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THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

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Education deals with the most fundamental human need: how to influence children to become competent adults. In this regard, "the sociology of education is perhaps one of the broadest fields within sociology itself," as Saha observes (1997a:1). He notes that one reason for such broadness is that almost everyone engages in some form of education. Another factor may be that both schools of education and departments of sociology lay claim to the field, often leading to turf issues. The school of education locus may also focus the field more on problem solving than on systematic sociological analysis. The field is also very popular; it is one of the largest special interest sections in sociology professional associations in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. No major study in virtually all fields of sociology fails to include the level of education as either a cause or an effect.

Sociology of education is relevant because it examines the kind of issues people care about. Reducing the dropout rate in high school and college is an important measure of academic success. Understanding how classroom social structures can make disadvantaged children feel socially competent and connected will help mitigate the experiences of being disadvantaged. Teasing out the effects of various pedagogical strategies on boys and girls may help create better learning environments for both. Clarifying the impact of education on the values graduates hold helps clarify the values in a society. Diagramming the social matrix in middle school may help develop strategies for reducing early drug and alcohol use.

Sociology of education has had a split identity, as reflected in its name change. Until the 1960s, it was commonly called educational sociology and tended to focus less on theory and large-scale research and more on within-school behaviors. Willard Waller's (1932) study of teaching is one classic example of a brilliant analysis of the school as a locus where competing interest groups, which include teachers, students, administration, and community, negotiate for influence. The administrative structure of schools drew much attention in the first half of the twentieth century. The shift in nomenclature signaled a shift from a less empirically rigorous and less theoretically grounded field that often dealt with how to improve teaching to a field steeped in theory and empiricism.

Today, sociology of education lies at the heart of sociology. Societies across time have invested considerable resources in socializing their young to become productive citizens. The two institutions most responsible for this role transition are the family and education, the informal and the formal players. Historically, it has been difficult to alter family socialization patterns, and most societies fiercely protect the autonomy of the family. But where do we turn when concerns arise about how to teach children well? The answer is often *the schools.*

Many societies at various points in their histories have used the educational institution to guide the socialization of their future citizens. The notion of a melting pot figured prominently in education in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century as American society attempted to respond to the social forces of immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. Capitalism took root, and education was needed to socialize future workers and teach them skills and to credential them. Schools have been used to promote values, norms, and beliefs thought salient for a particular society, ones that societal leaders often worried were incompletely taught at home. The current focus on intelligent design versus evolution, and with sex education,

for example, demonstrates the close relationship between the family and educational systems as these relate to the socialization process. Sociology of education also lies at the heart of sociology because of education's prominent role in status attainment, something that families also aspire to teach and transmit to their young.

Sociology of education is multidisciplinary, for many of the same reasons. Social psychologists study how individuals negotiate the schooling process and provide insight on how meaning and interpretation affect the values, attitudes, and aspirations of students. Economists examine the return on schooling investment for both individuals and societies. Corporate leaders have shown increasing interest in public education because its quality affects the competence of future workers. Corporate-sponsored education efforts rival those in the public sector. Political scientists examine power struggles and how educational decisions emanate from these struggles, providing sociological insight into educational decision making.

Anthropologists have traditionally examined the role of education and schooling across cultures to illustrate how schools reflect cultural values. More recently, anthropologists have contributed important insights by providing ethnographic accounts of school life at the elementary, secondary, and higher-education levels and of how college students respond to and attempt to redefine the culture of their schools. Historians have shown how the organization, focus, and outcomes of education have varied across time and space, providing sociological insights into the connections between societies and their education systems. All these contributions are relevant to sociologists studying education because they differentiate and analyze the social structural forces in education. Therefore, to borrow from Comte, it may be accurate to say that sociology of education is the queen of the social scientific approaches to education.

HISTORY

Lawrence J. Saha (1997b) notes that the earliest definition of sociology of education, then called educational sociology, goes back to a 1913 encyclopedia definition: "one of four special approaches utilized in that scientific study of education which founds its philosophy or inclusive theory upon detailed observation and analysis" (p. 106). Bidwell and Friedkin (1988) note that the sociology of education is "the analysis of educational activities—their form and content, their embeddedness in broader social structures, and their outcomes for individuals and collectivities" (p. 449). In reality, sociologists *have* examined just about everything involving education, ranging from macrolevel analyses of how educational systems reflect culture to microlevel analyses of classroom and playground behavior. But what distinguishes the sociological view from other approaches is its sustained attention to relevant structural and contextual dimensions, as well as its emphasis on

sociological theory and research. Hansen (1967) highlighted this role for sociology when he urged that the term *educational sociology* be reserved for what he called "normative" analyses of education, a form of analysis that suggests what schools ought to do. Sociology of education, he continued, should be reserved for sociological theory and research. He was writing at a time when the field was undergoing a transition from educational practice oriented to more systematically sociological.

With the exception of Durkheim, early sociologists generally ignored issues relating to education. But Banks (1971) details the rise of sociology of education in the United Kingdom; almost 200 universities were offering courses in the field by 1927. Interest in the area then began to decline. In fact, throughout the 1940s, educational sociology was marginalized (Saha 1997b). Most sociologists attached little significance to education as a field of study, and most educators thought sociology to be too far removed from the day-to-day operations of schools to be useful to educational practitioners. Even the number of courses in the field dropped by 1940 in the United Kingdom because it was taught outside the departments of sociology, a testament to its low status in the discipline.

By the 1970s, however, there was a growing interest in Marxist and radical theories. This interest is noteworthy given that the journal *Educational Sociology,* founded in 1927, bridged the gap between the normative and descriptive orientations of educational sociology and the scientific analysis of education of what later was to become sociology of education. In 1963, the American Sociological Association (ASA) assumed responsibility for the journal, titling it *Sociology of Education.* Lawrence Saha (1997b) notes that "the ambivalence about the sociology of education prevailed elsewhere in the English-speaking world," but "by the mid-1980s, the sociology of education was one of the most popular and productive areas within sociology" (p. 108).

Several factors contributed to this renewed interest. One was the new focus that caused researchers to emphasize qualitative techniques in their analyses of classroom interaction and language, and the curriculum (Riehl 2001). Another was the nascent empirical study of status attainment and the central role of education in that process. Critical theory gave another tool that provided greater prominence for a field of inquiry that emphasized the notion that the ideology of dominant groups is employed in schools to oppress the less powerful groups.

Another analytical approach was based on the view of education as an institution that reinforces and reflects cultural rules. Examples include studies of citizenship as well as the rise in enrollment of women.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

The sociology of education first emerged in Western Europe. Most scholars agree that sociology of education

was birthed in the work of Durkheim, particularly his *Education and Sociology* ([1922] 1956). The early theorists in sociology of education, primarily Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, focused on issues relating to social control, concentrating their efforts on establishing how educational systems produced competent citizens, reinforced dominant ideologies, and provided status markers for individuals.

Lawrence Saha (1997a) notes that Durkheim ([1922] 1956) was both a sociologist and a "pedagogist," a combination that provided him with keen insights into the crucial role of education in societies. Countless scholars after Durkheim were to benefit from his insights into the relationships between societies and their educational structures. Of course, Durkheim is best known for his stance and thoughts pertaining to moral education and how well such education is correlated with the norms and values of society. Durkheim believed that education was central to the continuation of a society; thus, his writings centered on social order, the factors that gave rise to social order, and the social consequences when that order breaks down. Durkheim was particularly concerned with the role of education in creating future citizens. He also examined the connections between education and social institutions such as religion. In this area, Durkheim promoted a functionalist view, and his analyses of the roles of the family and education for socialization have informed countless research and theoretical articles.

In light of the interest in Marxist theories of education in the United States and the United Kingdom, it is interesting to note that Marx actually paid little attention to education in his analyses of the capitalist class other than to note its role in perpetuating unequal class systems. It is also noteworthy that Marx's views included aspects of functionalism (Saha and Zubrzycki 1997) in that he believed that economic institutions dominated and that education served an important socialization function in capitalist societies. Schools inculcate appropriate values to those students of the working class who would later be in the employ of the ruling class. Later Marxists and neo-Marxists contemplated what an educational system could look like if it did not simply serve the needs of the ruling class.

Although Weber did not specifically address education in his vast writings, his work on bureaucracy and rationalization does pertain to education. School systems in the United States rapidly became more bureaucratized in the first half of the twentieth century, and Weber's writings about bureaucracy and the salience of rationalization played a central role in analyzing how school systems were organized. Many sociologists have examined the implications of the bureaucratic structure of schools, such as Corwin's (1970) study of the organizational impact on teacher militancy. Weber added to Marx's class analysis as the basis of society by using power and status. Education played an important role in generating power and status but also fueled conflict with those who had less. Weber's notion of *Verstehen* encouraged sociologists to look at the subjective meanings people experience, including that which emerges from membership in organizations; this orientation has yielded many sociological studies on the inner lives of schools and teachers (e.g., Metz 2000). Lawrence J. Saha and J. Zubrzycki (1997:17) conclude that "Weber has been relatively neglected by sociologists of education" because "he never developed a unified theory of society" (p. 17). This assertion may be somewhat overstated given all the studies employing Weber's ideas on bureaucracy and rationalization and his differentiation of class, status, and power. Certainly, education is a factor for each of these variables.

Jonathan H. Turner and Douglas E. Mitchell (1997) observe that "the emphasis in the sociology of education on applied problems has tended to blunt theoretical development at the micro and meso levels" (p. 21). These analysts outline what they consider to be the major paradigm contributions to sociology of education. First, the functionalist paradigm examines the social role of education, particularly in modernizing societies. Examples include the credentialing function that schools perform and the role of education in status attainment and mobility (Brown 2001).

Second, the utilitarian paradigm assesses the costs actors are willing to incur in pursuit of desired resources, which assumes a rational view of humanity. This paradigm appears most prominently in human capital and cost-benefit analyses and in the prominence of education for accruing human capital. More contemporary applications involve the assessment of the process in which policymakers and other interested parties engage in deciding on such issues as parental choice and school vouchers.

Third, the conflict paradigm has a rich history in sociology of education. The Marxist wing centers on the role of ideology in reinforcing unequal social structural relations among various economic classes. These relations are institutionally reinforced by education, the economy, and the polity and to a lesser extent by religion and the family. Some Marxist-oriented thinkers take a more radical view, stressing either the role of the hidden curriculum (e.g., Bowles and Gintis 1976) or the role of the formal curriculum (e.g., Giroux 1981) in maintaining and reinforcing the capitalist system. Other analysts, such as Anyon (1983), provide the empirical support for theoretical arguments by demonstrating how schools approach students who are from variant social classes in terms of how they teach, what is taught, and how students are evaluated. Conflict theorists examine the manner in which cultural ideologies perpetuate the class system within the context of the school system. In so doing, they highlight the role of status groups in this process. Perhaps the best-known sociologist who works in this area is Randall Collins (1979). Collins depicts how schools and educational systems construct and reinforce cultural differences, particularly through the process of credentialing on the basis of status definition and maintenance.

The interactionist paradigm takes a micro approach by examining the role of education in defining roles and the

self. Symbolic interactionists assess how teachers and students define their conceptions of self and social position, how the roles they play contribute to these definitions, and the consequences of both the definitions and the roles for school functions. They are particularly concerned with the sources and consequences of teacher expectations and labeling, as seen in the famous study by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1982). Erving Goffman's (1972) dramaturgical perspective is useful for examining how teachers and students engage in self-presentation and saving face. Other interactionists, such as Bernstein (1977), use linguistic analysis to show how restricted or elaborated linguistic codes are used in schools to reinforce class differences among students.

Finally, interactionist phenomenology examines the social reality as defined by teachers within the context of the educational institution. Students who do not conform to this teacher-defined model are shunted into less desirable tracks. Other social psychologists examine student attitudes and values, the impact of teacher attributions on student behavior, the role conflict experienced by teachers, the salience of reference groups, peer culture, and the sociometry of classrooms and schools (Bank and Biddle 1997).

Hallinan (2000c) outlines several problems with relying on general sociological theory to analyze education and schools. One such problem is that sociological theories fail to specifically address the unique situation of schools. Second, as a result, such approaches offer little for understanding the uniqueness of the educational institution as well as its many internal variations. Finally, she notes that using subdisciplinary approaches, such as stratification and social psychology, leads to similar problems.

MAJOR ISSUES

The analyses of schools and the school experience fail to match the progress made in other areas during the latter half of the twentieth century. Maureen Hallinan (2000c) posits three reasons for the greater success in other areas. First, models such as the general linear model were developed in other fields during the 1960s, which were then widely used to study schooling processes. Second, many well-crafted and statistically representative data sets were created using schools, teachers, and students. These data sets were mostly developed under federal auspices and yielded many longitudinal studies that helped spawn school outcomes research. Third, sociologists studying education saw the potential impact of their research on educational practice and policy, ranging from the local to the federal level.

Many approaches are employed to organize the major issues examined by sociologists of education. In this chapter, I draw on two of the most comprehensive works in this area, by Hallinan (2000a) and Saha (1997b). The use of both macro and micro approaches is one issue.

Macrolevel-oriented sociologists use quantitative methodologies to study the impact of social structure and cultural ideologies on, for example, the status attainment process. Such analysts view individuals as constrained by the social structural arrangements of which they are a part, demonstrating the differential consequences for individuals.

The relationship between education and development represents one such topic of interest. The goal is to encapsulate the relationship between education and social progress. Macrolevel sociologists also are interested in the impact of school on the workforce, and in doing so, they map the societal developments that influence how educational systems vary across time and space. These methods are used to establish the relationship between expanded educational opportunity and other aspects of society through examining the process by which national policies emerge and how these polices are implemented at the local level.

Microlevel sociologists use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to study subjective interpretations, suggesting that individuals are less constrained by social structural arrangements than macrolevel sociologists argue. The gap between these two approaches has not been successfully bridged. Microlevel sociologists examine the role of schools as a socialization agent and provide detailed accounts of the differential experiences of students, controlling for social class. They portray the means by which schools come to reflect the normative orientation of culture, how this process affects the manner in which students are able to internalize the values and norms of the general society, and how students negotiate their surroundings. They examine how teachers assume their roles while still attending college, the process of becoming a teacher, and the trajectory of teachers' lives as professionals. Robert Dreeben (2005) examines the professional status of teaching and concludes that teacher competency—the use of research-based as well as practical knowledge—may represent the missing link for professionalizing teaching. Regrettably, the teaching profession and the actual work engaged in by teachers receive little attention.

Critical pedagogy and postmodernism play important roles in the discipline of sociology, and this is no less true throughout the last third of the twentieth century; their impact on education is evident. Critical pedagogy encourages resistance to the external definition of individual roles and life experiences and promotes the role of education in a democratic culture to free students from dominant ideologies. Postmodernism rejects the notion of an underlying reality and hence defines the resistance attempts of critical pedagogy as meaningless. Postmodernists view education as potentially contributing to more democratic theory and practice, although little impact of this perspective on educational policy is evident.

Inequality is perhaps the most substantive issue in the sociology of education. Educational systems function to reproduce social systems that are grounded in inequalities,

but these same institutions are also widely thought to help reduce inequalities. Gender and race play prominent roles in these processes. Pamela B. Walters (2000) notes that educational expansion in the United States has occurred in response to demands for equity, but in reality it is largely a strategy to enhance attainment for disadvantaged groups while simultaneously maintaining the advantages held by higher-class people. She also found that school reform does not reduce educational inequalities. A related issue is the role education plays in maintaining, enhancing, or reducing cultural pluralism. Research centers on the educational experiences of minorities and the manner in which that experience is defined by the dominant cultural ideologies. On the more micro level, Hallinan (2000b) concludes that researchers need to address differential learning opportunities because they perpetuate inequalities. She notes that "researchers have focused on ways in which the organization of students for instruction, the content of the curriculum, student access to the curriculum, and informal social processes within a school limit access to learning" (Hallinan 2000c:7).

The effects of schooling are often examined from a sociological perspective. For example, private schools affect social capital more than is the case for public schools. Caroline H. Persell (2000) asserts that differential values and control mechanisms in public and private schools tend to offer different student experiences. She posits that it is the influence of higher-class parents that carries the most impact in private schools. In this body of literature, sociologists pay particular attention to the experiences of students who are traditionally less rewarded by educational systems. For example, Hallinan (2000b) links the literature on sociology of race and ethnicity with that on sociology of education to conclude that schools affect students differentially by race and ethnicity. Other sociologists depict how the status attainment process differs among minorities and whites and also how it differs within a specific minority group. Much of this work has led sociologists to employ the race and ethnicity variable as a causal variable, although Hallinan (2000b) concludes that race and ethnicity have a minimal impact on what sociologists think about the schooling process.

At the micro level, sociologists examine how students and teachers cope with schooling. Alienation occurs for both. For example, Wagenaar (1987) outlines the individual and structural causes of dropping out of school and posits policy changes to address the structural dimensions. Sociologists also contribute to our understanding of teachers and teaching. They have discussed why the field is so feminized in the United States, particularly at the lower levels, and why students select teaching as a career. They have considered the implications of the 50 percent dropout rate among young teachers within their first five years of teaching. The socialization process of teachers is also examined. For example, an effective mentoring system can substantially reduce the dropout rate among teachers by reducing the isolation of new professionals and creating a more collective responsibility for teaching and learning.

Professional collaboration is one hallmark of a profession, raising questions once again about the professional stature of teaching. Bidwell (2005) argues that sociologists should focus more on the academic and social lives of students as well as on how teachers function in the classroom, and relate these to both the organization and the curriculum structure of schools. But he also makes a more general proposal by observing that schools and classrooms represent social systems, and he highlights how reforms imposed by sources outside the school system are tempered by the power structure and the day-to-day activities of teachers and students.

At the organizational level, sociologists have examined the causes and consequences of specific structural arrangements, including for consideration factors such as leadership style, teacher interaction style, and teacher efficacy (Gamoran, Secada, and Marrett 2000). They clarify how organizational resources such as material, human, and social resources affect teaching practices, which in turn affect learning. They conclude that professional development is central to effecting change and that professional development needs to be "sustained, coherent, collaborative, and reflective" (Gamoran et al. 2000:52). Following sociological research that showed that smaller high schools help generate higher achievement, the Gates Foundation supported the reorganization of large high schools into smaller units in many cities throughout the United States. The degree to which school personnel work well together and hold high expectations for students also affects achievement. In this same area, Hedges and Schneider (2005) note how the organizational structure of schools and the microsociology of schools and classrooms affect the student learning process.

Schools are known to operate as loosely coupled organizations, in which the connections between the hierarchical structure and the actual teaching activities that occur are weak and rely on the professional knowledge of practitioners (Weick 1976). As a result, schools historically have not tightly controlled the curriculum and teaching methods due to the professional stature of teachers. This loose coupling has implications for staff compliance with the bureaucratic rules as well as staff accountability. It also raises questions about the disparity between teacher professionalism and autonomy and a bureaucratic emphasis on organizational performance. Ingersoll (2005), among others, tempers this view, however, by noting that classrooms are not as free from administrative and political influence as the model would suggest. This, then, may represent the crux of the problem: the tension between the control ideology of bureaucratic structures and the autonomous professional ideology of the "true" professions.

In the classroom, sociologists have examined how the sociometric choices of students affect both their academic and their social standing (McFarland 2005). Although

social network theory remains relatively underused, the types of subunit social structures teachers employ in the classroom are known to affect the educational experience. Elizabeth Cohen and Rachel Lotan (1997) employed expectation state theory to develop specific strategies that teachers can use with students, but without placing them in tracks, to provide an equitable way for teachers to teach when the classrooms has students of unequal status or experience. In this area, sociologists have long provided insight into how the gender and race of both teachers and students affects both the learning experience and social relations. Yet the specific mechanisms at work when schools as structures and teachers and students as individuals intersect remain to be articulated clearly.

Sociologists have also examined the long-term outcomes of schooling. Private school attendance has different student outcomes than does public school attendance. Participating in high school extracurricular activities is linked to civic engagement as adults. Girls who attend single-sex schools generally have higher subsequent levels of achievement. Schooling facilitates the transition to work, but this effect differs by society. Alan Kerckhoff (2001) notes that three factors affect the transition from school to work in different societies: (1) how much inequality exists in the educational system, (2) how much standardization exists in the educational system, and (3) the nature of educational credentials in a system. Globalization no doubt has affected the impact of education on the transition to work. Vocational education may help students secure work and does not necessarily inhibit attendance at college, particularly in more contest-based societies such as the United States. The impact of education on employment is greater in Germany and Japan than in the United States. One possible reason could be the tighter connections between school personnel and employers in countries such as Japan and Germany (Rosenbaum and Jones 2000). Comparative analyses of school effects are rare, but they can help refine the intervening mechanisms at work and how they vary by culture.

Education influences altruistic behaviors, such as volunteering. People with more education are more connected socially. They tend to marry and have children later. Their schooling experiences greatly influence the available pool of marriage candidates. Those with more education tend to have better physical and emotional health. Sociologists examine the impact of attending higher education and how these effects differ according to the type of school attended. They study how the effects of attaining higher education vary by society and why. We have encountered some good international comparisons but have yet to fully understand the differential causal processes at work in different societies. One can learn much about promoting higher-education attendance from research in other societies. There are status advantages gained by attending elite colleges, and these benefits vary by race and social class.

Other sociologists have examined the connections between the home, the school, and the community, and they have articulated the role of each in accruing social capital (e.g., Epstein and Sanders 2000). Different patterns of home-school cooperation have different outcomes. Participation by family members has a strong effect on students' performance, particularly when the school involves family members in its planning efforts. Epstein and Sanders (2000) found that teachers recognize how important parental involvement is, but teachers are lacking in a confidence as to how to effectively encourage parents to become involved.

Sociologists have examined the impact of school and residence neighborhoods on school functioning. Others have examined outlier schools that were predicted to have lower achievement but defied that prediction. Charter schools represent the current nexus of community involvement in education. They are alternative schools with a particular mission, such as strengthening achievement among low-performing minority students. Publicly funded charter schools are largely free from the regulations governing public schools. The dramatic rise in charter schools reflects community involvement through the creation of new schools that are not inhibited by traditional credentialing methods. Although little research has been conducted on charter schools, it is known that in Ohio, at least, many charter schools perform poorly on state assessment indicators. The charter school movement also intersects with the political climate—many parents disaffected with public schools have used the political system to create alternatives that more accurately teach their beliefs.

One of the most recent issues in the educational arena holding political and scientific connotations is "intelligent design" versus evolution. The religious and ideological issues involved gain the limelight, prompting both proponents and opponents to become involved politically by joining school boards. This and other conflicts highlight the intense political foundation of American education.

THE FUTURE

Societies continue to imbue their educational systems with extraordinary expectations for solving social problems. This rich legacy bodes well for the future of the sociology of education. Sociologists will continue to study and contribute to this popular area. Given that the field continues to progress both theoretically and methodologically, in the future, social interest groups also will become more vocal about what they desire from the educational system. Such events will undoubtedly make it difficult to compose a compelling unified rationale for educational policy, and public interest groups may also deflect the perceived need for and impact of pure research. Still, sociologists may and perhaps should have much to say about future policy and practice implementation processes.

Recent years have seen more national-level education policies. For example, in the United Kingdom, national efforts to assess and categorize institutions of higher

education were used for funding decisions, with substantial political fallout. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 exerted a substantial federal force in a nation that prides itself on local autonomy, especially in educational decision making. The act requires states to develop measures of academic progress in reading and mathematics, institutes minimum teacher credentials, and requires narrowing of the performance gap between students of various ethnic and ability groups. Specific strategies are required to assist students in low-performing schools. For example, after several years of school under-performance, school systems must provide tutoring outside the school and allow students to transfer to better schools. Accountability testing in science will soon be added to help reverse a rank of 16th of 21 countries in science and 19th in mathematics for the United States. Yet the United States leads most other countries in scientific accomplishments, so sociologists could help explain the disparity.

Sociologists have shown considerable interest in the No Child Left Behind Act. A special add-on series of presentations, sponsored by the Sociology of Education section of the ASA, has become a fixture at the annual meetings of the ASA. In the future, sociologists will examine how the act came into existence, how it is related to political ideologies, how the evaluation measurement of the act will affect school curricula and operations, how individual states respond and what factors determine these responses, how the teaching profession may be negatively affected by the further eroding of teachers' involvement in the decision-making process, the manifest and latent functions of the current test-taking mentality, and the consequences of such a national program among states and local districts accustomed to local autonomy. The act and other political developments once again highlight the intersections between education and the family and economic, political, and religious institutions.

Accountability and its effects represent a related theme. Accountability demands intersect closely with how schools affect students and bring issues of social control to the forefront. Sociologists will investigate who does the defining of success and the criteria by which such success is measured. Business definitions of success have factored into educational governance since the early twentieth century, and some argue that such definitions now permeate education. Accountability discussions often confuse school inputs, throughputs, and outputs—that is, what types of students and resources are admitted into school, what processes occur while at school, and what students gain after completing their schooling. We know little about the validity and reliability of recent accountability programs. Sociologists have made some progress in assessing the value added by schools, but more insight into how school characteristics connect with high scores on assessment tests is needed.

Moreover, little is known as to whether accountability demands have a linear connection with changes in student achievement. Accountability demands will undoubtedly continue to rise. These demands are intended to establish a firm base for bringing every student up to some minimal set of standards, document achievement, and compensate for such shortcomings as students may experience at home. The corporate school model also gives rise to accountability demands, including the expectation that neither financial nor educational losses should occur as schools respond to accountability demands.

In the United States, a shift to the religious right and issues relating to the demand for accountability have led to a sharp rise in the number of charter schools. In the future, sociologists will document how the daily lives of teachers and students change in response to these demands. Sociologists have yet to tease out the functional and dysfunctional and the manifest and latent consequences of the accountability movement. But anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are teaching for, and students are studying for, the mandated tests. Areas not tested, such as art and social studies, have withered. This test-centric focus may alter teacher creativity and may have substantial effects on the decision to either enter or leave the profession.

Australia, Western European countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States have each experienced a substantial inflow of immigrants in recent decades. In the United States, about one in five persons under the age of 18 is either an immigrant or a child of immigrants. This demographic movement has an effect on educational systems in ways that "question the relevance and efficacy of longstanding administrative, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices" (Luke 1997:50). Sociologists help to dissect the impact of immigration and to test alternative structural arrangements for meeting the needs of immigrant populations. Carol L. Schmid (2001) notes that external and intrinsic factors affect the uneven absorption and educational achievement of immigrants. External factors include economic opportunities, racial and ethnic status, and group reception. Intrinsic factors, on the other hand, include human and social capital, family structure, community organization, and cultural and linguistic patterns. Politically, arguments have arisen over whether local schools should be fiscally and otherwise accountable for the performance of recent immigrants. In Australian higher education, substantial increases in the numbers of foreign students have led to charges of inferior education being offered at some schools. In the United States, sociologists have much to say about the merits of bilingual education. They will continue to examine demographic issues at a macro level, advise policymakers on national policy, determine how shifts in student characteristics affect student outcomes, and examine the consequences for the dominant cultures. Sociologists will assist in clarifying the role of education in promoting democracy and citizenship, thereby leading to yet another debate on the role of education in promoting values.

Gender, race and ethnicity, and social class will continue to play a dominant role in sociological research because these remain important social variables. Recent

research shows, for example, that in the United States, male students at all levels of education are falling behind females on many educational indicators (Tyre 2006). In this area, sociologists will examine the roles of culture, institutions, the media, parents, schools, and teachers in this shift. Bidwell (2005) argues that researchers understand little on how national and global change affects the classroom experience. This too represents an important area for future research. More research similar to that conducted by Riegle-Crumb (2005) is needed to confirm the findings that mathematics and science performance among girls and boys in various countries is affected by their opportunities to participate in the home, the labor force, and the government. Of special interest is the finding that the gender gap performance is lower in countries where women hold high governmental positions. Also well known is the fact that race and ethnic differences persist in many countries in spite of efforts to reduce them. Although many sociologists have noted that class, race, and gender need to be analyzed conjointly, the frequency of such research is still low. In the future, sociologists will continue to shed light on the macro and micro social forces that may mitigate these inequalities.

Although their presence is currently meager at best (Suter 2001), sociologists will become involved in the analysis of alternative pedagogical strategies. Sociologists are uniquely qualified to identify the social and cultural dimensions of learning and how these pedagogical strategies promote learning. At both the secondary and the higher-education levels, the numbers of students participating in distance education are rising rapidly. Distance learning may alter the social structure of classrooms and may affect student performance. Student-centered pedagogies alter the authority and position of teachers. Schools have long been used as an example of cultural lag, where one part of a society moves more slowly than the other parts. That lag may decline with the rise of technology. Sociologists will examine how technology and the ready access of information help redefine learning and the role of teachers. We currently know very little about the sustained short-term and long-term learning consequences of greater exposure to technology, and we have been unsuccessful in bridging the digital divide (Natriello 2001). Riehl (2001) argues that sociologists studying pedagogical strategies need to link with work in cognitive psychology and other disciplines that view learning as situated and sociocultural.

Homeschooling is on the rise, but few sociologists have examined the nature and kinds of parents who homeschool their children and with what effects (Wagenaar 1997). Preliminary research shows that homeschooled children perform well in college, but a selection factor may be operating. Some school districts allow homeschooled children to participate in extracurricular activities and even some academic activities. These differences in the homeschool experience should provide an ideal laboratory for assessing the effects of formal schooling.

In the United States, high schools and colleges place increasing emphasis on community engagement and service learning as pedagogical strategies. The literature demonstrating the effects of such engagement is somewhat scanty, but in the future, sociologists will isolate more clearly the consequences of such engagement. The rise in school-community partnerships will also provide ample opportunity for further research activity. In yet another area, sociologists will focus some attention on classroom-teaching behaviors to enhance our understanding at the micro level.

During the past 30 years, we have been witness to a greater involvement in policy planning and reform efforts as suggested and encouraged by sociologists. The increase in qualitative research in the sociology of education enhances the sociological influence on educational policy and practice. The involvement should continue as sociologists become more interested in applied issues and as decision makers on education become more aware of the benefits to be derived from sociology in their decision-making procedures. The political consequences of this involvement can also be expected to increase, particularly at the local levels. There is anecdotal evidence that in the United States, individuals with strong political and educational ideologies are increasingly running for office and winning school board seats. At the national level, Shain and Ozga (2001) lament the impact of strong national policy statements in England stating that sociological research in education must be both relevant and useful for policymakers, adding that those who wish to study the broader social complexities of education outside application may not provide a useful service at this time.

Sociologists will continue to make major contributions to our understanding of the many social forces at work in the educational institution. They will do so at the micro level, the macro level, and the levels in between. Societies can ill afford to overlook sociologists' contributions to identifying relevant causal factors, using research to tease out the connections among such factors, and providing policy advice relevant to solving educational problems.