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Education and social mobility: changing conceptions of the role of the educational systems*

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Abstract. This paper pulls together a diverse body of theoretical and empirical material bearing upon the relationship of educational systems to stratification systems. I argue that traditional approaches in the sociology of education are unable to account for recent findings emerging from the study of occupational recruitment and social mobility. A conflict model in which education is viewed as a dependent, rather than an independent, variable is better able to incorporate what would otherwise be anomalies and contradictions. Thus, educational systems may be seen as shaped by, rather than shaping, the dominant patterns of class inequality; and educational qualifactions legitimate rather than "cause" social mobility. Some implications of this perspective for research in Canada are discussed.

Résumé. Cet exposé rammasse un corps divers de données théoriques et empiriques qui portent sur le rapport entre les systèmes d'éducation et les systèmes de stratification. C'est mon avis que les approches traditionelles dans la sociologie d'éducation ne réussissent pas à expliquer certaines trouvailles récentes sorties de l'étude du recrutment occupationale et de la mobilité sociale.

Un modele basé sur le conflit dans lequel on considère l'éducation comme un variable dépendant plutôt qu'indépendant peut mieux incorporer ce qui serait autrement anomalies et contradictions. Ainsi, on peut considérer que les systèmes d'éducation sont influencés par, plutôt qu'ils ne les influencent, les formes dominantes de l'inégalité de classe, et que la formation éducationale légitime plutôt qu'elle ne la cause la mobilité sociale. Je discute également quelques implications de cette perspective pour la recherche.

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Introduction

Recent approaches in the sociology of education make it apparent that we are at some sort of watershed or crisis point in our thinking about the role of education in society. We are, as Collins (1974) concludes, moving away from a rather benign and uncritical view of education to a growing awareness that the very content and structure of educational systems derives from the forces of capitalistic — perhaps simply industrial — society. Rather than education being an independent factor able to shape and alter the stratification system, it appears to be the other way round; from a variety of quarters education is increasingly debunked as an institution whose main function is to reproduce and legitimize relationships of inequality from generation to generation. Not only does it emerge that educational reform has been difficult to bring about (Katz, 1970; Pomfret, 1976), but it also becomes problematic whether most reforms, especially those touching upon educational expansion, make much difference or are, from certain perspectives, even very desirable.

While Canada has as yet to reach the level of educational saturation which Illich (1971) implies is the case for the United States, it has, nevertheless, experienced a rapid and massive growth and transformation of post-secondary education in the last decade. Since our views about education have tended also to be American, this pessimistic verdict on education, coming as it does largely from the United States, is of immediate relevance to Canadian theory and policy on education. The aim of this paper, then, is to pull together some recent and significant developments in the study of the relationship of educational systems to stratification systems and to point out their implications for theory, research and policy in the Canadian context. Although I draw largely upon existing published material and present no new data, the interpretation of this material and my approach to the sociology of education are colored by my own research on social mobility and education.[1]

Traditional approaches

Canadian educational policy has, in the past fifteen years, moved slowly, ambivalently, and uncertainly from a British elite-sponsorship ideology to an American egalitarian-contest ideology. It is necessary to add these qualifications because at the same time as there has been admiration of the American model of higher education, meritocratic and elitist attitudes and concerns have never given way completely to a populist ideology. For example, while entry standards to universities have possibly relaxed in recent years, this appears more a response to falling enrolments rather than any concerted attempt to reach a wider segment of society or from specific demands by any particular group that this should be done. Similarly, the community college system in Ontario was deliberately created to be terminal program rather than a "back door" entry into the universities. In the initial stages the "CAATs" were explicitly slotted into an openly acknowledged hierarchy of post-secondary institutions with graduates expected to enter similarly stratified positions in the occupational structure.[2]

A good deal of the impetus for the expansion of Canadian education and for

1. This research, reported in Richardson (1977), is British. My focus in this paper is however, Canadian.

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this continuing ideological uncertainty is clearly traceable to Porter's influential work in the late 1950s. In the following quotation, Porter outlines a model of education in which meritocratic and individualistic goals are seemingly reconciled:

> Modern education should be examined against the kind of model which is here being suggested — that is, a society in which the allocation of individuals to social tasks and access to educational resources is determined by ability. Thus two ends are served: the occupational structure will reflect a more rational allocation of ability; and individuals will have the greatest opportunity to develop their talents and make their contribution to the social good. . . . The principle of equality [sic] and the principle of the rational use of economic resources thus have a mutually reinforcing function. Now, more than ever, education means opportunity. A system which does not provide equal opportunity is also inefficient. (Porter, 1965:167)

Porter was working within what can now be seen as a traditional approach in the sociology of education in which the focus has been almost exclusively on the inputs to the system. The model is that of full equality of opportunity (cf. Jackson and Crockett, 1964). The concern is with class and status factors which impede the realization of the model. Rather than systematic and persistent manifestations of patterned inequality, these factors are, in Collins' words, "treated as residual categories: carryovers from a less advanced period, or marks of the imperfections of the functional mechanism of placement" (1971:1008). In the traditional approach, both theory and policy are firmly embedded in the liberal ideology which holds that equality of opportunity is an acceptable substitute for equality of condition. Like the Utopians before them, liberal sociologists have, as George Kateb (1963:70) puts it, "sacrificed equality with regret; its loss was a necessary evil; the most had to be made out of the human resources available."[3] Hence, as Porter makes clear, the concept of equality of opportunity represents a compromise between, on the one hand, egalitarian sentiments and, on the other, the equally compelling attraction of the norms of universalism, achievement, and, above all, of efficiency.

The aim, then, was equality of opportunity which was to be brought about through equality of educational opportunity; there was to be substitution of one principle of stratification by another, of ascription by achievement. Education played such a central role in the liberal ideology because it was seen as an institution capable of reorganization and manipulation. It was also assumed that the skill requirements of jobs in industrial society are constantly rising, making more and more formal education necessary if these roles are to

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2. See various articles and letters in the *Globe and Mail* over the period 1966-68, and Garry (1975:1-8). It is of interest that while Quebec education, especially in the French sector, has been essentially elitist, CEGEPs were expressly modelled on the junior college system of California as mainstream routes to specialized programmes at the university level and as "social levellers" (see Denis, 1975).
3. As Runciman (1974) points out, for societies to become radically more egalitarian there would have to be a drastic degree of de-industrialization. Nevertheless, even within liberal sociology, the possibly utopian goal of equality of condition has never been totally obliterated. For example, see Porter et al. (1973:196-200) in which the question of how "much" inequality is necessary is once more posed. (See also, Wrong, 1964.) A more direct assault on inequality is also manifest in the recent shift by some American sociologists from equality of opportunity to "equality of results" (Bell, 1972). See also the discussion by Fein (1971) of equality and the liberal ideology.

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be filled adequately. In short, education has typically been viewed both as the key to individual mobility and as essential to the smooth and efficient functioning of an industrialized and bureaucratized society.

Elitist and egalitarian ideologies

In bringing about equality of educational opportunity, it is generally assumed that an egalitarian system of higher education is preferable to an elitist system. The main argument seems to be that an elitist system inhibits entry into higher education by individuals of lower socioeconomic background (Harvey and Charner, 1975). However, while elitist attitudes about education may affect *educational* opportunites, it does not necessarily follow that equality of opportunity — social mobility — will also be seriously affected by a shift from an elitist to an egalitarian system. This is likely to be true only if educational systems constitute the only mobility routes in society and if both the amount of equality and equality of opportunity can in fact be shown to be greater in egalitarian societies than in elitist societies. As will be shown later in this paper, neither of these assumptions appears to be the case in industrial societies. Rather, both value systems are essentially ideologies of selection and allocation and act as different kinds of justifications for class and status inequality.

Under an elitist ideology the pool of talent is defined as limited and largely determined by hereditary factors. Hence, it is assumed that the majority of the population could not possibly benefit from education above a given minimum and that selection should occur at a relatively early age in order to take the most advantage of the talent available. As found in Britain, the elitist ideology upholds the view that there should be a number of educational routes which separate those who appear bound for elite status from those who appear bound for lower-level positions (Hopper, 1971a:97).[4] There is, therefore, a fairly explicit recognition that not everyone can be socially mobile. As a result, welfare is likely to be justified primarily in terms of its improving the social and economic well-being of those who are defined as uneducable and who are not expected to alter substantially their class position or that of their children.

In contrast, the egalitarian ideology, when taken to its extreme (as it sometimes is in the United States) emerges as what Jensen (1969) refers to disparagingly as the "average-children concept": children, aside from those with neurological defects, are very much alike and differences are a result of social deprivation rather than inherent characteristics. The pool of talent, in principle, constitutes the whole of the society and is limited not by heredity but by the persistence of class factors which work to the detriment of some and to the advantage of others. It is assumed that everyone can benefit from education regardless of their future ability to contribute to social and economic productivity. Insofar as it is concerned with elite formation, the egalitarian ideology upholds the view that selection should occur relatively late and that, as much as possible, elite and non-elite should experience the same kind of

4. It is particularly in this sense, for example, that the CAATs in Ontario can be understood as the outcome of an elitist, rather than an egalitarian, ideology: students streamed at an earlier point into a non-academic programme were to receive practical education to fit them for subordinate positions (see Garry, 1975).

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education.[5] Finally, welfare, community action, and "Headstart" programmes are justified mainly in terms of their contribution toward improving the mobility potential of disadvantaged groups — in the lexicon of the 1960s, the task was to create a "platform" for upward mobility. Thus, to a large extent equality has meant equality of opportunity, and it is implicitly, sometimes explicitly, assumed that everyone can be upwardly mobile.[6]

In sum, in an egalitarian system, selection comes at the end of the contest rather than as a result of sponsorship of those viewed as most able to comprise a meritocracy in the future.[7] Whereas in an elitist system ambition is not legitimate until one has been sponsored and encouraged by the educational system, selection in an egalitarian system ideally should not occur until there has been sufficient evidence of ambition. In the former, the deserving are those with talent; in the latter they are those who have demonstrated adequate motivation.

Despite these differences, the two ideologies have in common that they focus educational research mainly on inputs to the system. Thus, the sociology of education has been almost exclusively concerned with class factors impeding equality of access to higher education (see Davies, 1970). Important though the study of these factors is to education and stratification theory, it is only part of the story. Theory generated within these ideological contexts fails to raise certain key questions about educational systems and is incapable of dealing adequately with certain facts or "anomalies" about social stratification in industrial societies.

It is a central contention of this paper that only when we pose the more general question of what all this education is in aid of — when we redirect our attention from the inputs of education to the outputs of education — can we make theoretical sense of what has been transpiring over the past few decades with respect to education. When this shift occurs, it emerges that a conflict model as well as a full-fledged functional model of education are both capable of generating new hypotheses and accounting for persistent anomalies. The key in either approach is that educational systems come to be viewed not as independent entities but rather as institutions embedded in, and subservient to, larger systems of social inequality. I will first consider very briefly some of the anomalies and then consider some of the more important alternative theoretical perspectives.

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5. This is not to suggest that "tracking" (streaming) does not occur, but rather that it is not so explicitly made evident to students or parents. Also, since selection occurs late, there is a greater necessity to soften its impact here than in an elitist system. The most apparent methods are a combination of "cooling-out" procedures (Clark, 1960) and a less than open stratification of post-secondary institutions (Karabel, 1972).
6. While this may seem like an exaggeration, consider that Lipset and Bendix (1959) devoted a good deal of their book to showing that the mobility ethic was in fact an ideology and not an empirical fact. It is also implicit in the more recent "news" that even with equality of opportunity there would not be equality of results (see Jencks et al., 1972). In short, most of the attention has been directed to the "contest," very little to the final selection.
7. It is of interest that in coining the word, meritocracy, Young meant to satirize through exaggeration what he saw as trends in post-war British society. As the discussions by Bell (1972), Herrnstein (1971), and others suggest, American social science has taken the concept very seriously, either as a positive development or a regressive step, but in either case as seemingly inevitable (see Young, 1958).

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Education and social mobility

First, what should have been obvious, that not everyone can be upwardly mobile, apparently was not. Yet, only a brief encounter with the literature on social mobility reveals that even under the assumption of a full equality of opportunity model only a minority can expect to move upwards and that this will be at the cost of an almost equivalent amount of downward mobility.[8] At the same time, it should be noted that while no society has ever reached full equality of opportunity, evidence from a variety of mobility studies (Jackson and Crockett, 1964; Blau and Duncan, 1967; Broom and Jones, 1969; and Richardson, 1977) indicated that there is considerably more social mobility than can be accounted for by changes in the occupational structure. Furthermore, unless we are prepared to make the assumption that most children of high status backgrounds are essentially incompetent to inherit positions similar to their parents', it is not clear just how much more mobility could be created than already exists in industrial societies.[9] In this respect, recurring dissatisfaction with the progress being made toward equality of opportunity is likely to be more pronounced among sociologists who focus exclusively on educational achievement rather than on social mobility *per se.* These sociologists are, in other words, likely to exaggerate the importance of education in the mobility process.

For the same reasons, what is also likely to be less apparent from a sociology of education perspective is that rates of social mobility have not changed much over this century despite a massive expansion of educational systems (Glass, 1954; Jackson and Crockett, 1964; Blau and Duncan, 1967; and Boudon, 1974). Nor, as it happens, is there very much difference between societies that can be attributed directly to education (Fox and Miller, 1965). An obvious illustration is that despite its having nearly four times as many people in higher education, the United States has a mobility rate roughly comparable to that of Britain. And, although we do not as yet have the relevant mobility data, the same conclusion is likely to be true for Canada as well: the rate of upward and downward mobility will be very close to that of the other industrial societies no matter what has happened to higher education in Canada.

In part, these somewhat suprising findings can be accounted for by the fact that there is, at best, a very loose fit between educational achievements and actual social mobility as the latter concept is generally understood. When attention is directed specifically to mobility, it emerges that a good deal, perhaps as much as half, of the mobility in industrial societies takes place independently of formal education. That is, nearly as many people are upwardly mobile through alternative educational routes (cf. Lee, 1968; Hordley

8. The amount of mobility will obviously differ depending on the number of status categories used in the analysis and in the relative size of the higher and lower categories. I am referring here to manual/non-manual dichotomy, the conventional measure of social mobility. For a fuller discussion of these issues, see Richardson (1977).

9. In general, the correlation between fathers' status and sons' status appears to be very similar and equally low in Europe, America, and elsewhere. My data for the London region show a Cramer's v = .208 and for the Glass (1954) data v = .240. Jackson and Crockett (1964) found for their American data a v = .246. Using parametric statistics, Blau and Duncan (1967:403) report a zero-order correlation of r = .40, a value identical to that found in Europe by Svalastoga.

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and Lee, 1970), through on-the-job promotion or through entrepreneurship, as through formal educational routes. There is a high degree of consensus that these intragenerational mobility routes are declining in favour of intergenerational mobility legitimated by the acquistion of formal educational qualifications (Goldthorpe, 1964; Halsey, 1971; and Westergaard, 1972). Yet, in the United States where this possible trend may be expected to have advanced furthest, Blau and Duncan (1967:196) find the correlation between educational and occupational mobility to be fairly low (r = .320), thus confirming Anderson's (1961) earlier skepticism about the significance of education in the mobility process.

Additional confirmation that the role of education may have been exaggerated in previous research can be found in the potentially revolutionary conclusions of the Coleman (1966) report and the later re-analysis of its findings by Jencks and his associates at Harvard (Jencks et al., 1972). The approach is firmly taken in terms of outputs; the key tool is path analysis. The latter allows us to see more clearly what was not so quantifiable in our earlier two- and three-fold tables: that while there are undoubtedly connections between family background and education and between education and occupational achievement, these are not nearly as strong as was previously supposed. The zero-order correlations show that there is a considerable amount of variance in the dependent variable which is unexplained. Whether we call this "luck" as does Jencks, residual factors as do Blau and Duncan, or simply unmeasured (perhaps unmeasurable) factors — "charm," "personality," "ruthlessness," "drive" — as did Sorokin (1927), the fact remains that it is far from easy to engineer equality of results even if access is made nearly equal to all.[10]

This is not to suggest that educational opportunities have not increased in the last few decades. All the available evidence suggests that they have done so fairly dramatically. But in most societies, policies designed to benefit the lower classes have, in doing so, tended to benefit other classes even more (Westergaard and Little, 1964; Spady, 1967; and Marceau, 1974). Thus, as the belief spreads that career prospects and social position come to depend upon and be legitimized by educational qualifications rather than inheritance or experience acquired on the job, high status families begin to want more education for their children.[11] The result is a rather static situation in which everyone gets more education, both those at the bottom and also those at the top. In short, while there is perhaps greater equality of educational opportunity than in the past, there is no greater equality of opportunity and little or no reduction in the range of class inequality.[12]

The meritocratic or technical-functional side of Porter's analysis of modern

10. Jencks et al. (1972) argues that there is nearly as much inequality between brothers raised in the same family as in the general population. Thus, inequality is recreated anew in each generation.
11. For example, Clement (1974:174, 175, 241) shows that while the proportion of those in the corporate elite in Canada who inherited their position has actually risen in the past twenty-one years, they are far better educated than their fathers.
12. Westergaard and Resler (1975) provide strong evidence that the gap between the rich and the poor in industrial society is widening, not narrowing. See also Jencks et al. (1972) for the United States and Johnson (1973) for Canada.

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education also does not bear up very well under empirical scrutiny. Rather than a necessary concomitant of industrialization, the more pessimistic conclusion is that education is, in main, counterproductive and wastes social resources. Collins (1971 and 1974) presents a convincing argument that educational expansion has proceeded much more rapdily than the technical or skill requirements of industrial society and that, as Berg (1970) had previously shown, education contributes little to individual productivity; vocational skills are learned primarily on the job, not in school. Working a similar vein, Gintis (1971 and 1972) argues that "profit-maximizing firms find it remunerative to hire more highly educated workers at a higher pay, *irrespective* of differences among individuals in cognitive abilities or attainments" (1972:86). He concludes that the skills necessary to job adequacy in a technological society either exist in such profusion or are so easily developed on the job that they are not a criterion for hiring. Similarly, other researchers have shown that while there is a modest correlation between education and occupational status and IQ and occupational status (r = .50) (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Sewell et al., 1969), there is only a very loose relationship between IQ and job performance (R = .21) (cf. Jensen, 1969:15). Moreover, educational requirements for specific jobs vary depending on the time of year (Berg, 1970), the degree of organizational emphasis on normative control, and the size of the organization (Collins, 1974). Apparently, what employers seek in hiring educated workers is not technical skills or cognitive ability but the type of compliant personality produced through schooling (Gintis, 1972).[13]

Extension and change of education does not, therefore, appear to have created greater equality of opportunity or contributed to economic productivity in the manner suggested by the human-capital economists (Becker, 1964). What these changes have done is to cause education to become subject to a kind of inflation. As defined by Karabel (1972:525), "educational inflation is the process by which the educational system expands without narrowing relative differences between groups or changing the underlying structure of opportunities." It means that particular qualifications "buy" ever decreasing amounts of occupational status and income. Thus, in Canada recent evidence suggests that the occupational status conferred by a B.A. degree in 1964 can only by purchased in 1968 by acquiring a second degree (Harvey and Charner, 1975). As Illich (1971) argues, the only valuable skills in society become those which are the result of formal education. Credentials become, in effect, commodities to be bartered for a chance at upward mobility or a means of preserving an existing high-status position.

For the individual, then, it is true to say that education is the key to mobility; it pays to stay in school.[14] The race for more credentials makes rational sense as a reasonable defence in the more general battle for status —

13. This is elaborated extensively in chapter five of the recent study by Bowles and Gintis (1976). See also Kohn (1969).

14. For example, my data for Britain suggests that education above the legally required minimum invariably leads to upward mobility for those with working-class origins or retention of parental status by those born in the middle class. However, many people were also successful in moving upward or avoiding downward mobility without education (Richardson, 1977). See also Carnoy (1974).

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what some have called a war of credentials. But, as in the vicious circle of wages and prices, what is individually rational may be seen as irrational when escalated to the collective level. It would, for example, be naive to assume that if the main legitimization for inequality moves from ascription to achievement, those previously in power will not bestir themselves to obtain the degrees necessary to keep their positions. Moreover, post-secondary education is not a single system but is made up of hierarchically ordered institutions offering degrees with different conversion rates in terms of occupational and social status. In other words, as low-status groups begin to attain access to certain degree institutions they may find either that educational escalation is pushed one step further, as is suggested by the recent data for Ontario (Harvey and Charner, 1975; Marsden et al., 1975), or that the route to high-status positions is through institutions which are mainly reserved for the already privileged (Clement, 1974). Karabel (1972:525) concludes that the net effect of educational inflation is thus to vitiate the social impact of extending educational opportunity to a higher level.

Educational inflation also has consequences for the perception of social mobility and, in turn, how it is likely to be studied and evaluated. With respect to the first of these, while a relatively high rate of upward mobility is institutionalized and anticipated in industrial societies, it is also expected that this will be intergenerational movement through a formal education route. The considerable amount of mobility which proceeds via non-educational routes increasingly becomes defined as irregular mobility — illegitimate and largely invisible (cf. Turner, 1966; Hopper, 1971b). Thus, those who rise because of on-the-job promotion or entrepreneurship may find that their achievements do not constitute genuine upward mobility. To take one example: my research in Britain suggests that for equivalent amounts of occupational achievement, those possessing the "right" educational qualifications are more able to transform occupational mobility into social mobility, are more effective in transmitting the new status culture, and find easier acceptance in the middle-class. In contrast, men who moved upward without benefit of education beyond the minimum tended to retain a working-class value system which, when passed on to their children, contributed to their eventual downward mobility (Richardson, 1977).[15]

Second, to the extent that researchers share this assumption that education provides the main or only mobility route in society, educational achievement rather than occupational achievement will receive research attention on the grounds that to study the former is effectively to study the latter. This more limited focus is likely to have important and misleading implications for stratification theory. Among these, it could be suggested that at the general policy level research findings on educational opportunities will lead to a possibly unwarranted degree of despair that equality of opportunity remains such a distant and unattainable goal. The degree of inequality of opportunity existing within the educational system is relatively easy to document and subject to trend analysis. Unless there is also an attempt to include the less

15. I am referring here mainly to middle-mass social mobility. For a more general discussion of the thesis of a "tightening band" between education and occupation, see Halsey (1971).

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visible mobility occurring within the occupational structure, the outcome is likely to be a plea for yet another and unproductive expansion of education.

Theoretical reformulations

As indicated earlier, to make sense of education in industrial society and of the above anomalies requires that education be treated as a dependent, not an independent variable *vis-à-vis* the stratification system. For a wide range of questions, educational systems are more appropriately viewed as being shaped by the dominant patterns of class and status inequality and the ideologies which support and legitimize that inequality. Insofar as the functions of educational systems are of concern, recent approaches have for the most part abandoned traditional functionalism for theories which derive essentially from Marx or Weber.

One of the most influential advocates of the Weberian approach is Collins (1971 and 1974) who, in going beyond Karabel's analysis, views education primarily as a power resource, a weapon used by status groups to monopolize occuptions and thereby control entry. For Collins, the basis of entry into an occupation is power; education is merely a strategic barrier used to control entry. The principal functions of education are to teach particular status cultures and to act as sorting and selecting mechanisms. Employers use educational requirements both "to select new members for elite positions who share the elite culture and, at a lower level of education, to hire lower- and middle-level employees who have acquired a general respect for these elite values and styles" (1971:1004-1005). The focus is, therefore, almost exclusively upon the stratification system rather than the educational system. As Collins concludes, "to state the conditions under which status groups vary in organizational power, including the power to emphasize or limit the importance of technical skills, would be to state the basic elements of a comprehensive theory of the forms of stratification" (1971:1018).

A somewhat different analysis of educational systems comes from Hopper (1971a and 1971b), a British sociologist. Hopper shares the general perspective of the "new" sociology of education that educational systems derive from the stratification system and not the other way round. His emphasis, however, is upon the role of education in what he calls the "total selection process," a functional problem confronting all societies no matter how simple (1971b:295). The exact structure and organization of particular systems will be determined both by the stratification profile of that society and by what he calls ideologies of implementation: norms and values about how selection and allocation should occur. Thus, Turner's (1960) contest and sponsorship norms are seen respectively as constituting egalitarian and elitist answers to these questions: How does selection occur? When are pupils initially selected? Who should be selected? Why should they be selected?

The full analysis and implications of Hopper's classifications of ideologies, stratification systems, and educational systems are complicated and cannot be dealt with adequately here. But it is important to note that, as in the work of Karabel and Collins, there is in this theory, first of all, the view that the manifest knowledge transmitted by schools may not be as important as the status training which goes with it (cf. Davies, 1970) and, secondly, that various types of educational institutions will have different functions with respect to status training — transmitting either an elite culture or a respect for it.

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Hopper's analysis is unique because of his extensive treatment of these various educational levels as a system of mobility and non-mobility routes which have different consequences for people located at different places in the status hierarchy. It has been possible to develop a number of testable hypotheses from these formulations, concerning the effects of various educational systems and mobility routes on the creation of ambition and on the personal and social consequences of social mobility.[16]

These two theories reflect Weber's contention that status situation can be raised to the same analytical level as class situation. Thus, status groups are viewed by both Collins and Hopper as active and independent, at times more likely than economic groups to precipitate "class" consciousness and to be generative of conflict. In both the focus is on the analysis of educational systems within *industrial* societies. Therefore, neither are directly concerned with explicating the relationship of education to capitalist economies — the political economy of education.[17]

Others, notably Illich (1971), take a more strictly Marxian perspective.[18] While the context remains the stratification system, the focus is more clearly directed at what, since Illich, has come to be known as the "hidden curriculum," the ideological functions served by education (see also Illich, 1972 and Snyder, 1970). As described by Gintis (1972:86), the manifest purpose of imparting cognitive skills reveals when unmasked "that social relations of education produce and reinforce those values, attitudes and affective capacities which allow individuals to move smoothly into an alienated and class-stratified society." Similarly, Carnoy (1974:14) argues that the spread of education to colonial societies was carried out in the context of imperialism and colonialism; the result, he suggests, was that people were forced out of traditional hierarchy but were brought into a capitalist hierarchy and that, while this process has elements of *liberation,* it includes elements of *dependency* and *alienation.*

As with Dreeben's (1968) earlier analysis of the latent functions of schooling, the contention that schools do in fact teach a class culture is largely in the category of a "reasonable" assumption rather than an empirical fact. Thus, there is again the danger of exaggerating the significance of education in most people's lives (cf. Bereiter, 1972; David, 1975; and Richer, 1974). However, work in Britain by Bernstein and his associates and by Bourdieu and Marceau in France tends to reinforce and extend this largely American view of the role of education in reproducing relationships compatible with capitalist society (cf. Bernstein, 1971, 1972, 1973; Bourdieu, 1973; Marceau, 1974; and Young, 1971).

To summarize briefly, all of the recent theories have in common an implicit recognition that as long as societies remain stratified, educational systems will also be stratified and that unless there is radical reform in the wider society,

16. For a list of hypotheses, see Hopper (1971b). Research using these hypotheses is reported in Richardson (1977), Hopper and Osborn (1973), and Hopper and Pearce (1973).

17. For a brief but useful summary of some differences between the Marxian and Weberian approaches to the sociology of education see Collins' (1976) review of *Schooling in the Capitalist America.*

18. However, see the critique by Gintis (1972) of Illich's concept of "de-schooling," reproduced in part in Bowles and Gintis (1976:256-262).

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most reforms within school systems are likely to be doomed at the outset.[19] As the work of Coleman, Jencks, and others taking part in the Harvard seminar (cf. Mosteller and Moynihan, 1972) makes apparent, the new sociology of education is with some few exceptions firmly embedded in a socialist, sometimes Marxian, ethic rather than a liberal ideology. Equality of opportunity, what Mathews (1973:215) depicts as "the equal right to compete freely for positions in which [it is possible] to exploit one's fellows," no longer is defined as the essence of a just society. The aim of social policy becomes "equality of result — by sharing and redistributive policies — rather than equality of opportunity" (Bell, 1972:47).

At the same time, it is not necessary and is perhaps undesirable that sociologists subscribe politically or theoretically to an egalitarian ethic in order to understand educational systems in terms of the wider system of social inequality in which they are lodged. The brief outline of the work of Collins and Hopper attests to this. Their work reveals that once we shift the approach of sociology of education from education as an independent to a dependent variable, both functional and conflict perspectives provide new insights into education. Generally, a far more fruitful research programme emerges when the assumptions of the technical functional model are relaxed, when education is viewed in terms of outputs rather than simply inputs, when educational systems are no longer treated as if they existed in a social, cultural, and economic vacuum, and when educational theory and research are more explicitly informed by stratification theory, be that Marxian or Weberian. To conclude this discussion I will list briefly some research and policy implications for Canadian education which seem to me to flow from the adoption of such a perspective.

Research implications

1. Given that the technical-functional model is under such sustained attack, there is a need for research in Canada on the actual link between skills and occupational status. We must, in other words, move toward a more objective set of criteria about what is transpiring in the occupational structure with respect to skill requirements. To what extent *are* entry requirements based around "control and conformity" and to what extent do they reflect real needs within that occupation? How do these vary from occupational situs to occupational situs, by size of organization, by type of organizational goals?

2. More attention should also be directed to the outputs of post-secondary education. No longer can we assume that a degree is a necessary guarantee of occupational success. Because people at all levels of the status hierarchy are likely to have more education than in the past, it is also relevant to discover

19. There is clearly considerable disparity about what kinds of reforms are possible. For example, despite their harsh criticism of what has sometimes been called radical school reform (see Gross and Gross, 1969; Troost, 1973), Bowles and Gintis (1976) seem to be arguing for expansion of education on the grounds that while schooling is repressive it is potentially liberating and revolutionary. See also Carnoy (1974). Others, such as Jencks et al. (1972) argue for a "voucher system" which would allow those who lost out on the first round to try again. Collins (1976) on the other hand, favours Illich's drastic proposal for a "de-schooling" of society.

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more about how class of origin continues to affect occupational attainment even after it has been mediated by education. With respect to both of these problems, the research of Harvey and Charner (1975) and of Marsden et al.(1975) is noteworthy, including as it does not only the effects of social class but also those of sex on occupational success.

3. Within this same general theoretical perspective there is need in Canada for a clearer articulation of what various educational routes exist within Canada and the consequences, personal and social, they have for those using them as mobility or non-mobility routes. We cannot assume, as in the past, that Canadian post-secondary education is monolithic and not stratified. There is an obvious hierarchy between universities and post-secondary institutions. But we do not know, except informally, how universities themselves are stratified, in terms of both status dimensions and regional dimensions — what Davis (1971) refers to as the hinterland-metropolis. How, for example, do the mobility experiences of graduates from a university at the centre differ from those at the periphery? How, within the centre, do universities differ in these respects? (see Clement, 1974) What, precisely are the mobility functions of community colleges?[20] How do these differ from universities, and so on? The research reported by Harvey and Marsden, cited above, is again a movement in the right direction.[21] With the respect to the consequences of various mobility routes, there is, for example, evidence in Britain which suggests that upward mobility through a "red-brick" university is more conducive of anxiety and neurosis than is upward mobility through the "Oxbridge" system (see Hopper and Pearce, 1973).

4. Still within this same general perspective, there is also a need to consider adult education. To the extent that the formal education is about status training and not about the transmission of job-related skills, the consequences for clients of these alternative routes are also worthy of investigation. Even a brief encounter with part-time education suggests that its aims are principally instrumental; the concern is with upgrading of people already employed. It is providing, therefore, what education is manifestly about, but it is seriously circumscribed in its ability to convey the latent or hidden curriculum. Given the limited contact there is with these students and the obvious difficulty of resocializing adults to new status, there is likely to be a considerable gap between what the qualifications promise and what in terms of social, as opposed to occupational, mobility is eventually delivered.[22]

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20. For example, impressionistic evidence suggests that community colleges in Ontario, while providing an important channel of short-distance upward mobility, also serve an important function in reversing what would otherwise be the downward mobility of middle-class children whose educational achievements are too low for them to gain admission to university. Some universities may also serve a similar function.
21. I am currently carrying out comparative research on two small universities which is meant both to replicate the Harvey-Charner-Marsden studies and to articulate their specific functions with respect to both social and geographical mobility.
22. While the "voucher system" proposed by Jencks et al. (1972) is superficially attractive, the possible failure of adult education to deal successfully with this function of the curriculum poses a serious difficulty to this and similar policies.

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5. Finally, there is a need for rethinking the relationship of educational systems to the regions in which they are located. What, for example, are the consequences of reducing regional and provincial disparities in education if these are not accompanied by a corresponding decline in equality between metropolis and hinterland? What are the implications, at the collective, as opposed to individual, level of analysis, of extension of educational opportunities? There is, in many regions of Canada, likely to be a sizeable gap between the expectations of those emerging from university and the objective structure of opportunities in the local area, meaning either that there will be considerable dissatisfaction or out-migration of young people toward the "centre" (Martin and Macdonnel, 1976). For instance, preliminary analysis of my data for one such regional university suggests that aside from providing a few service and secretarial jobs and bringing some money into the region, its principal function is to act as a "staging" mechanism for those wishing to leave the area (see note 22). Thus, extension and expansion of education within particular regions is far from straightforward and may well have negative consequences for the survival of these regions as communities. As we have seen, more generally, what is functional and rational for the individual with respect to education may in both the long and short term be dysfunctional and irrational from the point of view of the social system.

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