same approach which is the "structuralism"

The structuralism:

According to Hawkes (1977) the idea of structuralism was firstly revealed by the Italian jurist_Giambattista Vico in 1725, when he published a book called "The New Science ". This book was an attempt to show that it is possible to develop a science for society like the "Natural Science" discovered by Galiles, Bacon and Newton.

Vico (1725) based his new "Science "of society on the assumption that societies are formed by their myths which have their background in the generalized experience of ancient people. The myths have the role to shape the society with a satisfactory and humanizing sens. This shape, according to Vico

(1725) is human mind made. In short, Vico try to say that men have “created themselves” (Vico, 1725, quoted in Hawkes, 1977 p 13). He explains further more by saying that: “the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our human mind. ” (Vico, 1725, quoted in Hawkes, 1977,p13).

When man create the myths, the social institutions, in a sense he creates the whole world as he perceives it, in doing that he is in fact constructing himself. Hawkes (1977) argues that the process of “structuring” is a process which “involves the continual creation of recognizable and repeated forms”(p14).

If we come now to the definition of structuralism we find – as Hawkes (1977) said- that “ the most fruitful attempts at a definition has been made by Jean Piaget.”

According to Piaget, structure “ can be observed in an arrangement of entities which embodies the following fundamental ideas.”

i) The idea of wholeness: which means, the sense of internal coherence. The arrangement of entities will be complete in itself and not something that is simply a composite formed of otherwise independent element “ (Hawkes, 1977, p16). In short the structure is something different from an aggregate.

ii) The idea of transformation: Hawkes (1977) stated that “the structure is not static, the laws which govern it act so as to make it not only structured, but “structuring”. “He gives the example of the language, which is the basic human structure. It has the capacity to transform various fundamental sentences into the widest variety of new utterances which retaining these within its own particular structure. ” (p 16)

iii) The idea of self-regulating: Hawkes (1977) finds that the “structure is self-regulating in the sense that it makes no appeals beyond itself in order to validate its transformational procedures “ (p16)

Having set out the description of structures as developed by Vico, Hawkes (1977) comes to the deduction that “ structuralism is fundamentally a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perception and description of structure. ” (p 17)

The tendency of structuralism is a kind of shift in the nature of perception of things that has been predominant in the early twentieth century, specially in the field of physical sciences.

The structuralist perception find that things are not perceived within their own shape as they exist because there is always a significant degree of bias in every perceiver’s “method”. Therefore any observer is “recreating” something of what he observes, and make a kind of “relationship” between what he observes. In fact, the structuralist conceive that the reality is not in things themselves, but it is within the

relationships which people construct, and then perceive between them. In short, the structuralists claim that “ the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by its relationship to all the other elements involved in that situation. (Hawkes, 1977, p17-18)

From sociological point of view, Glucksman (1977) points out that “ the most significant features of structuralism are its distinctive concept of structure, and its critics of empiricism and historicism which entail many practical implications. But the most easily assimilable aspect of structuralism is its attention to the internal construction of social and cultural phenomena. In all fields, linguistics, miology as well as anthropology and political economy, the structuralist orientation is defined by its attention to finding the concepts and ways to describe how elements are related to each other. ”(p 243)

The sociological and anthropological ideas of Durkheim:

Emile Durkheim is an Alsatian Jew who was born in 1858, and grew up in a turbulent period of French history, characterized by the defeat of the Franco-Prussian war, the setting up of the Third Republic and the weakning of traditional educational institutions dominated by the church. Durkheim, known as an agnostic, he devoted himself to the search for a new secular and scientific social ethics which have the role to bind the French society together. (Rex, 1979, p156)

In his book “The Division of Labour” Durkheim affirms that we should use the scientific method to study moral life. He said: “This book is pre-eminently an attempt to treat the facts of the moral life according to the method of the positive sciences “(Durkheim, 1960, quoted in Bierstedt, 1966, p33)

On the other hand, Durkheim rejects the evolutionary theory which consist of a certain link between primitives societies and the moral and social organization of modern societies. He gives an affirmative answer to the possibility of having a scientific basis for ethics.

Bierstedt (1966) argues that Durkhiem emphasis on the “use of `authentic proof`, the zeal of exactitude and precision, the careful observation of facts, and the treatment of facts in such a way that they will be objective, and if possible, measurable. ”(p 38)

Durkheim believes in the necessity of setting up hypothesis in the scientific inquiry because the growth of science does not come just by an accumulation of facts. They can never constitute a science. (Bierstedt, 1966, p 38)

If we come to the problem of division of labour, we find that Durkheim wants to discover some connection between it and the moral life which has a

central interest in his theory, and the one, for the sake of which, he examines all others.

In Durkheim's theory, there are two types of social solidarity. The 'Mechanical' and 'Organic' solidarity.

Bierstedt (1966) argues that Durkheim "approaches his distinction through the law, where he observes that there are two types of punishments that are visited upon offenders, repressive sanctions and restrictive sanctions"(p 43)

The difference between "Mechanical" and "Organic" solidarity is well set out by Bierstedt (1966). He said that "in the first, an individual is bound to society without any intermediary ; in the second, he is dependent upon the parts of which society is composed. Society itself means something different in these two instances, in the first, it is a totality of beliefs and sentiments, a "Conscience Collective"; in the second, it is a system of interrelated and interdependent functions, a system, in short, that exhibits a division of labour. The first is the solidarity of similarity, the second, the solidarity of difference." (p 49)

The concept of "La Conscience Collective" is an important one in Durkheim's theory. He defines it as "the set of beliefs and sentiments common to the average member of a simple society which forms a determinate system that it has its own life."(Durkheim, 1960, quoted in Lukes, 1973, p4)

Bierstedt (1966) argues about the "Conscience Collective" by saying that "it has no specific organ or location but is diffused throughout an entire society. It maintains an independence of particular individuals, however, in as much as it precedes their appearance in society and survives their departure. (p44)

Having defined the "Conscience Collective" so that it contribute to two understanding of the two types of solidarity, we come back to see how Durkheim conceives the form and the nature of the society within the mechanical and organic solidarity.

Bierstedt (1966) stated that "Durkheim does more than make the distinction (between the two types of solidarity) however, he suggests that it is the latter, the organic, that contributes more than the former, to social cohesion. As labour is divided, so also does each member of society depends more and more upon his neighbour."(p 50)

Durkheim argues that every society is a moral society and this is clear in the advanced societies where the division of labour is intensive, so that it makes clear to every member how much he depends upon other members of the society, and how it is necessary to receive all what he need through the society. This situation helps to shape his sentiments and characterize his cooperation of a moral features. (Bierstedt, 1966 p53)

In his book "The Rule of Sociological Method", Durkheim continues the tradition of August Conte in insisting that sociology is –or at least ought to be- a

science, that confirm to all of the same rules of verification and all the canons of evidence that are exhibited in physical sciences.

Durkheim considers that sociology is like other sciences, it is concerned mainly with facts, not speculations. He defines social facts in the following quotation: "in every society there are phenomena that differ from those which attract the attention of physical scientists. We pay our bills in a certain way, honour contracts, use currency, confirm to customs, obey the law, participate in religious life, and follow a profession, and all of these activities have their origin and locus outside the consciousness of the individual. They are ways of doing things that antedate the appearance of any individual in his own society and will doubtless endure after his disappearance."(quoted in Bierstedt 1966, p79)

The social facts have a second criterion. Durkheim said that: "the social facts are not only exterior, they are also coercive. If we fail to obey the law, something happen to us. If we violate a contract, something else happen to us. If we refuse to follow the patterns of our profession, we shall put our success in jeopardy."(Bierstedt, 1966, p79)

Durkheim concludes that no legal law set out by the government to punish people who for instance, prefer to speak another language rather than French language. But people still have some constraint that lead them to obey the social patterns. The exteriority and the constraint of social facts are its characteristics.

From the point of view of Durkheim, Bierstedt (1966) argues that social facts are now very distinctive, "the are clearly not biological and they are just as and they are just as clearly not psychological. They exist neither in the body nor in the individual consciousness. Their locus is in society ; they are social facts ; and it is only to them that the adjective 'social' should be applied. They constitute the proper domain of sociology and give to this science its unique character" (p80)

Two years after the publication of the 'Rules of Sociological Method', Durkheim's 'Suicide' appeared. This book was an application of the idea and concepts suggested in the 'Rules of Sociological Method'. Durkheim had chosen the phenomena of 'Suicide' to set out the autonomy of social facts. He believes that even a decision to commit suicide is something intimate and personal but this decision exhibit certain regularities. The incidence of suicide reveals certain patterns that can be understood only in sociological terms. The phenomena of suicide in Durkheim's opinion is a social, not a psychological fact. (Bierstedt, 1966, p135-136)

By using the available statistics, Durkheim shows that there is no support to any hypothesis which refer suicide to individual causes. What matters in Durkheim's opinion is the rate of suicide which indicate that is a kind of social, whose very structure combats minority of people towards self-destruction.

The last work of Durkheim is presented in his book 'The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life'. Although he was a Jew, brought up in a catholic educational tradition and end up as an agnostic, he is interested in the phenomenon of religion not for its own sake but for the light it can shed upon the nature of man.

Durkheim believes that religion is a human institution so as all human institutions. It has a support in the society in which it arise. The study of religion is important because Durkheim considers that religion shed light not only upon what men believe, but more fundamentally on what and how they think. Religion is a formative factor in the development. One might even say that religion contribute to the construction of human intellect. (Bierstedt, 1966, p193)

Durkheim argues that religion derives from society, because wherever there is a religion, there is an organized group of people united by their common perceptions. He defines religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relatives to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called church, all those who adhere to them.". He said also that religion is "an eminently collective things"(Durkheim, quoted in Bierstedt, 1966, p199)

Durkheim argues that the origin of religion is the totem and the totemic principle. The totem is known as the symbol of the name and identity of a clan or tribe, and therefore, it represents a society. It is the society that creates the totem and the totem, in turn, serves as the basis of the sacred. In short, religion is a social phenomenon.

Durkheim goes further more to argue that before the birth of the gods, the totem performs the divinities. The gods themselves are products of society.(Bierstedt, 1966, p200-202)

Durkheim tries to show the social origin of the religion in the fact that among primitive people when the whole clan or tribe are gathered in important social occasions, an atmosphere is generated which is attributed to supernatural origins, but which is in fact, simply due to the collective excitement of the crowd. (Rex, 1979, p156)

Durkheim concluded that this is an obvious example of how myths related to religion develop during a period of time.

The sociological and anthropological ideas of Pierre Bourdieu:

Pierre Bourdieu was born in 1930 in France. He has done his study at the Ecole Normal Supérieur, and become "agregé" in philosophy. He lectured in the faculty of Arts in Algeria, University of Paris and the University of Lille. Now, he is Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes études, and Director of the Center for European Sociology in Paris. He is Editor of the Journal "Actes de la reches en Sciences Sociales" He is also author of many books like

“Sociologie de l’Algerie” (1958) , “The Algerians”(1962) , “Travail et travailleurs en Algerie”(1964) and many others. (Bourdieu, 1977, p18)

The main ideas of Bourdieu are dealing with two concepts which are “symbolic violence” and “cultural capital”. His ideas are reflecting the french educational system which is playing a role to maintain the system of power by means of transmission of culture. Bourdieu and his colleagues are using a method of work in sociology which is quite distinctive. They divided the theoretical models and the use of such models, in a derivative way, by “researchers”. In other words, they have a continuous interplay between theory and research, which has so often been criticized as a major failure of sociology as a science. In Bottomore’s point of view, this kind of permanent process of theoretical-empirical investigation will prove more fruitful than the intermittent launching even of large scale research projects. (Bourdieu, 1977 p8,9)

I shall start first of all by the concept of “symbolic violence”. Bourdieu has four propositions which constitute his theory of “symbolic violence”. I want just to state the first one because it is the basic and essential one and the others are related to it.

The first proposition is put like this “all pedagogic action (PA) is, objectively, symbolic violence in so far as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”. (Bourdieu 1977 p5)

Bredo and Feinsberg (1979) explain more clearly the meaning of the first proposition, so that it can shed light on the understanding of “symbolic violence”. They say that pedagogic action “refers roughly to all attempts at socialization by some agent, and includes not only schools, but family and other forms of informal education as well”.(p317)

“Symbolic violence” is the definition of the pedagogic actions “in so far as it involves the attempted inculcation of meaning which are culturally “arbitrary” by a group whose power is also “arbitrary”.(p317)

Bourdieu means by the word “arbitrary” the fact that something become arbitrary “when it cannot be deduced from an universal principle, and thus cannot be shown to be logically or physically necessary”.(p317)

In practice, however, Bourdieu focus on those cases in which pedagogic action is “objectively” “symbolic violence”. He defines “symbolic violence” in the objective sense as “a conception in which the set of power relations between groups is the basis for establishing the pedagogic relation, and the meanings that are selected as worthy of being reproduced represent the culture of a particular dominant group”.(Bredo and Feinsberg, 1979 p317)

The obvious thing that pedagogic agencies have is that they are arranged “in a dominance of hierarchy depending on their “symbolic strength” (legitimacy) where the agency that is put in the highest position is the one that best

represents the "objective interests" of the dominant groups or classes"(Bredo and Feinsberg, 1979 p317)

Bourdieu believes that the dominance of hierarchy serves indirectly to "collaborate in the dominance of the dominant classes"(p 317)

In short, Bourdieu wants to say that the effect of these agencies is that they "always tend to reproduce the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among these groups or classes, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the social structure"(quoted in Bredo and Feinsberg, 1979 p318)

The second proposition is mainly concerned with the nature of pedagogical authority. Bourdieu believes that pedagogical agents have an authority which is quite well perceived in terms of its dependence on the group bias of the culture they seek to impose. Therefore, authority for Bourdieu is "a result of misperception, of not seeing things "objectively", rather than of deliberate endorsement"(p318)

In Bourdieu's point of view, such authority "always serves (by intention or not) to hide power arrangements and deceive believers. (p317)

As example, Bourdieu argues that pedagogical action is not a mere communication of information, but it is always more than that because it is defined as an « educational activity » which gives it a certain legitimacy that stamps its message as valid and important. Pedagogical action derives its legitimacy from the fundamental principles of its legitimating group or class, so that the more nearly the agency includes the culture of the group delegating its authority, the more legitimate it is likely to be seen and the less it has to agree for justifying itself.

Another source of legitimacy lies in the external "market". The more a pedagogical agent's sanctions (for example, grades, degrees) are supported by economic and social marks, the more force and legitimacy these sanctions are likely to have. (Bredo and Feinsberg, 1979 p 318)

The third major proposition says that pedagogic action entails pedagogic work which is the "arbitrary imposition of a cultural arbitrary" (318)

The concept of pedagogic work correspond to the concept of socialization which is "arbitrary".

Bourdieu thinks that when pedagogic work is successful, it is seen as becoming a durable *habitus* which is an irreversible inculcation. He means by the term *habitus* "the tacit understandings or perceptual frames through which meaning is constructed". (p318)

Bourdieu considers that the function of *habitus* in social reproduction is similar to that of genes in biological reproduction. In long term, stable elements are likely to pass on from one generation to another. This is what happens in pedagogic work which produces a *habitus*, it allows groups to reproduce themselves and allows the dominant group to maintain its status without resort

to repression or physical coercion. If the inculcation of the habitus is effective it helps to increase the moral and intellectual integration of the group. However, Bourdieu points out that such integration does not come primarily from conscious beliefs or values but rather from shared tacit understandings which then serves to generate surface beliefs.

In addition to the role of the pedagogic work in integrating the groups, it serves also to maintain the broader social system, composed of groups in different power relations. This is done by legitimating certain cultural "products" (for example, college graduates, worthwhile arts). In deduction from what we have said previously, order is maintained not by imposing an alien knowledge, such as in the case of indoctrination, through the indirect inculcation of tacit conventions by legitimate agents as they routinely perform their pedagogical roles.

Bourdieu sees the inculcation of the habitus as an irreversible in which earlier elements modify the ways in which later elements could be added.

He argues that pedagogic work deals with members of different groups so that its productivity is clearly different because these groups have their own subcultures which place them in different relationship vis-à-vis the dominant culture that is being inculcated. Having said that, those (middle and upper class) who, because of life circumstances, have greater early familiarity with the manipulation of symbols, are in position to be effectively inculcated, with a habitus emphasizing symbolic skills than those (working class) whose early experiences had to do with more directly practical activities. In other words, schools base the legitimate of their teaching method on the degree to which legitimate receivers (upper class) learn what is being taught, so if one possess the cultural prerequisites, he do successfully follow what is being taught, but those who fail to cope with the legitimate teaching method will not be successful in their studies. Therefore, the system is self-regulating, based on its continually attempt to legitimate its own activities which make those from a dominated group in a disadvantaged situation.

The fourth and final proposition is emphasizing the structure and the functioning of the educational system as institution. The structural characteristics of schools have two essential social functions, which are the cultural inculcation and reproduction. In order to perform these functions, they must be able to handle large numbers of studies by using conditions such as standardized training and the use of standardized techniques or instruments.

Schools also have the function to monopolize the production of new teachers, with the result that the new teachers are thoroughly inculcated in just the same culture that the schools attempt to pass on. (Bredo and Feinsberg, 1979 p319)

Bredo and Feinsberg (1979) argues about this final proposition in an explicit way. They said: "in short, these are pressures for the institutionalization and routinezation of the work of schooling which lead schools to operate in this routine way overtime, implicitly meeting social expectations without explicit or use of power, they come to be seen as autonomous and legitimate institutions, there by further serving in subtle fashion the dominant power groups". (p319)

After drawing out the main ideas in the theoretical theme of "symbolic violence", we come now to the concept of "cultural capital" which is the fruit of a practical research undertaken by Bourdieu and his colleagues. Bourdieu observes that there is an inequality within the educational system in France, this inequality is seen in favouring the up-class children to benefit from the culture and teaching given in school, and on the other hand the working class have no chance of getting benefit from what is offered in the schools. He said that there is a consensus in society, which considers education as a mean of increasing social mobility, but in fact, the existing system of education is the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social patterns.

In order to prove the existence of inequality of opportunity in the educational system, Bourdieu brings some statistics that were applicable in France which show the process of elimination that occur throughout the whole of the period spent in education by pupils. Bourdieu goes beyond the fact of inequality in education to the description of the objective process which continually exclude children from the least privileged social classes. He find that the sociological explanation of inequality in education which refers it to unequal ability is not convincing. Bourdieu has an explanation more accurate in his view than the previous one. He said "in fact, each family transmits to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain "cultural capital" and a certain "ethos". The latter is a system of implicit and deeply interiorized value which, among other things, helps to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions. The cultural heritage, which differs from both points of view according to social class, is the cause of the initial inequality of children when faced with examinations and tests, and hence of unequal achievement." (Bourdieu, 1974 p32-33)

Bourdieu (1974) believes that success at school is directly linked to the cultural capital transmitted by the family milieu. It plays also a role in the choice of options taken up by working class children. The school is providing a certain kind of culture which is proper to the up-class and the elite, it is called the "aristocratic culture". This culture is for the benefit of pupils who are in the "particular position" of possessing a cultural heritage conforming to that demanded by the school.

Even the teachers are the products of a system whose aim is to transmit an aristocratic culture, and they are ready to accept its values because they owe to

it their own educational and social success. Therefore, these teachers are going to assess their pupils according to the "aristocratic culture" which now they belong to it.

The problem which faces the lower middle class children is that the culture of the elite is so near to that of the school so that they can just acquire with great effort something which is "given" to the children of the cultivated classes, such as style, taste, wit, in other words, those attitudes and aptitudes seen as natural in members of the cultivated classes, because they are learning their own "culture". (Bourdieu, 1974 p38-39)

Banks (1976) argues that there is a "close analogy between cultural capital and economic capital, and indeed possession of one often implies possession of the other." (Banks, 1976 p178)

Comparison between Durkheim and Bourdieu :

Having exposed both ideas of Durkheim and Bourdieu in the previous pages, we come now to the comparison between them.

In fact, there are a lot of differences between their thoughts because they are dealing with quite different subject, aim and interest.

Durkheim 's thought has been influenced by many scholars such as Parsons, Rudt-Clife-Brown in anthropology, Merton in the subject of suicide, and some argue that he has been influenced by Saint-Simon and Comte.

There is no consensus about which theory Durkheim belongs to, some argue that he is a dangerous social realist, with a metaphysical belief in the group mind. One writther putting him in the tradition of Fichter and the German Romantics. According to another he is a Kantist revised and completed by Comte (Lukes, 1973 p2-3)

If we come to Bourdieu, we find that he is a structuralist, mainly influenced by the anthropological tradition of Durkheim, and he is Marxist in his analysis of the social structures. (Davies, 1976 p133)

In the sociological ideas, we find that Durkheim have the aim to discover a new secular and scientific social ethics which would serve to bind the French society together. He has been trying to draw out a science for the society with its specific shape which will help to understand the social phenomenon in a rational way. (Rex, 1979 p156)

But Bourdieu, because he is in such more sophisticated and developed stage in sociology, he has been using new method of investigation which formulate a kind of theoretical basis that will be used in research fields as hypothesis to be tested.

Bourdieu has been clearly influenced by Marxist thoughts so he has been explaining the educational system in France in a progressist way. There is one similarity between Durkheim and Bourdieu which consist of using the same methodology or approach in formulating their thoughts

Lukes (1973) considers Durkheim as a pre-structuralist specially in the sociology of knowledge. (p02) Also Davies (1976) argues that Bourdieu is "Both structuralist and Marxist wishing"(p133)

Durkheim is clearly structuralist in his approach because he has attempted to study moral life according to the method of the positive sciences. This attitude has been taken throughout his whole scientific career, he has also been claiming that he is using a scientific objective method of inquiry to study the social phenomena. It is quite clear the tendency of scientific method in his study of Suicide, Rules of Sociological Method and his study of Religious Life.

Durkheim has been trying to show that there is a certain internal construction of social phenomena. He does not explain social facts from an outside factor, in other words in an ideal approach. For instance, his idea about the origin of the religion. According to his theory, religion is a social phenomena created by the people's myth in society and by the time

It become socially recognized by all people and start to have a constraint on them.

Durkheim also refers the creation of the social world to the myths which have been created by people in the first place, the myths after a repetition become recognized as a social order and start to do a kind of constraint on people's behaviour in society.

The way Durkheim explains the formation of social order is structural in the sense that he looks for concepts and ideas that give a logical interpretation of the social facts, and describe how each element is related to others.

Durkheim believes also that society is structural in its function, because every section is contributing to a functional role that helps society to survive. This is clearly the idea of self-regulating in structuralism doctrine. The example of that in Durkheim's thoughts is his argument about the crime in society. He argues that "crime is normal social phenomena, even if the criminal is an abnormal individual. " He considers as well that a crime "is also necessary and useful because the conditions of which it is a part are themselves indispensable to the evolution of morality and law"(Bierstedt, 1966 p87)

Therefore, according to Durkheim every social phenomena has a beneficial function, even in the case of crime and deviancy

The structuralism of Bourdieu is quite obvious in the formulation of his theory. Davies (1976) argues about his ideas that they are making up the "structured structure". If we observe his main concepts which are the "symbolic violence", "cultural capital" and its related ideas like "habitus", we find that they are wisely related to each other, so that to explain in the end the situation of the educational system in France. I think that this is a structural approach.

Bourdieu did not accept the usual explanation of the inequality in education by sociologists,

But he goes further more to search for an explanation that is functional in society, for instance his idea of cultural capital which as he mentioned, constitute the main factor that let the working class children in a disadvantaged situation because they are not able to acquire the culture given in the school. This interpretation is structuralist in the sense that it is an attempt to find out what are the causes behind the inequality in education and how these causes are contributing systematically to create this inequality.

The idea of “symbolic violence” also is in some way a structural interpretation. Bourdieu did not explain the dominance of the “elite culture” just by an ideal reason, but he goes to argue that there is a systematic strategy of the up class which is using a kind of “symbolic violence” that have a role in maintaining the “aristocratic culture”. “symbolic violence” is any form of socialization that happens in society in an influencing way through the process of education in particular, because all the pedagogic action are representing the “aristocratic culture”. There is always a dominance of this culture over the culture of the working class. This interpretation is fashionably structural because it stress the ways and methods which make things happen in a proper way and in relation to each other. It gives also the feeling that there is no room for possible change or modification in society at all

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