BOOKS

Education and Colonialism

Philip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly, *Education and Colonialism*. New York: Longman, 1978. Pp. viii, 372.

Education and Colonialism is a symposium of articles dealing with the educational experiences of some formerly colonized peoples and other oppressed groups. The major objective of the editors is to substantiate their claim that the framework of classical colonialism can be useful in studying education, not only in colonized societies, but also among other exploited, oppressed or disadvantaged groups in any society.

Three types of "colonialisms" are identified and the articles deal with educational developments in these different situations.

1. Classical colonialism characterized by a nation-to-nation domination. This section includes articles on educational developments in India, the Philippines and Vietnam under British, U.S. and French colonial rule respectively.

2. Internal colonialism. This is the situation in which the exploiter and the exploited groups belong to the same nation state. Articles included deal with the educational experiences of such exploited groups as native Americans, blacks, women, and Indians in Peru.

3. Neocolonialism which refers to the continued domination of the former colonial rulers or their counterparts of the now politically independent nations. In this section there is one article which examines the continued influence of the world's richer countries on the distribution of knowledge in the Third World while the other focuses on African universities as institutions which contribute to the continuing external domination of their societies.

Despite the useful introductory chapter in which the authors tried to pull together some of the commonalities and differences in the educational experiences of these various groups, the book suffers from two major weaknesses. The first is the attempt to extend the concept of colonialism to include all types of inequalities even those arising from sex and class. The second is the authors' unwillingness to look at the question of motivation or the *raison d'être* for colonialism. This decision denied the readers the use of a potentially valuable tool for explaining the nature of educational developments which took place in colonial societies.

Consider the first weakness. The dependency relationship which characterizes the colonial situation has both structural and psychological features. Structurally the colony was hinterland of the metropole and this fact was reflected in the developments which took place in the economic, political, legal, educational and other major institutions of the colonized society. All these institutions were so structured to ensure the maintenance of this dependency.

Because of this, the concept of colonialism usually implies the existence of two societies or in certain cases two identifiable sub-societies - a dominant and a dominated society. In this relationship the former determines in its own interest the structural features of the latter. This very important element in the colonial situation is neglected when the term "colonialism" is used so loosely as to include all situations of inequality even between groups living in the same society.

The other dimension of the colonial relationship is the psychological one - the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and the effect of the colonial situation on the psychology of both groups. It seems quite likely that there are many psychological similarities in the relationships between all dominated and dominant groups irrespective of whether they are in a classical colonial situation or not.

However a major mistake made in this book is to assume that the psychological similarities provide sufficient reasons for including all such oppressed or disadvantaged groups under the rubric of "colonized people." Ignoring the structural dimension of colonialism which the authors did by their very selection of articles, trivialises the concept almost to the point of uselessness.

The second weakness stems from the authors' unwillingness to examine the motivations of the colonizer or the political economy of colonialism as a means of more fully understanding the nature of the educational developments which took place in the colonial societies. The authors did come close to discussing this issue when they noted that the colonizer rather than the colonized defined the "purposes" of colonial society and that colonial schools were designed to serve the "needs" of the colonizer while ignoring the aspirations of the colonized. But the question of what these "purposes" or "needs" of the colonizer were is ignored.

This left the authors with an important explanatory variable missing in their efforts to account for the various developments in colonial education. In fact had they used this variable they would have observed an essential consistency or rationality in colonial educational policy rather than the "substantial confusion" which they seemed to have detected.

The basic motivating force among the colonizers was the economic exploitation of their colonies and while there might have been additional motives these were subsidiary ones. The objective of economic exploitation usually took precedence over all other motives in the formulation of colonial policies. The major aim of most colonizers was to achieve this objective in the most efficient and profitable way possible. This was best done in the absence of strong opposition and preferably with some help from the colonized. Colonial educational policies can best be seen as crucial instruments to aid this strategy of "efficient exploitation" - efficiency judged mainly on an economic cost/return basis.

Since the local situation in each colony differed, the colonial rulers attempted to modify existing policies or develop new ones when these were considered necessary to ensure the achievement of their overiding goal. And this to a large extent was why all colonial educational policies were not standardized in the metropole but allowed for flexibility to meet the specific problems which each colony presented. In other words, standardization of educational policy would have been incompatible with the objective of efficient exploitation.

This lack of a uniform colonial policy in education even by a single colonizing power was therefore not the result of "confusion" as the authors seemed to imply but part of the overall administrative strategy of the colonizer. For example, there were often differences in educational priorities or even disagreements among various groups in the metropole as to the type of educational developments that should be encouraged in a particular colonial situation. But such disagreements were not usually allowed to undermine the major purpose of the colonizer. When the educational activities of missionaries were likely to be "disruptive" in a society they were either forbidden to carry out their work or their operations were severely circumscribed. On the other hand, when their work was considered a valuable means of domesticating or controlling the local population they were given all the support necessary. In the West Indies missionaries were sometimes permitted to carry on religious activies among the slaves but were not allowed to "educate" and more specifically to teach them to read. Similarly they were forbidden to establish schools in the devoutly Moslem areas of Northern Nigeria and Northern Sudan where it was felt that their proselytizing efforts might disrupt the existing social order and make efficient exploitation more problematic. On the other hand when the educational efforts of the missionaries were likely to produce social stability their support was actively sought and encouraged. This is why they were given unbridled freedom to develop education in the West Indies after the abolition of slavery.

Unless one continues to keep in mind this over-riding goal of efficient exploitation shared by all colonizing powers then their educational activities in the colonies would fail to make sense. For example, why was the British Colonial Secretary actively urging the West Indian Governments to enact compulsory education legislation for three decades before it was introduced in England when this policy was never considered desirable in other colonial situations? To understand this one has to come back to the over-riding motive of "efficient exploitation".

With the abolition of slavery which, according to Williams, had begun to lose its economic viability as a mode of production, the legal props which legitimized and underpinned slave society were withdrawn and it became clear to the colonial rulers that voluntaristic support by the ex-slaves for the essential features of plantation society had to be built up. Education with its strong moral and religious teachings was seen as one important means of developing support and breaking down any "false ideas of independence" which the ex-slaves might be nuturing and which might lead them to "disregard the diversities of rank and conditions in life (which were) imposed for wise purposes", i.e. for their efficient exploitation by the colonial masters. Hence the establishment of primary schools throughout the islands was actively encouraged. Similarly the study of Vietnam by Kelly indicated that the French desire to establish schools under their own control stemmed not only from the fact that such institutions had historically played an important role in Vietnamese society but also because the teachers in these traditional schools had been one of the crucial groups resisting French rule. The objective of the colonizer in providing government schools therefore was to make it difficult for these traditional schools and their teachers to survive and by this means reduce their disruptive influence on the colonizing regime.

In some colonial territories where general education for the masses was more of an economic liability to the government, schools were only grudgingly supported - the main objective being to provide clerks and lower level personnel for the Government services and European commercial enterprises. Where the practice of indirect rule was considered the most "efficient" form of governance, boarding schools were set up to provide a "good" education for the sons of chiefs who were seen as the future "comprador elites" for the colonizers.

Another important variation in the colonial situation was introduced in those countries where part of the colonizing group lived alongside the colonized and transformed "a colony of exploitation" into a "colony of settlement and exploitation" to use Maunier's terms. This posed a different educational problem and "necessitated" a marked dualism in the educational system - a solution which was not considered feasible in other colonies.

These different examples show that while on the surface there seems to have been no single educational policy

even for the colonies controlled by any given imperial power, one needs to look at the underlying motivation for colonialism before this diversity and seemingly uncoordinated picture begins to make sense. The vast array of these differences and in some cases similarities in colonial educational practice is more understandable when one starts from the premise that the major motivating force of the colonizer was the efficient economic exploitation of the colony. The developments which took place in the system of education of any one colony can therefore only be fully understood if they are seen as instruments to help achieve that objective. True, not every strategy used in ensuring efficient exploitation of a colony worked well. There were often errors of judgement. But the unwillingness of the authors to consider the motivation of the colonizer or the political economy of the colonial relationship cannot be lightly overlooked since it leaves an essential gap in their efforts to explain similarities and differences in the development of colonial educational policies.

Despite these two weaknessess the book consists of a number of excellent articles most of which have not appeared in print before. One has to see this effort as an important step forward in drawing the attention of students of comparative education to the likely value and limitations of the concept of colonialism in helping to increase their understanding of educational developments among oppressed or otherwise disadvantaged groups even in modern societies. It is a must for any reading list on comparative and international education.

M.K. Bacchus
University of Alberta

Sociological Theories of Education

Raymond Murphy, with the collaboration of Ann B. Denis. 1979. *Sociological Theories of Education.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited. Pp. 231 (Paper).

Sociological Theories of Education examines the theoretical orientation of selected Canadian studies that are considered to be contributions to the Sociology of Education. The assessment features a carefully conceived, multi-level approach, which pinpoints the major sociological theories of education, the major international debates of the Sociology of Education field, and the future sociological research possibilities in Canadian education. Part I gives a short Introduction to the purposes and expectations of the work. Parts II to IV are each composed of three chapters treating the theoretical frameworks of (1) Functionalism and exchange theory, (2) Conflict theory, and (3) Interaction theory, Phenomenology, and Ethnomethodology. The three chapter units, in Parts II to IV, critically outline the respective general theoretical framework with special application to the field of education, and in this context analyze a number of studies selected as "International Examples", and "Canadian Examples". Part V, "Toward a Theory of Canadian Education", contains a proposal for new directions.

It should be clarified that the book is not set up as an attempt to identify Canadian renditions of the three classifications of theoretical frameworks listed above. The purpose centers on the task of placing Canadian research studies within the broad context of what particular sociological theories are applied and what particular sociological debates are generated. A specific concern of the work is to give appropriate attention to Québec research material written in French, which it is argued, is often not done within Anglophone Canadian research. To ensure an appreciation of the role of the three theoretical frameworks in the book, the reader is informed more than once that ". . . the classification in this book should not be interpreted as a mechanical separation into watertight compartments but rather as a heuristically useful ordering of knowledge." It is clear that a major factor in assessing the effectiveness of this work depends on the degree to which the theoretical classification system offers heuristic direction.

From an examination of research works selected for in-depth analysis and discussion, and of the authors discussed in the book, several observations are relevant. The author and his collaborator have made a deliberate and successful effort to balance Canadian research studies with an attention to international ones, to balance Anglophone Canadian research with that of Francophone work, and to balance American research material with that of European researchers. The guidelines of the theoretical classification system do produce several contraints. Selecting works and authors that "fit," for example, results in an imbalanced concentration on Functionalist theory, and an incomplete focus on Social Exchange theory and Ethnomethodology. The selection of Canadian materials and authors attends to the Anglophone—Francophone dimension, but it is excessively weighted toward the central region of Canada, toward the middle and upper social classes, and limited to two academic centers in Anglophone Canada. One effect of the overall selection process is that the book, contrary to what might be expected from its general organization, is not particularly "Canadian" in its emphasis, nor does it have national overtones for that matter. The reason for this is that the book keeps a deliberate and primary emphasis throughout on the sociological analysis of education. It should be noted that Table 1, included in the Appendix, provides a background of the authors that are discussed and this chart gives the beginning student a useful frame of reference for categorizing people working within the field.