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SOCIOLOGY AND EDUCATION
Issues in sociology of education

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I - PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Sociology and Education is a substantial introduction to issues in sociology of education. Examining the contributions of the various sociological approaches to education, the author presents the fundamental information needed to understand the issues involved, including the foundations and the limits of the various theories, notably in relation to the underlying psychological assumptions.

The aim of the work is twofold: to equip the uninitiated reader with the necessary theoretical elements while preparing more advanced students to undertake research in the field.

An attempt is made to situate to each other the theoretical contributions and scientific discussions with respect to the current issues. Certain conceptual or empirical problems are discussed in detail (structures, modes of thought, inequality of educational opportunity etc.) so as to permit comparison of the sociological interpretations. These clarifications bring out the unified character of the object that each of these perspectives illuminates in its own way. Special attention is given to the intellectual sources of present-day approaches. The early major perspectives are not only part of the history of research, they are also important for the essential contribution they made and for understanding the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the research carried out in their wake.

II – BOOK STRUCTURE

Sociology and Education is constructed as a textbook. The different parts are at once independent and interrelated. They are organized according to a logical and progressive development of the subject. The work opens with psychological questions concerning cognitive development (Part I). It then tackles the major social-action approaches underlying the different orientations found in present-day sociology of education (Part II). These orientations are then presented and articulated according to the levels of social action they favor (Part III). The focus then shifts to general relations between educational systems and society, as seen through two main axes: social philosophy doctrines and the interpretations of the evolution of educational systems (Part IV). The work ends with the question of the relationship between educational systems and occupational systems. The first section presents the major conceptual differentiations developed for analyzing these relations, and the second gives an overview of the state of knowledge on inequality of educational and social opportunity based on analysis of exemplary empirical findings (Part V).

PART ONE
EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE
The work begins with a presentation of the main approaches used today in psychology of cognitive development and knowledge theory. Psychology, knowledge theory and sociology, three essential kinds of approach to cognitive processes, are tightly intertwined.

PART TWO
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
This part deals with the role of social factors in the development of the human mind and with the role of reason in social action. It is based on a selection of significant approaches, from Marx to the interactionist and actionist perspectives (Schütz, Boudon), via functional approaches (Durkheim, Parsons).

PART THREE
SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO FORMAL EDUCATION
This chapter is built on an analytical grid that provides a basis for comparing the different perspectives developed by contemporary sociology of education as they relate to their approach to social action. This grid opposes two major poles (social/normative and individual/interactionist) as well as three levels of social action (axiological/motivational, logical/cognitive, symbolic/expressive).

PART FOUR
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SOCIETY
This part presents a selection of major doctrines of social philosophy that are, in certain respects, complementary and which illuminate the contemporary theories of education (Marx, Spencer, Ward, Dewey). These doctrines account for some of the social ideologies at work in the definition of a modern democratic education. Further elements of understanding are gleaned from Mannheim's analysis of the democratization of culture and Durkheim's analysis of Pragmatism. The long-term development of educational systems in conjunction with social changes are described in a second section, centered on Durkheim's famous analysis of the evolution of educational thought. Finally some keys to analyzing changes in today's educational systems are discussed.

PART FIVE
SCHOOLS AND INEQUALITY
The aim of the first section is to account for the processes of status allocation as practiced in contemporary democratic societies. The author reviews the major conceptual tools available for analyzing the relations between types of education, methods of selection and social types. The second section aims to provide a clear overview of what is known about the respective influence of family and school factors on educational inequalities. In this perspective, the author presents the empirical analyses that have marked the development of sociology of education or are of major interest for the field.

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PART FOUR
SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

> **PART FOUR – FIRST SECTION**
> **SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION**
> School and democracy

> **I -** *Karl Marx and the school of labor*
> **II -** *Naturalism, social utopia and education in the work of Herbert Spencer*
> **III -** *Lester F.Ward and democracy through universalization of knowledge*
> **IV -** *John Dewey and education for democracy*
> **V -** *The problems of the "democratization of culture" according to Karl Mannheim*
> **VI -** *Pragmatism, sociology and knowledge: Durkheim's criticism*

> **PART FOUR – SECOND SECTION**
> **THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS**
> Sociologies and social change

> **I -** *Functional approaches*
> I a - The sociological tradition
> I b - Economic tradition and the "human capital" theory
> **II** - *Conflict theories*
> II a - Neo-Marxist perspectives
> II b - Neo-Weberian perspectives
> **III** *Interactionist approaches*
> III a - Educational change from the early Christian era to the twentieth century
> III b - Educational change in the twentieth century
> > Expansion of educational systems
> > Evolution of educational thought

PART FIVE
SCHOOLS AND INEQUALITIES

> Inequality of educational opportunity

> **I -** *Educational systems and occupational systems*
> I a - Types of political domination and types of education in Max Weber
> I b - Parsons and action-orientation: particularism *vs* universalism, ascription *vs* achievement
> I c - Mobility through sponsorship and mobility through competition
> I d - Modernization theory and the allocation of social status
> **II -** *Impact of social variables on academic achievement*
> II a - Social *vs* school factors effects on individual achievement: The Coleman Report
> II b - Determinism *vs* indeterminism of individual social achievement
> II c - Impact of family decisions on scholastic attainment
> II d - An inequality of opportunity processes modelling
> **III -** *Impact of institutional variables on academic achievement*
> III a - Impact of institutional practices of orientation on academic attainment
> III b - Effect of types of schools on academic achievement
> III c - Institutional construction of academic identity
> III d - Institutional factors in academic success

III – INTENDED AUDIENCES

Sociology and education is aimed primarily at general sociology students interested in sociology of education or contemplating to exploring the field. In this case it can be used as a textbook for undergraduate as well as graduate students. However it is also a useful introduction to sociology of education for researchers and decision-makers working in

sciences of education, educational policy, social mobility, etc. Lastly, it is appropriate for a general reading audience interested in understanding the issues raised by present-day education (teachers, parents, etc.).

Sociology and education helps understand the respective logics behind the various sociological approaches to education, their assumptions and their limits. It clarifies the links between psychology, microsociology and macrosociology, and the role ascribed to human reason in social action. Throughout the work, the author is concerned to develop ideas and concepts in sociology of education that explain the theoretical grounding of contemporary approaches. The work enables the reader to grasp the viewpoint and assumptions of the different approaches and thus to envisage new perspectives and to prepare further research. For the non-sociologist, the presentation is clear and stimulating, and will serve as a reader's guide to more specialized works in sociology of education.

Sociology and education is rooted in both American and European sociology. The author carried out her own research on the contemporary history of educational systems and sociology of education in the United States and in Europe. The references and the examples contained in the book have been chosen for their role in the culture of the field and for their intellectual and instructive value.