Modelling Educational Choice
An Explanation of Change in French Secondary Education

By Nathalie Bulle

Contents

Forward

By Raymond Boudon

Introduction

Curriculum changes: the need for explanation
Sociological perspectives concerning the evolution of educational systems
The analysis of the evolution of educational values in France

I - Changes in the secondary education system: 1902–1965

1 - The 1902 reform: introduction of the scientific, classical and modern curricula
2 - The 1925 reform and introduction of a core science curriculum
3 - The Vichy reforms and elimination of the core science curriculum
4 - Educational choices of applicants before entering one Grande Ecole
5 - Section choices after the Libération, and the lack of engineers and technicians
6 - The 1965 reform and its effects on student orientation

II – Some elements about school choice models

1 - Asymmetry of information and the role of school certifications: Akerlof’s model
2 - School structures, individual performances and decisions: Spence’s model
3 - The diffusion of cultural preferences: the logistical model
4 - The interdependence of the choice of a stream of study: Schelling’s model

III - SIMULATION OF CHOICES OF STREAM OF STUDY

1 - General Hypotheses
2 - Complementary Hypotheses
3 - Study of interactions between parameters
4 - The set of solutions
5 - Changes in the profiles of students in classical streams
6 - Results of the model
7 - Discussion of results
8 - Elements of a conclusion on the school choice simulation

IV - FORMAL THOUGHT AND THE REAL WORLD

1 - Causality and conceptual construction
2 - The nature of scientific explanation according to Filmer Northrop and Henry Margenau
3 - Prediction versus causal realism
4 - The hybrid nature of explanatory models
5 - Explanation vs. Argumentation
6 - The question of empirical adequacy
7 - The question of the validity of formal explanation

Conclusion

Propositions concerning the evolution of the French secondary education system
The crisis of education in expanding educational systems

Bibliography

Index