# The sociology of education

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***abstract*** Because education is an essential institution in society, the sociology of education must focus on an array of salient social issues, many with vital policy implications. Following a discussion of the various theoretical orientations and methods used by sociologists of education, this article, which was written by members of the Board of the Sociology of Education Research Committee (RC04), examines a selection of these significant and emerging issues.

***keywords*** education ◆ globalization ◆ educational accountability ◆ lifelong learning ◆ peer groups ◆ teachers

Sociology of education makes contributions to the understanding of an important institution present in every society – education. In the following article members of the Board of the ISA Sociology of Education Research Committee, RC04, explore aspects of the field including theory, methods, emerging issues, stratification, inequalities in developing countries, politics of education and multiculturalism, educational assessment and accountability, peer group effects, school-to-work transitions, adult and lifelong learning, teacher supply, demand, status and morale, and social control. Attention is also paid to emerging issues in the sociology of education.

## Theory in the sociology of education

As a major contributor to the field of sociology and to the testing of established theories, sociology of education plays a vital role in the continuing development of sociology. Émile Durkheim is generally considered to be the founder of the sociology of education, having provided a sociological conceptualization of education as a system that transmits society's culture and social order to new generations. The sociology of education also derives its conceptual and theoretical roots from the contributions of Marx and Weber. Marx laid down the foundations for conflict theory and later conflict theorists have explored the ideological role of the state in education as it reproduces and maintains class statuses. Weber developed a multidimensional approach in which structure, human agency, the material and the normative were combined.

Building on this early foundation, several more recent directions have emerged. Among structural conflict theories, Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory of practice, Basil Bernstein's (1996) theory of language codes and Randall Collins's (1979) Weberian theory of social exclusion have had a major impact on contemporary sociology of education. According to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of praxis, the social world consists of the history of accumulation. Education as a part of social and cultural reproduction is linked to cultural capital (capital based on students' social settings and opportunities that provide knowledge of the world derived from live experiences) and subsequent social differences between students. Similarly, in Bernstein's 'code theory' (1975) he explores the performance of working-class students and argues that socialization is based on class. The dominant school

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pedagogy, in addition to language and culture, reproduces social differences between classes. In Coleman's (1988) view, in the formation of human capital, social capital based on trust and community (e.g. school's relationship with students' families and communities) plays a central role. Social capital refers to the social resources and family networks students bring to their educations that affect their opportunities and achievement. The study of such material and symbolic resources in relation to education has enriched our understanding of differences in educational opportunities. At the same time, it has opened up opportunities to affect such differences through educational policies.

Symbolic interactionism and social constructionism have been major sources of action theories in the sociology of education, particularly in their focus on interaction (Ballantine and Spade, 2014; Woods, 1983). According to Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to cognition, learning is dependent on the interaction between the learner and the social environment, and this includes peers, as well as parents and teachers. From oppositional culture theory, Demanet and Van Houtte (2011) add to the analysis of interaction by discussing misconduct in schools and the causes of feelings of futility in students in and out of their school environments. Also contributing to theory at the interaction level, Mickelson discusses gender differences in interaction in classrooms for boys and girls and how these differences affect their experiences (Mickelson, 2012).

Modern and postmodern theories have emerged on all continents. In Chinese and especially in Taiwanese sociology, the hidden curriculum and ideology are familiar concepts, and scholars have reviewed almost all relevant theories, including feminism, postmodernism, Weberian theories, reproduction theories, resistance theories, critical theories, dramaturgical theories, structural theory, ethnomethodology, and so on (Chang and Renjie, 2003). In Latin America, political sociology of education, influenced by the Brazilian Paulo Freire, is the major field. Freire (1921–97) – 'the best known educator of our time' (Gerhardt, 1993: 439) – believed education was a political, not a neutral process. He has influenced research and policies in literacy acquisition, education as liberation and transformative adult education, and educational inequality (see especially Freire, 2008 [1970]). School systems reflect an eclectic mixture of philosophical and pedagogical ideas such as pedagogical positivism, spiritualism, humanism, normalism and human capital theories, and these also influence theory and research (Torres, 2003).

## Methods in the sociology of education

Researchers in the sociology of education have always used a variety of methods in the study of educational organizations and processes. From the beginning, the standard 'methods of the day' characterized educational research. Both qualitative and quantitative research strategies prevailed, and often the two were mixed. This is what we find in early studies such as Hollingshead's *Elmstown's Youth* (Hollingshead, 1948) and Coleman's *Adolescent Society* (Coleman, 1961), in the United States; Hargreaves's *Social Relations in a Secondary School* (Hargreaves, 1967) and Ford's *Social Class and the Comprehensive School* (Ford, 1969) in the United Kingdom; Connell et al.'s *Growing up in an Australian City: A Study of Adolescents in Sydney* (Connell et al., 1959); and even Bourdieu and Passeron's *Les Héritiers: les étudiants et la culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964) in France. Similar studies can be found in other countries. All of these studies are based on standard methods used by sociologists at the time, namely questionnaire surveys, interviews, sociometric maps and observation as sources of data.

During this period sociologists of education knew that the study of schools, and the students within them, was more complex than the methods which were available to study them. Because students are nested in classrooms, and classrooms in schools, and schools within other boundaries, such as school districts or countries, there was recognition of the possibility of what was called 'contextual effects', but there were no efficient methods through which these effects could be studied.

By the end of the 1960s, new statistical techniques began to be developed which opened up the possibility of both investigating the contextual effects of nested data, and also for the simultaneous analysis of larger numbers of variables (Blau and Duncan, 1967). The development of multivariate causal models by Sewell and his colleagues, which came to be known as the 'Wisconsin model' (Sewell et al., 1969), opened up a new methodological era, not only in sociology of education, but for sociology as a whole.

The last several decades have seen the expansion of statistical techniques, especially driven by the unique demands of the analysis of educational data. These techniques, such as PLSPath and LISREL (both developed in Sweden) and HLM (developed in the United States), have been described in Saha and Keeves (2003) and Keeves and Darmawan (2009). The first two techniques made it possible to create latent variables from measured variables in the same causal model, thus advancing the use of path models

such as the Wisconsin model. The latter technique, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), was a radical breakthrough in allowing researchers to take into account the nesting of data to two or three levels.

It would be incorrect to assume that all advances made in research methods have been in the quantitative domain. During this recent period, qualitative research methods have also evolved in a way that enhanced the validity of the study of educational processes. The early processes of observation, participative observation, and the content study of documents have expanded to include both biographical and narrative methods (Antikainen and Komonen, 2003; LeCompte, 1997). In many ways, these techniques have provided more in-depth and sensitive understandings of how students, teachers and administrators attribute meanings and understanding to the day-to-day life of teaching and learning at all levels.

The methods in the sociology of education have evolved in response to the unique challenges of research on education. Most of these methods, once developed within educational research, have now become commonly used within the sociology discipline itself, and have made possible equally valuable contributions in other fields within sociology. Therefore, it is correct to say that the unique issues in educational research, especially from a sociological perspective, have meant that sociology of education 'leads the way' in the development of research methods and statistical techniques (Saha and Keeves, 2003).

## Selected emerging issues in the sociology of education

### *Education and globalization*

Globalization has had a profound effect on educational systems in developed and developing nations, with many of its consequences being unanticipated. Contemporary societies are in a period of profound changes, where the national space-time has been lost, gradually, since the 1970s. The primacy in relation to the growing importance of space–time globally and locally has led to the crisis of national social contracts, which formed the basis of the modern development of central states.

As Dale (2001) argues, most evident effects of globalization in educational policies result from the reorganization of states' priorities in becoming more competitive, namely so as to attract investments of transnational corporations to their countries. It is also argued that transnationalization of education is a form of 'low-intensity globalization' (Santos, 2001; Teodoro, 2003), partly because large statistical research projects have an indirect influence on national education policies and also because of the relationship established between international organizations and the formulation of these policies. In this sense, the center of educational governance remains largely under state control, although it is possible to identify new forms of reconfiguration. The way regulation works is now deeply influenced by supranational forces, as well as by political-economic forces.

On the other hand, Meyer (1997) points out that there is a World-Wide Common Culture that sees the development of national educational systems as built on the basis of universal models of education, state and nation. This means that institutions of nation-state and state themselves are shaped by standards, ideologies and universal common values. However, Ball (2003) has noted that alignment among developed nations with economic (and educational) policies of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the OECD has resulted in pressures on developing nations to 'Americanize' their economies and to utilize an American or a First World model in the organization of schooling. The sociology of education in Central and Southern Africa has addressed the conflict between the vestiges of colonial approaches to education and those that value the contributions of local cultures and practices. Scholars recognize that in a globalizing world children in African schools must be competitive, but also must not lose their cultural heritage. Otherwise, they will likely only value that which originates in the countries of their former colonizers (Awasom, 2009).

This globalized world culture is seen as being provided by science, rationality and the conception of human rights, which are created in and installed in individuals by formal education. This explanation sustains the theory about the spread of educational systems by isomorphism, through processes of cultural diffusion (Dale and Robertson, 2009).

### *Education and stratification*

Educational differences and inequality are found in all societies where competition, markets and the family are central institutions. It should be noted that professional hierarchies and models of social mobility are surprisingly similar in all industrial societies (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). As education and participation in society expand, the effect of social background weakens slightly (Dronkers, 1993), but this weakening can be different for students in different fields of study in higher education (Ayalon and Yogev, 2005). The persistence of differences and inequality takes distinct forms, including both the social and economic values of schooling and also the contents and the format of each kind of

education (Bills, 2004; Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993; Shavit and Müller, 1998).

Regardless of globalization, cross-national differences are clearly seen in educational inequality. They are linked with more general social differences, so that in the Nordic countries – or more generally in countries with a socialist or social democratic regime – the differences are smaller than in countries with liberal market economies. Strong factors explaining the differences include individualization and the formation of different school tracks in education (Beller and Hout, 2006; Marks, 2005). According to Marks's (2005: 494–5) results, 'The greater the number of school tracks, the stronger the effects of class background. Similarly, the greater the difference between schools in student performance (the intraclass correlation) the stronger the effect of class background.' Nevertheless, the relationship between education and economic relations is less than unity. For example, as Marrero (2012) showed, Uruguay has one of the better Gini indexes (income distribution) in Latin America and the most unequal education system in the continent. Dubet et al. (2010) indicate that the societies that give more value to diplomas – supposedly more open and democratic – have very restricted systems of education.

The social struggles over education are part of institutional characteristics of school systems: the middle classes, being in a key position, are able to influence the development of education in the direction of its exclusive aims (Ferreira, 2000; Power et al., 2003). The academic bias can distort the efforts and investments on schooling, depreciating technical formation and certificates (Barbosa, 2012; Brunello et al., 2007; Schwartzman, 2011). Social struggles can result in barriers such as the accessibility of education. Social barriers are a combination of factors preventing someone without some social resources from getting education. Sociocultural barriers represent a strong trend between the level of education quality and such characteristics as education of parents, their occupation and work position. Territorial barriers are determined by a variety of factors: type of populated area, distance from residential area to school, access to transportation, number of schools within reachable distance and level of urbanization in the area. Every one of these factors could be either an obstacle, or a resource. In analyzing economic barriers it is important to consider not only the open factors of accessibility such as family income, but also the latent ones such as chargeability of school services (sometimes as unofficial praxis). Institutional barriers are specific. If territorial, sociocultural and economic barriers *can be reproduced* by the educational system, these institutional barriers *are created* by it. Considerable research in the sociology of education is thus dedicated to an examination of both the barriers and the mechanisms that create and perpetuate them (Konstantinovskiy. 2003, 2012). In addition to social class, education systems are marked by gender and 'racial' (ethnic) differences. Social class, gender and 'race' as collective identities cannot be reduced into each other, but they are not separate either: rather, they are intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991; Mirza, 2009; Santos, 2009). As a result, inequalities can be based on multiple grounds, systems of classification may cross each other, and identities may be multiple and multiply marginalized.

### *Education inequalities in developing countries*

The construct of the nation-state remains critical and almost indispensable in regulating and influencing policy (Green, 1997). The nation-state as the maker and the implementer of legislation remains, in the 21st century, the key custodian in the establishment of social institutions and the protection of civil rights, alongside which is a more assertive and well-informed civil society. More and more, policy-makers, especially in education, are forced to include the discourse of equity and redress. Much of this discourse finds itself embedded in the tension between state policy and the vagaries of the free-market.

Analyzing education in North America, Apple (2000, 2001) coins the term 'hegemonic social bloc', made up of an alliance of neoliberals, neoconservatives, authoritarian populists and the new professional middle class. These groups exert their political and ideological hegemony to serve the interest of the 'market', 'meritocracy' and 'technocracy', resulting in different forms of exclusion. The relationship between the market, civil society and state becomes negligible to the extent that state regulation has led to greater forms of exclusion than inclusion.

While developing and under-developed societies continue to struggle with inequalities in their educational systems, a developed country like the USA is equally challenged. Teach for America (TFA), a non-profit organization, claims that only about seven out of 120 Grade 7 learners at a North Carolina school knew the name of the president of the USA. Morss (2013) concludes that the USA spends a great amount on health and education with a small return. He links educational outcome to income inequality. Ball (2008) claims that despite the flood of government initiatives and policies introduced over the past 20 years in the UK, the education system remains split along class lines. Unterhalter (2012) proposes that inequalities in income are compounded by inequalities in higher education, which exist in all countries. National

disparities reflect global inequalities (UNESCO, 2009). The developmental question is: 'What makes educational inequality different among the developed, developing and under-developed societies?'

In 2009, the United Nations Education and Scientific Committee (UNESCO) released a report which lays the blame squarely on governments, political indifference, weak domestic policies and the failure of aid donors to act on their commitments (UNESCO, 2009). The report goes on to project that at least 29 million children will still be out of school in 2015. Currently, children in the lowest 20% in countries such as Ethiopia, Mali and Niger are three times less likely to be in primary school as children from the wealthiest 20%. In the Philippines, children in the poorest 20% receive five years less education than children in the wealthiest families. Many learners leave the schooling system without the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 3.8 million teachers will have to be recruited by 2015 if universal primary education is to be achieved.

Developing countries are unable to escape from the overt, covert, intractable and pervasive influence of global agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and multinational corporations. For the last two decades, the World Bank has increased its economic and ideological influence in setting the global agenda of the so-called less developed countries (Xavier, 2002: 1), and in most cases, in conjunction with these governments. These influences have often had negative effects upon the educational systems in the developing nations, have weakened local cultural knowledge in communities, and made it increasingly more difficult for some countries to educate all children.

Despite strong and progressive policies, as in South Africa, serious issues around the lack of capacity, poor controls over the system and unaccountable trade union activities contribute to growing inequalities. The unrelenting quest among both the lower-class and middle-class parents to secure places in 'good' schools for their children, many of which require fees, creates the conditions for continued exclusion. For all levels of education, the lack of relevance of curricula to local developmental needs and a dubious understanding of quality and governance undermine efforts at overcoming inequality.

Naidoo (2010) asserts that for higher education, a market model may not be appropriate for low-income countries at this stage of their development. Despite student growth worldwide, it has been the least in low-income countries; for example, the average participation rate in Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest at 6%, and is even lower for countries with the poorest level of human development where opportunities for participation are non-existent (Unterhalter, 2012).

Some nations have focused on multicultural education to foster the inclusion of under-served groups. For example, the government of Indonesia, a nation with more than 300 language and ethnic groups, has passed legislation to foster multiculturalism in response to a globalizing world and to mitigate ethnic conflict (Sunarto et al., 2004). In 2003, it was mandated that 'education is to be provided in a democratic and just manner, without discrimination with respect to human rights, religious values, cultural values and national diversity' (Law No. 20 of the National Education System; cited in Pattinararany and Kusumadewi, 2008: 3). However, these authors note that the implementation of multiculturalism has failed at the classroom level because of the lack of knowledge about diverse groups and cultures on the part of the teachers, and entrench resistance by conservative forces.

### *The politics of education in developed nations: the case of multiculturalism*

One of the current issues relating to the politics of education is the ways with which state institutions, political ideologies and competing interests, both within and outside the education community, influence the content, form and functioning of education. A number of studies focusing on the political aspects of education and educational policy-making examine how the concept of multiculturalism is dealt with in a globalized world. Below, there are some examples of how a number of western countries try to manage the issue of multiculturalism in their national systems.

In Britain education is a field characterized by racial inequalities, given the noticeably poor performance of Black and Minority Ethnic children in schools. Multiculturalism is overshadowed by notions pertaining to diversity, citizenship and nation-building. The radicalization of young Muslims in Britain, community cohesion and the educational policies set by the governments are central, as is the significance of 'whiteness' and the role that White and middle-class culture plays in modern Britain.

In the Netherlands while multiculturalism was once the main objective regarding the future of the Dutch society, it is nowadays apparent that assimilation weighs far more heavily. Policies designed to combat educational disadvantage in the Netherlands are often dictated by the political ideology of whatever political party is in power, with the main differences between left-wing and right-wing parties expanding over the field of education.

In Germany government policy and ideology

helped promote a 'Europeanized national identity' so as to promote the needs of a multicultural society. Germany continues to struggle with shifting its educational policies from maintaining a Europeanized identity to a novel dimension of multicultural citizenship. Educational policies in Germany and citizenship education, from the times of the Weimar Republic, through Nazism, to the postwar division of the country, have always been instrumental in shaping society.

In the US a key issue dominating education at national level was Civil Rights and the lack of equality of educational opportunities. The expansion of Civil Rights, the arrival of new immigrant groups and globalization have revamped the US education system to an extent that what was once considered the domain of state and local authorities nowadays includes the federal government. Both schools and states have resisted federal interference in educational policies. Increased educational opportunities available to disadvantaged groups and immigrants alike have lessened the career prospects of those pupils coming from the native-born middle class. In addition, there are growing fears expressed by the business sector concerning a lack of competitiveness of the American labor force in the midst of the worldwide financial crisis and the overall impact of economic globalization.

In Canada inequalities continue to persist in education despite various educational strategies. The pertinent cultural differences between the First Nations peoples, the British and French communities, as well as the immigrant population are often reflected in Canada's understanding of multiculturalism and education. Interestingly, education in Canada is a provincial matter rather than a federal issue, thus affecting many of the federal government's initiatives to defend multiculturalism.

More than many other western nations, Australia has embraced multiculturalism as a national educational agenda. Thus, considerable research in the sociology of education has examined the effect of this perspective on educational outcomes. Not only has there been a growing concern about Aboriginal education and life chances, but also in the teaching of non-Aboriginal youth about Aboriginal culture. Likewise, the significant increase in European, Asian and Latin American immigrants to Australia has resulted in substantial research on the adaptations of diverse groups to Australian society. For an examination of multiculturalism in Australia and its exploration in sociology of education, see Saha (2014).

Examining the politics of education in other western countries as well reveals the politicized nature of education. Such study makes clear that educational phenomena reflect and inevitably serve certain political agendas that do not necessarily coincide, in this case, with the all-pervading notion of multiculturalism. Amidst rapid social changes brought about by globalization and postmodernity, states and governments try to reaffirm their power to promote policies that reflect the needs and the priorities set out by those in power as has always been the case since the late 19th century.

### *Educational assessment and accountability in global perspective*

Systems of educational assessment and accountability have been in existence for centuries. However, the intent of such assessment has changed considerably in the past 30 to 40 years. Early accountability systems held students or applicants for admission accountable for their learning through the use of graded examinations. In the early years of the 20th century, the testing of students served another function – as a diagnostic tool to inform teachers of student deficiencies that were in need of remediation or enhanced instruction. While these earlier roles for accountability persist, new purposes emerged during the last few decades of the 20th century; these coincide with significant changes in economic and political relations among nations. Testing in its current usage frequently serves as an indicator of the quality of the educational system and its professional practitioners. Test score outcomes are used to judge whether to close schools and replace personnel at the school level, and to judge the adequacy of a national workforce (Dworkin, 2005; Dworkin and Tobe, 2012a; Lee, 2008; Nichols and Berliner, 2007; Pigozzi, 2006; Spring, 2008, 2009; Teodoro, 2007).

In a globalizing world, markets are no longer restricted to regions or even nation-states, and economic factors, be they producers, managers, workers, or clients and customers, are also not limited. Since producers of goods and services are not restricted to local labor markets, they can choose among labor markets globally to match their particular needs. They employ workers with high levels of academic attainment drawn from high-performing educational systems to perform valued, technical work, and workers from lower-performing educational systems to perform the more menial work. As Pigozzi (2006) observed, governments, business and the public have begun to recognize that differentials in the academic performance of a nation's student body have broad ramifications. Countries with well-educated populations can thrive, while those without such populations stagnate.

Whether a nation thrives or stagnates is not left to chance. Privileged nation-states exploit their advantage to maintain hegemony over scarce resources (Apple, 2003). But the advantages must be

justified in a rational manner, preferably based upon 'objective' measures and standards. This is the logic of neoliberalism, with its focus on the 'marketization' of social life and social institutions (Ball, 2003). The objective standards should be readily understood and accepted, and if privileged groups or privileged societies perform best on these objective measures and standards, so much the better. Standardized achievement tests meet the requirements of apparent objectivity and rationality, and also tend to portray those with economic and political advantages as the most competent. Conveniently, the schools that suffer the most draconian sanctions, including school closings, tend to serve minorities and the poor, while many of those that serve the middle class are not negatively sanctioned and may even be given financial rewards for high achievement.

International tests such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) provide, on first inspection, the necessary data for international economic decision-makers to gauge which countries have a competent youth population and future labor force and which do not. In turn, decisions about the placement of industry and the selection of different kinds of labor markets to be employed can be determined by the results of a single, standardized test. A nation's motivation to do well on such tests is in part one of national pride, but it also exerts pressure on states to raise achievement. When Finland scored above other nations on PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 there were demands by government leaders in other nations to copy the Finnish educational system. While Finland was among the top scoring nations on PISA 2009 and 2012, Shanghai, China outscored all test-taking nations with lower-scoring countries asking 'how can we now be like Shanghai?'

Nevertheless, criticism of PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and similar international tests has focused on test validity and reliability when applied across cultures (Hambleton, 2002: 58). There is yet another concern. Ball (2003: 31) has noted that alignment among developed nations with the economic (and educational) policies of the World Trade Organization, the IMF, the World Bank and the OECD has resulted in pressure on developing nations to 'Americanize' their economies. Imposing an 'American' or 'First World' model on developing nations that seek aid to build capacity often results in the deterioration of cultural patterns that are central to the populace and are part of a national heritage. Educational reform often accompanies these transformations. However, as Awasom (2009) observed, the past 'colonial' education models that were imposed on European colonies in Africa likewise diminished the cultural heritages of peoples, stifled their social development and fostered dependency. Awasom argues that the First World continues to dictate educational policies in Africa that at the minimum maintain dependency and stifle progress for the African working classes.

Finally, it cannot be assumed that all educational accountability is dysfunctional for students, teachers, schools, or developing nations. Those systems of accountability that seek to expand educational opportunities are notable exceptions, including the United Nation's 'Millennium Development Goals' to end extreme poverty by 2015 through the promotion of universal primary education and gender equality and empowerment of women (UNDESA, 2008). Further, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has fostered the goal of 'Education for All' (see Draxler, 2008) and operates the annual IIEP Policy Forums, which have addressed issues of anticorruption practices in schools and in government ministries (Hallak and Poisson, 2002).

### *The effects of peer groups on schooling*

Since Coleman's early study *Adolescent Society* (1961), the research literature on the importance of peer groups and friends as factors in educational achievement and attainment has been extensive. The isolated adolescent is a rarity, and recent literature supports the notion that an understanding of the interpersonal relationships of young people is a key to understanding learning both in and out of the classroom (Burross, 2008).

Peer groups and friends provide the context within which social learning takes place. During early adolescence peer groups become especially strong, presenting challenges to parents and teachers. Not only does this pressure affect social development, such as the formation of self-identity and self-esteem, but also attitudes and motivation towards academic learning. Peer subcultures vary considerably and include not only academic learning, but a wide range of other behaviors relating to dress, music, drugs and alcohol, sex and leisure activities. In many ways, the peer group serves as a 'mirror' from which the individual young person finds out what kind of person he or she is (Packard and Babineau, 2008). But more importantly, the peer groups, and the friendships which may or may not be a part of the group, provide a gradual continuum between dependence on the family and the independence of adulthood (Coleman and Hendry, 1999).

There have been some recent shifts in the direction and emphasis of peer group research. For

example, Caselman and Self (2007) found that the extent to which the adolescent regards him- or herself as 'a close friend' (and therefore has a positive self-image) depends partly on the support of the peer group; this clearly has implications for academic performance. Boehnke (2008) not only demonstrated that peer pressure can cause under-achievement, especially for girls, but that this varies across cultures. In countries where achievement is highly valued, peer pressure has less effect. What is perhaps more relevant, from an educational perspective, is that teachers cannot always determine who belongs to which peer group, although the ability to determine peer membership improves with the length of time the teacher knows the student (Pittinsky and Carolan, 2008).

### The school-to-work transition

Of concern to many countries is the preparation of young people for productive roles in society. Sociologists of education are interested in these patterns of entry into the workforce and their effectiveness. A number of countries provide stepping stones into jobs – from high school or vocational school to college or trade school to apprenticeships to jobs. Planned economies determine their worker needs in advance and train for available jobs. Other nations plan transitions through various steps in the educational process (Buehler and Konietzka, 2010; Van Houtte and Van Maele, 2012). In many systems, little guidance is provided to high school students who must adjust to the demands of the job market. Ballantine and Hammack (2012) have noted the growth of the 'credential crisis', in which college graduates can no longer count on their degrees leading to access to high-status jobs.

While the problem is significant in the West, there is considerable evidence of the under-employment of well-educated individuals elsewhere. For example, a growing problem in China is the presence of what has been called 'ant tribes' (Lian, 2009), or college-educated individuals who are forced to share housing and meager incomes because they cannot obtain work that uses their educational skills. China's economy currently cannot absorb the burgeoning pool of college graduates, despite public and central government demands that more Chinese youth seek college degrees. Growing industrialization and the extent of outsourcing to China by foreign corporations have resulted in more need for assembly line workers with junior middle school credentials than workers with college degrees (Choi and Greenaway, 2001; Ren, 2011).

### Adult education and lifelong learning

Adult education has a long history related to civil society and social movements in particular. Since the 20th century, adult education has also become a matter of state policy (Torres, 2006). Esping-Andersen (1990) has proposed a well-known classification of ideal types of welfare states. His point of departure is the concept of 'decommodification', i.e. 'the degree to which welfare states permit people to make their living standards independent of pure market forces' (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 3). In both liberal welfare capitalism and in the conservative or corporative model, social rights are restricted and the rate of decommodification is low. The third regime cluster, the Nordic model, includes 'those countries in which the principles of universalism and decommodification of social rights were extended also to the new middle classes'. The Nordic model of adult education includes a high participation rate, a high share of public funding and public suppliers, and a high share of personal interest in adult education (Antikainen, 2010; Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009; Tuijnman and Hellström, 2001).

For decades, participation in adult education has been studied by conducting rather uniform national level surveys (Desjardins et al., 2006). Differences in participation are related to socioeconomic status, initial level of education, age, gender, urban–rural setting and ethnic (minority) group; these are called 'determinants of participation' and their combinations, 'patterns of participation'. At present, the life course perspective and life history methods are also frequently applied (Antikainen and Komonen, 2003; Crossan et al., 2003).

The breakthrough of lifelong learning as the principal concept for education policies occurred in the context of accelerating globalization (Teodoro, 2003). Jarvis (2008) suggests that current lifelong learning is like two sides of the same coin: 'We both learn in order to be workers so that we can produce and then we learn that we have needs to consume so that we devour the commodities that we have produced, whilst others take the profits.'

### Teacher supply and demands, status and morale

There is a substantial body of research in sociology of education dedicated to such topics as the demand and supply of qualified teachers, the role of teachers in determining student learning outcomes, and the effects of the growing neoliberal pressure for school accountability on teacher morale and turnover. The role of such performance-based assessments on teacher performance, as measured by student achievement results, is an additional research topic receiving considerable attention. Other work has

focused on teacher demography and factors that attract individuals into teaching or repel them from considering a teaching career, while still others have explored the relationship between student disruptions, classroom bullying and student delinquency on teacher effectiveness or teacher burnout (Bru, 2009; Cassidy, 2009; Friedman, 1991, 1995; Gavish and Friedman, 2010). Selected for this article are three issues that focus on the inter-mix among the varied research issues associated with teachers. The three presented are the status of teachers within their societies, which affects the capacity of schools to attract quality teaching staffs; the resultant issues of teacher supply and demand; and finally, the stressors associated with teaching, intertwined with status, that affect teacher morale and burnout.

*Teacher status:* One measure of teacher status is relative salaries based on a percentage of a nation's GDP. The OECD reports that the highest salaries for teachers with 10 years' experience (expressed in US dollars) are found in Luxembourg and Switzerland, while the lowest are found in Indonesia and a few former Eastern bloc nations (OECD, 2011: 406–12). Using the proportion of GDP measure for 28 developed nations, the OECD reported that during the year 2009 experienced teachers (15 years of service) had a mean salary that was as low as less than one-half of the per capita GDP for 25- to 64-year-olds with a tertiary education and no higher than 1.25 times the per capita GDP for the same population. Of course, teachers' salaries are generally based on a school year, which is often nine or ten months in developed nations, while the GDP comparison is based on a full-year's employment. Thus, the gap between average GDP for tertiary-educated workers and teachers might be somewhat narrower (perhaps by a quarter, or three months), but would still reflect a relative disadvantage for teachers. The OECD reported that elementary teachers earned 77% of the salary of the comparison population, while lower-secondary teachers earned 81% and upper-secondary teachers earned 85%, respectively (OECD, 2011: 408). When data are examined for developing nations and literacy rates are controlled in the analysis, the results remain depressing for teachers. Mehrotra and Buckland (2001) adjusted the data for literacy rates among the populations in order to compare teachers with comparably educated groups, the results changed. The residual between the expected ratio of teachers' salaries to GDP per capita and the observed values for the nations in the OECD study resulted in an actual advantage among teachers in the Third World compared with their First World counterparts. UNESCO's Section for Teacher Education noted that, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, teachers' salaries have failed to keep pace with other professions requiring comparable levels of training (Moon, 2007). By contrast, teachers in Taiwan and China are held in high status and rewarded because traditional Chinese culture places them high in the realm of heaven (Fwu and Wang, 2002; Hargreaves, 2009).

*Teacher supply and demand:* The issue of the availability of teachers around the world has two foci: the absolute supply of teachers relative to demand, and the supply of competently trained teachers relative to demand. Mulvaney (2006) noted that in 2004 South Africa lost 4000 teachers to HIV/AIDS. Further, past discrimination in access to schooling and low levels of adult literacy have meant that the potential pool of people to be trained as teachers is attenuated. Ironically, attempts to realize 'Education for All', which is central to UNESCO and the IIEP's global goals, may contribute to increases in the demand for teachers that can outstrip the supply. Miller et al. (2008) reported that the problem of teacher supply is further exacerbated by migration out of developing nations to the First World (the so-called South–North migration). There is also some small amount of South–South migration. Mulvaney (2006) reported that in 2004 South Africa lost 21,000 teachers to out-migration.

Teacher supply issues are nuanced by concerns about teacher qualifications. This is further delineated by whether the teachers are qualified to teach in the specific subject field they are assigned to cover. Citing a UNESCO study, Moon (2007) indicates that in Sub-Saharan Africa about one-third of primary school teachers were untrained. He reports that in South and West Asia the percentages of untrained teachers are similar to those found in Southern and Eastern Africa. In the developed world concerns about teacher quality are no less salient. For example, Marrett (1990), Ingersoll (2001, 2005) and the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2004) report that in high-poverty and minority schools in the US, the likelihood of teachers being certified in their teaching area, especially in science and mathematics, was significantly less than in middle-class and majority schools. Furthermore, 35% of US teachers in private schools have no certification at all, compared with slightly over 1% of public school teachers (Aud et al., 2011). Kane et al. (2008) has warned that merely because a teacher is certified or has an academic degree in her or his subject matter does not guarantee that the teacher is effective in raising student achievement.

*Teacher morale and teacher burnout:* Drawing on the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 70,000 teachers, the OECD (2009) noted that teachers contend that their effectiveness is sabotaged by unruly and disruptive students and a lack of support by parents and administrators, which leads to heightened teacher burnout rates (Dworkin, 1987, 2009; Dworkin and Tobe, 2012b). The data demonstrated that (1) in excess of 90% of teachers in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland and Norway felt that good teaching was not rewarded; (2) over 70% of the teachers in the lower-secondary schools in Mexico, Italy, the Slovak Republic, Estonia and Spain said that their teaching was hampered by disruptive students; and (3) teachers in Brazil and Malaysia report that between 13 and 17% of the school day is spent maintaining discipline.

In nearly all of the countries in the OECD study, the teachers hold relatively stable employment with full-time appointments. In fact, historically there has been a social contract between teachers and societies that offers teachers job security in exchange for salaries that are less than competitive with those offered to comparably trained individuals by the world of business. However, under the aegis of accountability, performance-based assessments of teachers, linked with threats of school closures and staff terminations, are occurring. Increasingly in the most developed nations, teachers (and their schools) can face employment instability when student standardized test scores are low. Teachers then face both less competitive salaries and job instability. The consequence of this change in the social contract has been a shift from what Bryk and Schneider (2002) term 'organic trust' to 'contractual trust'. The former is based on the type of interpersonal trust characteristic of a *Gemeinschaft*, while the latter is both formal and bureaucratic, as in a *Gesselschaft*. Effective school reform often depends upon interpersonal cooperation among teachers and school administrators that involves a willingness to believe that the other shares personal values in common and they can 'trust' one another. The shift in trust caused by school accountability systems violates and transforms the nature of trust and makes more problematic the willingness of teachers to take chances with new practices. The violation of such trust has been found to be associated with rising levels of teacher burnout (Dworkin and Tobe, 2014).

## Social control: an understudied issue in the sociology of education

Since the 1970s, globalization has swept through human societies. Although the term 'globalization' involves diverse arrays of concepts, including knowledge economy, market economy, identity politics, digital society, individualization, privatization and so on, it highlights the restructuring of the world economic system and the intensification of international competition. To confront these global trends, the New Right ideology has dominated educational reforms all over the world. Its cult of efficiency and accountability worried sociologists and educators so much that they devoted their efforts to issues concerning the compromised social justice. The consequence was that other issues raised by globalization were relatively neglected. The social control issue is one of them.

Social control, be it visible or invisible, explicit or implicit, exerted through such social institutions as religion, law, medicine and education, maintains social order to the extent that it provides a solid basis for social development and progress. For an education system to fulfill the social control function via its socialization-selection task at a time of unprecedented social change, school curricula, instruction and assessment need to change accordingly. Given these, relations between education and social control require renewed discussions. Consistent with the issue of social control is the need to reconfigure concepts such as citizenship and social solidarity in light of globalization and trans-state residency. Such issues have been addressed in work by Green et al. (2006), Kivisto and Faist (2007), Faist and Kivisto (2008), Bloemraad et al. (2008), Mugge (2012) and most recently by Saha (2013). Saha has argued that citizenship education does not seek to produce 'mindless conformity' to the social, political and civic norms of society, but rather the ability of citizens to engage in an open and informed debate about relevant national and global issues. Ever since World War II, with the emergence of many new nation-states, and also following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has emerged a growing worldwide trend to include more social and citizenship studies into school curricula as a form of nation-building and national integration (Saha, 2013: 8). Seen in this way, social control as a sociological concept is not a domineering and limiting force on human behavior, but an open and dynamic process whereby change takes place in an ordered and socially integrated manner.

In response to concerns about the relationship among education, globalization, accountability citizenship and social control, the Sociology of Education Research Committee (RC04) of the International Sociological Association has dedicated a series of conferences to the inter-link among social control, education, globalization and accountability. The most recent such conference was the 19th Taiwan Forum on Sociology of Education held in

Taipei, Taiwan in June 2013. These themes will also play a significant role in RC04's contributions to the 2014 World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama, Japan.

## Annotated further reading

Ball SJ (2003) *Class Strategies and the Education Market: The Middle Classes and Social Advantage*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
An epoch-making study on education and social class.

Ballantine JH and Hammack FM (2012) *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*, 7th edn. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
A good example of the sociology of education textbooks.

'Globalization and Education' (2010) *Current Sociology* 58(4; special issue).
An analytical account of education in the context of current globalization.

Kassimeris C and Vryonides M (eds) (2012) *The Politics of Education: Challenging Multiculturalism*. London and New York: Routledge.
Considers the political nature of educational planning and policy-making and focuses special attention on multiculturalism in an increasingly globalizing world.

Saha LJ and Dworkin, AG (2009) *The International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, LLC.
An international presentation of varied issues associated with teachers and teaching taken from a sociological perspective.

Stevens PAJ and Dworkin AG (eds) (2014) *The Palgrave Handbook of Race and Ethnic Inequalities in Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
A theory and research-based view of the intersections of race/ethnicity and educational inequality as seen through a collection of nations drawn from each continent of the world.

Torres CA and Antikainen A (eds) (2003) *The International Handbook on the Sociology of Education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
An international assessment of the sociology of education.

Torres CA and Teodoro A (eds) (2007) *Critique and Utopia: New Developments in the Sociology of Education in the Twenty-first Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
An assessment of the consequences of recognized and unrecognized consequences of globalization and neoliberalism in education around the world.

Wexler P (1987) *Social Analysis of Education: After the New Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan.
This book redirected the sociology of education towards modern cultural theory.

Young MFD (2008) *Bringing Knowledge Back in: From Social Constructivism to Social Realism in the Sociology of Education*. London: Routledge.
A re-evaluation of the new sociology of education and an introduction to knowledge in education.

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Ball SJ (2008) *The Education Debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ballantine JH and Hammack FM (2012) *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*, 7th edn. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Ballantine JH and Spade JZ (2014) *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*, 5th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

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***résumé*** Comme l'éducation est une institution primordiale dans la société, la sociologie de l'éducation doit mettre l'accent sur une panoplie de questions sociales donc une partie a des conséquences fondamentales directes sur la politique sociale. Se basant sur les arguments des différentes tendances théoriques en sociologie de l'éducation cette communication, qui a été écrite par les membres du conseil du Comité de Recherche (RC04), comprend une sélection de ces questions qui revêtent une grande importance

***mots-clés*** l'éducation ◆ les enseignants ◆ la formation continue ◆ les groupes de pairs ◆ la mondialisation ◆ la responsabilité éducative

***resumen*** Dado que la educación es una institución esencial para la sociedad, la sociología de la educación debe centrarse en un conjunto de importantes temas sociales, muchos con implicaciones políticas vitales. Siguiendo la discusión sobre las diferentes orientaciones teóricas de la sociología de la educación, este texto por miembros del Consejo del Comité de Investigación de Sociología de Sociología de la Educación (RC04), aborda una selección de estos temas significativos.

***palabras clave*** el aprendizaje permanente ◆ la educación ◆ la globalización ◆ los grupos de pares ◆ los profesores ◆ la responsabilidad educativa