

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 weaknesses 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.

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## **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 constraints. 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.

The distinct organizational features of the book are such that it cannot stand by itself as a core text in the Sociology of Education field. Theoretically, to fill such a role, the theories would have to be spelled out in more precise form and, empirically, more scope would have to be provided to cover all facets of education. The "General Arguments" of the three theoretical frameworks, which are presented in very short chapters, are conceptually synoptic and place an undue emphasis on the shortcomings and weaknesses of the various frameworks. Within limited space, attention is given to the principal versions of the six major theories and to the legacy of themes and usages relating to each found in the Sociology of Education literature. The book's intention of focusing the reader on the broad spectrum of sociological theory in relation to education is both valid and stimulating. The limitations in this approach are a reflection of the difficulty in developing both succinct and exact presentations of theoretical positions without moving to a less than tolerable level of simplicity. While this tension applies in some measure to each of the theories presented, the difficulty may be illustrated with reference to Conflict theory, where a Marxist and non-Marxist version is outlined. Of the five authors emphasized in the "International" and "Canadian" examples, two are Marxist-Leninist, one a Weberian conflict theorist, and it is debatable (as the author and collaborator acknowledge) whether two are Marxist. In my view, the analysis generally is not augmented by sufficient theoretical explanation of the particular frameworks, and the references in the text are not extensive enough for the reader who wishes to gain access to supplementary materials.

The reader can see an important contribution of the work in terms of comparative research. The strategy on which the overall book is based, its careful selection of research done within a variety of theoretical traditions, and its inclusion of authors from a variety of cultural contexts (American, British, Canadian, French, Swiss) gives it certain natural advantages in articulating not only sociological theories of education but in developing insights in the Sociology of Education. The presentations on the functionalist work of Pierre Bourdieu and that of Philippe Perrenoud show an extremely effective use of the comparative research approach. This aspect of the book represents a contribution to the Sociology of Education, but the principles of comparative research are in several instances problematic. The consideration, for example, of Bourdieu's work vis-à-vis that of Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet is encumbered by the theoretical classification system and would be of more heuristic benefit if it were approached from an explicitly comparative perspective. Looking at the book from a comparative research position also raises the question of "comparableness," particularly in relation to the "Canadian" and "International" examples selected for inclusion. Some selections do not "fit" particularly well on this basis. The discussion of Pierre Bélanger and Guy Rocher when coupled with an earlier treatment of Talcott Parsons covers much common territory. The selection of some aspects of John Porter's work and that of Wallace Clement poses problems concerning the placement of works in the theoretical scheme and in the definition of what topics are to be covered in a Sociology of Education approach. In other words, the coverage of the book is at times broader than that of the Sociology of Education. It is difficult to decide on the extent to which this is so because of the problem of finding studies, particularly Canadian, that really fit in the area of the Sociology of Education alone.

In the concluding Part of the book, the author and his collaborator outline "Toward a Theory of Canadian Education." The purpose of this chapter is to present a "theory of the recent history of Canadian education" and, given the organization of the book, it is highlighted as an important focal point. The integrating theme that is developed here is that each of the theoretical frameworks that were examined are limited in certain ways and that in order to address all facets of education the "most promising direction" is draw upon various theoretical frameworks. This conclusion comes as no particular surprise to the reader and indeed is unfulfilling in its effect. The basic message of the "Proposal" may well have been more effectively released earlier in the text. The "Proposal" is also somewhat misleading in that by outlining a sociological analysis of the recent history of Canadian education, it does not offer any particular theoretical contribution to the Sociology of Education. While the author and his collaborator do note that the ideas offered are meant as suggestions rather than a full presentation, there is an unfinished character to the "Proposal" that would benefit from more empirical depth and theoretical rigor.

An evaluation of *Sociological Theories of Education* leads to a series of general observations that characterize the work. That improvements could be made, that more detail could be desired, does not hold off the conclusion that the author and his collaborator have produced a creative and carefully crafted product. The writing style works well in the task of handling theoretical material and in highlighting empirical facets of education. Within 200 or so pages of text, we find a varied and interesting synthesis of current thinking in the Sociology of Education field. There is in-depth analysis and discussion of a select group of Canadian (including Claude Escande, Wilfred Martin, and Mark Novak) and international researchers (including Basil Bernstein, Peter Blau, Randall Collins, Christopher Jencks, Arthur Jensen, and Arthur Stinchcombe). The reader is still best advised to read the original works; however, the sociology student should not be disappointed by what is promised and what is delivered. The work should also be of assistance in helping the student to define the Sociology of Education, to examine the field, and to draw meaningful conclusions that may well be the result of different persuasions.

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