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The sociology of education: discoveries and discontents

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The Sociology of Education: Discoveries and Discontents.

By:

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For Gabriella,
&
Amanda.

Richness More Than You Could Ever Know.

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**Declaration.**

The contents of this thesis is the original work of the author and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university. The work of other people is acknowledged by reference.

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Abstract.

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The purpose of this research study is to analyse what has happened to the sociology of education. In the past educational sociology produced prodigious theories concerning education, and was a source of leading debate. However, today educational sociology is much less influential than it used to be, it has also been partly diluted by policy related perspectives. The importance of this investigation is that it will help ascertain whether sociology is of value to education.

To carry out this study, I will examine the distinctive phases of sociology's development. I have identified these as, the Early Sociology of Education, Interactionist and Marxist sociologies, and lastly the approach of the 'New Right'. Within each stage I aim to appraise the strengths and weaknesses of sociological techniques to education. This will enable me to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the progression of educational sociology. I will therefore be able to ask the question, 'did sociologists create their own nemesis, or were there other factors which caused educational sociology to decline?' My intention is to examine phenomena outside of sociology that may have induced sociology's demise. Have changing social and economic conditions made a move away from sociology?

Finally, one last inquiry I will undertake is, 'do we need a future sociology of education?'

Acknowledgements.

My supervisors were Dr N. Ellison and Dr I. Roberts, from the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, at the University of Durham. I must thank them for all of their excellent assistance and ideas.

I must take this opportunity to thank my family, do I need words? I think not.

I would like to express gratitude to Karen Lucas for her succour, for which I am indebted.

Cheers Ronke Martins, especially for the endless games of 'Droughts'! and also to Niall Burton.

"EDUCATION IS THE KEY
TO THE NEW WORLD" (P.66)

"THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
WE MUST AIM AT PRODUCING
IN THE FUTURE IS ONE WHICH
GIVES TO EVERY BOY AND
GIRL AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
THE BEST THAT EXISTS" (P.16)

"THE IDEAL SYSTEM OF
EDUCATION MUST BE
DEMOCRATIC, ALTHOUGH
THAT IDEAL IS NOT
IMMEDIATELY ATTAINABLE"
(P.16)

BERTRAND RUSSELL:
On Education, 1926.

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THESIS INTRODUCTION.

The main object of this study is to analyse what has happened to the sociology of education in the past one hundred years. I am concerned with the changing aspect of educational sociology and sociological inquiry, the reasons for this and the continuities (if any) of the nature of educational sociology.

The focus of the work concentrates upon specific authors and their work which has had an influential if not dramatic effect on educational sociology and its development.

At the beginning of the period there was clearly a situation which has not continued today. Educational sociology was originally influenced by the methods of natural sciences. Furthermore, during the post war era sociology provided numerous great explanations and theories of education, and was a source of major debate (Heald _et al_, 1981; _Developments in Sociology_ Vol 1, 2 & 5). However in recent years the sociology of education has arguably been in decline, while other substantive sociological areas, such as gender, work and employment and the study of the criminal justice system have dominated the sociological arena. Today in comparison, much less is written on the subject of educational sociology in its own right.

A modern sociological account of education is simply not available. Why does sociology provide no in-depth analysis of answers to education anymore, what has happened to the sociology of education? This study is important because it will help determine the extent to which education remains open to the kind of sociological analysis examined here.

Throughout this work my aim is to assess the value of sociology to education, are there future possibilities for sociological inquiry, or is sociology no longer of relevance to education, are better alternatives are now in place?

In the course of writing this paper I have spent many hours searching various libraries for sources of information. I have consulted a vast array of literature, and so I have had to be selective, choosing what I felt to be the most apt and influential authors. This has culminated in reflective research and changes in direction.

I am therefore submitting a historically based analysis of the literature available. Consequently my bibliography is crucial in understanding the development of this work.

My main focus is on sociologists, their opinions of education, as such I relate specific individual accounts of education. In this way I have tried to incorporate the main thrusts of the development of educational sociology, and write from an analytical-critical stance. The aim, to include an understanding of the social relations of each period within which sociologists were operating, and how over time differences in opinion, or areas of concern rendered sociological changes of direction.

The central empirical focus has been upon the British education system since 1945, though in addition I have utilised the insights of 'foreign' sociologists, who view education as an important mechanism of society and social order, in order to gain an in-depth understanding and informed debate of how the British education system may be examined and understood.

The limitations of this approach have been to condense a huge complexity of work into manageable and distinct phases in the development

of educational sociology, from which I could identify specific sociological changes of direction, author interest and methodology. The literature available which addresses the different sociological accounts and method of education over the past century is limited, this is one of the reasons for this study.

Another form of influence on my work has been the advice given by my two academic supervisors. Some of the advice I have taken, some I have not, from this I developed new ways of thinking about the thesis which had consequences for the areas I finally decided to focus upon, hence the final structure of my work. My ideas have undoubtedly changed along with the progression of this work.

The following account divides the last century into three distinct phases, the **Early Sociology of Education**, a combination of **Interactionist** and **Marxist accounts** of education, and the **'New Right'**. The reason for this distinction is that educational sociology can be seen to evolve over time according to specific theoretical and ideological epochs. Obviously there will be some overlapping of theories, and yet each phase has a chapter which describes key factors in the development of educational sociology. This will allow me to answer the question 'what has happened to the sociology of education?' Consequently it is important to identify the inherent flaws and strengths of sociological approaches to education throughout each chapter.

Directly related to the theme of this study each chapter involves a specific question, designed to illuminate 'discoveries and discontents' in the development of educational sociology. Common throughout is the theme of sociologists attempting to understand more clearly the operation of education, and the reasons for the educational success or failure of pupils.

As sociological theories evolved, concern developed with new areas and illustrated deeper problems in understanding the realities of education, for instance this study aims to show that the way we approach education will determine our understanding of education, and thus any recommendations for the improvement of education. Traditionally receiving a good education was seen as one of the key components to 'successful' later life, this has particularly been the case for males, whereas for women the norm was for marriage and motherhood. Similarly there are difficulties in defining what education should consist of, I have limited myself to opinions in each phase. Views have naturally changed over time.

From a work of this scope one cannot expect too much detail, nor is it necessary to examine all divergence's within each specific phase as long as the main themes of each period have been addressed. Although further reading can be obtained by using the bibliography to follow in greater detail the work of specific authors.

Naturally there are some terms which need clarification before continuing. In particular, what do the terms *Early Sociology*, *Interactionist/Marxist* accounts and the '*New Right*' mean? These are terms which will be used throughout this work and are addressed below.

The first chapter is concerned with the period originating in the 1890's to the early 1960's, and introduces us to the beginnings of educational sociology, hence the title '**The Early Sociology of Education**'. The actual start of education in the last century must be our initial starting point as this period marks a clear watershed in the emergence of sociological inquiry. The formalisation of education (1870 Forster's Education Act), as a necessity prior to work initiated individuals to start thinking about education

and education policies as it would be their implementation which would come to have a profound effect on the labour market.

Initially there was considerable debate over the role and nature of education, and yet two authors stand out and dominate the sociological literature of this era to such an extent that they can be regarded as the 'founding fathers' of educational sociology. Durkheim and later Parsons are two of the most important theorists in the development of educational sociology, as I will show they produced specific theories which were continually returned to by later theorists. Their work directly influenced the direction of educational sociology.

In essence the first chapter is essential to give a brief summary of how educational sociology originated. I will achieve this by providing insight into how the first major sociologists perceived the role of sociology and education: what they considered relevant and what they did not, their motives, methods and what they hoped to achieve. For instance, from Durkheim's perspective the sociology of education started from the premise that it is necessary to examine the infrastructure of society in order to obtain answers to how individuals achieve within any given social structure. Next I will critically analyse early sociological accounts, evaluate the work, question whether it was successfully applied to education and compare it to Interactionist sociology. Much of the critical diagnostic examination of the work of the two prominent early sociologists will therefore take place in relation to Interactionist sociology. This will lay the foundation for what follows.

Chapters two and three consider the time from the late 1960's to the early 1980's. During this period we note the emergence of new sociological approaches to education. The work focuses upon a combination

of **Interactionist** and so-called **Marxist** explanations of education which run concurrently. These new theories can be seen as a reaction to, and critique, of early sociology, in particular to the specific issues Durkheim and Parsons raised. The authors who characterised the Interactionist phase in educational sociology were Keddie, Young, Labov, Becker and Hargreaves. For the Marxists, Bowles and Gintis, and Willis are most apt.

The ultimate purpose of the Interactionist and Marxist chapters is to ask whether sociology created its own nemesis, or whether there were other factors that caused problems within educational sociology. Firstly I will consider why the sociology of education changed direction, and explore sociologists' new foci of attention. For example, much of Interactionist sociology's research operated around the question of 'how social order is created in education', with researchers concentrating on interaction, values and meanings. Although undoubtedly there was a rise in individualism, problems remained of ascertaining the effect of wider societal influences on education. Following an examination of Interactionist sociology, its successes, failures and whether it laid the foundations for its own downfall, I will look at other approaches within the sociology of education. Hence my next consideration will be concerned with what Marxist educational accounts consisted of, and what they contributed to the sociology of education that was different from Interactionist theorising. Did Marxism benefit the development of sociology or did it contribute to the nemesis effect?

Chapter four is concerned with the period from the 1980's to the mid 1990's, an era which could be classed as one of anti-educational sociology. It is important to examine whether outside phenomena have contributed to, or have caused an undermining of educational sociology. I

will therefore pose the question, 'have changing social and economic conditions made a move away from sociology?' To answer this I will define the political philosophy of the **'New Right'**, explain how and why it rose to political dominance. This will enable me to explain how the 'New Right' transformed education via legislative acts, and assess the subsequent implications this had for the sociology of education. Writers which distinguish the 'New Right' include Cox, Dyson, Boyson and Marks.

From each of these chapters my purpose is to have resolved the theme of this study by answering the question, what has happened to the sociology of education? Related to this, one final inquiry I would like to pose is, do we need a future sociology of education?

CHAPTER 1

THE EARLY SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Role of Education:

"Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined" (p.71, Durkheim, 1956).

Role of State:

"It is, then, up to the State to remind the teacher constantly of the ideas, the sentiments that must be impressed upon the child to adjust him to the milieu in which he must live. If it were not always there to guarantee that pedagogical influence be exercised in a social way, the latter would necessarily be put to the service of private beliefs, and the whole nation would be divided and would break down into an incoherent multitude of little fragments in conflict with one another. One could not contradict more completely the fundamental end of all education" (p.79, Durkheim, 1956).

Introduction: The Creation of Educational Sociology.

In order to understand what has happened to the sociology of education it is important to trace its progress from its initial origins, especially as this will highlight any inherent sociological weaknesses or flaws that have contributed to sociological decline, this will also explain the reasons for the particular development of the sociology of education. My initial aim therefore is to provide a short introductory chapter which assesses the nature of the sociology of education before the development of Interactionist and Marxist theories. Within this I will provide a descriptive account which highlights the positive elements of functionalist sociology as this relates to education, encompassing the work of Durkheim, Parsons, Davis and Moore, before moving on to other chapters.

The early sociological accounts of education can be regarded as the first attempts to establish the sociology of education as a substantive academic specialism in its own right, indeed this was one of the aims of the first major educational sociologist Durkheim, see Solovay (1966). The period in which his work originated was one dominated by scientific achievement, and this strongly affected Durkheim's concept of sociology (Solovay, 1966). The possibilities of scientific method were considered unlimited, for example the birth of industrial mass production, huge medical advances and even world travel, all reduced the mysteries of existence and heightened the optimism and belief in science and what it could offer.

The Early sociologists Durkheim and later Parsons hoped to explain the final area where science was yet to be applied - human behaviour. For Durkheim, why did individuals act as they do? For Parsons,

why were some more successful in education than others? The key to answering this appeared to be the development of a single sociology based upon the methods of natural science - positivism and functionalism. This methodology would set the limits to the questions it posed, and for the first time reveal the truth about human behaviour devoid of petty human emotions. Only then could man (I use the term 'man' because at this time the prevailing view was of women remaining in the mother/housewife role) create a truly promising new world of increasing opportunities where each individual would be placed according to their skills and subsequently give their best to society (Durkheim, 1956, 1961, 1964; Parsons, 1937, 1955, Fall 1959; Davis and Moore, 1945).

Firstly I will examine how and why the early sociologists approached education, the methodology they used, and how they perceived the role of education. This will set the scene, enabling an understanding of the dramatic differences in sociological thinking that occurred over time. The key figure in the establishment of the discipline of the sociology of education was Durkheim. Durkheim is an anomaly in the sense that he is a 'pre-1940's' influence, yet this does not pose a problem as his theories are constantly taken up and returned to by later theorists (Such as Parsons, Fall 1959; Davis and Moore, 1945; Burt, 1965; Coleman, 1966), and it is Durkheim's concept of education that has been central to the development of educational sociology. This can be seen in the sociological literature of the period. The work of Durkheim and Parsons was not the only approach to education, but it is clearly the most important for the level of impact and direction that sociology subsequently took. With regard to Parsons the underlying principle of this sociology appeared to be that of meritocracy: fair competition within education would allow each individual the prospect of

academic success, hence employment would be awarded fairly due to merit. It was this principle that helped determined the way many of the first sociologists such as Davis and Moore (1945) and Coleman (1966) approached education.

Sociological concern in education strengthened with the recognition of large-scale academic differences between the social classes. This was demonstrated most clearly by the *Early Leaving Report* (1954) and the *Crowther Report* (1959):

Table 1: School Leaving Age.

	Age (in Years)			
Sons of:-	15	16	17	18
(10% top) All men in ability group 1	9%	33%	17%	41%
Manual workers in ability group 1	19%	44%	13%	24%

These reports showed that the lower down the social scale a child was, the greater the possibility the child had of leaving school at the first opportunity, thus limiting his or her academic and vocational prospects.

Subsequently, following the principles governing sociological inquiry laid down by Durkheim and Parsons, much initial sociological work in the field of education was concerned with the inequality that existed between the generally successful middle-classes and the largely unsuccessful working-classes. An example of this approach is that Floud, Halsey and Martin (1957), were concerned with why certain working-class children were more educationally successful than others. Consequently, a major

question behind the early sociologists' work was, 'Why are the majority of the working-classes not able to benefit from educational provision in the same way as other social groups?' This point was illustrated by the *Scottish Council for Research in Education*: "Once again we note the strong relationship.... the majority of the low scorers coming from the unskilled and semi-skilled classes. No son or daughter of a father in the professional class was found among the low scorers." (p.149, MacPherson, 1958). Likewise, "The broad facts of the social distribution of measured intelligence are well-known. Capacity to score in intelligence tests improves with social level." (p.44, Floud, Halsey and Martin, 1958).

Possible explanations, which I will explore, were deemed to be the differences a child would bring with it to school from its social environment and culture. As such writers like Douglas (1964), and Coleman (1966) turned their attention to the child's family life, home background and neighbourhood.

From this I hope to have developed an understanding of the way the early sociologists approached, defined and researched education: the questions they asked, why they asked them and the answers they found. My aim is to demonstrate to the reader how the sociologists view of education developed into new areas, and the subsequent implications this would have for the development of sociology. Having achieved this, my critical analysis of any inherent weaknesses in early sociology will then begin in earnest. I believe it is appropriate to begin my research this way as the sociology of education initially develops chronologically, so many of the criticisms of early sociology are inherently related to the subsequent rise of Interactionist sociology and should therefore be included at that stage. The main issue I will be asking of the culmination of early sociological work will

hence be, 'were they correct in their implicit questioning of what was occurring within, or even what was inherently wrong with the working-classes and their lifestyles?' Or should the question have been 'in what ways were the working-classes disadvantaged by the education system?'

a) Durkheim: The Founder of The Methodology of Sociology and the Definer of the Role of Education.

Durkheim's work was crucial in establishing the framework around which early educational sociology was to develop. In Britain there had always been considerable debate about how schools should be organised and the importance of IQ (See the Wood Report, 1929; Education Act, 1944; Burt, 1965), and yet in sociological literature Durkheim's scientific approach was the only one which dominated early sociological thinking.

Durkheim's scientific perspective - structural functionalism and positivism - would be utilised by early sociologists and would help determine the way they approached education. Specifically their understanding of education concentrated upon the workings of society, the functional fit each component had with the next and hence the emphasis was with society's conformity and consensus. This approach clearly owed much to the work of Durkheim, who can therefore be regarded as the *'founding father'* of the early sociology of education. He believed that education was not merely a learning tool, but transmitted society's values, social solidarity and collective conscience - all of which were vital for the very existence of that society. Durkheim (1956) subsequently defined education as socialisation of the child. He further argued that it was the social scientist who could discover the 'true' nature and workings of any society, if only the rules and methods of the unbiased natural sciences were used (Solovay, 1966):

> "Society can and must be studied as a
> phenomenon given in nature, and which is thus of
> the same order as the phenomena studied by the
> natural sciences. According to Durkheim, this is
> the single most essential conception which must
> precede the formation of an autonomous discipline
> of sociology" (p.30, Giddens, ed., 1972).

The sociologist should therefore work with methods that had been applied to an analysis of the physical elements. He believed it was imperative that social facts be considered as 'things' (Giddens, ed., 1972). The only way towards knowledge is in the acquirement of ordered facts (Whitehead in Hodgkin, 1957).

Nevertheless in recognising the 'danger' of human values or even emotions invalidating scientific inquiry, Durkheim stated that:

> "Undoubtedly social life is composed of
> values, and values are properties added to reality
> by human consciousness; they are wholly the
> product of psychic mechanisms. But these
> mechanisms are natural facts, which can be
> studied scientifically; these evaluations which
> human judgement makes of things depend upon
> causes and conditions which can be discovered
> inductively. There is thus here the subject matter
> of a whole group of sciences which, as with the
> natural sciences, move from given effects to the
> causes upon which those effects are dependent:
> such is the object of the social sciences" (p.63,
> Durkheim 1972).

Furthermore, he pronounced here

> "that social phenomena are not the creations
> of his own will - is also true of any given
> individual member of society. This can be shown
> to be so from two, related, aspects. The first is
> that every individual is born into an already

existing society which moulds his own development. The second is that the particular individual is no more than a single element in a vast system of social relationships" (p.33, Durkheim 1972).

This doctrine of logical scientific inquiry helped set the framework for the process of analysis of the schooling system by early sociologists. The stress upon objectivity meant that there could be no place for subjective values, compassions and prejudices that could so easily distort sociological enquiry. Only now, Durkheim believed, could education be studied impartially, devoid of all human biases and contradictions. So even though there is in every single society a given group of phenomena which may be differentiated from those studied by the natural sciences, due to their humanistic traits, they can still be understood in purely scientific terms:

"When I carry out my obligations as brother, husband, or citizen, when I comply with contracts, I perform duties which are defined, externally to myself and my acts, in law and in custom. Even if they conform to my own sentiments and I feel their reality subjectively, this reality is still objective, for I did not create them, I merely received them through my education" (pp.63-64, Durkheim 1972).

Indeed Durkheim concluded that education is the tool by which the social order equips in children the fundamental conditions required for society's very being (pp.203-204, Durkheim 1972). Education's function is also to prepare the child for his or her position in society and to this extent education is the means by which a society guarantees its own survival. It can thus be said that education is in reality, only a reflection of society.

In considering this Durkheim subsequently outlined the main functions of the education system thus:-

i) Socialisation.

ii) Allocating to pupils their future position in society.

iii) A mechanism of social control.

iv) Teaching knowledge, skills.

v) Facilitating the development of an individual's personality.

vi) A key implement in relation to social mobility.

As education is able to change and alter its socialisation process (by what is taught), Durkheim asked exactly how the social scientist could decide which form of education was best suited for a particular society. He believed

> "that never was a sociological approach
> more necessary for the educator...It can give us
> what we need most urgently; I mean to say a body
> of guiding ideas that may be the core of our
> practice and that sustain it, that give a meaning to
> our action, and that attach us to it; which is the
> necessary condition for this action to be fruitful"
> (p.134, Durkheim 1956).

Durkheim also recognised that as technology improved the population must spend longer periods in school and, in producing a more qualified workforce, education would incorporate a technical function whereby the division of labour increased. He thereby maintained (pp.28, 70-72, Durkheim, 1956; p.203, Durkheim, 1972) that education is vitally linked to the economy in a functional relationship. In Britain, as early as the 1870 Education Act, industry's needs for a literate and numerate workforce had been recognised. As society advances, so too must education in providing more readily available knowledge. For Durkheim, it was the ability of

education to be both specialised and diversified that was important. In this way education fulfils a particular society's needs, whether it be ancient Rome, medieval France, or modern Britain.

It was these principal ideas of Durkheim that can be regarded as the founding cornerstone of educational sociology.

b) Consolidating Early Sociological Perspectives: The Work of Talcott Parsons.

Durkheim's work provided the informed basis for Parsons' (1955, Fall 1959) structuralist/functionalist approach to education. Notably it is the extent to which Parsons work fitted in with and followed on from Durkheim that established what would become the overriding concepts and methods by which many later sociologists would approach education. Parsons' (1955) stressed organic analogy: the idea that every part of society played a role in the maintenance of the whole. Parsons was especially interested in the transmission of values and the allocation of positions to new generations. He believed that

> "If...the essentials of human personality were determined biologically, independent of involvement in social systems there would be no need for families, since reproduction as such does not require family organization. It is because the human personality is not 'born' but must be 'made' through the socialization process that in the first instance families are necessary. They are 'factories' which produce human personalities" (p.16, Parsons, 1955).

Parsons (Fall 1959) stated that after primary socialisation, within the family, the socialisation process would be taken over by the school. It would act as a bridge between the family and society, preparing the child for its future adult role. Thus following Parson's two pattern variables of particularism and universalism (see below for the definition of

'particularism and universalism'), education's role emerges from this interpretative framework (p.173, Karabel & Halsey, 1979). He argued that it is here, where education adopts universalistic rather than particularistic values, where the continuity of norms and traditional values would be ensured. Education served an integrative function that maintains society's equilibrium. Within the family the child is judged and treated in terms of 'particularistic' standards. Parents treat their child as their own special child rather than judging him/her in terms of standards which can be applied to every individual.

This is not true outside the protection of the family home. In the outside world the child is supposedly treated in terms of 'universalistic' standards regardless of its background. Within the family the child has its status fixed from birth, while outside the family status has to be achieved. School prepares the child for achieving that status. Crucially in Parsons' view, the school embodied universal standards which each individual was deemed capable of achieving: a child's conduct can be assessed and achievement is measured by examinations. The same standards are set for everyone, regardless of class, gender or race. As status is gained through merit, schools thereby operate on totally meritocratic principles. Following Parsons, Blau and Duncan maintain that this ideal remains important: superior status can no longer be inherited due to favouritism but must be legitimated by actual accomplishments that are socially recognised (in Karabel & Halsey (1979), p.19).

Logically for Parsons industrial society would increasingly be based on achievement rather than ascription, on universalistic rather than particularistic standards, on meritocratic principles which apply to all of its members. School must therefore reflect the operation of society as a whole.

In this way both Durkheim's (1956, 1972) and Parson's supporters argue that school represents society in miniature and prepares the child for its adult role.

As part of this process schools must socialise the young into the basic values of society, because value consensus is essential for society to operate effectively. In America Parsons (Parsons, Fall 1959; p.62, Robertson & Turner, 1991) argued that schools instil two main values: those of achievement and equal opportunity. Schools do this by encouraging students to work for high levels of academic attainment and rewarding those who do. The key element is that schools are all equal - represented by classrooms for all. Children are all placed in similar situations (the classroom) and are allowed to compete on equal terms (examinations). Equality of schooling for Parsons was therefore not a problem, or an issue to be raised. Both the 'winners' - the high achievers - and the 'losers' - the low achievers - will see the system as fair and just since status is gained through equal opportunity for all.

In this way Parsons (Fall 1959) regarded the education system as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society. He saw education's function as allocating human resources within the role structure of adult society. Since not everyone possesses the skill potential to do every job, education must sort out who is best at doing what. So schools, by testing and evaluating students, match their talents, skills and capacities to the occupations for which they are best suited.

The work of Durkheim and Parsons has been central in establishing the framework around which later sociologists would follow. Crucially it was their concept of the role of education, its impartial nature and the methods of scientific endeavour which unconsciously directed the

course of other theorists. Their work dominated the literature of the period and without their input, educational sociology would not have developed as it has.

c) Davis and Moore: The Function of Education.

Durkheim and Parsons set the foundations for sociological research. Central to this was the notion that sociological work must be scientifically acceptable as Durkheim's methodology demanded (Solovay, 1966), and it was this that became the basis for later sociologists undertaking further educational study. Davis and Moore (1945) specifically added to the theoretical underpinnings of both Durkheim and Parsons' work by producing a functionalist consensus theory of social stratification. They also highlighted equality of opportunity via social mobility: "As a functioning mechanism a society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions" (p.242, Davis & Moore, 1945).

Like Parsons they argued that in any society some positions are functionally more important than others, such as professionals, lawyers and engineers. Yet there are still menial positions that someone has to undertake. Crucially for Davis and Moore the 'important' occupations demand special skills, for example not everyone has the appropriate talent necessary to be a brain surgeon. Not only is high intelligence needed, but also a steady hand, hence some occupations are functionally more essential than others (p.243, Davis & Moore, 1945). To convert this talent into skills takes time, and education is needed for this. Davis (1962) concluded that industrial societies demand that individuals must be chosen for their careers because of their own particular talents, whereas previously in pre-industrial societies, the community could easily survive if men merely inherited their fathers' occupations.

Davis and Moore also argued that to persuade individuals with talent to undergo education an incentive is required. This takes the form of those things in short supply - prestige, high salary, ample leisure, *etcetera* (p.243, Davis & Moore, 1945). As a result inequality is functional, inevitable, and necessary. For Goddard,

> "the fact is, [a] workman may have a ten
> year intelligence while you have a twenty. To
> demand of him such a home as you enjoy is as
> absurd as to insist that every labourer should
> receive a graduate fellowship. How can there be
> such a thing as social equality with this wide range
> of mental capacity?" (in Bowles & Gintis (1976),
> p.104).

Education prevents the wasting of pupil talents as without it there would be utter dysfunction: how would an individual ever be guided into the role that would suit them best without first being tested and evaluated by the school? In conclusion Davis and Moore agreed with Parsons and Durkheim that the role of education is to select individuals fairly and equally according to their own individual talents, so for these sociologists there was no notion that education could itself create inequalities. Educational disparities should not exist simply because of the 'equal and universal' nature of schooling. Therefore the stratification process operates to ensure that the most important positions are filled by the most capable people (Collins, 1975), and social inequality being an unconsciously evolved 'objective' phenomenon which permits the relatively smooth allocation of roles (Davis & Moore, 1945). The work of Davis and Moore can thus be seen to have strengthened the direction in which educational sociology was developing. The axiom behind the founding theorists was therefore an unquestioning

acceptance of a belief in the equality and impartiality of all school situations. They failed to recognise that education itself may act as a possible cause, or even contributory factor in creating academic failures (I will critically examine this statement further under the next chapter concerning Interactionist sociology).

Regardless of this theoretical deficiency however, early sociologists had begun to illustrate the importance of educational research. Not only had they conjectured why education had developed in the form it had, but they had also attempted for the first time to explain reasons for different social groups' educational success or failure.

Following their scientifically based research principles coupled with the unquestioned belief that equality of opportunity was unproblematic, I will subsequently investigate how early sociologists specifically began to account for academic differences between the social classes.

d) Following the 'Founding Fathers': Early Sociologists' Concern for Children's Social Environment.

The central ideas of Durkheim and Parsons were influential in the work of later theorists (for example Douglas, 1964; Coleman, 1966). These theorists continued to partially operate within Durkhemian frames of reference in their analysis of what was occurring within education (such as educational impartiality), and yet they had significantly moved on from the original areas of concern posed by Durkheim and Parsons, i.e. the meaning and role of education.

Concern was now directed towards children's social environment via specific empirical studies. As such this represented a substantial progression and development of sociological inquiry. Sociologists were still unable to embrace and explain education as Durkheim had formerly intended: via a causal scientific method. Indeed the new focus of empirical concerns led them further away from Durkheim's rather rigid theoretical ideal and into the dynamics of the classroom.

The search for other possible factors responsible for differences in educational attainment advanced the early sociologists' research framework to include the social background and culture of the contrasting classes as there were clearly observable differences between them. It was thought these differences could be analysed scientifically in a causal relationship, asking, for example, which elements of a middle-class lifestyle promoted educational success, and which constituents of working-class behaviour prompted their educational failure. Authors in this section should

still be regarded as 'early' sociologists because of the way they approached their work (and the fact that their undertaking follows on from and then surpasses that of Durkheim and Parsons, to take the vanguard of educational analysis). Crucially it was the following in-depth studies into educational differences which advanced the sociology of education far beyond the basic functionalist ideas of Durkheim and Parsons. As such early sociologists can not be regarded as a homogeneous group, rather gradual theoretical progression meant that a number of sociologists were becoming increasingly concerned with the actual realities of educational environments and the actors themselves, an area which Durkheim and Parsons had largely ignored. Inevitably it would be the specific differences of approach between sociological authors of this period which would ultimately culminate in unrecognisable differences, that enabled a new sociology to develop and take the forefront in educational analysis.

By the early 1960's the sociologists' attention was focusing on the child's life outside school:- the neighbourhood, the family size, the local culture, even the diet and physical condition of the child itself and how this would affect the child within the classroom. Research findings, from authors like Burt (1965) and Coleman (1966), actually stressed the environmental deficit of the lower-classes. In each area it appeared that the working-classes had the least life chances, and moving up the social scale improvements could easily be measured via statistical data such as censuses. It appeared evident that the working-classes in comparison to the middle-classes were often found to be living in overcrowded substandard housing suffering from poor health care and relative poverty, neither of which are conducive for educational learning. Financial pressures meant that not only could the middle-classes afford larger, higher quality housing, but also have higher

standards of maternal care as mothers did not have to work, thus preparing a more beneficial learning environment. Furthermore, economic factors at work may have meant that working-class fathers might have been struggling to finance the family economically and so needed their offspring to enter employment at the earliest opportunity and bring in a wage to avoid financially burdening the family. This would lead to a 'catch twenty-two' situation - the child would be unable to gain the education necessary to qualify for well paid work and so would be stuck, like the father, in a world of menial labour. Hence many working-class families would not value education like their middle-class counterparts.

These conjectures correlated strongly with those of Douglas (1964) who undertook a longitudinal study of 5,362 children born in Britain beginning in the first week of March 1946. Douglas's investigation primarily focused on streaming in the primary school, though this revealed a range of factors that influenced how long a child stayed on at school, and how well it progressed. Most notable of these was social class (measured by the father's occupation). Douglas (1964) concluded that the middle-class child was placed at an exceptional advantage by the greater concern of its parents towards education (see Table 2), other vital factors appearing to be the norms of speech and behaviour in the home that have fulfilled a learning ethic.

Table 2: Parental Encouragement: Parents' Attitudes to Education by Social Class.

	Level of Interest.			
Social Class	*High*	*Average*	*Low*	*Unknown*
Middle				
upper	242	197	167	44
lower	328	443	911	73
Manual Working				
upper	193	414	1189	41
lower	182	627	2842	127
Unknown	5	26	88	1

(Source: p.155, J.W.B. Douglas, 1964)

Other studies reflecting early sociology's exploration of the inter-relationship between the family and school were forthcoming - namely those concerned with i) parental attitudes and ii) social class, in relation to their effect on pupil performance. Initially came the *Plowden Report: "Children and Their Primary School"* (1967). This traced the link between parental attitudes and the child's performance. It found that manual workers would help their children less with homework, either from a lack of ability, tiredness, or disinterest, than their middle-class counterparts. They were also less likely to buy their children copies of school books. It was further reported that two thirds of unskilled workers had a maximum of five books or less at home, apart from magazines and children's books.

Following this, the report *From Birth to Seven* (1972) by Davie, Butler, and Goldstream illustrated a clear link between social class and oral ability. Language affects reading skills. Children from social class five were six times more likely to be poorer readers at the age of seven compared with those from social class one. Significantly the same children were fifteen times more likely to be non-readers.

Little (1971) commented that the difference between a good and a bad home is far greater than the difference between good and bad teaching. Similarly Coleman's analysis of American education during the 1960's concluded that the material resources available in schools made very little difference to academic performance. The decisive factor therefore appeared to be the child's social class. The "inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighbourhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school" (p.325, Coleman, 1966). Coleman suggested that children from minority backgrounds would improve educationally if they were mixed with students from more affluent backgrounds[1].

Such findings of differences in parental attitudes and social class introduced the idea of 'cultural discontinuity', the notion that the working-class child would find school to be unfamiliar, even alien. This culture clash would mean that if working-class children passed the Eleven Plus they would attend a middle-class school and be separated from their working-class friends during the day. The only opportunity of meeting them would be at night once they were free from this 'alien' culture, whereas for the middle-class child school would be a normal extension of home life. For a child to leave its 'natural' peer group this can easily lead to ostracism: from the child's friends, for being a 'traitor', and from the school children, for being an 'outsider'. Characterising for the moment, 'working-class' culture would consist of pursuing instant gratification, 'public houses, betting and bingo', and a way of life which contrasts sharply with the 'middle-class' culture of emphasising, 'literature, erudition, the arts and science', all the necessary ingredients for educational success, and ones envisaged as positive attributes by teachers. It is these cultural differences which would

encourage working-class children to leave school at the earliest occasion, and only the middle-class would stay on and benefit from education.

As such there appeared to be firm evidence of middle-class pupils having certain advantages over their working-class counterparts. Early sociologists, in examining the environmental differences and parental attitudes of the different classes, were able to produce a specific theory concerning education:-

Figure 1: Class Expectations in School.

| Middle-Classes | ⇨ | Parents Value Education | ⇨ | Deferred Gratification Plus More Ambition | ⇨ | SCHOOL SUCCESS. |
| Working-Classes | ⇨ | Parents Do Not Value Education | ⇨ | Instant Gratification | ⇨ | SCHOOL FAILURE. |

It appeared that both strong cultural links between middle-class homes and schools, and middle-class parents taking considerable interest in their children's work and expecting them to do well, had a very significant effect in promoting the child's educational success. Even today it is still regarded that it is the middle-classes "general willingness to accept 'deferred gratification' as a necessary investment to secure anticipated future rewards" which benefits them invaluably in comparison to other social classes (p.185, Giddens, 1986). For early sociologists, it seemed that the middle-class expected more from education, it was not simply a 'time filler', but a means to greater rewards, a norm the working-class did not share.

Early sociological ideas, especially those of Davis and Moore (1945) and Parsons (1955; Fall 1959) were strengthened by the findings of the geneticists and psychologists of the same period. Due to the 'scientific' nature of their work, these authors are more closely related to the methodological ideals of Durkheim and Parsons than those authors whose primary concern was with empirical environmental analysis. As such it could be argued that early research was mainly divided between Durkhemian, environmental and psychological/genetic researchers, all of whom were tied loosely together via scientific principles and an acceptance of educational impartiality[2].

Essentially it appeared that the functional development of society was equatable with the genetic development of children. This also legitimised the sociological idea of some roles in society being more functionally important than others. Darwin's (1898) idea of natural selection had been reinterpreted to explain inequalities within education and thus stratification of society as natural (see Burt, 1965). Class disparities of wealth, power and learning would naturally have occurred because of the process of human evolution. "The facts seem to be that individual differences in ability between children do exist and although in part they are related to differences in environmental opportunity, they are for the largest part ascribable to genetic factors" (p.4, *Procedures for the Allocation of Pupils in Secondary Education*, 1963).

Through the idea that genes controlled intelligence it seemed obvious why certain classes failed. The working-classes were less intellectually evolved, and so naturally failed in education, whereas the upper-classes were of superior development, and so succeeded academically. The 'Father of educational psychology', Sir Cyril Burt (1965)

firmly believed in the superior inherited intelligence of the middle-classes. For other psychologists, the importance of heredity varied between 50 and 80% (p.107, O'Donnell, 1987). But more importantly, the geneticists' assumptions had a direct affect on British educational policies and those who planned them (such as the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, 1963). In particular Burt's (1961, 1965) research remained authoritative and influenced British education from the 1920's to his death in 1971 (p.225, Nobbs, 1983). His notion of inherited deficiency of general intelligence was utilised in the 1929 Wood report, and his work firmly influenced the 1944 Education Act (pp.226-227, Nobbs, 1983). This is explicitly noticeable in the idea of Tripartite education where schooling was separated into three distinct types allegedly suitable for the intellectual capacities of children.

Although it is difficult to provide a direct link between the reasoning of geneticists, psychologists and sociologists, the strength of influence genetic theories exerted in the planning of education would have been difficult for sociologists of the same period to be unaware of. There is also the fact that their work complemented each other, especially since they put forward similar and logical reasons for working-class underachievement in education, whether that was due to cultural disadvantage, necessary stratification in society, or intellectual inferiority (for a critique of the genetic/psychological argument see Appendix 1). For a student of this period it must have looked as though sociologists had indeed found answers as to why education and society had evolved as they had.

Unfortunately there were implicit assumptions which early sociology had been based upon which had not been taken account of. The

main criticism of early sociology is that the authors contented themselves with mere observations of class differences. Many recognised environmental and cultural distinctions, but failed to go any further than saying the working-class were 'deficit' in comparison to the middle-class. Early sociologists were so convinced that education was fair and equal for all that they failed to question whether the working-class or their lifestyle were actually 'deficient', or if the way working-class children were treated by education and society actively 'made' them 'deficient'. To a large extent theorists acceptance of society as it was also prevented them from attempting to produce solutions to improving the situations they had identified and described. Nevertheless, their work opened up new areas of sociological interest which, in time, were vital for the development of Interactionist sociology.

An Evaluation of Early Sociology.

The founding fathers of educational sociology, Durkheim and Parsons, attempted to provide an in-depth analysis of how and why an education system operates on a macro level. Their work had began to strip away the enigmas of education, and allowed subsequent theorists to provide answers to previously unfathomable questions such as, 'Why doesn't everyone achieve in education? How do different environments affect schooling?'

However, Durkheim and Parsons never asked the question 'Can schooling itself be improved?' They simply accepted that education in schools was not in any need of attention because it fulfilled the functional need of providing learning. It strongly promoted the *status quo* simply because it already existed. As such, their work has been heavily criticised for being biased in defence of the existent social order (Heald *et al*, 1981; Haralambos, 1985), though I feel this is a somewhat unfair stereotypical criticism, it is true that they failed to provide any attempt at reforming or criticising education in detail, and thus their work does comes across as a justification of the social order, in which they continually over-emphasise educational consensus. Indeed, because early sociology was essentially based upon a structural framework consisting of the interrelationship of society's elements, it appeared that the individual would always be subordinated to the needs of society in a deterministic manner. This relationship they also failed to question in detail. Instead, society was portrayed to be based on consensus, thus creating people in its own image to maintain stability. The point being that Durkheim and Parsons did not regard individuals as influential as the collective order. Education's main purpose

was therefore to socialise the child into appropriate norms and values that were beneficial for society's existence, not to solely reinforce conservative doctrines of societal organisation. Though the implication from this being that education should counter potentially disruptive threats from 'unnatural' subcultures such as those of the working-class. Their work has therefore be accused of accepting perceived middle-class values as the normal set of criteria that everyone should ultimately aspire to (*Developments in Sociology* Vol 1 & 5; see also Keddie, 1973[3]). Ultimately it was these principles of Durkheim and Parsons that set the framework for other researchers, some of whom fell into the similar predicaments (illustrated by Davis and Moore, 1945).

Yet early sociologists did not see themselves as being biased in favour of the middle-class, as controlling or indoctrinating children, but rather, as a means of allowing the child to develop to its own full potential. In not allowing for the possibility that schools may play a part in the cause of working-class academic failure, the blame was transferred solely to the individuals involved (for example, by Davis and Moore, 1945; Coleman, 1966). The implication arising from Durkheim and Parsons' work was that they simply believed education was as efficient as possible. So in failing to recognise the likelihood that it was conceivable to identify ways of creating greater educational efficiency, early sociologists unintentionally tended to justify the academic differences between the classes. They failed to understand that education is too heterogeneously complex to be explained by a basic set of 'scientific' ideals and principles (see Giddens, 1977).

The reasons for the early sociologists' short-sightedness was that they were a product of their time, and dependent upon the functional way they approached education. Durkheim and Parsons did not have the

benefit of hindsight as we do, and were not aware of future areas of concern, such as the political context of schooling and questions arising over the funding of research (see Coulson and Riddell, 1977).

Following on from the work of Durkheim and Parsons environmental theorists simplistically located the problem in the difference between working and middle-class homes. In effect the reasons for working-class failure were seen to be deeply rooted in working-class culture itself. For example, the disposition of working-class parents to education was not beneficial (Douglas, 1964). Many familiar concepts were applied to the lower-classes, such as:- 'wastage', 'underprivileged', and especially 'cultural deprivation'. Significantly this did seem to legitimate and validate itself. Working-class children appeared to be placed at disadvantage through impoverished home backgrounds, larger families, greater financial insecurity, and restricted parental interest in education. The early sociology's analysis of financial deprivation is a good example of a factor that still constrains working-class children today. The main strength from the work of Douglas was his view that attitudes of parents are influential and do affect their children's progress, but not to the total extent that writers such as Coleman (1966) stated. It completely ignored the possibility that teachers' attitudes could also play a part.

Early theorists only provided basic descriptions, such as poor reading abilities and lack of parental support, without adequately explaining the reasons for such social disparities. They failed to explain why such social situations were occurring in the first place. More critically however, the early sociology failed to answer, or even ask, the question 'Why do

parents hold the attitudes they do?' Consequently there was a large area of work that could be covered and become a new sociology.

Early sociology had begun to raise provoking questions about education, but failed to recognise the importance of explanations other than those based around consensus. For instance, the functionalist work of Davis and Moore (1945) was based on the concept that individuals would be placed equally and fairly according to their talents by education. Early sociologists failed to recognise that other reasons affected why individuals were initially categorised and placed by schools, for example class background, race and gender. Their approach was too inflexible and they were unable to see alternatives. Individuals had to be placed as this was one of the primary functions of education. Yet why must they? Was it simply a way of maintaining social inequalities? Are the most important positions really filled by the most capable persons, or just someone who could do the job? These were possible questions that a new sociology could examine.

The early sociology had placed too much emphasis on structure. The functional fit everything had to have with the next component meant there was little room for individual choice, or meaning, everything had to have a 'purpose'. As such education had been reduced to a machine, there was no room to even understand the needs of children or teachers.

Inevitably, sociology gradually developed beyond the area encompassed by early theories because of the recognition that education was more complex than scientific methodology had allowed it to be. 'Science' had tried to explain complex human characteristics and the behaviour of man by using a measuring procedure. Those essentially human variables such as meanings, intentions, values and culture it could never measure, comprehend or predict, therefore it could not use or explain them. Once questions began

to be raised about the exact definition of so-called 'scientific categories' the whole basis of early sociology was brought into question.

There were two major flaws in early sociologists' reasoning which prompted early sociology's demise. Firstly, external pressures for change challenged theorists' conception of education. During the 1950's it became apparent that many children were not fulfilling their potential in education and leaving early. Many of these children were working-class (p.68, Williamson, 1979), a fact which at least implied that the tripartite system of schooling was actively reinforcing class divisions. Parity of esteem was never present as the grammar schools had greater status and more funding than secondary modern schools, which became synonymous with educating children for manual work (Taylor, 1963). More parents challenged the 'rejection' of their children by schools which identified them as 'inferiors' to their colleagues. There were increasing demands for improving educational standards for all children, instead of concentrating education on an *élite*. Ultimately, "education within a tripartite structure in the years after 1944 failed,.... there is even less justification than before for the educational and social inequalities of the tripartite system." (pp.162-163, Taylor, 1963). It was this mounting pressure on grammar schools and the emergence of ideas of comprehensive education (for evidence of this see: Hughes, 1955; Holly, 1965; Batley, O'Brien and Parris, 1970; and Rubinstein and Simon, 1973) that early sociology could not comprehend. It had over-emphasised equality for all, social stability and consensus to such an extent that it was unable to explain social change, and as such became outdated. The theories of Durkheim and Parsons were unable to endure unchallenged.

Secondly, sociologists' commitment to functionalistic 'science' only provided them with a limited understanding of education. They had ignored complete areas of study, such as the meanings and intentions of individuals, the operation of education in classrooms and the prevailing values and ideologies within education. Initially much of the foundation behind early sociology had simply been demographic, *i.e.* studying the success/failure statistics of education, this only noted the lower-classes' under-achievement in education. There was no questioning of how official classifications had been defined. Later analysis did shift onto the local environment of schools and sub-cultural attitudes, but the emphasis was always concerned with the working-class not emulating middle-class principles. Yet being so predisposed, this allowed later theorists the opportunity of correcting such prejudice. Although for those early sociologists this would be impossible. The supposedly 'scientific' nature of their research meant that their findings should be value-free and unbiased. Empirical analysis would reveal the 'true' nature of education and could therefore be used to produce guidelines which would enable efficiently organised knowledge to be transmitted more effectively, thus promoting equality for all and the maintenance of society's consensus. From the viewpoint and culture of science this appeared possible. However, it began to be recognised that the idea of a value free science was a value judgement itself. This was because early sociologists, in stating that the working-classes were culturally deprived in values, attitudes, language *etcetera*, prompted research concerned with different class attitudes and backgrounds to begin to question whether working-class culture was deficient or not. Illustrations of this trend are Keddie (1973, 1975) and specifically on the nature of linguistics within education Labov (1973, April 1973, 1978). The

'scientific' methodology also prevented theorists from recognising that individuals had helped create these classifications and thus the inequalities in education in the first place.

As a gradual recognition of these theoretical deficits occurred, the sociology of education was beginning to slip away from the rigid structural 'scientific' concerns of early sociology. Not only was it unable to find conclusive scientific proof its methodology demanded, but its 'scientific' categories came under increasing critical inspection. Early sociologists no longer appeared to possess the kind of knowledge capable of illuminating the complex series of pressures constraining working-class educational performance. Consequently, in recognising the differences of middle-class and working-class lifestyles, backgrounds, aspirations, attitudes *etcetera*, in their own right, this further strengthened the need for a new approach.

[1] The retort to Coleman's (1966) position can be seen as an excellent example of changing sociological attitudes towards educational analysis between early and Interactionist sociologists: In response to Coleman's (1966) work, Rutter and Giller (1983) after analysing the educational development of groups of boys over several years concluded that the quality of teacher and pupil interaction and co-operation - an area that Coleman (1966) had largely disregarded - had tremendous effects on the academic performance of the children. Nonetheless, they also maintained that social class was still the most crucial element, although they stated that class divisions could be reduced by improving teaching quality, school atmosphere and organisation. This standpoint Coleman (1981) later agreed with. (It is these elemental differences which I will critically examine in Chapter Two).

[2] The similarities between such groups does not mean however that all were allied in agreement. For instance, with regard to the work of psychologists, Durkheim himself was anti-reductionist in respect to social, or sociological explanations.

[3] Even though it is doubtful whether Durkheim himself actually embraced such a concept of uniformity, it has been the interpretation of his (and subsequent authors e.g. Coleman, 1966; Little 1971), work that has lead to such criticisms.

CHAPTER 2

THE INTERACTIONIST SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION.

Role of Sociology:

"Thus, by making explicit the principles that lie behind the dilemmas of education, important considerations about how things are and about the sort of decisions that have to be faced in dealing with them, are clarified. We are better placed to understand the difficulties of explanation, justification and practical action in our education system." (pp.4-5, Evetts, 1973).

Providing Equality Of Opportunity For All:

"Secondary education is today experiencing unprecedented pressures for change. We are committed to the elimination of selection for different types of schools at the age of eleven and the provision of a much more broadly based range of educational opportunities for all. Psychologists are providing new knowledge about how children learn, and sociologists are helping to make us aware of the way in which schools respond to the demands of society for the development of particular kinds of knowledge and skill. The importance of the forms of knowledge embodied in the traditional school subjects is being reassessed, and the implications for subject organisation and teaching methods of a longer school life for all are beginning to be faced." (p.1, Taylor, 1973).

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Introduction.

Social Change: Setting the Background.

By the mid-1950's society itself was undergoing social changes that helped prompt the development of a new sociology of education. "The experience of war had endorsed a set of values which included a commitment to welfare and a just society" (p.65, Williamson, 1990). Social inequalities were apparent, but the growth of affluence during this decade headed a concentrated determination to reduce inequalities. Rising living standards, high wages and low unemployment all led to rising expectations of the creation of a better world. The development of the Welfare State, care from the 'cradle to the grave', represented a radical departure from the limited social provisions that had been available pre-1945. It covered housing, education, social and health services, the opportunities of which people began to expect as a right. Such optimism led political analysts to claim the disappearance of the working-class (Laing, 1986).

However, by the late 1950's there were early signs that continued prosperity was not assured. In 1957 for instance, proposals for curbing government expenditure were introduced, then rejected. By 1958, with increasing inflation problems the Cabinet was in continual disagreement over which course of action to take, (p.183, Peden, 1985; p.44, Graham and Seldon, 1991). A decade later the economy was experiencing increasing difficulties. Rising inflation and unemployment, successive balance of payment crises, declining productivity, falling profits and industrial conflicts forced people to think again (Kaldor, 1966; Hutchison, 1968; Crafts and Woodward, 1991). The political stability of the 1950's had fragmented by

the late 1960's. The rewards of affluence had not been distributed equally as had been anticipated by the Wilson government. Divisions in society were widening and a new awareness of possibilities and alternatives was fostered. A sense of crisis deepened with the 'rediscovery' of poverty and deprivation as this showed the Welfare State was failing (Abel-Smith and Townsend, 1965; Vincent, 1991). New political radicalism, expressed in counter-cultures, CND, feminist and Black groups and the genesis of the New Left after the Hungarian uprising in 1956 (Blackwood, 1986; Laing, 1986) all prompted searching questions to be asked about the nature and direction of society. There developed a pursuit of individuality and self-expression. The 1950's established in people expectations which had never been fulfilled, and so by the 1960's people began to look elsewhere: dominant alternatives included the development of new anti-establishment politics - anti-Vietnam war protests, the upsurge of the student movement, flower power, psychedelic drugs (Laing, 1967). This amounted to a search for new meanings and values (see Williams, 1965), which prompted much concern over the young and their newly found sexual morality and subcultures (Carstairs, 1964; Cohen, 1973). The results of social change culminated in increasingly critical intellectual attacks on the way Western society was developing. For important examples of this see Parkin (1968) on the increase of middle-class radicalism, Gavron (1983) on the awareness of women's issues, and Marcuse (1994) as one of the first leading New Left writers. Crucially, it was the rise of an interest in individualism and radicalism that prepared the way for new sociological analysis of education, specifically centring on how individuals themselves would help create and maintain the social relations of education (Abrams and Brown, 1984; Laing, 1986; Williamson, 1990).

Theoretical Change.

The main question I will be asking of Interactionist sociology, is, 'did it create its own nemesis?' To answer this I intend to analyse what happened next to the sociology of education, why Interactionist sociology changed direction away from early sociology. This will lead my work into an examination of the Interactionists methodology, how it was different from early sociologists methods. I will show how the growing realisation of the flaws of early sociology led the intention of the Interactionists (and Marxists), to escape from the 'stimuli-response' approach of the positivists. In doing so Interactionist sociologists moved away from the former emphasis on the alleged defects of the child and its social environment, to the nature of education itself.

Previously,

> "Researchers in education, seeking the
> neutrality and objectivity of scientific inquiry,
> have most commonly treated the child as an
> asocial object (rather than subject to himself and
> others) whose attributes can be measured by a
> battery of tests to reveal his intelligence quotient,
> social adjustment, achievement motivation, etc."
> (p.7, Keddie, 1973).

Questions were raised asking whether 'scientific' sociology, and all of its categories and classifications, had been as impartial, value- and ideology-free as it had claimed. This is the first issue I aim to examine. From this questioning Interactionists refused to take categories and classifications such as 'ability' and 'natural talent' for granted. They would investigate the social

construction of these terms by studying the interaction that occurred between teachers and pupils. New questions were asked: first, 'what were the relationships between what counts as school knowledge, power and control, and those who succeed or fail in education?' and second, 'how did the meanings that both teachers and pupils apply to situations affect the chances for later student success?' Consequently, it was realised that the whole process of questioning the internal operation of schools on a day to day basis had previously been avoided.

Attention was now directed towards schools as cultural institutions that themselves could create problems, for example, low pupil/teacher expectations which in turn could lead to more serious difficulties such as incorrect 'streaming', which I will examine later. The emphasis switched to how the classroom operated by considering the roles and interaction of teachers and pupils. It was now considered that the way in which pupils were treated in and by schools was as important as any differences that they brought with them into school. My study will consequently concentrate upon possible problems of schooling, such as schools' procedures, language and classroom interaction. I will consider what Interactionists achieved, how successful they were, and whether their work was an improvement on early sociology. My purpose is also to ascertain Interactionists failings, and whether they were incomplete in their study of education. Therefore, I will be able to begin to answer the question 'did sociology create its own nemesis?'

a) The Discovery of the Value-Ridden Nature of 'Scientific' Sociology.

Theoretical questioning brought by Interactionists would lead them into a direct diatribe against the founding fathers of the early sociology. As I will demonstrate this pushed educational sociology far beyond its 'scientific' origins. Durkheim (1956, 1972), Parsons (Fall 1959) and others had failed to adequately consider that the values from education may in fact be those of a ruling minority, rather than of society as a whole. For Garfinkel, the early sociologists' idea of social order "when looked at closely becomes something of a myth which exists only because it is never questioned...Parsons' social system, held together by value consensus, thus crumbles under close empirical examination" (p.106, R. Collins, 1975). The early sociologists' implication that education was founded on principles of functional consensus and would have been examined impartially by 'scientific' method (for example Davis and Moore, 1945; Durkheim 1972), was reduced to an ideological construction created by early sociologists themselves. This was a defect that a supposedly 'scientific' methodology should have prevented.

It could be argued that scientific research far from being open minded, objective and dispassionate as positivism dictates, is actually irrational, biased and value driven, the character of science being fundamentally social/human. For Habermas (1970) the image of scientific research is very different from its culturally based reality. For instance, Crane (1965) found that scientists gained more recognition if they studied at major universities. West Goodrich wrote that writers from minor universities were rejected more often than those from major ones by the *American*

Sociological Review (pp.716-725, West Goodrich, 1945). The information of an author's academic background can have precedence over the content of their work, which in an ideal world should not happen. Concerning Durkheim, an example is that one of his greatest works was to establish causal scientific links between individual suicides and differing societies. The ultimate individual act, suicide, became a scientifically explained phenomena. Nevertheless, the interpretation of Durkheim's 'scientific' theory has itself changed over time, a feature which should not have occurred if scientific principles had originally discovered the true nature of suicide. For Simpson (1975), Durkheim had unquestioningly accepted official statistics of suicide as correct. For this he was criticised by the Interactionist sociologist Douglas (1967). Subsequently Atkinson (pp.165-192, Cohen, 1971), an ethnomethodologist, launched a diatribe against both by stating that the methodology utilised by Douglas was as doubtful as that used by Durkheim because both adhered to problematic classifications of data. In this way the paradigm[1] utilised by the social researcher had set the framework within which research problems were posed and answered. (Likewise this thesis illustrates differing research periods in the development of educational sociology: Early to Interactionist theorising). Consequently to believe a value free 'scientific' sociology could develop in a contentious social system is theoretically untenable and practically unrealistic. As such, the whole 'scientific' basis of research disappears (see Coulson and Riddell, 1977).

Social factors do not merely affect the conditions under which scientific knowledge is produced, they help determine the theoretical judgements of scientists/sociologists to the point where they can never be totally impartial or unbiased. The predominant notion is that social forces

are central to the process of change rather than being the focus of change as the positivists believed. It became increasingly apparent that non-scientific human behavioural variables do affect, even control 'scientific' work.

The central importance of this is that, as much of early sociology was based upon the methodology of natural science, and because human biases and values are applicable to the life sciences, then these emotions are even more likely to be applicable to the social sciences because they deal with social phenomena rather than non-living physical elements. As such, this helped undermined the whole foundation of early sociology: a view of one scientific truth, which today may be regarded as 'naive'. The implicit assumptions of many early theorists were exposed. The concept of a value-free science, the methodology of early sociology, was simply another socially constructed ideological paradigm[2]. No longer was it believable that early sociologists were correct in attempting to establish precise 'scientific principles', categories or 'facts' governing the analysis of education. Interactionist critics such as Parkin (1971), and Keddie (1973, 1975), therefore argued that early sociologists could not, as they claimed, explain the functioning of education as an integral whole. No longer was it felt adequate to examine education solely by macro-theorising as demanded by positivist and functionalist methodology. Henceforth early sociology was stripped of the authority it once possessed, and its claims of value free 'scientific' epistemology were rejected. With 'scientific' sociology reduced from the ultimate method of research to another competing system of belief, Durkheim and Parsons' aim of sociology becoming a natural science was now impossible.

The implications of this were that the sociology of education, could have ended at this point, as much of early sociology had been

invalidated. But it was recognised that as scientific knowledge was socially constructed, it would be possible to examine science (and therefore education) in terms of the meanings and intellectual content of what is deemed to be scientific (or educational), and the effects these images have on society (Goodman, 1969). Inadvertently, it was the discovery of the domination of science by values that helped set the way for the development of Interactionist sociology. Specifically, as the mechanistic view of early sociology had ignored the possibility that education is formed by individuals via meanings, labels and interaction, it was these elements which had now become open to study. For Touraine,

> "society is produced through social
> action...A society has neither nature nor
> foundations; it is neither a machine nor an
> organization; it is action and social relations. This
> idea sets a sociology of action against all the
> variants of functionalism and structuralism" (p.25,
> Barton and Walker, 1983).

As it had new areas of research to undertake Interactionist sociology can thus be regarded as a complete metamorphosis from earlier sociology. In particular, the increasing realisation of the inherent flaws of early theorising substantiated the need for a new type of sociological methodology capable of providing an in-depth understanding of schools' curricula, procedures, and how a child learns and develops in school via interaction. Sociologists would also turn their attention towards the relationship between schools and children in an attempt to ascertain whether schools themselves played a part in the creation of educational problems.

b) The Problem of Schooling: Procedures and Language.

Due to the realisation that early sociology had defined and classed social phenomena according to its own preconceived ideas, attention was quickly drawn towards a major assumption behind early sociology. Namely, that educational procedures themselves were not in need of study because schools operated via impartiality and equality (Davis and Moore, 1945; Parsons, Fall 1959; Coleman, 1966; Blau and Duncan in Karabel and Halsey, 1979; Robertson and Turner, 1991). Yet now M.F.D. Young (1971) pointed out that few British Sociologists were actually interested in the study of schools, he asked the question 'how do schools process children into different success rates?'

That is:-

Figure 2:

General Intransigent Class Outcomes From Education.

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    Middle-Classes    ->   SCHOOL   ->   SUCCESS.

    Working-Classes   ->   SCHOOL   ->   FAILURE.
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This represented sociology's break away from its early origins with the emergence of a new methodology because it: i) raised new questions and ii) a different perspective had to be adopted in order to answer these questions, namely micro- rather than macro-sociology. This new theoretical analysis firmly utilised Interactionist and phenomenological research methods, most notably used by Keddie (1975), which had been prompted by early sociology's aforementioned inadequacies. As such this

new type of methodology was a radical departure from the early sociologists' 'scientific' method.

Interactionist sociology asked what counted as school knowledge, and in which forms it occurred. Young himself concentrated upon the organisation and distribution of knowledge. Interactionists questioned the once 'sacred' curriculum, and asked exactly who gets taught what? Any notions of 'ability', and indeed 'education' were now treated as social constructions worthy of study. For Young "very detailed case studies are necessary which treat as problematic the curricula, pedagogic and assessment categories held by school personnel" (p.5, Young, 1971). Henceforth Interactionist sociologists were often extremely critical of the educational *status quo* and of the previous 'sacrosanct' assumptions behind early sociology. Examples of this approach are particularly derived from: Young (1971); Bernstein (*On the Classification and Framing of Knowledge*, Vol. 3, 1975); Keddie (1973, 1975); Bourdieu (1977), and Marxist theories of education.

The work of Jackson and Marsden (1966) provides an excellent illustration of the development of educational sociology from early to Interactionist styles. They compared the backgrounds and lives of ten middle-class, and eighty-eight working-class children who passed the Eleven Plus in Huddersfield between 1949 and 1952. Previously the implicit suggestion from the work of earlier sociologists was that the working-classes were innately deficient in some way. Yet for Jackson and Marsden, the emphasis of sociological inquiry should be on social factors and the position of the respective classes as a possible cause of inequalities. Jackson and Marsden did not see the working-class as culturally deficient, they were also critical of existing educational arrangements. They demonstrated that, to

the middle-class child, the prevailing grammar school atmosphere was a natural extension of home life. At the same time there was a cultural clash between the neighbourhood and school for working-class children. Those who succeeded were usually those with middle-class connections, either through the family, or by attending a school dominated by middle-class parents and pupils, or were those from the upper working-classes.

Young (1971) argued that the curriculum itself should be examined to trace any relationship that might exist between dominant groups in society, and what counts as knowledge in that society. Politically, if specific models of social relations are comparable with particular curricula, then it is plausible that alterations will be resisted to the extent that they are seen to be eroding the values, morals, privilege, status and power of those dominant groups concerned.

Concerning the school curriculum on an Interactionist level Bernstein (Vol. 3, 1975) believed that the implications of 'classifying'[3] and 'framing'[4] of knowledge should be studied. Bernstein maintained that failure could be diminished if education was made more relevant to a child's everyday life experiences. This would occur by reducing the degrees of classifying and framing that exist. Education could thus become a joint venture between pupil and teacher as both would be concerned with problem solving. However, how far this could actually be achieved is still highly debatable. Questions must be asked about how realistic this is?[5] Bernstein himself notes that moves to weaken classification and framing make it possible for the school to value working-class culture, albeit the weakening process may benefit middle-class children more than their counterparts, especially since middle-class children are more experienced at identifying teacher control methods. Nevertheless, Interactionist sociology consequently

studied the interaction between pupils and teachers to reveal the effects that this would have upon educational success and failure, especially through everyday phenomena such as language usage and 'labelling'. For this reason Interactionist sociologists would demonstrate that during any social situation the teacher must enter into the 'correct' social relationship with the child if the teacher wishes to achieve the best results from this child. Unfortunately achieving this is highly problematical. A primary example is the use of language.

Bernstein's work on linguistic codes (Vol. 1, 1971; Vol. 2, 1973; Vol. 3, 1975) provides an examination into everyday school language and its consequences. Bernstein stressed the fit between the elaborated code of middle-class families with the language used in schools, and the restricted code of the working-classes. For Bernstein the type of language used within schools is accepted by all groups as fair, normal and natural, although he argues that education is actually based upon the elaborated code of speech, consisting of longer, more complex speech patterns. So the working-class child, who uses the restricted code, is immediately put at an everyday disadvantage as they do not use or even know the elaborated code (see Figure 2). This is a code that the middle-class child has already learnt at home. Furthermore as middle-class pupils generally belong to the same social class as teachers neither group will find school language intimidating or mystifying. This is enhanced as the middle-classes recognise that in order for their children to succeed in life they must undergo a process of disciplined education (Vol. 3, 1975).

Figure 3: The Use of Language.

Example: The Key Factor is <u>Language.</u>

<u>Restricted</u> *working-class codes = "Oi Pak in."*

<u>Elaborated</u> *middle-class codes = "Do not do that Charles, it is extremely undignified."*

As Bernstein argues in *Class and Pedagogies* (Vol.3, 1975), since the middle-class 'govern' education it is natural for the elaborated code to be used, yet it is no conspiracy on their behalf. However within the classroom it appears that the working-class are slow, even stupid. This then gives the middle-class students an intellectually superior image that reinforces teachers' stereotypical expectations. So, for example, by the age of eleven, working-class readers are approximately three years behind their middle-class peers. This can be due to simple factors such as working-class children not knowing, or understanding 'big words'.

Consequently any attempt to translate the lesson into a 'user-friendly' approach for the working-class child may result in a miscomprehension of the very intents that the teacher wishes to convey. The child may also face immense difficulties understanding any intellectual or conceptual discussions, and yet the teacher may not be aware of this, as the child obeys basic level discourse such as 'sit still and be quiet'. Tough (1976) endorsed Bernstein's hypothesis by stating that working-class children do suffer more from an insufficiency of having their questions answered, and that when they do receive answers, they often exclude the reasoning given to others. This view was later confirmed by Tizard and Hughes (1984).

For Giddens the situation is all too common: "working-class families are larger in average size than those of the middle-class, and the

amount of direct parental contact is lower - a phenomenon which, in so far as it influences the verbal facility of children, may have lasting effects upon intellectual abilities" (pp.184-185, Giddens, 1986). As such, working-class children will be starting school with an immense disadvantage that in time can severely hinder their chances of entering university and gaining an advantageous occupation. On the other hand, middle-class parents with smaller families and higher levels of educational learning can pass this linguistic expertise on to their children, who when starting school will have a substantial advantage. Bernstein therefore concluded (pp.83-84, Musgrave, 1979) that working-class speech patterns impede, and can even prevent their progress academically.

Even though Bernstein successfully highlighted the socially imposed linguistic disadvantages that working-class children endure in schools the danger in his work is that he did not make it absolutely clear if linguistic 'deficiency' is attributed to an inadequate culture (as early sociologists believed), or social conditions which are rooted in economic disparities (as Marxists later argue).

Labov (pp.179-218, 283-309, Giglioli, 1980), attacked Bernstein's implication that the working-class are linguistically deprived by not knowing middle-class elaborated speech patterns. Labov argued that the working-classes cannot be culturally deprived of their own equally complex, but grammatically different language (Labov, 1978), and as such language is far more complex than Bernstein's thesis had allowed. For instance, early sociologists did not recognise that black children often speak their own languages such as Creole, which like middle-class dialects consists of extremely sophisticated linguistic patterns. Yet until recently Creole was merely regarded as a poor attempt at basic English[6]. For Goody and Watt the

difference between a family's oral language and school's literate tradition was a significant separator in industrial societies (p.286, Sergeant, 1979).

Lawton (1968) argued that working-class children do have the potential available for speaking an elaborated middle-class code, but they often lack the practice and therefore the facility to use it. This may be because they do not need to use it. Their language is only restricted as their culture is different from the values of the 'middle-class' school, which is attempting to change working-class children into middle-class children capable of 'proper' etiquette, while it avoids their 'real' academic needs. Lawton implies that teachers are moulding children into forms they finds acceptable before educating them (I will discuss this in the next section). Lawton also believed, like Labov, that there is an extremely large gap between what children conventionally do, and what they are capable of doing.

Stubbs (1977) proposed that working-class language was not inferior, it was different to middle-class language but just as complicated. Keddie (1973) stated that there are no superior/inferior languages, just different representations of languages.

In response Sharp (1980) developed a simplistic solution. She believed that teaching teachers the equality of all human languages, to not distinguish preferences for middle-class over working-class speech patterns, should reduce class differences in education. We may be able to incorporate this in a revised education system, but not to the extent Sharp demands. Class still affects the type of language a pupil uses, and therefore can effect a child's schooling, though this is usually a hindrance and not an impassable obstacle as insinuated by Bernstein's findings.

For Interactionists, the working-class are not deficient as the early sociologists stated, but rather, they are placed at a disadvantage in education by the methods, procedures and classifications of schools. Labov makes the point that, "The concept of verbal deprivation has no basis in social reality...Unfortunately these notions are based upon the work of educational psychologists who know very little about language" (p.179, Giglioli, 1980).

Labov provides an excellent illustration of the disparity between early and Interactionist understanding and classification of students and their potential. In studying interview techniques Labov (Keddie, 1973; Giglioli, 1980) demonstrated that children can and will respond in different manners to different stimuli. For example, when a black child was confronted by a suited white man, and then by a casually dressed black man, the child would be far more responsive to the latter interviewer. The impression formed by the first interviewer was that the child was 'backward' or 'slow'. Yet Labov stated that children just do not volunteer information in unfamiliar situations. Their defence is often to become silent and inarticulate, which wrongfully becomes synonymous with expectations of lower intelligence. Once they are in the playground talking amongst their friends they are capable of expressing ideas just as abstract, subtle and universal as any white upper-class speaker: there are no intellectually superior 'white' games that black children do not play.

The discussion of language by Interactionists illustrates that because the research techniques and classifications of early sociologists (and also early geneticists/psychologists) was problematic, in not taking account of actors intentions and meanings, this was then detrimental to the conclusions of sociological inquiry. Consequently if working-class children

are not linguistically deprived are they, as early sociologists concluded, 'culturally deficient'? Early sociologists simply assumed that the working-classes lacked a 'preferable' middle-class culture. For this presupposition they must be criticised. They did not appreciate the differences. Certainly the working-classes do have their own cultures which have developed over time. It is plausible that anyone brought up in a certain way will find it extremely difficult to imagine other lifestyles, and so swapping from one culture to another will be extremely difficult. Consequently when children have been brought up in a specific manner they have a greater tendency to emulate their parent's way of life in an almost self-fulfilling prophecy.

Yet, during the 1970's the early sociology's stress upon culture became widely criticised as an anachronistic 'deficient one-sided model' (Young, 1971; Keddie, 1973; Labov, 1973). Authors such as Keddie (1973, 1975) and Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b) have argued that early sociology and schools were in fact only representative of the middle-class. Early sociology had no appreciation of cultural integrity or parity. The approach of many early theorists was now regarded as far too deterministic, especially since it suggested that working-class children's status had been fixed solidly by their social background, implying that teachers could have little effect (for instance, Burt, 1965; Coleman 1966).

It was Keddie (1973) who assaulted the concept of working-class cultural deprivation:-

> "In the first place it is not clear of what
> culture these families and their children can be
> deprived, since no group can be deprived of its
> own culture. It appears therefore that the term
> becomes a euphemism for saying that working
> class and ethnic groups have cultures which are at
> least dissonant with, if not inferior to, the

'mainstream' culture of the society at large...The argument is that the school's function is to transmit the mainstream values of the society and the failure of children to acquire these values lies in their lack of educatability. Thus their failure in school is located in the home, in the pre-school environment, and not within the nature and social organisation of the school which "processes" the children into achievement rates" (p.8, Keddie, 1973).

Interactionist sociology therefore developed an appreciation and understanding of how schools' procedures and language could affect children's performance. No more was it excusable to cast them off as simply 'deficient', instead it was schooling that was seen to be failing to get the best out of the pupils. Concern was inevitably drawn towards classroom interaction itself and how pupils and teachers interacted and the ways this could improve or hinder education.

c) Classroom Interaction: The Classification of Pupils and the Power of Teacher Expectations.

The strength of the Interactionist perspective rests with micro-analysis which studies the behaviour between pupil and teacher, and it is this that allows Interactionist sociologists to explain how education works on a day to day level. Interactionism did not aim to measure scientifically educational achievement like early sociology did, but rather to share and evaluate the meanings and intentions of the participants involved to improve education for each student and teacher.

Keddie (1975) was concerned with two views of classroom reality: the teacher's and the pupil's. It is teachers who perceive, evaluate and label their pupils. Labels like white, male, Protestant, are embedded within all interaction. It is such classifications that enable all discourse to take place. Without them we would not be able to communicate with others. However, labels can not only constrain individuals, but also be derogatory. Ultimately, they can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, for example a teacher may wrongly conclude that a child is academically backward and so the child recognising or sensing the teacher's perception acts accordingly. This process will continue unchallenged as pupils generally accept the teacher's authority as legitimate. This is derived in the first place from socialisation, for instance we obey the policeman, not because he will hit us with his truncheon, but because we have been taught that to obey authority is correct. Secondly it derives from power, the threat of punishment, such as detention.

One of the major discoveries, or realisations, of Interactionist sociology has been that if individuals, "define situations as real, they are real in their consequences. This is at the core of the self-fulfilling prophecy" (Thomas in Karabel and Halsey (1979), p.299).

Goffman (1959) stated that the social world is actually full of illusions perpetrated by individuals upon each other. It is people who construct the world about themselves and their own place within it. For Goffman this occurs via the construction of Durkheimian notions of rituals, which in turn have developed from class stratification. This means that once people have been successfully 'labelled' by those in authority, they then begin to conform to the descriptions which have been imposed upon them: in this case educational achiever or failure (this is in direct correlation to Becker's work (1964)).

The first set of labels and expectations placed on children are by their parents, and these can have considerable effect. For Hore (1970) even subtle gestures, such as a smile or frown, can have determining implications. Swift (1967) scrutinised 132 children who had taken the Eleven Plus. He found that the parents of the successful working-class children actually expected more of their children occupationally than the rest of the working-class in general. It emerged that these working-class parents retained views similar to the middle-class. They even declared that they saw themselves as middle-class. Swift's crucial finding was that the aspiration for educational success differed generally between working and middle-class families. The implication being that early sociologists were correct in so much as class cultures do affect either positively or negatively a child's academic development. Yet in contrast to early sociologists Swift argued that working-class parents concentrated upon schooling as a socially

liberating process, whilst middle-class concern was with the acquisition of certificates. Ultimately though the most important and decisive classification of pupils occurs at school, because teachers have the potential to enhance or prevent children's academic and thus career development.

Studies concerned with teacher expectations, such as Seaver (1973), and Sharp and Green (1975) have consistently shown that pupils very quickly learn what a teacher expects from them, and they will then act accordingly. The key to subsequent interaction being teachers initial expectations. The most crucial question raised by this was, 'How are teachers influenced in making their initial judgements concerning the expected performance of their pupils?'

Interactionists such as Keddie (1975) further suggested that teachers themselves are unaware of their preoccupation with the class backgrounds of their pupils. This information they assumed from the appearance and demeanour of their students, as noted by Cicourel (1968) and Clifford and Walster (1973). It is this observational interaction that enables the teacher to build up certain stereotypes of different pupils and label them.

The act of 'labelling' has severe repercussions for all subsequent interaction:-

Figure 4: *The Basic Process of Stereotypical Labelling.*
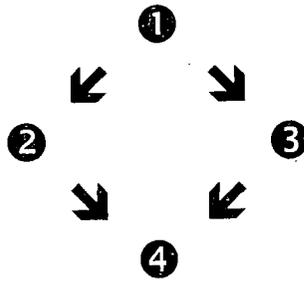
❶ *Initial Encounter.*
     Teacher is influenced by: child's demeanour, appearance, language usage, knowledge of child's family, physical attractiveness etcetera.

❷ *Status (label) Conferred of 'Imperfect Pupil'.*
     The child is classed as: disruptive, non-co-operative, has little interest in learning.

❸ *Status (label) Conferred of 'Ideal Pupil'.*
     The child is classed as: hard working, diligent, co-operative, attentive.

❹ *Child Acts Accordingly.*
     Once the label has been successfully applied it is extremely difficult to change.

This figure illustrates that it is the process of interaction (in this case the stereotypical images held by teachers) that determines the way the child is treated, and its potential evaluated by teachers, and not as early sociologists believed due to documented proof (reports and certificates) of their previous academic achievement. For writers like Becker (1952) and Keddie (1975) it is the working-class, minorities and females who are usually classed as 'imperfect' pupils while the middle-class gain the prestigious status of 'ideal pupils'. The importance is that it does not matter if children act or achieve similarly, once the label is applied it sticks: middle-class is 'good', working-class is 'bad'.

For Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Karabel and Halsey (p.299, 1979), the academic success of a child rested more with the expectations (created by labelling) of its parents and teachers than with the child itself. The irony here was that the child became a pawn in the labelling game as it had no control over the labelling process, and consequently the child had the least say in its own educational programme. To improve the child's academic potential the social researcher and teachers must discover what conditions are needed for beneficial labels to be created. For Sharp and Green (1975) the child would benefit most if parental attitudes matched teachers' expectations of what a good parent should be: involved, knowledgeable and interested in school affairs.

Interactionist sociology had recognised that differences in teaching expectations would affect the response of the pupils. And because it remains the privilege of the decision maker to shape and direct a child's life as he/she sees fit (Clark, 1961; also Cicourel and Kitsuse, 1963), to improve the achievement rates in education teachers need to be highly aware of the consequences of all their actions and attitudes.

The culmination of teacher expectations and pupil classification results in what Keddie (1975) defined as the relationship between the teachers' views of 'ability' and 'knowledge' and the subsequent success/failure of their pupils. For instance, Vulliamy (1982) illustrated that the way music is taught (classical or rock), has consequences for student interest and success. Keddie (1975) identified education's problem as being that those pupils defined as 'low grade' (the working-classes, minorities and females) are actually denied access to high grade knowledge (the information required to pass examinations) which is essential for educational success. She suggested that if teachers could recognise this, they could then

prevent it. In real terms this would mean that they would no longer deny certain pupils the knowledge they required, and would thus increase educational equality. For Hargreaves (1975) the harmful effects of labelling which he believes to a large extent have caused the social problems of education, could be diminished if only teachers were more aware of the labels they create. Education could therefore be an effective means of countering stereotypical prejudices. Interactionist sociology had succeeded in linking itself to real life possibilities: the improvement of classroom interaction.

The insights of Interactionist sociology opened up a number of new areas for writers to explore concerning education, such as Hyman's *Approaches in Curriculum* (1973). The true value of Interactionism is its ability to show those concerned how social order is maintained and socially constructed. It is this form of theorising that analyses the very essence of education which is just what early sociologists never questioned but simply took for granted. The development of Interactionist sociology meant that only now could researchers begin to comprehend and explain the reality of the classroom situation, how and why knowledge is transferred or ignored. Interactionist sociology demonstrated that schooling was not a one-way process of authority and knowledge transference as early sociologists stated. Teachers often have to negotiate with their pupils. For example in a mathematics lesson, to gain the co-operation of the students, the lesson may be made more interesting by undertaking mathematical games rather than numerous equations. Compromise is an important everyday part of the learning process. With this level of understanding it should have been possible to provide both teachers and policy makers with clear cut advice on how to improve teaching methods.

Nonetheless, "The question, 'What shall I teach?' poses itself to every teacher.... No one teacher can teach everything nor can one student learn everything. Selection is therefore necessary" (p.3, Hyman, 1973). The question hence arises of exactly whose values and knowledge are to be taught: those of the teachers (which teachers?), parents (which parents?), or pupils (which pupils?). Interactionist theorists failed to provide any means to evaluate which would be most beneficial. Controversially this leads into one of the central and persistent dilemmas of Interactionist sociology: the problem of relativism. Can a particular 'solution' be the 'correct' one applied to all cases? The simplest answer would be for a majority interest to take precedent, but this is against the Interactionist's aim of giving individuals back their self-worth and autonomy.

The failure of Interactionist sociologists is that they did not provide specific guidelines designed to improve classroom interaction. They failed to identify labels to be encouraged or those to be avoided. They offered little advice on how teachers could classify pupils and the role teacher expectations must take in order to gain the best from children. They had identified specific causes of educational underachievement, but did not offer any effective solutions. This would leave their work vulnerable to 'New Right' criticisms of ineffectiveness and ergo of being valueless. As such, the foundations to Interactionist sociology's possible nemesis had been laid.

d) The Practice of "Streaming" Students.

Interactionists not only had shed light on how pupils are classified and the role of teacher's expectations, they also ascertained that a cardinal problem facing schools, especially comprehensives, was the effect of teachers being in control of the classroom situation and imposing their own expectations on children via labelling. This problem was enshrined in the action of 'streaming', a notion which became universal with the *Hadow Report* of 1926, a publication whose ideas were based on the theory of inherited IQ. The notion of IQ had been disputed due to work on the development of intelligence by psychologists such as Hebb (1961), Piaget (in Flavell, 1963), Luria and Vernon (in Rubinstein (1979), p.145), subsequently new explanations of why only certain students succeeded academically were advanced. Interactionists were specifically interested in streaming as it illuminated how teachers' classifications of pupils had a direct impact on their academic achievement and future lives, a process earlier sociologists had completely missed. Interactionist sociologists therefore regarded streaming as an extremely important process of education, and consequently made the first attempt at analysing streaming and its effects.

According to Douglas (1964), Jackson (1970) and Ball (1981), children were placed in different streams not according to ability or intelligence as early sociologists insisted, but instead due to untested stereotypical expectations held by teachers (as discussed previously). Children placed in the upper streams were predominantly white middle-class male pupils whilst the lower streams were reserved for working-classes

(p.41, Douglas, 1964; p.22, p.75, Jackson, 1970). Schooling rather than being based upon equality of opportunity (early sociology) instead exemplified social stigmatisation.

Ball (1981) discovered that teachers justified such class segregation by regarding the children in the lower streams as 'unfortunates' with emotional and mental difficulties. Their conception of the classes were considerably similar to the notions exemplified in early sociology: 'deficit' and 'ideal pupils'. Once children were placed into different streams they were treated very differently, as either achievers or non-achievers. The content of the syllabuses for each stream soon diverged to such an extent that it prevented transfers, except for downward mobility (Hargreaves, 1967; Ford, 1969; Ball, 1981; Nobbs, 1983). For Ford (1969) and Ball (1981) the streams represented precisely defined separate and contrasting intellectual environments which accordingly transpired into the children's examination choices. It remained the middle stream pupils who were persuaded not to take 'O' levels, even though many achieved higher results in mock examinations than many top stream students. From initial selection at eleven years Ford and Ball traced a link to a child's impending career. Failure to enter a top stream became as damaging as failure to enter a grammar school had been prior to 1965.

The children themselves would act appropriately (p.115, Douglas, 1964), Jackson (1970). Ford (1968), Measor and Woods (1984) expressed anxiety concerning overriding pressures to conform to peer groups. For Hargreaves (1967), streaming encouraged children to form an 'ability identity': a view of themselves as 'clever, average or stupid' in order to prevent being normatively, or physically isolated from their peers in their allotted stream. Hargreaves also suggested that those placed in the lowest

streams were most likely to become members of delinquent sub-cultures, whilst those in the 'A' stream were more inclined to be 'ideal' pupils. The reasons for this are two-fold. Children in the lower streams were denied any status or prestige by the school. Psychologically this resulted in feelings of inferiority. In response these children rejected school and all that it stood for, hastily developing into an anti-school culture consisting of overt rebellion, fighting, disruption and ignoring homework. From this they gain prestige and status in the eyes of their peers, but are regarded as 'double failures' by their teachers. Those children in the top streams behave in an inverse fashion: good behaviour, appropriate dress, and a willingness to learn[7].

According to Interactionists the assumptions of expectations in this way became reality via self-fulfilling prophecies, and the teachers' expectations were proven legitimate (Ball, 1981; see also Appendix 2). Since Interactionists highlighted the far reaching effects of streaming there has been much concern. The Swedish government as a result outlawed streaming below the age of fifteen because of the social and psychological problems it may cause (see Jackson, 1964, 1970; Barker Lunn, 1970).

Concerning unstreamed schools Jackson (1964, 1970) showed that they maintained equal if not better results than streamed schools. This he believed was because teaching quality was dispersed through all classes in an unstreamed system, so that there would be no classes of 'no-hopers'. According to Ball (1981) however the abolition of streaming would not resolve any problems, as streaming would reappear within each classroom: teachers would still identify children in 'types', and as long as teachers' attitudes remain 'fixed' the objective of comprehensive education, equal opportunities for all, would remain unfulfilled. Keddie (1975) further stated

that the elimination of streaming would have little consequence in transforming the hierarchical categories of knowledge, performance and ability that continually leave the working-class student categorised as 'uneducatable'. More directly Hooper (1971) questioned whether maintaining curriculum based inequalities is more potent than relying on more evident selection methods. This is especially important because the content of a school's curriculum is an essential element in the creation of social norms/inequalities (Internet, 1995).

The re-education of teachers that Ball and Keddie insist upon may seem impractical for authors such as Hooper, but one way of breaking the effect of streaming and 're-educating' teachers is illustrated by Rutter (1979). He was concerned with the quality and interaction of teaching. Successful schools were the ones where the teachers had a constant commitment to their own high values and rules. They expected hard work and good behaviour. He concluded that it is the teachers who create academic achievement via encouragement, values, discipline and behaviour, the school ethos is crucial. The earlier work of Ainsworth and Batten (1974) and also Bennett (1978) corroborates this. There is also evidence that missed schooling has an adverse impact on measured intelligence, and that more years spent in education have increasingly advantageous results (Jencks *et al.*, 1972).

Interactionist sociologists had therefore found an important cause of academic underachievement: stereotypical labelling which determined streaming. They had also provided a possible solution to the problem: making teachers aware of their own actions and emphasising the improvement of teaching quality. Nevertheless Interactionist theorists did

not elucidate exactly how the effects of streaming could be reduced, or how teachers' actions and teaching quality should specifically be improved. They could not provide guidance here because any discussion would have had to involve specifying the precise nature of the teacher's task, which to Interactionists would have infringed upon the autonomy and independence of the individual in the same way earlier sociologists had implied everyone should aspire to middle-class norms in education.

Streaming Between Different Types of School.

Interactionist sociologists also attempted to show how streaming existed between different forms of education. According to Parkin (1971) a minority of pupils receive high quality education (public schools) whilst the rest are given elementary schooling (comprehensives). Contrary to the implicit assumptions behind early sociologists' beliefs (see Davis and Moore, 1945), these two establishments do not educate pupils equally. Rather they prepare children for social inequality by instilling diverse levels of aspirations and expectations. Parkin, feeding off early sociology's macro-structural/functional methodology, affirms that the main socialising function of comprehensives is to reduce children's ambitions to comply with the requirements of the lower end of the labour market. At the same time those educated within public schools have their expectations raised to match the top occupational echelons. Likewise for King (1969) the academic success of institutions such as the grammar school depends heavily on the elimination of the 'less able'. In this way education is responding to genuine distinctions that exist in the labour market (early sociology). It has also been

suggested that comprehensive education undertakes a 'usefully humane function' by psychologically preparing working-class children for the reality of the outside world by narrowing their expectations and ambitions.

This view contains severe political connotations. Firstly, it strongly implies that working-class children are generationally prevented from improving their social position. Secondly, it precludes all classes from competing on open access, an ideal upon which the whole educational system is supposedly based. Douglas (1964, 1971) and Holly (1965) also agreed that comprehensives do not necessarily raise educational and occupational ambitions. They maintained that this is due to comprehensive education currently being of a lower standard in comparison to private education. The innuendo was that, given time comprehensive education could be made to equal, if not surpass private education. Nevertheless, comprehensives did not, as was hoped, provide an unquestionable alternative to tripartite education, nor did they lead to the abolition of streaming on a large scale. Indeed, streaming has continued as one of the main factors which reproduces social class differences and wastage. For Ford (1969) comprehensive streaming represented tripartite differentiation, the only difference being that the grammar, technical and secondary modern schools are housed in one building. Over a decade later Nobbs (1983) confirmed that comprehensives predominantly still use selection, and this accentuates social class differences to the benefit of the middle-classes. As such the problem persisted that comprehensives are not likely to decrease class divisions as long as streaming is present (Holly, in Sergeant (1979), p.267).

As such Interactionist sociology's progress was becoming problematic. The simple cause and effect hypothesis of early sociology had

been replaced by a multiple cause, multiple effect scenario. This made it more difficult to pin down the root cause of educational problems and alleviate them. This situation was exacerbated because a recognition was developing of the external constraints that were placed upon schooling by other streaming factors such as geographic location and wealth.

Geographic and Financial Streaming.

By 1978 80% of state secondary education was comprehensive based (p.709, O'Donnell, 1987). The ideal justification behind comprehensivisation was that it would widen equality of opportunity and reduce class inequalities and geographical variances. Comprehensives continued to show considerable differences in results however, and it should have been clear that schools continued to differ greatly in their resources according to their geographic locality. Geography was an area in which Interactionists displayed little interest. They failed to take account of its importance and the consequences the actual location of schools could have. There is much variety between comprehensives: there are inner city, country, large and small schools (p.108, Felsenstein, 1987). The effect of the schools' geographic location on the interaction within the school can be dramatic: "As regards the school itself, poor equipment and poor facilities in the underprivileged areas are associated with badly qualified teaching staff and an educational environment in which problems of control assume precedence over intellectual development as such" (pp.184-185, Giddens, 1986). The effect of geographic location was illustrated by Coates and Silburn (1970), and confirmed by Gray and Jones (1986), as well as the Department of Education and Science (16.12.1988), all of whom reported

that the overwhelming factor in deciding examination results was the social composition of the area a child inhabits, other important influences being school organisation and teaching quality.

A second aspect correlated to this is the effect of financial streaming. It is ability to choose, through personal wealth, that influences children's education. Comprehensives in middle-class areas often have better resources, attract highly qualified staff, more supportive parents, and suffer from less vandalism than inner city schools. The *Newsom Report* of 1963 stated that 79% of secondary modern schools in inner cities and slum areas were substantially materially deficient, coupled with an exceedingly high teacher turnover. It found that children in these areas suffered learning difficulties (p.239, Sergeant, 1979).

It has been estimated that it would cost the taxpayer £4 billion to return all English schools to a basic equal standard (*BBC2, Learning to Fail, Why Don't the English Care About Education?* 7.1.1992). The *Parent Teacher Association* (26.11.1991) reported that the education system is more appropriate to Dickensian times than the late twentieth century. Differences are further exaggerated as many higher-class parents are able to pay large amounts for their children to attend public school. For example, Harrow public school fees are £13,425 per annum (*Harrow School Prospectus*, 1996), which comes to more than the average working-class family's yearly earnings. The very presence of a selective education system, having such close links with the social class structure, is enough to help perpetuate social divisions and inequalities. Consequently there is structural inequality and class divisions. Interactionist sociology has therefore refuted the previous sociology's claim that all children are treated equally in every single classroom. It is the socio-economic location that remains

fundamentally important in a child's education. Comprehensives have failed to overcome this. Yet this system is far better than the Eleven Plus, no longer are pupils overtly assigned to 'failure' schools, and the biased nature of entrance examinations has ceased (*Early Leaving Report*, 1954).

Interactionist sociologists could never get away from streaming in one form or another: geographic, financial or 'prejudicial'. Yet, more positively, those involved (teachers), could be made aware of, and attempt to limit the more tangible effects of streaming, such as the stereotyping of children in terms of their social origin. But even if they wanted to, they could do little to alleviate geographic and financial streaming. Theoretically this signified a need to return partly to the empirical concerns of early sociology to discover wider societies relationship with education, though it was this Interactionists could not cope with because it meant dealing via macro-sociology with the structural organisation of society. If they had attempted this it may have seriously questioned and undermined the scope and effectiveness of their own micro-Interactionist methodology. Consequently this theoretical deficit left open a whole area of analysis solely for Marxists. Specifically how wider societal influences affect schools themselves, for instance, the questioning of any political motivations behind education policy. Questions must therefore be raised concerning the relevance and impact of Interactionist sociology upon education policy, and whether their theoretical shortcomings left them further open to the nemesis effect.

e) The Impact of Interactionist Sociology on Education Policy.

The change of education policy during the time of early and Interactionist sociology's had been dramatic. Questions directed towards the extent of the involvement of Interactionist sociology in this must be addressed, did the Interactionist understanding of education improve education policy? But first it is worth noting the changes themselves and the observable reasons for this.

Prior to 1944 social class had overtly determined a child's education as secondary schooling had been fee paying and consequently excluded most children. Only 2% of the population attended university (p.419, Giddens, 1990). The 1944 Butler Education Act introduced Tripartite schooling. This consisted of grammar, technology and secondary modern schools. Selection took place via the Eleven Plus, which was initially designed as an objective test that was supposedly based upon 'Parity of Esteem'. Its aim was to transfer the pupil from the primary school to the most appropriate secondary school according to ability and regardless of social background.

However by the early 1950's it was evident that the Eleven Plus had not achieved expectations. Social research into educational opportunities identified distinct social class discrepancies in the numbers of children gaining access to grammar schools, as well as in scholastic achievement in secondary schools (Williamson, 1990). The *Early Leaving Report* (1954) not only discredited Eleven Plus selection tests, but also illustrated that working-class children were more inclined to abandon grammar schools than middle-class children. It concluded that educational

reforms had so far only had a limited affect in reducing class academic inequality (C.A.C.E., 1954). Crosland (p.259, 1956) pointed out that the middle-class had dominated places available in the grammar schools. The *Crowther Report* of 1959 stated that only 12% of pupils remained in education until the age of seventeen, and that early leaving was very much more related to class background than academic performance (p.419, Giddens, 1990). Furthermore, there were clear disparities with foreign systems, 25% of children in America and 12% from U.S.S.R. attended university, compared to only 4% in Britain (p.177, Crosland, 1962).

From such data, there gradually occurred a growing recognition that the 1944 Act and Eleven Plus selection was not allowing all children to achieve as well as had been anticipated. During the 1930's the ratio of children staying on at school until or past the age of sixteen had been five upper-class boys to one working-class boy, by the 1960's the ratio had increased to 6:1 (p.68, *Developments in Sociology*, Vol. 1). The failure of the 1944 Act to live up to expectations can be summed up by the National Foundation for Educational Research which stated, "It is however, clear that much of the uneasiness over eleven plus is really an uneasiness about current patterns of secondary education. It reflects, too, a confused recognition that equality of opportunity has not been achieved." (p.24, N.F.E.R., 1963).

In an attempt to eliminate the extensive academic and social divide between the grammar and secondary modern schools the Labour Government of 1964 became committed to establishing a national system of comprehensive schools. Calls for this date as far back as 1942 when Dent wrote, perhaps surprisingly via a Parsonian organic model, against the inefficiency of separate school types which he saw as a severe impediment to national productivity. Instead he advocated a single combined system,

diverse in provision, with a common purpose (Dent, 1942). The 'purpose' was a) to create open access to equality of education for all students irrespective of social background, whilst mixing the social classes to overcome any disparities, and b) to improve technology and efficiency, and remedy the general lack of qualifications amongst the young in order to fulfil their potential. The notion was that comprehensivisation would produce a more open society incorporating higher rates of social mobility thus reducing inequalities between classes.

However confusion developed over what comprehensives should specifically offer, a framework for change was never defined or agreed and consequently the reforms were random rather than planned, which has been described as a 'comprehensive mess' (Richmond, 1978). For Benn and Simon comprehensivisation was only 'Half Way There' (1970, 1972). Some Local Education Authorities even resisted the changes and continued with grammar schools[8].

From the time of comprehensive change onwards Interactionists had achieved an in-depth understanding of schooling and had identified clear problems within the processes of education. Their awareness of how education operates and the constraints placed on education by the actors (such as labels and teacher expectations *etcetera*), was certainly an improvement on the insights of early sociologists. Yet the nature of Interactionist's work, focusing upon individual professionals and their daily practices opens up the possibility for politicians to utilise such findings in their own favour - to pass any blame - (see the 'New Right' Chapter), this inevitably leads to Marxian questions over funding for research (see Coulson and Riddell (1977), in the following chapter). Likewise Interactionists'

failure to evoke possible solutions would lead to the serious consequence of their work being open to the nemesis effect: namely critics could argue that their findings were impractical and unrealistic. It was the very technique of Interactionists, concentrating on unrelated small scale investigations, that were not linked to policy which left them with the problem of justifying the need for their approach in education. Interactionists never provided a lucid counter strategy, or even a guiding framework around which policy makers could have made their decisions. This, coupled with the fact that they never expressly advised governments, meant their impact was never direct. Consequently Interactionist sociology was not as effective as it could have been if it had specifically addressed policy issues. Instead the aim of Interactionist sociologists had been to find the cause of educational difficulties, share and evaluate the meanings and intentions of the actors involved. They had not set out to actively campaign for change. But there was a definite attempt to improve the understanding of those involved in education (especially teachers). In this respect there had been an agenda for helping to improve education policy, otherwise there would have been little point in making these discoveries in the first place. Also, because both the change in policy and development of Interactionist sociology occurred at the same time, they were both part of the same movement. Mounting criticism of the 1944 Act forced both groups (sociologists and policy makers) to explore new alternatives. At this time educational policy makers possibly had an understanding of Interactionist theories as each groups' work was concerned with the same ideas, for example the introduction of comprehensives was a direct attack on the effects of streamed Tripartite schooling.

The crucial point is that they were able to 'feed off' each other's concepts. Theoretical and practical developments do influence each other. Sociological ideas have affected education at its grass roots, especially in improving teacher training and university courses (Giddens, 1993), but the impact of these changes is difficult to establish (Williamson, 1990)[9]. For instance, much of the Interactionists' research was concerned with the effects on children of the introduction of comprehensives, and this relationship needs noting. However, data concerning examination achievements does not show this relationship, making it difficult to establish the extent to which Interactionists affected real policy changes.

Firm links from the sociologists to policy decisions cannot be illustrated. Hence it is possible for critics of Interactionism to dismiss their work as irrelevant and jeopardise its continuation. Certainly the development of sociology and policy could have occurred in isolation from one another, but due to the overriding phenomenon that both fields developed simultaneously, and the interest both had in the same areas, the evidence points to at least a possible awareness of each other, and mixing of ideas. Nevertheless the dilemma remains which came first, the beginnings of Interactionist sociology, or pressure for educational reforms? But does this question really matter? It is the change in direction by sociology and education policy that is important.

Conclusion.

Interactionist sociology represented a new type of sociological approach. A new methodology and subject matter for analysis clearly separates Interactionists from earlier sociologists. They raised new concerns and questions for education and provided new explanations.

The development of Interactionist sociology marked the end of the previous era where all education was simply seen as 'righteous' (early sociology). Under Interactionist sociology education was instead seen to be counter-productive for many children. The fundamental difference of the Interactionists in opposition to the previous phase became their interpretative basis. Instead of a functional/structural approach, Interactionism meant for the first time that individuals were seen to create society, they could no longer be viewed as passive receivers of the collective conscience. People could create their own social realities via meanings and interaction. Subsequently the concept of schooling was no longer fixed and 'measurable' as was once thought. It was now considered inadequate for the teacher to simply instruct the child, as interaction was seen as a two-way process. The simple one-way stimuli response of positivism was now believed to be inadequate: there were simply too many varying influences and possibilities that occurred during interaction, and hence the laboratory approach concerning education became useless. It was also recognised that the social scientist could not escape from meanings and values, consequently they could not, as they had surmised, interpret without being constrained by human actions. 'Science' was therefore unable to freely judge education. Ideology had been all too often mistaken for concrete facts.

Early theorists also failed to understand social interaction and social processes. Interactionist sociology has been crucial for our understanding of how education works on a day to day basis. We now know how teachers classify students, about the socially constructed nature of classroom interaction, what counts as school knowledge, social categories and processes. No longer are the assumptions of early sociology simply accepted. The cultural assumptions that determine the power of teachers have clearly been examined. The concept of fixed intelligence along class lines has been resigned to the history books. Interpretative micro-analysis has given teachers, if they so choose, an insight into the reality of classroom life and what differences their approach can make. Teachers are more able to realise that they can create problems of underachievement via labelling and streaming and hence they are capable of reducing failure. The needs of the pupil could now 'supposedly' be considered by teachers when they plan and initiate lessons. The main strength of the Interactionist understanding is summed up by Felsenstein: "Knowing pupils is at the heart of the comprehensive ideal which seeks to value all pupils and to develop them and their talents to the full" (pp.43-44, Felsenstein, 1987). Interactionist sociology had succeeded in helping to understand the respective roles of pupils and teachers in varying ways and has thus made sociological analysis directly applicable to all situations of classroom interaction and understanding.

The work of Interactionists on the effects of classroom interaction and school procedures led to research on areas early theorists missed: the effects of social interaction within schools upon the working-class, girls and ethnic children. This led to an understanding of their needs and helped pave the way for an appreciation of other groups' requirements.

This included the disabled, 'problem' children, and also helped in the establishment of remedial classes for slow learners, and culminated in the introduction of 'Educational Priority Areas' in London, Birmingham, Liverpool and the West Riding of Yorkshire (Halsey, 1972; Midwinter, 1972). For the first time people were able to appreciate differences between different cultures and not simply regard specific groups as uneducatable due to their backgrounds.

What had occurred from the first micro-examination of education was a widening of educational debate onto issues that had never before been questioned. As such, this helped raise peoples' horizons and individual awareness at a grass roots level. For example, the birth of the 'political correctness' debate in education, and also new teachers being trained in "Professional Studies" and "Whole School Issues" (Durham University's Education Department, 1995), the aim being to give an understanding of gender issues, disabled and special needs children's requirements.

Interactionist sociology brought to light the nature of interaction and socialising effects between schools, teachers, parents and pupils and how this had a huge impact upon pupils' academic performance and their futures. The discovery of human interaction and potential appeared to be the way forward. The implications of this approach were that reform was possible. The belief was that once Interactionist theorists had found the causes of the problems that hindered education's development, then an attempt could be made to cure 'all' ailments. If schools could be made to process their pupils more effectively, then 'wastage' would be avoided. In many ways this ideology is remarkably similar to the optimism of early sociologists 'we can explain it'. The true meritocratic functioning of the

education system had merely broken down temporarily, under the strain of advancing educational needs. Yet once improved all would be well. However Interactionist sociology contained severe deficiencies that meant progress was not going to be as rapid and unproblematic as was initially thought.

The most devastating question to ask of Interactionists is 'how realistic has their work been?' Interactionists had concentrated their research at the grass roots level of education, in classroom interaction and the discourse that takes place. They were so involved on a micro level that they failed to even consider macro forces, such as economic and structural factors. Many studies were not thus directly applicable to everyday 'outside' school life. Interactionists did not provide a comprehensive understanding of education.

The Interactionist's hope that reform could be initiated by teachers, by them being self-critical, aware of their actions, their expectations and the way they classify, label and categorise pupils was not realistic. It ignored the fact that humans are prone to error. Can all teachers always be impartially aware of the consequences of all their actions and attitudes? The default of Interactionists was that they did not, at the very least, offer guidance on how teachers should conduct lessons. They simply over-emphasised and over-relied on the power of teachers who themselves have already been socialised into society. This also implied the blame for educational failures should rest mainly with teachers. This ignored wider influences such as geographic, financial and political pressures.

Ultimately the excess of Interactionist sociology meant that the sociology of education had gone from one extreme to the other. It had accused early sociology of only being concerned with macro issues, yet in

an attempt to escape from this, Interactionist sociology itself became locked within micro-sociology. As a result, Interactionist sociology could not comprehend structural issues just as the previous sociology had not understood individual meanings. Both theories could therefore be seen to be lacking crucial elements of the other.

This is where Interactionist sociology began to fail drastically and encounter the 'nemesis' effect. It had a lot of good concepts, but never linked itself with educational policy, its impact upon which could therefore be classes as negligible. It inadvertently diverted itself away from trying to improve education with its micro concentration and thus failed in its aim to help society's children reach their potential. Even though Interactionists had identified specific problems of education, such as the effects of stereotypical labelling and self-fulfilling prophecies, they failed to take this any further and solve these problems. There were no great sweeping policies or even a blueprint guiding schools or teachers. Possibilities were wasted: comprehensives still use the selective process of streaming for example. The utopian dream of the comprehensive planners is still far away, equality of opportunity for each child, and equal access to all facilities regardless of background were never achieved, perhaps because comprehensives were never given a clear picture of what needed to be done.

So ultimately in answering the question 'did Interactionist sociology create its own nemesis?' I believe that Interactionist sociology succeeded in defeating itself. It was never an aspect of education policy and much of its work was subsequently ignored. Interactionist sociology did not prove beyond doubt that it was vital, or even worthwhile for the improvement of education. As such Interactionism remained prone to critical attack. Yet this in itself is not sufficient to explain the rapid and subsequent

undermining of educational sociology. It is plausible to suggest that another sociology may have taken the place of Interactionist sociology in the same way Interactionists replaced early sociologists. A possible foci of concern could have developed from a recognition of macro and micro interests.

I therefore argue that what has happened to educational sociology was only partly caused by the inadequacies of Interactionism. There are two other possible causes which need to be explored before I draw any final conclusions. These are:-

i) Other approaches within the sociology of education.

ii) Factors outside the discipline of sociology, which may have affected it adversely.

The first of these, the sociological alternative, consisted of Marxist approaches to education. The failure of Interactionists to recommend or even analyse policy changes left a void open for other researchers to fill. Into this stepped the Marxists with possible solutions to the problems of education. Furthermore, the criticism they offered against Interactionist sociology was that Interactionist analysis remained deficient because it did not explain why expectations, labels, attitudes and cultures occur in the forms they do. There was also a lack of consideration of the notion of power. Interactionist theorists were accused of only going part of the way as they did not investigate the structural aspects of society which, for Marxists, underlie social interaction. Interactionists failed to recognise this. As such they had only given a partial insight into social reality. Marxists were thus concerned with more emphasis being placed on structural factors and less on Interactionism. From this, I believe it is important to see how competing sociological accounts of education affected

the discipline of sociology as a whole, and whether Marxists also contributed to the nemesis affect.

The second possible ingredient that may have contributed to the problem of educational sociology is concerned with non-sociological phenomena. Ironically, even though Interactionists had successfully accused early sociology of not dealing with real life issues, they also fell into the same trap. With the rise of the 'New Right', an anti-sociology, educational attitudes changed. The 'New Right' directly addressed policy, and stated that what children really needed was jobs, not cultural awareness, an argument to which Interactionists had no effective answer. Consequently it is also salient to establish how this affected the sociology of education.

I now propose to examine these two potential causes of sociological difficulties in turn, so that I can answer the object of this study, 'what has happened to the sociology of education?'

[1] The term 'paradigm' is used in reference to a set of ideas, methodology, or values which enforce an individual community of scholars to undertake research in a manner that is particular to them.

[2] For a specific and detailed account of the unscientific nature of natural science, Kuhn (1962, 1970) provides an excellent example of the human attributes which affect scientific research, an area which is still fervently debated in the philosophy of science.

[3] 'Classifying' refers to the extent that subjects are insulated from one another. This allows individual specialists to build up knowledge in their own sphere without having their basic assumptions questioned.

[4] 'Framing' deals with the extent to which pupils and teachers can decide what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught, *i.e.* the distinction between everyday and classroom knowledge.

[5] For Marxists like Bowles and Gintis (1976) the key point of such work has been missed, rather, the implications concerning the alleged indoctrination of children should be studied.

[6] For instance, "He stand still", is the correct way of writing "He stood still" for West Indian Children (p.124, O'Donnell, 1987).

[7] This parallels Willis' Marxist conclusions (1977).

[8] For further reading concerning the success/failure of reforms, critical authors include: Ford (1969); Westergaard and Little (1974); Halsey (1980); Grey, also Heath and Ridge (*Developments in sociology* Vol. 1). Those detailing the success of reforms comprise: Benn and Simon (1970, 1972); Boudon (1974); Neave (1975); The National Children's Bureau (in Wilby, 1980; O'Donnell, 1987); Lancaster University's Education Research Institute (in Nobbs, 1983); Felsenstein (1987); Williamson (1990).

[9] Not only has the impact of sociological effectiveness on educational policy been questioned, but Heath (*New Society*, 17.7.1987, pp.13-15) actually questioned the effectiveness of legal intervention and successive education acts, the 1944 Education Act, 1965 comprehensive introduction, and the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen in 1974. He proposed that these reforms have made very little impact in reducing inequalities even though they were expressly designed to do so.

Heath concludes that the increasing numbers of children gaining examination certificates seems to have been hardly influenced by past education reforms. Heath argues that the growth of free (1944 Act) and comprehensive education has done nothing to abate the steady increases in examination success and dominance of the upper-classes over the lower-classes, and has probably aided it. However the reformers have encountered one unexpected change. Even up to the 1960's the working-class was virtually united in not gaining any examination qualifications at all. Today acute differences are emerging between the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled sections of the working-class. Educational success has consequently become more, not less affiliated to social background (p.15, *New Society*, 17.7.1987; and p.423, Giddens, 1990).

This has momentous implications for all sociologists and policy makers as it culminates in the apprehension that legal reform is not as effective as was expected, and at worst impossible. However Heath does not assert that educational reforms are useless, rather that they have not yet made any real improvements to social disparities in Britain, for example, Abrams and Brown (1984) conclude that after the introduction of comprehensives little has changed. Policy changes have merely followed existing trends and not 'come out of the blue', in the way that the French Government's promotion of the *Baccalaureate* via advertising did.

The inference for Interactionists is that even if their work had been taken up by policy makers, it may still not have improved children's education. The whole scenario would seem to be against reformers, though as Halsey (1980) implies, there is no practical alternative but to reform. I believe there

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is a definite need to investigate further the effects 'reformers' have on education. This is a possible area a future sociology of education could undertake.

CHAPTER 3

MARXIST EXPLANATIONS OF EDUCATION.

Resistant Social Inequalities:

"Notwithstanding all the propaganda intended to suggest that these differences are mostly a thing of the past, and that 'levelling' and 'egalitarianism' have if anything all but obliterated class lines, the fact is that Britain has always been and remains a very unequal country, in which differences in wealth, income, conditions of work, security, housing, education, and 'life-chances' in general have remained very large, and, at the opposite ends of the scale, truly enormous." (p.10, Miliband, 1982).

Education Cannot Heal Society's Problems:

"our reliance on education as the ultimate public policy for curing all problems, economic and social, is unwarranted at best and in all probability ineffective" (Thurow in Karabel and Halsey (1977), p.335).

Introduction.

In proceeding to answer the question what has happened to the sociology of education, I will now turn my attention to other approaches within the sociology of education, namely Marxist explanations. I have chosen to examine Marxist accounts next due to chronology (Marxist and Interactionist explorations into education occurred simultaneously), and also because Marxist ideas developed specifically with reference to the sociology of education. Consequently I aim to ask the same question of Marxism that I applied to Interactionism, 'did sociology create its own nemesis?'

To be able to answer this I intend to identify what the Marxist approach to education consisted of, and why Marxism was different from Interactionism. To illustrate this effectively I have chosen two polar extremes within Marxism - the most prevalent group consists of those Marxists interested predominately in the structural relations of wider society and how this affects education, and still important, but less instrumental are those concerned with the interaction that takes place within education.

The former category developed from criticisms of Interactionist sociology's complete lack of analysis of structural influences on education. The Marxists' aim was to understand the assumptions underlying social order, an area Interactionists were failing to investigate. Research therefore concentrated on the relationship between education and social structure. Macro rather than micro Interactionist phenomena were to be studied. The hope was that such research would enable Marxists to produce a theory capable of explaining social reproduction, and specifically the relationship between education and the following world of work. Theoretically Marxism had returned partially towards early sociology's structural/functionalist

method, though Marxists proposed to study not by early sociology's 'science', but by the rationale of 'dialectics". The ultimate goal of Marxist accounts was to provide definite answers to many of the questions raised by Interactionist theorists, for example, Young (1971) asked, 'What is the relationship between power and knowledge in education?'

At the opposite extreme, Interactionist Marxists, shared the same interest as Interactionists of the previous sociology, concentrating upon classroom interaction. Yet Marxists were concerned with whether or not such interaction was determined or related to economic and social class considerations. Their emphasis was thus fundamentally different from Interactionist theorists. Marxists also questioned early sociologists' concept of 'collective conscience' (or agreed norms), in respect of how valid this was in an extremely diverse social environment. As we shall see Marxism developed into these two main research programmes, which ultimately led to Marxism's proposals for education.

Next I aim to establish the relative strengths of Marxism in comparison to Interactionist sociology and what Marxism contributed to the sociological understanding of education. Hence, did Marxists help the sociology of education, as an academic discipline, to demystify the complexities of education and state what needs to be done to solve educational problems, thus ensuring the need for a sociological approach in education? Or was the effect of the Interactionist and Marxist sociologies, instead of complementing each other, to place sociology in a more disputed and thus precarious position?

Ultimately this investigation will allow me to answer the question 'did Marxism contribute to the Nemesis effect?'

a) Marxist Discontinuity with Interactionism.

Educational Marxism developed during the time same period as Interactionist sociology and, like Interactionists, Marxists attacked early sociologists' attempt to reduce education to a basic cause and effect model. Marxism and Interactionist sociology had a greater concern with understanding the nature of education, and what occurred within education and the reasons for this, than in placing the blame for academic failure on what early sociologists had assumed to be inherent deficiencies of the child. Consequently, Marxism and Interactionist sociology had the following characteristics in common:

i) The questioning of all forms of facts, statistics and the so-called use of 'objective classifications'.

ii) The treatment of social categories as problematical.

iii) A dissent with early macro-functional sociology, especially the positivist and functionalist 'excesses' of early sociology.

iv) The concentration upon the actual transmission and acquisition of all interpretative and communicative actions.

As Marxism evolved, writers such as Bowles and Gintis (1976), and Willis (1977), were aware of, and hence able to feed off of Interactionist sociology. In spite of the above similarities however, Marxists were dissatisfied with the scope of Interactionist theorists to such an extent that they opposed their work rather than complemented it. Before examining Marxist accounts it is important to understand the reasons for their

dissatisfaction. Criticism centred upon what Marxists perceived as Interactionist sociology's inherent inadequacies. In raising questions about the nature of education, Interactionists had begun to cover the theoretical field of the sociology of knowledge and power in relation to education. However the position of Interactionists in this area was not entirely clear. It is true that they were critical of existing educational arrangements, but not in so thorough a manner as Marxists would like. Interactionist sociology tends not to examine aspects of education other than within the classroom situation. Thus the main Marxist criticism of Interactionist sociologists is that they raise interesting questions concerning education, but fail to provide a theoretical framework capable of answering far more complex questions about the origin of meanings and intentions, and why some meanings and values apparently dominate others. Marxists like Althusser (1969a,b, 1971), and authors who wrote about Marxism such as Kolakowski (1978) believe that the origin of these meanings and values are important and should be examined as they may determine classroom interaction prior to Interactionists classroom analysis which does not take account of the widespread origins of interaction. As such, Marxists were interested in areas of education with which Interactionist sociologists were not concerned.

The central Marxist criticism of the Interactionist's phenomenological analysis is that it cannot evaluate beyond a specific situation which is based wholly upon an individual researcher's own perceptions. In stressing the actors' definition of the situation via meanings and thus relying upon participant observation in their research, Interactionist theorists may only be imposing their own interpretations and values onto situations under study. The Interactionist researcher in consequence may be blind to structural factors that influence meanings and definitions in each

circumstance. Thus in treating education as distinct from broader social arrangements attention may well be diverted away from the true causes of educational inequality. Marxism subsequently began its analysis of education with a different perspective and therefore different approach. My study will consequently examine the way Marxists initially investigated the interrelated processes of education and society which they believed would give a more accurate understanding of education. For example, Interactionist sociology cannot explain the basic proposition of why it is that teachers and pupils hold the values and attitudes that they do when other opinions could easily fulfil similar needs. For instance, why do teachers hold stereotypical images in favour of middle-class children? Interactionist sociology could describe how schools create inequalities such as self-fulfilling prophecies, but failed to explain the fundamental causes of these inequalities. Interactionists had located the cultural meanings and 'effects' of education, but had not linked them to the historical, political and economic development of society which may have created such meanings in the first place. From the Marxist perspective Interactionist theorists had failed to recognise that a capitalist society is stratified and inevitably creates academic failures, instead Marxists aim was to expose the constraints imposed by capitalist societies on certain sections of society, to change society and then allow everyone to achieve. Interactionists had not attempted to explain the relationship that the economy has with education, a relationship that was of central interest to Marxists. Interactionist sociology consequently remains myopically idealistic. In treating education as separable from society, the Interactionists created their own pitfalls.

Marxists also express opprobrium towards Interactionist sociologists for their 'cultural relativism'. That is to say that most

Interactionists argue that all meanings applied to a particular situation are equally valid. This provides no objective means of choosing between competing ideas. As the Interactionist Bernbaum himself stated, "It is impossible to say what 'being wrong' might constitute" (p.61, Bernbaum, 1977). This is why Interactionists have been referred to as 'Romantic Libertarian Anarchists' (Williamson, 1974) for their stress on the role of individual freedom and cultural relativism in education. It is this which leaves education with no real blueprint for educational improvements or policy recommendations, but rather a mishmash of isolated studies, which in turn has severely discredited the credence and impact of Interactionist theorists.

Feeding off this theoretical deficit Marxism combined facets of the early and Interactionist sociologies and brought two new concepts into the sociology of education. The first is a dialectically based understanding of the way the organisation of society affects education, for example, economic and political systems and their requirements. The second is an Interactionist awareness of why education has developed in its present form.

b) Society's Influences on Education.

Marxists were concerned with identifying connections between education and wider structural aspects of society, and the relations between individuals and society. Marxists posed the questioned whether the social structure was constraining individuals and emphasised that the structures of society should be studied and not individuals as Interactionists insisted. Their method was therefore similar to that of early sociologists (Durkheim and Parsons) rather than Interactionist theorists. In opposition to the inherent cultural relativism of Interactionist sociologists, Marxists also addressed the issue of class consciousness and ideology, and what effects this has on education.

According to Marxists interested in structure, the reality of education only comes to light when the structures of society are examined dialectically. It is significant structures, such as economic and political systems, that give meaning to particular facts, ideas and values. Only then can the sociologist understand the processes of education. This is because society is not based on random individual interaction, but contains underlying regularities that affect how people behave. Deriving from Marx, Lukács and Piaget (Kolakowski, 1978), individuality is only a representation of collective tensions, aims and struggles which originate from social and practical circumstances. It is these social influences which can ultimately constrain actions and thoughts[2] in education.

Apple (1979) presents the case that British society is structured and sustained by an arrangement incorporating a high proportion of social inequality that is accepted as natural by the population it is repressing. Questions must be asked as to what happens within education that brings

about a willing acceptance of such a disproportionate society. How do dominant groups maintain their hegemony? Logically education should evince the masses to their exploitation.

Consequently Apple (1990) argues that to separate education from its relationship with ideology (what Interactionist sociology had done), and from the historical development of education (which explains why ideology has dominated knowledge), would prevent the sociologist from gaining an understanding of how society reproduces itself by promoting ideologies which defend institutional arrangements to such an extent that they may be causing inequalities of stratification. Without this understanding it is impossible to comprehend society and education fully.

Interactionists in also failing to examine wider societal influences on education while they focused on interaction and the selection of knowledge meant that they had overlooked reasons explaining why society and education are as they are, and why certain forms of knowledge, ideology and interaction dominated others in education. Yet at least they had begun to deal with the issue of created and selected knowledge unlike the mono-defined 'science' of early sociologists.

Marxists interested in the structural organisation of society and its relationship with education consequently identified new constraints placed upon education by outside influences. The main strength of this approach is that it attempts to explain how the economy affects education. For example, *Unpopular Education* (1981) elucidates ways in which education has changed to suit a capitalist economy by the reaction of the state to different and often contradictory historical events. For instance during World War Two, women were educated to disregard feminine virtues, adopt masculine skills and seek employment. Yet after victory when

they were no longer needed, the norm was for the women themselves to return to the 'safety' of the kitchen as their traditional feminine identity had not been altered (Arber and Gilbert, 1991). The central point for Althusser (1971) is that the state functions to harmonise otherwise competing class factions, and that education is the dominant ideological state apparatus by which the long term interests of the bourgeoisie are maintained.

Marxist theories have subsequently concentrated on the way education reproduces and legitimates social divisions, especially according to economic requirements. Bowles and Gintis's empirical work (1976) relates the demands of a capitalist economy to America's education system. Their work can be traced back to Althusserian structuralism (Althusser, 1969a, b), and though they do not avow to be structuralists, they did believe the capitalist mode of production was all determining. Bowles and Gintis argued that education provides a workforce meeting economic requirements by instilling:

i) An appropriate personality of students (submissive, disciplined, dependable and punctual, not independent and creative).

ii) A specific form of work and social relations based on hierarchy and obedience. Pupils are taught how to fit in and accept society. School is therefore a mirror of the workforce as it prepares pupils for work in the economy. This is similar to the socialising concept of the early sociologist Durkheim (1956), save for the opposing view of conflict rather than consensus.

iii) Arguably the most important aspect of their work is the justification of inequalities, especially in relation to social class differences. Bowles and Gintis stated that education legitimates class inequalities by propagating the following myths: education attainment and occupational

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reward are based on merit; education is the only route to occupational success. The illusion of meritocracy, achievement and opportunity established in schools leads to the belief that role allocation in schools is fair and legitimate. Education is therefore reducing any discontent that a hierarchy of wealth, power and prestige tends to produce. Yet in reality for Bowles and Gintis, and Oakes (1985) it is the class background of a pupils' parents that determines their educational success or failure, and hence their career.

Consequently as a result of societal pressures on education (something Interactionists missed) education is not only reproducing the skills needed within the economy, but also creating a false class consciousness, and socialising pupils into an acceptance of capitalism, to submit to their exploitation as natural. For Althusser (1971) education is not a meritocratic establishment (early sociology), but rather it is an 'ideological state apparatus' which reproduces a technically efficient and submissive workforce vital for capitalism's survival.

Marxism thus answered the question Interactionists raised but could not answer: interaction and knowledge within schools is designed to fulfil capitalism's needs. Education's purpose is not to counter or even dilute class inequalities as Interactionists believed, but rather to maintain and reproduce the exploitative nature of a suppressive capitalist regime[3]. So instead of viewing schools as a solution for all educational problems as Interactionists tried to, Marxists concluded that schools are imprisoned in a social system which is heavily influenced, in the last instance, by the economy, which has set the limits to education's ideological requirements. To improve education, imposing new education policies like the 1944 and 1965 Acts, is not enough. For all Marxists the whole of society must be

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revolutionised, not just a subordinate element like education. So through economic change, an improved society and education system will emerge devoid of capitalist inequalities and injustice.

An Appraisal of Marxist Educational Theory.

The strength of Marxist theorising is that it allows authors to relate the processes of schooling to the wider needs of society, especially the economy, an understanding other theorists do not share. Marxists have recognised that it is impossible to separate education from wider society, and they are fundamentally correct in so much as it is the economy that remains unequivocally interconnected to education. They also drew attention to the relationship between a family's socio-economic position and education (Althusser, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Young and Whitty, 1977). Marxism thus contributed to the explanation of why school organisation and knowledge reflect material reality, an element Interactionist sociologists never captured. Additionally, Marxists illustrated that Interactionists had no awareness of the concept of ideological domination as they remained at the level of the individual.

However, there are inherent difficulties within Marxist accounts of society's affects on education. The main problem with this is that they lack awareness of interaction and individual meanings (see Interactionist sociology and next section). According to Illich (1973), the classroom is more influential in determining educational inequalities than wider society.

The insistence of authors like Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976), that education fulfils capitalism's requirements, means that

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their analytical approach becomes a distortion of earlier sociologists functionalism. They are thus open to functionalist criticisms such as Wrong's (1977) argument that they view people as excessively integrated. The core criticism is that they provided a mechanistic view of the relationship between education and society, coupled with a subsequent lack of analysis of interpersonal interaction. At the very worst they can be attacked for being economically deterministic. Education quickly became reduced to a passively controlled machine[4] devoid of autonomous actions. There was no acceptance of a two-way process of negotiation, or even a recognition that education could affect the economy. For example, it could be argued that the introduction of comprehensives forced more employers to recruit from comprehensives than from the 'prestigious' grammar schools, as many grammar schools ceased to exist in their own right.

The weakness of Marxism is that it used the basic functionalist methodology and positivist analysis of early sociology and disguised it as a new elixir to reveal the 'true' nature of society. Marxists also adopted early sociology's concept of 'collective conscience', which they criticised, inverted, and utilised for 'class action'. The same methodology has thus been used but for opposing explanations: conflict rather than consensus. Marxists failed to learn from the criticisms of early sociologists methodology and made the same mistakes. Even though Marxists attacked early sociology for being myopic and obsessively predisposed towards the structural functional consensus of the *status quo*, the same is true of Marxist theories which emphasise the functional relations of conflict. Because Marxists state education is a necessary part of capitalism they make education a functional necessity as early sociologists had previously done. They also avoid possible alternatives. Capitalism prior to state educational ideologies survived with

religious dogma, as such education is not a necessity as employers could teach the young. Also, if education is determined by the economy, Marxism cannot define to what extent this occurs. Does education have no autonomy of its own? If it does not, as Marxists suggest, how could Interactionist sociology have developed? And if schools are merely cogs in a capitalist system they must therefore be 'reflections of the wider society' (early sociology). Marxism consequently gets trapped within methodological dilemmas it has no answer to.

Ironically Marxists, however critical of capitalist education systems, also failed to overcome the problems of socialist education systems. Bowles and Gintis (1976) placed considerable faith in a socialist solution, and yet socialist education systems often contained phenomena they had criticised 'capitalist education' for: strict discipline and punctuality in China, the authoritarian teacher-centred methods of Cuba, while in Russia, the most successful students tended to be the offspring of party members (Dobson in Karabel and Halsey (1979), pp.254-269)! The Marxian reliance on an 'all curing' socialist education system was a utopian desire, not a reality. Both Marxist explanations that emphasise ideological control and Interactionist theories which utilise cultural control can be criticised for their implication that after the researcher has understood the ideological/cultural subjugation of individuals they can simply transcend such problems of education.

The economic approach is important, and has a part to play in understanding education, but according to Marxists interested in the wider society it became too overpowering, God-like even. The aim of Marxists was to show the deficiencies of the capitalist system, including education, and this enforced their quest to revolutionise society. Educational theorising

merely became part of this process, the validity of education in its own right was lost. Marxists like early sociologists were not dealing adequately with social realities, their overriding condemnation of capitalism diverted their attention away from value free and impartial research. In doing this they abandoned dialectical principles, jeopardised the validity of their own work, and opened the way to the nemesis effect.

c) Interactionist Marxism.

Both Marxists interested in wider issues of economy and society, and the functionalist theories of the early sociologists primarily concentrated on the effects of macro social forces on people, and were inclined therefore to ignore the interactions between teacher and pupil. Interactionists accuse both early sociologists and these Marxists, who often overlap on a functionalist basis, as seeing and classifying people as mere puppets - what Wrong (1977) defines as the 'over-socialised conception of individuals'. It is this that, while valuable in explaining the complexity of modern societies, is too generalised to explain the complexities of human behaviour within education. For Wrong (1977) individuals are not forced to act by some determining law of stimuli and response which creates social cohesion, as the positivists of the early sociology demand. Nor are they compelled, as Marxists would have us believe, into confrontations where men endeavour to subdue one another. In relation to Marxists, this question must be asked: 'how is social order possible in complex societies that, by their very nature, should result in destructive conflicts between opposing groups?'

Although both early sociologists and Marxists concentrate on the role of the education system in the reproduction of skills and ideology suitable for the economy, they do so from opposing viewpoints. The functionalism of the early sociologists centralises the way in which education maintains and reproduces conformity, consensus, and commitment to widely-held values. As such they view each individual as an over-socialised consenting being, while the Marxists see individuals as over-integrated controlled beings.

The main objection to these theories is that their emphasis remains generalised while it allegedly provides empirical proof for a one-sided view of human nature. Modern sociology has attempted to escape from, and reveal, the caricatured views of people contained in such doctrines as classical economics and social Darwinism. The aim was to expose the unreality of such abstractions as the God-seeking theologian, the Machiavellian of the self, and the pleasure-seeking Freudian. The irony is that these sociologists may have produced another reified account in socialised individuals (Wrong, 1977).

In evolving from earlier Marxist accounts, Marxist Interactionists were able to escape from criticisms of over-determinism and return to the dialectical approach (which was envisaged as a methodological prerequisite by Young (1971)), and see what was actually happening to the actors involved within schools, an area previous Marxists had largely ignored. This lead to Interactionist Marxist questions concerning the creation, legitimacy and power behind social values and their transmission. For example, did individual actors' behaviour accord with economic accounts of education?

The Marxist Interactionist purpose was to understand the reasons why and how individuals held specific views, meanings, values and intentions, areas Interactionist sociologists had not been clear upon. It was this insight that should fulfil Marxism's aim of providing a theory capable of understanding and explaining all the elements of an education system which existed within a capitalist society. The benefit of this approach was that the emphasis was once again with education and children. This would enable Marxist Interactionists to show how pupils living under capitalism perceive their situation, and whether they attempted to fight and reject it or whether

they were content. Parker's (1974) *Resistance Through Rituals* (1976) and Willis (1977) are illustrations of this trend.

Much of Marxist Interactionism developed in parallel to, or even from Interactionist sociologists. For instance, Gramsci's work (in Adamson, 1980) is likened to Interactionists' perspectives on classroom knowledge, but he specifically addressed the issue of how and why school knowledge is created. Gramsci regarded education and its content as a certain form of knowledge that is decided upon and imposed by intellectuals on the working-classes, who are henceforth prevented from thinking independently[5]. Gramsci is a forerunner to Marxist Interactionists such as Willis (1977), who concentrated on his ideas of class struggle against hegemony (Boggs, 1976). Willis (1977), one of the most influential Marxist Interactionists, specifically took Interactionist sociologists' approach to classroom interaction further in respect of economic necessity. His work was in part derived from Keddie's Interactionist understanding (1975). In this she traced the links between the teacher's view of 'knowledge' and 'ability' and the subsequent success/failure of pupils. But more importantly it was Willis (1977) who combined Marxist theories of reproduction with an Interactionist understanding of what was happening to individuals on a class based level. Willis investigated the ways in which working-class boys created their own culture in order to learn how to accept working-class jobs as the structure of capitalist society worked to restrict their educational horizons.

Willis distinguished between two groups: the rebellious working-class 'lads' and conformist 'ear oles' (p.13, Willis, 1977). It was the creation by the 'lads' of a counter-school culture, based upon their working-class roots that intrigued Willis. The real significance of Willis' study lies in

its demonstration of the unintended consequences of the 'lads' revolt against the system. It is this revolt that leaves them without qualifications, and it is their culture which makes them willing to take on manual work. They find satisfaction from unskilled, dead-end jobs. Their minor revolt, against qualifications, inevitably makes them conform to the capitalist system even though they strongly describe themselves as non-conformists. They see manual work as hard, tough, and masculine, the very essence of life they idolise. They do not expect or look for work satisfaction. Instead they seek and create extrinsic group-based gratification's that education cannot offer. They therefore fulfil the requirements of capitalism by providing it with an exploitable workforce eager to undertake the least desirable occupations available.

For Willis the 'lads' actively resisted a middle-class ideal pupil image by developing a counter-school culture, which was later matured and regularised in the world of work. Willis thus demonstrated competently that the system does not always function as simply as Althusser (1971) had suggested, since the working-class are able to 'fight back'. This 'fighting back' of the working-classes can also be seen at work through such observable entities as trade unions. Even so Willis' work is a clear attempt to show how schools ensure working-class children receive working-class jobs, even if they 'fight back'.

Nevertheless Willis argued that the 'lads' do have partial insights into the reality of their situation as they have rejected or exposed the fallacy that the education system provides open access for all. They know, or at least perceive, that they will fail academically due to their class background. However, Willis states that the 'lads' do not receive a full picture of their position in society and so are denied a firm basis for political

action. Instead, divisions within the working-class continue maintaining the equilibrium of the unequal *status quo*, because by the time the children have reached adulthood they will have been educated primarily in not recognising the privileged *élite*. This will prevent comparisons being made, and so the working-class accept their lot unquestioningly.

Furthermore Young and Whitty (1977) concluded that the minority of working-class pupils who are academically successful are placed under extreme pressure to adopt the cultural and political profiles of ruling *élites*, whilst organisational changes, aimed at creating better 'schooling', appear more prone to socialising pupils into accepting class divisions than enabling them to transform them. Young and Whitty (1977) state that education is a cultural institution of the upper-classes and it cannot be changed by reforming Interactionist theorists and their amendments merely enforce the *status quo*. It is such conclusions which define Marxist proposals for the improvement of education. These are contained in the next section *Reform or Revolution*.

An Appraisal of Marxist Interactionists.

In evaluating the work of Marxist Interactionists it is essential to examine their methodology, and their accounts of interaction in schools.

Marxist Interactionists also get trapped within their own methodology. They argue that society is created by individuals' interaction, the limits to which have been defined by society, and not created as early sociologists believed by a force of agreed 'conscience collective' which determines individuals' behaviour. The problem with this is two-fold. Firstly, because of their emphasis on class conflict there must to some degree be an

element of 'conscience collective' which determines class allegiances, but they fail to define this, or to what extent wider society influences interaction. Secondly, if society is created by individuals, education can therefore be changed by individuals. Yet the certainty felt by many Marxists that reform is useless means ignoring educational improvements that have occurred. For example girls in the nineteenth century often had to prove they would benefit from education before they were allowed to attend school, and yet today, it is no longer acceptable to teach the subordination of women. Interactionists predict the same is possible for social inequalities. Marxists overlook the point that comprehensivisation was not extended as far as many sociologists intended (see Benn and Simon (1970)).

Marxist Interactionist accounts of what is actually happening within schools are susceptible to similar criticisms that Marxists themselves applied to Interactionists. Specifically, that they may only be imposing their own interpretations onto events. Also in attempting to avoid the cultural relativism that prevented Interactionist sociology providing educational solutions, Marxists have again over-emphasised anti-capitalist feeling. For instance, the Interactionist sociologist Woods (1980) challenged Willis' (1977) implication that pupils can only be placed into one of two groups: those who enjoy school and those who do not. Woods suggests that what may appear to be a 'conformist' student may not be very conformist after all, or that anarchic pupils are hidebound by rules. Marxist Interactionists failed to explain the way in which pupils and teachers have various strategies that are constantly developing and changing behind the public facade of the school. Anyon (1984) claims that female pupils can avoid teacher manipulation and actually create self-esteem in schools by using their own strategies, such as sexuality and the look of 'hopelessness' as manipulative

forms of resistance, where overt confrontation would be dealt with more severely.

The point is that classroom interaction is not as simple, or as easily understood and interpreted as Marxists would have us believe. Nor is it determined directly by economic requirements. Interactionism emphasises how classroom compromises are reached, by the actors themselves, ensuring the acquiescence of pupils to teacher control, often by trading off aspects of lessons that the pupils themselves find preferable, and negotiating the amount of work done in lessons. Woods (1980) concludes that pupils will bargain, making the most of their own powers in furthering their own interests, often in alliance with their fellow class mates, discovering and inventing infinite and complex strategies using tactics, such as noise, friendliness and imitation to procure what they want. Likewise Ball (1981) has studied initial encounters to stress the development of teacher-pupil relationships, and how teachers utilise various modes of control. One thing is certain, pupils constantly change and vary strategies, from class to class, and between schools. It appears that working-class pupils are more readily willing to disrupt lessons and cause physical disturbance to gain what they want than those children from public school.

To some extent Marxist Interactionists are right. It is the class background and culture of the family within capitalist society that is influential in developing a child's educational attitude and maturation (see Fuller, 1983). However, Marxists get too carried away with the concept of class struggle. Like the 'clearly defined science' of early sociology they see education through rose tinted spectacles. The culmination of Willis' work is the accusation of the 'lads' false consciousness. This in itself is problematic as it presupposes, and is dependent upon the objectivity of the researcher.

Furthermore Marxist Interactionists like Willis argue that working-class children only have partial insights into social reality which provides no basis for political action. This may be so, but they are only children, we cannot expect them to be political activists. Marxists accused Interactionists of leaving the improvement of education to 'reforming teachers', and yet they have done the same thing by emphasising a political awareness that children should have. This draws the question of how realistic has the Marxist Interactionist approach been?

The criticism of all Interactionists is the problem of multiple interpretations. How can their interpretations be any better than the early positivistic accounts? The whole process of validating Interactionist work can be called into question. Nothing can be totally proven to be the actors' true perception of events. Interactionist sociology had met its own nemesis. We only have Willis' claim that these children were rebelling against an unequal capitalist system, there may have been other reasons for their behaviour.

Nevertheless, the value of both Marxist and the previous sociological Interactionism (Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977; and Ball, 1981) is that rather than being theoretically isolated from each other, they have together shown that different social groups, such as the working-classes and girls, are perfectly capable of producing their own strongly based culture, a feature early sociologists disputed. As early sociologists discovered, the attitudes of the working-class themselves are influential in their own efforts, or lack of effort, in securing academic success (in this, the three sociologies become one, aspects of each; as we will later see, are important). The blame

for continued educational class disparities cannot therefore solely be put upon the education system.

Both Interactionism and Marxist Interactionism have given invaluable insights into what life is really like at school, and how we might assess and transform the quality of school life for the better. So to answer the question whether Marxism helped the sociology of education fulfil the goal of improving our understanding of education, I believe it is not possible to separate Interactionist lessons from Marxist perceptions. Interactionist sociology is correct as it is the individual's perception of society that determines their own academic intentions, but without Marxism's understanding of ideology and society becomes meaningless.

These theories have contributed enormously to our understanding of how schools actually operate on a day to day basis, a far cry from early sociology. The critique of all positivists/functionalists is hence their lack of true interpersonal ethnography, a criticism which can also be applied to Marxists only interested in the effects of wider society on education.

A further consequence of the development of Interactionist Marxism is that rather than contributing to the development of a coherent integrated Marxist critique, their work separated them as a minority from mainstream Marxists who were predominantly concerned with wider social issues: both groups were interested in researching different areas, using different methodologies - micro versus macro sociology. It is this problem of the incompatibility of research interests, Interactionists against those interested in wider social organisation, that sociologists have never overcome. They never recognised that it would be impossible to explain education fully without each other, as both groups had a part to play in the understanding of education (I will examine this in the final chapter with

regard to the requirements of a possible future sociology). Instead the split within Marxism further enforced the nemesis effect, and subsequently weakened the impact of the sociology of education, although more devastating was the split between the ideas of the Marxists and Interactionist theorists for improving education. Consequently I will study the implications of this in the following section: *Reform or Revolution?*. This left authors fragmented between opposing explanations of what was actually occurring in education. The consequences of this deep sociological division gave proponents of the 'New Right' the ability not only to foster their own development, but more importantly to claim the inherent uselessness of sociological analysis concerning education (*Black Papers*, 1975, 1977, Cox and Marks 1982).

Conclusion: Reform or Revolution?

I believe that in an increasingly demanding age the most important dilemma facing the sociology of education is how to improve education. After the demise of early sociology it may have been anticipated that another single, but new remedy would have been put forward. But this was not the case. There were profound differences between Interactionist and Marxist theorising. This has been highlighted by Bernstein's article *'Education Cannot Compensate for Society'* (*New Society*, 26.2.1970). The objective for both groups was to solve the problems of education, but the crucial difference was how to achieve this: reform within education (Interactionist sociology), or social revolution (Marxism)? It is this dilemma which prevented the sociology of education providing a unified response and strategy for improving schooling.

Centrally for Marxists a child from unskilled manual working-classes had as much chance of entering university during the 1980's as it had during the 1930's. 'Equal opportunities for all' as proclaimed in 1965 by Interactionist educationalists has still not been achieved. All Marxists, via different routes, arrive at the same conclusion: education is not simply a sorting system in relation to aptitude as early sociologists believed. Rather, it is a system which reproduces existing class inequalities, legitimating economic privilege via such processes as the continued domination of *élite* occupations by a minority of upper-class ex-public school pupils (Miliband, 1969; Althusser, 1971; Bourdieu, 1977b, c; *New Society*, 4.10.1979; Apple, 1990; Scott, 1991). For Marxists, Interactionist sociologists failed to comprehend the relationship of social divisions and inequalities that are established and reinforced through education according to private ownership

and economic interests. Interactionist reforms (like the establishment of 'Educational Priority Areas', Midwinter (1972)), appear destined for failure because of the requirements of the dual labour market. The problem for schools is that they exist within an unequal social system. For Burgess (1985) the inequalities of society cannot be atoned by education. In this respect the solution to the problem of education by Marxists (such as: Althusser, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; *Unpopular Education*, 1981; Apple, 1990; Scott, 1991) is more immediately apparent than that of Interactionist sociologists. Reform is not enough for Marxists, only a radical change in all the arrangements of society will do. From this it follows that no amount of 'tinkering' with the policies of education will make any worthwhile improvements. Only revolutionary changes within the whole structure of society will produce true educational improvements and a just education system for all.

Many Marxists therefore reject all progressive Interactionist theories of the previous sociology, especially cultural explanations for the failure of the working-classes, as they do not take account of power relations or social reproduction. Even the ideas of compensatory education or the need to make teachers aware of the requirements of the working-classes are rejected as inadequate. They feel that education cannot be improved 'half-heartedly', for example by changing the curriculum to accommodate 'disadvantaged' children. Such innovations, for Marxists, have never been successful in providing greater equality, the failure of the 1944 Butler Education Act and comprehensivisation in providing 'equality for all' confirms this. Simply changing the school situation is not enough, for the classroom is controlled and regulated by society's economic needs. It is the whole bourgeois system that creates social conflict and inequality. There is

consequently no point in reforming education alone. In the Marxist view, educational problems cannot be solved without changing the economic foundations and cultural divisions which strongly induce educational experience and performance (see Westergaard and Little in Craft, 1974). Interactionists fail to understand why society has developed educational inequality in the first place. It is their continued notion of reform within the system, for Marxists, which pre-empts their ability to improve education.

This situation is made more problematic and confused by later Marxist theorists like Young and Whitty who state that "socialists working within education and elsewhere will begin to develop more realistic strategies for change" (p.272, Young and Whitty, 1977), though they fail to define these strategies, the implication remains that reform should be similar to that proposed by Interactionists. Other Marxist theorists prepared to work within education include Bourdieu (1977 a, b, c) and perhaps surprisingly Bowles and Gintis (1981). Due to considerable criticism of their work *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), Bowles and Gintis by 1981 had changed their views to such an extent that reform from within, similar to Interactionist sociology, was now deemed appropriate[6]. The solution to improve education has thus changed from social revolution via direct political action, to utilising education itself. The range of educational opinion within sociology, went from one end of the spectrum to the other, and its impact was not to be missed.

The effect of the reform within, or revolution of, society debate had a devastating impact upon the sociology of education. Not only did the work of Marxists and Interactionists not complement each other, but crucially their divisions strengthened the nemesis effect to such an extent that it made sociology's relevance to education appear tenuous because of its

apparent inability to provide a coherent and full understanding of education. Inevitably, deeply ingrained theoretical fragmentation did little to attract educational policy makers to the work of the sociologists (there is little evidence of a direct link between the two), at a time when sociology needed to gain credibility in order for its work to be taken account of. These two counter philosophies, Interactionism versus Marxism, further weakened the impact of each other as this debate occurred at the same time (during the 1970's - 1980's), and competed for the same audience, a feature early sociologists, until their demise, never suffered. This problem was further exacerbated by fragmentation within each camp, for instance Marxism was internally divided between those interested in wider society and Interactionists. There was also considerable disagreement between authors themselves, for example Bourdieu's analysis of education (1977 a, b, c) operating as a system of cultural reproduction was severely criticised by Sharp (1980), as little more than a theory of cultural deprivation lacking in-depth analysis. But most importantly, there was no attempt made to create a strategy, united or otherwise, to improve education. Instead of each research group even attempting to contribute to the whole, which would have provided a more thorough and complete analysis of education, researchers, like early theorists before them, became so locked within their own methodological paradigm that the lessons of the past were simply not learnt.

The failing of each of the three sociologies was that they attempted to reduce education to an elementary and manageable form within their own paradigm. For example, the critique of Marxism by Marx (Thompson, 1968) is that class appears as a rigid fixed entity, and is over-simplified (*i.e.* Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Education in reality constantly changes in a relationship with all features of society not just the economy. It

was the Interactionist theorist Banks (1968) who emphasised the complexity of it all. She stressed the need for more research. Each of the sociologies failed to understand the complexity of education and realise that each had important points to offer in the understanding of the whole operation of education. It is this which desperately needs examining, and which I will look at in the final chapter.

The consequences of this overwhelming theoretical fragmentation were that it was no longer possible to explain educational processes in a united theoretical approach as early sociologists had attempted to do. The effect of this was that sociology could not offer concurring advise for the solving of educational problems, which gave sociology little value as an appropriate discipline for educational analysis. This drew the whole credibility of the sociology of education into question. Most notably the attack on the relevance of sociology in education occurred with a series of *Black Papers* (1969, 1970, 1975, 1977) written by Cox, Boyson and Dyson, and also Cox and Marks (1982). Furthermore because educational sociology no longer presented a unified approach, as it had during the time of early sociology, there was no theoretical or practical means of choosing between competing educational accounts. The sociology of education was severely divided and confused, and was therefore extremely weak. Consequently sociologists were unable to solve the problems of education, which had been an important reason for sociologists undertaking their theorising in the first place. This process meant that it became very difficult to identify a sociology of education in its own right. Crucially, it was the nemesis effect that laid the way for the 'New Right' to dispute sociology and take control in educational theorising. Indeed sociology's fragmentation was so severe that no effective opposition to 'New

Right' ideas were even offered. The next stage of my study will subsequently examine the impact of the 'New Right' on educational sociology as the only other cause of what has happened to the sociology of education remains to be factors outside sociology. The question to be posed is thus, 'did the sociology of education destroy itself with the nemesis effect, or was something else needed to push sociology over the edge into oblivion?'

[1]Dialectics is the method of assessing the truth of a theory by discussion and logical disputation.

[2]Though within Marxism there is a difference between structuralism (structures have influence over actions) and structuralists (*e.g.* Althusser) who believe the whole of society obeys the determining effect of unfolding structures.

[3]A point agreed by even some non-Marxists such as Giddens (1979, 1981, 1982).

[4]Determined 'in the last instance' by a particular mode of production.

[5]A critique of Gramsci is that his notion of all knowledge being controlled by the intelligentsia contradicts his idea of struggle (Adamson, 1980).

[6]The critique of *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976) was that the emphasis on an harmonious structural link between education and the economy did not allow appreciation of contradictions, and therefore appeared rigidly functionalistic and pessimistic of internal change being possible. Bowles and Gintis stated educational reform could not take place without economic reform. Yet by 1981 their opinion had altered so that internal change (Interactionist sociology) was appropriate. However, they argued that progressive educational theories (Interactionist sociology) did not recognise the inherently social character of education which prevented Interactionists from achieving their aims of equality and opportunity for all. The social constraints of education cannot be ignored. Bowles and Gintis (1981) believe that only with the development towards socialist education can educationalists overcome internal problems that have thwarted Interactionists from fulfilling their aims, as this will render the rights of property subordinate to individual/group rights.

CHAPTER 4

THE 'NEW RIGHT'.

Back to Basics:

"Young English teachers in the 1960s revived the romantic nineteenth-century notion of 'enthusiasm', encouraging the working class child to remain a literary primitive... Many of the new English teachers indoctrinated themselves and their classes in attitudes critical to the police, local government bureaucracy, industry and employers. They did not hesitate to encourage this ideology in the children's writing, or classroom discussion... The new wave of English teachers was committed to the comprehensive school, to unstreaming, subject integration and team teaching" (Thornbury in Ball (1990), pp.25-26).

Politics and Education:

"The pattern of English education cannot adequately be explained by reference too some master plan drawn up over brandy and cigars by the CBI. Nor can it adequately be explained by reference to the efforts of crusading politicians, eager to use the education system as the key machine tool in their own projects of social engineering" (p.99, Dale, 1979).

Introduction.

The final part of my study leaves me with only one other area as a possible cause of what has happened to the sociology of education. I consequently aim to ask the question, 'have factors outside of sociology, especially changing social and economic conditions, made a move away from sociology towards the 'New Right'?'

The 'New Right' is a difficult term to define. It is not a unified movement with a shared doctrine, nor has it a single integrated philosophy (Gamble, 1989). Instead, the 'New Right' is a coalition of diverse political, economic, social and moral ideas which, perhaps surprisingly, has not weakened its impact. Nonetheless there are two main contradictory, but unifying themes within the 'New Right':

i) Liberal economic arguments for free market forces, limited governmental intervention, self-regulation and individualism.

ii) Moral Conservatism, where the government should re-establish traditional values: social order; authority; responsibility and sovereignty, based on moral, religious and social conservatism (King, 1987; Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991).

The initial driving force behind this was the popular political agendas of Thatcher and Reagan (King, 1987), who unified 'New Right' elements around an agenda of reducing inflation and taxes, privatisation, deregulation, market forces, institutional reform, and law and order (Jordan and Ashford, 1993). This set the 'New Right' apart from previous approaches to education, because it is not a sociologically based paradigm, though it does include a number of right wing authors who have addressed

sociology such as Cox and Dyson (1969, 1970), Cox and Boyson (1975, 1977), and Cox and Marks (1982).

The first issue I will examine is how and why the 'New Right' was able to rise up from obscurity during the 1970's, a period in which the work of 'New Right' authors in education, Cox, Boyson and Dyson was largely ignored by the major sociological protagonists, and yet by the 1980's the 'New Right' had suddenly become extremely authoritative and influential in education. I will look at the social conditions of the period and whether they have aided or hindered the 'New Right's' rise.

The next stage of my analysis will be to evaluate the impact of the 'New Right' on both education itself, and more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, the sociology of education and the implications this has for the future of sociology. Is there a need for a sociological approach to education anymore? I will also define the ideas of the 'New Right' in education, and whether they are new concepts or a rehashing of old ideas. Consequently I aim to establish whether the 'New Right' has solved the problems of education.

a) Why did the 'New Right' Become Politically Dominant?

The 'New Right's' rise can be traced back to the social and economic conditions of the late 1970's. Up until this period, all government policies had been based upon Keynesian economics of state intervention[1]. Many such as Crosland (1956) advocated high public spending, especially on welfare, as the main object of the state was to create social egalitarianism.

However changing economic conditions across the world exacerbated Britain's economic weakness. Keynesian principles were seen to be failing (Gamble 1989). Post-war prosperity and constantly improving living standards were replaced by severe economic recession. Industry stagnated under high inflation, increasing industrial conflict and heavy taxation. This culminated in the *Winter of Discontent* of 1979 where the Labour government was under increasing political pressure, a situation it offered no new solutions to (Williamson, 1990; Edgell and Duke, 1991). The effect of recession was that it was no longer affordable to maintain large scale public expenditure aimed at providing equality, and cradle to the grave care, or high wages (King, 1987). A new political approach was thus made possible.

The 'New Right' was concerned with the idea of an over-expanded state, crippled with excessive welfare and economic responsibilities/costs which it could not meet. This was believed to have created a financial crisis that hindered economic growth (Drucker, Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1988), The state was therefore seen to have become integrally inefficient: it was not supplying those in greatest need. It

was also unable to control insubordinate elements, especially trade unions (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991). The welfare state was seen to have failed and social problems had not been solved (Le Grand, 1982). These criticisms were not new, but what was new was the growing strength of those opposed to large scale state intervention and the harmful affects it may cause (Ashford, 1985).

The pivotal change occurred with the abandonment of Keynesian policies in the mid 1970's when the Labour Prime Minister Mr.Callaghan announced that it was impossible to spend your way out of recession as had previously been thought. His statement symbolised an end to the social democratic traditions of the post-war era (King, 1987), and the return to the influence of economic liberalism in the guise of the 'New Right'.

The 'New Right' never developed into a political party in its own right. Its supporters were so diversified, from neo-liberals, conservatives, moral crusaders and disciplinarians, that within its ranks there were countless internal divisions and conflicts (Gamble, 1990). As such it had no single focus, its assumptions and the parameters of politics continually changed (Gamble, 1989). But what united the 'New Right' under the banner of the Conservative party was its development as a response to the crisis of the 1970's (also their fear of increasing state growth, *i.e.* a state which was not under their control and prone to the influence of socialism), and its new questioning of the post-war consensus under one of the strongest leaders this century, Mrs.Thatcher. All the different interest groups that made up the 'New Right' were able to rally behind her and the deliverance she offered to society's problems. These groups shared a rejection of social democratic policies of the past, such as collectivism and the ideas, methods and institutions of social agencies, which were seen to have failed and

brought only high inflation, taxes, unemployment and an inflated bureaucracy. With regard to education, the 'New Right' was strongly 'anti-sociology', especially concerning counter cultures, progressive educationalists and reforms that paralleled Interactionist theories such as comprehensivisation. These were blamed for the collapse of social order, educational degeneration and Britain's decline (Gamble, 1990; Savage and Robins, 1990). Once the Conservatives won the election of 1979, a major governmental change of direction occurred, which had direct implications for education and sociology.

The aims of the 'New Right' ,which would be applied in part to education, were concerned with a new economic approach. This involved the rejection of central government planning, which appeared wasteful, and weak as in the case of the U.S.S.R. (Gamble, 1989). Instead the strategy was to reduce the state's role to a minimum, rein in public expenditure/responsibilities, control inflation and reduce taxes (Drucker, Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1988). When all weakening functions/responsibilities are stripped from the state, such as a costly, interventionist and overburdening welfare system, Britain would become economically competitive. All 'New Right' elements agreed it was necessary to replace state management of the economy with a strategy of market forces (Gamble, 1989). The free market was believed to be the most efficient and productive system, better able to satisfy peoples needs via increasing competition and privatisation (Green, 1987). Ironically, the critics of interventionist policy could point to the work of socialist economists to show that increasing public spending on education would benefit the middle-classes to the disadvantage of lower-classes. We can see this from Le Grand (1982) who concluded that interventionist spending would create more

inequality than if market forces had been allowed free reign, and also from Miller (1989); Le Grand and Estrin (1989). In education, market based replacements were encouraged by promoting the Assisted Places Scheme (Edwards, Fitz and Whitty, 1989).

A further aim of these reforms was that individuals should be self-reliant and responsible for their own actions. People should not be dependent on the state (Anderson, Lait and Marsland, 1983). Ideally responsibility would be with families who should reaffirm traditional moral standards (Glennerster and Midgley, 1991). Concerning education, the 'New Right' constantly attacked 1960's liberalisation, progressive educational theories and sociologists for alleged declining educational standards, ill-discipline, delinquency and vandalism (Cox and Boyson, 1975, 1977; Cox and Marks, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986). It emphasised fears that in the quest for equality of opportunity, teachers were leaving bright children in classes of general intelligence and failing them. The claim was that a loss of excellence had occurred with the replacement of grammar schools by comprehensives. The 'New Right' was also anxious that schools were coming under increasing influence of left-wing ideologies, especially those of sociologists (*Black Papers*).

Notwithstanding this, the 'New Right's' call for the freeing of economic ability and the creation of a stronger state was contradictory. On the one hand, liberalism is based on minimalism with no notion of the state, but conservatism is a theory of statehood (Gamble, 1989). The 'New Right' comes from both liberal and conservative elements, and these elements were not resolved: the state could not be both non- and highly interventionist, as well as libertarian and authoritarian. But this means that the 'New Right' suffers from major incoherence, inconsistencies and ambiguity. For example,

the 'New Right' has to utilise a strong state to reduce welfarism, which has hindered a free market and individualism. Specifically in education, the state has been highly interventionist to create 'consumer choice', and there has been considerable conflict over this within the 'New Right' (Gamble, 1989). Consequently, the 'New Right' cannot be narrowly defined in terms of its objectives and methods of achieving them. The key to its success was the ideology of Thatcherism, which united the 'New Right'. Without it these divisions would have probably prevented the 'New Right' from influencing subsequent reforms in education. Educational sociology would possibly have been able to continue as it had been doing.

Nevertheless, the key point is that the basic assumptions on which so much of educational sociology was based were seriously undermined by changing economic conditions from the mid 1970's onwards. The core assumptions about the role and purpose of education were transformed in this process. Thereafter Conservative governments were able to reconstruct prevailing ideas about education from a position of intellectual dominance.

b) The 'New Right's' Effect on Education.

The origins of the 'New Right's' approach to education can be traced back to the failing economic and social democratic policies of the post-war era (Whitty and Menter, 1988). With the 'New Right's' rise post-war educational consensus changed from agreement that education was the way of ending social/economic problems, to a sense that education was failing as it was not preparing children for employment. Marxists had already argued education was reinforcing social divisions rather than changing them (see above). Education had not achieved the expected greater social equality (Jordan and Ashford, 1993).

The 'New Right' challenged conventional ideas concerning education and laid the blame for declining standards, discipline and moral values with progressive teaching methods and comprehensives, though evidence of this was never provided (Raab, 1993). The *Black Papers* initiated critical attacks on post-war education as a cause of economic decline[2]. In 1976 the Labour Prime Minister Mr.Callaghan gave the 'New Right' recognition, by questioning progressive education and stating that education was not fulfilling industry's needs for trained workers or parents' wishes. However there remained considerable disagreement over what the correct role of the government should be (Green, 1987). This atmosphere led to specific aims being established for education by the 'New Right' which culminated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. These aims comprised reducing educational spending to alleviate economic crisis[3], reforming education to support traditional values (responsibility, discipline, morality),

and fostering an enterprise culture and popular capitalism to create a type of society the government desired (Gamble, 1989).

The Education Reform Act of 1988 was the most important development since 1944. It contained radical proposals from the right aimed at ending the post-war education system by creating conditions for parental choice and the market operation of education. The 'New Right' was extremely critical of state education. The Adam Smith Institute (1984) stated parents say had been excluded from their children's education. Parents should have the ability to choose which schools their children attend, and this should not be limited to comprehensives. To achieve this vouchers were considered but disregarded (Gamble, 1989). The earlier Assisted Places Scheme was designed to help small numbers of parents send their children to private schools, but a lack of funding meant the scheme had a negligible impact (Edwards, Fitz and Whitty, 1989). City Technology Colleges (CTC's) were introduced, outside of Local Education Authority (LEA) control, the funding of which was supposed to be met partly by industry. Again the impact was questionable as they remained few in numbers (Regan, 1990). Instead the chosen route to parental choice was seen to be changing the LEAs role in education. Much of the preparation for reform came from 'New Right' think-tanks, which were concerned with heavy LEA bureaucracy and especially Left-wing LEAs, such as the Hillgate Group (1987).

Schools were now able to opt out of LEA control and become Grant Maintained Schools (GMS) where they would be financed directly from the state. This gave the responsibility of school management to teachers. The implication of opt out was that it would help dissolve the comprehensive system of education, and promote market forces. However

many teachers claimed they did not have the time, or training to be managers (Savage and Robins, 1990). A number of comprehensives chose to opt out in order to remain comprehensive (Glennerster and Midgley, 1991)! The government was deeply concerned with the number of GMS. Out of 25,000 schools only 1,000 have chosen to opt out since 1988. Consequently the government has planned to give GMS privileged powers, such as borrowing money on the financial market and the ability to choose pupils. The aim is to encourage more schools to become GMS (*The Times*, 13.9.1995). In 1993 the responsibility of school inspectors was taken away from LEAs. The effect of this was to reduce severely LEAs independence and powers, and prevent their interference in the operation of market forces.

The aim of the 'New Right' was to restrain the collectivist and universal welfare ideology of post-war period in favour of markets, self-help and enterprise. By substituting parental preference in choosing schools over LEAs imposed limits the resulting competition between schools, to attract pupils in the free market, should improve standards. 'Bad' schools would have to improve or face closure and only effective schools would prosper (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991). Competition and not a social democratic or sociological understanding was the key to improvements in education for the 'New Right'. Education was henceforth regarded as a business commodity which should be left to the free operation of market forces, rather than education, as in the past, being a public good which should be a provided service equal for all (Grace, 1991).

The 'New Right' Hillgate Group (1987) argued that market forces were the most efficient way of achieving school potential, but to do this, central government intervention is required to prevent vested interests (LEAs and teaching unions) from threatening educational standards and

traditional values. The state's main role should be to ensure that competition is equal and fair. Yet central control, going against the wishes of liberal 'New Right' elements in favour of 'New Right' conservatives, has increased dramatically with LEA reforms and the introduction of a National Curriculum. There has been considerable conflict during this process[1].

The introduction of the National Curriculum and a system of testing children's performance at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 years, set out standards by which parents and teachers could assess individual, class and school progress via league tables, thus providing the basis for choosing market services. Nevertheless severe problems occurred in carrying this out as many teachers refused to administer these tests (Savage and Robins, 1990).

The effect of the 1988 Education Reform Act was that what had started as a variety of different ideas, came to be regarded as a coherent education plan. Large scale opposition from teaching unions and LEAs made little impact (Haviland, 1988). This resulted in the reforms becoming properly established, and growing confidence for the 'New Right'. Forty years of post-war social democratic methods and goals for education were cast aside.

Even so there were inherent criticisms applicable to these reforms. Increasing central government control ended the partnership between teaching professionals, local and central government which previously created education policy (Raab, 1993). Power now rests with politicians, who could shape education for political rather than educational purposes. The state has become more authoritarian in creating and implementing policy (Edgell and Duke, 1991), which contradicts the idea of free markets, though there is the possibility that some parents have more

choice. The 'New Right's' introduction of market forces brought back the pre-war notion that education was not the state's true responsibility (Chapman, 1986), as the idea of 'self-reliance' reduced the concept of state responsibility and accountability:

> "Politicians are always adept at shifting the blame, and this is an Act where not only national but local politicians can shift the blame down to school level... The local politicians could turn around in the future and say, 'Well don't blame us, they were given the budgets, they were told they could do what they like" (David Hart: General Secretary of The National Association of Head Teachers, in Ball (1990), p.68).

Instead of trying to improve the relationship between teachers, children, parents and ministers, the effect was to allow the government to escape from criticism of its policies, and to pass the blame for failure to the individuals themselves.

Additionally, the free market is not as open as it appears. The ability to choose within the market is determined by social class. Only those with the resources available to make informed choices, with the ability to move to a 'good' school or pay for private education. This can prove detrimental to a child's education. For Bash and Coulby (1989) a hierarchy of schools could be created from private, through GMS, down to under-resourced inner city LEA schools. The 'free market' is therefore favouring middle-classes (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991; Raab, 1993). If the 'New Right' believed a free market would easily solve the problems of education, they were naïve.

Parental choice also has drawbacks. Popular schools have had to turn many pupils away, thus limiting choice. Some schools have become increasingly selective, only choosing most able pupils, and not accepting difficult or special needs children as they are less likely to achieve good results and benefit the school in league tables. This can also damage less popular schools in terms of the resources distributed and morale. This has further eroded the comprehensive ideal of education for all, especially as this policy takes little account of geographic and socio-economic differences. The government may advocate parental choice, but only when it suits their aims. For example ministers ignored parental votes to keep the Inner London Education Authority and in the creation of at least two CTC's as this did not fit in with their agenda (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991). Government policy has also backfired as many newly created school governing bodies of parents and professionals often act together against government plans (Golby and Brigley, 1989). Consumer choice has not rested easily with governmental educational efficiency.

Depending on one's position, these reforms can be viewed as attempts to improve education and relate it to consumer and economic needs, against vested interests of LEAs and teaching unions. But it is also viable to argue these reforms have centred control of education with politicians and prepared the way for a two-tier education system as choice and market forces are only available for those who can afford them (Savage and Robins, 1990)[5]. Furthermore the 'New Right's' stress on individual choice rather than collective success allows for the idea that social inequality is inevitable as why else would parents choose to purchase private rather than state education? No longer was education's aim to be equal for all. All the decades of work by educationalists and sociologists who tried to achieve

'an equal outcome and opportunity for all' was dismissed. Consequently much of the basis of educational sociology was therefore undermined. The 'New Right' also reincarnated the early sociologists' Davis and Moore's (1945) anachronistic concept that everyone is responsible for their own place in society due to their own efforts. This immediately ignored substantial sociological evidence which states that education achievement is influenced by geographic location, streaming, socio-economic position and cultural attitudes (see Interactionist and Marxist chapters). What is surprising is that the 'New Right' did not possess a full understanding of education, many of its policies were not based on tested hypotheses, but on strongly held beliefs and prejudices (King, 1987).

The diverse nature of the 'New Right' meant that its varied aims and methods were constantly plagued by a lack of clarity, confusion and contradictions (King, 1987; Ball, 1990). Education policy has been characterised by messiness and unexpected outcomes (Raab, 1993). According to Simon and Chitty (1993) chaos is rampant as there remains no overall educational strategy. For example, 'New Right' conservative supporters of the National Curriculum are opposed by liberal thinkers who believe the reforms have not gone far enough, education is too statist thus hindering the free market. Additionally there is criticism that subjects have been chosen not for their intellectual or literary value, but for the political views they transmit (Scruton et al, 1985). The reforms have also not overcome differences of opinion between industrial and educational protagonists who argue respectively that education is too academic or not traditional enough (Jackson, 1989; Ball, 1990). Many of the 'New Right' have become disillusioned (King, 1987). The government has failed to balance internal contradictions of ideology, public appeal and business

interests. Yet this is considered unimportant since education has been reformed, though these internal differences will probably never be solved.

Due to policies being established around such incoherent ideological aims, they are more susceptible to be criticised and changed than if they were based on proven experience. It is the above criticisms of the reform of education by the 'New Right' which gave sociologists the opportunity of presenting their own case for education. I will consider whether sociologists did utilise such assessment and how they responded in the following section. Undoubtedly the 'New Right' has opened new possibilities for education, but whether their ideas will last as long as the social democratic policies of the past it is impossible to predict. Some elements of 'New Right' philosophy may survive, others may not (especially since the success of 'New Right' schemes is highly debatable (Raab, 1993)). But there is considerably more manoeuvrability in educational thinking for the future than there has been in the past. Nevertheless, the 'New Right' has not legitimised itself in education, its support rests on changeable political ideology, and parents as voters/consumers do not share a common interest.

Yet the effect of 'New Right' education ideas under Mrs.Thatcher and Mr.Major can not easily be dismissed. They may have failed to eradicate the social democratic institutions of the past, such as the welfare state (Jowell and Witherspoon, 1985; Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991; Hill, 1993), but the 'New Right' took the initiative and confidence from educationalists, Labour, the Left and sociologists. 'New Right' educational ideas have been so dominant that the political opposition has adopted many of their concepts. This can be seen in Labour's *White Paper on Education* (Taylor, 1994). More of its ideas are from Conservatives than traditional Labour. It strongly emphasises choice, discipline, accountability,

parental involvement and responsibility. The 'New Right' succeeded in ousting the social democratic policies of the past on which much of sociology had been based. It rewrote education's agenda. 'Equality for all' was replaced by 'consumer choice'. This had severe consequences for sociology as it raised questions concerning the relevance and understanding of sociology in education: were sociologists' methods and aims, which had developed prior to the changes, equitable with the new form of education? What would these changes mean for sociology, and how would it respond? What role should sociology play in education according to the 'New Right'?

c) The Impact of the 'New Right' on Educational Sociology.

After defining the term 'New Right', why the 'New Right' rose to political dominance and how it reformed education, it is now possible to examine what this meant for the sociology of education.

The progress of educational sociology under the government influence of the 'New Right' can be attributed to several factors: the origins of the ideas which created 'New Right' philosophy; the state of educational sociology and its past effectiveness; the strength of the 'New Right' and opposition to it; and the attitudes 'New Right' elements held towards sociologists.

As I have described previously the 'New Right' can be divided into those of liberal and conservative persuasion. The liberal element was strongly influenced by Hayek (1944, 1960, 1973, 1979; see also King, 1987; Jordan and Ashford, 1993). Several of his core ideas have defined 'New Right' reasoning and their relationship with sociology.

1) Inequality is inevitable and necessary for society to operate efficiently. Because wealth is earned by the efforts of each individual, a distribution of income is natural as it offers incentives for individuals to work harder. This is identical to the ideas of early sociologists, like Davis and Moore (1945), whose concepts were discredited in the Interactionist chapter. Still, this concept means that inequality is viewed by the 'New Right' as a positive feature of economic progress. It is this which denies social democratic policies, such as egalitarianism, universal standards, and equality for all (the basic aims of Interactionist and Marxist sociologists), their legitimacy. Instead equality as policy aim would prevent market and

individual freedom, and promote economic decline. Heavy taxation, as in the past, to pay for such policies is seen as illegitimate. This therefore changes the role of sociology and denies its past work as pursuing the wrong goals.

2) Liberty allows individual freedom to experiment and produce the best development of society, via free markets and competition. This process is unpredictable and the results cannot be forecast. Hence it is impossible for sociology to guide or suggest improvements. This leads to the limits of social science.

3) For Hayek (1979) the social sciences are only able to study motives and attitudes (similar to Interactionist sociology) and discover broad patterns. Sociologists have a limited ability to predict the consequences of social actions and do not have a full understanding of knowledge. Knowledge is not understandable outside of the individual, *i.e.* there is no such thing as 'social knowledge'. Consequently, due to individual freedom, there is no consensus in free societies over the correct role of society (this is seen in the differing views of sociologists, Interactionists versus Marxist), therefore its study by sociology becomes meaningless. Also for Barry (1983) and Willetts (1992) sociological categories like 'class', 'states' and 'societies' are simply abstract illusions which have little value, rather it is individuals and their choices and actions which are important, but cannot be predicted. This therefore negates much of sociological analysis.

4) Social sciences cannot understand fully the processes at work in society because society is a spontaneous order. Social institutions, practices and human actions are the result of individual actions, not design or planning. Sociology and what it can offer is hence limited. Furthermore, society develops according to natural selection the best survives and the

weak dies. Individuals do not need to understand this process to benefit from it. Sociology is not necessary.

5) Hayek (1944) argued that socialism requires a centralised state to enforce individuals to work to a plan of socialism. This limits choice, freedom, competition and markets. Eventually this will lead to such a crisis of stagnation that socialism will collapse. This concept applied to education denies any form of collective planning, especially egalitarian planning such as comprehensivisation and the approach of previous sociologies.

The second aspect of 'New Right' philosophy, conservatism[6], is also hostile to sociology. Conservatives constantly aim to return to an earlier period and reconstruct traditional values and classes in hierarchical terms (King, 1987). Concerning education they are opposed to social democratic/progressive policies, welfare, the left, and the social and sexual liberation of the 1960's. They believe there is no place for a sociological understanding, and education should be the responsibility of the family (Eisenstein, 1981).

It is these core beliefs of 'New Right' liberalism and conservatism which turned the government away from all protagonists of the social democratic principles which were seen to have failed. Greater social equality and equality of opportunity for all, the basis behind so many reforms and sociological thinking, never occurred. From the view of 'New Right' philosophy, these concepts had even helped maintain inequalities and divisions as they had interfered in the natural development of education. The 'New Right' also feared sociology was dominated by collectivist and left-wing influences, which it aimed to destroy (Gamble, 1989). As such there was inherent opposition to all sociologists and their work, and this guaranteed that sociologists would have no place in the reforms of

education. Sociology itself was beset by internal fragmentation and offered no unified defence. There were so many competing methodologies that sociology simply appeared weak. Sociologists were able to explain why problems and inequalities of education occur, but they completely failed to produce policy ideas and state what they would do if they were in charge of education. For instance, they never said which subjects should be taught and why. This implied sociologists were divorced from the real world and not committed to improving education.

The 'New Right' on the other hand changed the nature of education from what appeared to be a confused set of understandings to an organised policy with clearly defined goals such as the National Curriculum and parental choice. Economic recession had forced governments to deal with the cost and nature of education, and exactly who would get taught what and for what purpose. As a result the great sociological theories of the past became outdated as they were not policy oriented at a time they needed to be. The 'New Right' succeeded in changing the definitions and ideological assumptions surrounding education, on which sociology had been constructed. For example, reliance on individualism pre-empts the need for collective sociology. Collective improvement had been replaced by individual decision making as a way of achieving increasing social opportunity, but not equality. The 'New Right' changed the discourse of education and eliminated the language of sociology (Ball, 1990). It therefore set new limits to educational reasoning and policy devoid of sociology.

The key to this change were the consecutive election victories of the Conservatives since 1979 which gave the 'New Right' unlimited confidence and unprecedented opportunity to put their plans into action (Glennerster and Midgley, 1991; Heath, Jowell, Curtice and Taylor, 1994).

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The 'New Right' was able to dominate education as it had a strong voice in government, it spoke directly to the Prime Ministers Mrs.Thatcher and then Mr.Major. This is what sociologists never achieved to such an extent. Certainly sociologists were consulted, like Halsey (1972) and Labour, though they never achieved the extremely powerful position the 'New Right' procured. The assertiveness of the 'New Right' can be seen with the emergence of 'New Right' think-tanks, which were expressly designed to advise the government on policy. They include the Adam Smith Institute (1984), the Institute of Economic Affairs (I.E.A.) (1987), the Hillgate Group (1987), and the Centre for Policy Studies (1990). An example here is Sexton (1987), writing from the I.E.A. Education Unit, who provided a possible parliamentary manifesto concerning the 'privatisation' of education and parent purchasing power.

During the same period the political opposition led by Labour appeared to support sociologists, as they were in favour of collectivism and increasing the state's role (Gamble, 1989). However with crisis in the labour movement due to severely weakened support (Hobsbawm, 1981; Edgell and Duke, 1991), the Labour Party provided no effective alternative to the 'New Right', (no significant counter education policies were put forward in the 1980's). Coupled with the removal of collective bargaining for teachers by the Teachers Pay and Conditions Act (1987) this meant those susceptible to the ideas and methods of sociologists were in no position to mount a defence of the social democratic/sociological principles of the past.

The strength of the 'New Right' was solidly reinforced with the collapse of communism. Marxist regimes had failed at their very core. This presented immense problems to those on the left as it invalidated much of their ideas, like state-centred collectivism. Marxist accounts of education

lost their validity. The move to the right was world wide (Jordan and Ashford, 1993). Socialism was in crisis. The response of the 'old' left was marked by a lack of coherent theoretical arguments to gain popular support or academic appeal (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991; see Shtromas, 1993). This forced a rewriting in socialist and social democratic circles as a response to the 'New Right'. Where collectivism had previously set the agenda, these groups are now having to address 'New Right' concepts such as the market and parental choice. For instance, in *Market socialism* Le Grand and Estrin (1989) concluded that socialism being purely state based was outdated, and that the market and socialism were now equally important. The 'New Right' was so strong that it forced the Labour party to reconsider (Glennerster and Midgley, 1991), and move away from policies of the past towards 'New Right' education ideas.

A further effect of the 'New Right' was that there was so much going on with the reforms of education, health, unions, social services, public order, economic management, the changing nature of employment and the role of the state, that academic attention was diverted away from educational sociology and on to social policy. This is apparent with the authors of the period, for example King (1987); Dale (1989); Gamble (1989); Graham and Tytler (1993); and Simon and Chitty (1993). All these events contributed to overwhelming 'New Right' dominance and the severe undermining of educational sociology, especially left-wing sociologists.

This meant that the sociology of education had been overtaken by policy pragmatism. The nature of 'New Right' policies had eclipsed educational theorising. As such there occurred a sense of sociology ending in education. It was the weakness of sociology and the strength of the 'New Right' which enabled politicians to replace educational sociology with their

own ideas. The 'New Right' simply denied the relevance of all sociological issues which had examined and explained such phenomena as cultural identities, streaming, economic requirements, socio-economic and geographic location, and the way in which they affect education. The 'New Right' regarded sociology as having no part to play in education, not even as a debating mechanism to gain ideas from. Decades of work were simply dismissed because they were not politically acceptable. Educational theorising returned to a partial explanation. The effect of repudiating sociology has severely undermined sociologists' relationship with education, very few authors are now writing on the subject. The once strong Interactionist and Marxist sociologies are now enervated. The development of educational sociology has dwindled. It is now extremely hard to identify a sociology of education in its own right. For an academic discipline to be displaced in this way by a political ideology is quite an achievement. Nevertheless, I believe it is worth evaluating how strong the position of the 'New Right' is, did they solve the problems of education, and whether they have succeeded in eradicating the social democratic principles of the past, and if sociology has a role for the future.

An Evaluation of the 'New Right'.

The impact of the 'New Right' on education and sociology raises the question of whether the 'New Right' has solved the problems of education, and in so doing replaced the need for a sociological analysis of education. Does educational sociology have a future? To answer this I will examine the strength of the 'New Right's' position on education and the current indications of the success and possible continued domination of their policies.

What has happened to the sociology of education is that changing social and economic conditions have made a move away from the sociological traditions of the past. The 'New Right' became so strong because events favoured them, with economic problems, weak opposition and intellectual fragmentation of the political opposition and sociologists the 'New Right' gained an unprecedented opportunity to change society. The 'New Right' appeared attractive, it offered blind hope and quick solutions (Edgell and Duke, 1991). Yet the 'New Right' had too much optimistic confidence and little real evidence their approach would work. They oversimplified intellectual reasoning and this is their weak link. Much of their support came from ideological rather than proven data. The media played a crucial role in this (Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985). Comprehensives were portrayed as unruly, uncivilised centres that were responsible for producing a new criminal element. Teachers were portrayed as inadequate revolutionary misfits (*Unpopular Education*, 1981). The manipulated image was of state education being in crisis. Consequently many parents were glad to see the reforms of education.

What actually occurred was a 'moral panic' over educational standards, as defined by Cohen (1973). This is where a minor event gets portrayed out of all proportion to reality. The 'New Right' capitalised upon such moral panics as the alleged decline in reading standards and numeracy caused by progressive teaching. This culminated in the ultimate claim that comprehensives had reduced academic attainment (Cox and Boyson (1977); *Black Papers*). What is surprising is that this imagery became dominant when there was no firm evidence of declining standards. To the contrary, more pupils than ever before were gaining examination passes (Ball, 1990). With regard to numeracy, the Cockcroft Report (1982) supported progressive methods and severely criticised 'New Right' educational strategies. Overwhelming proof supports neither one way or the other. According to Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd (1987) there is no substantial evidence to support 'New Right' claims that comprehensives have decreased academic standards over time. Instead they argue data proves the opposite: school leavers with no graded results was reduced from 44% in 1970/71 to 18.7% in 1975/76, to 12.2% in 1983/84. Also those gaining five or more 'O' level/CSE passes increased from 20% in 1964/65 to nearly 27% in 1983/84.

Consequently for Grace (1991) authors should be challenging 'New Right's' ideologically created moral panics over state education and prove there is no crisis of standards. It is therefore the research nature of the 'New Right' which needs evaluating. Ironically what 'New Right' proponents' fear of sociologists, that they are biased towards left-wing ideas, is true of themselves concerning right-wing concepts. In ignoring the work of authors who are sociologists, the 'New Right' only includes work it finds ideologically/politically acceptable. As such the 'New Right's' research

material is narrowly selected and defined (Lauder and Kahn, in Grace, 1991).

The whole research methodology of the 'New Right', the basis of the reforms, is extremely problematic and dubious. Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) attack the Centre for Policy Studies, particularly Cox and Marks (1983, 1985), for their measurement of pupil intakes into school which is extremely deficient as they did not take into account pupil quality. Hence their postulations concerning school effectiveness may be totally wrong. Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) also state that analyses based on measurements of home background by Cox and Marks (1983, 1985) are likewise inadequate. Instead they argue that multiple indicators which cover a whole range of social and academic factors should be used, as in Mortimore's *et al* report (1988).

Under closer inspection the whole basis of 'New Right' research can be called into question. For instance, Cox and Marks (1983; published by the National Council for Education Standards) state that selective education gets higher results than comprehensives, as much as 30-40% more 'O' level passes per pupil. They thus argue that returning to selective education would improve educational standards. Yet according to Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd (p.48-50, 1987) there are major errors in their methodology. For example, their work contains all of the selective LEAs, but less than one third of fully comprehensive LEAs. Also, in attempting to take account of the more disadvantaged socio-economic position of the comprehensive LEAs, Cox and Marks (1983) only used one background variable. For Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd other variables would have changed substantially the explanations of examination differences (pp.48-49, 1987; see also Gray and Jones, 1983; Gray, Jesson and Jones, 1984).

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Variables such as ethnicity, housing and employment increased the rate of variance explained by staying on at school by 13%. Subsequently the alleged superiority of selective education could be due to the study's poorly defined intake variables, rather than social/environmental factors. Essentially for Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd (1987) LEAs which had a fully comprehensive system of education were in reality comparable to schools organised on a selective basis.

Yet Cox and Marks' next study (1985) duplicated much of their own earlier work: unsurprisingly proving that selective education was superior to that of comprehensives, thus adding to the 'New Right's' research findings. Gray, Jesson and Jones (1985) were able to apply much the same criticisms as they had before as the earlier faults had not been corrected. Next Cox and Marks (1986) produced a comparison of the fully comprehensive ILEA system with selective systems. The argument again was that comprehensives demonstrate high levels of under-performance in relation to selective education. Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd (p.50, 1987) again cast criticism over the study's methodology. Cox and Marks (1986) had used 1981 and 1982 examination statistics as their base line even though 1981 marked the last intake of highly-creamed comprehensives into the old system. Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd (1987) also question the study's appreciation of the high level of social disadvantage in London.

Consequently for Ball (1990), Glennerster and Midgley (1991) 'New Right' analysis is overshadowed by commentary and critique rather than research. Inconvenient realities are simply ignored. It is hence possible to assert that the 'New Right' missed vital research data, and drove ahead with preconceived prejudices and unproved theories. The theoretical foundations of the 'New Right' can therefore be seen to be based upon.

methodological problems and research bias. The position of the 'New Right' is not well established or convincing.

A further feature of the 'New Right' is that much of its ideas and aims were not new, but rather a rehashing of early sociologists' discredited concepts for current political purposes. Most notable of these include early notions of stratification, inequality, individual responsibility, accountability, and discipline. The 'New Right' had not intentionally aimed at rekindling early sociological ideas, rather, their own conception of education had regressed educational thinking to old-fashioned ideals. For instance, the understanding of education reverted back to early sociologists' refuted idea that schools would function to allot pupils their position in society equally and impartially, simply because individuals deserve what they achieve due to their own hard work or lack of it. This completely avoided all subsequent sociological research which conclusively demonstrated the effect of environmental and socio-economic influences, which would prevent such a naïve hypothesis from occurring (see in-depth criticisms in the Interactionist chapter). For example, a modern equivalent of the problems over the Eleven Plus are school league tables. These can be seen as a way of reintroducing selection, and they are not balanced by taking account of differences in children and geographic location.

The 'New Right' also used early sociologists' emphasis of the functional fit of society, the idea of everyone having their place, and the efficient causal link between schooling and employment. Educational theorising had thus gone full circle, but with only one element missing. The 'New Right' did not try to justify itself with the scientific method early sociologists used. Even though the 'New Right' despised sociology they were still using early and contested problematic sociological ideas. As such,

coupled with internal contradictions and confusion's, the 'New Right's' methodology is extremely weak, it will not stand up to scrutiny, and has clear faults for a future sociology to capitalise on while developing its own philosophy.

The indications of reform suggest that under the principles of the 'New Right', education has become a business with its emphasis on profit and loss, success and bankruptcy. There is freedom and choice for the affluent, but for those who live in poorer or inner city areas and cannot afford to move or choose the location of a good school, the situation is more appropriate to Dickensian times than the late twentieth-century. Even those who are able to choose schools are finding popular schools oversubscribed and turning children away. The 'New Right's' idea of choice and regulating market forces has not provided all it promised. Fundamental problems have not been solved (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991). There is also increasing criticism that state education has declined in quality (Glennerster and Midgley, 1991). The reforms of education remain unfinished. Schooling has returned to the days of selective education. Potential is being lost, educational policy is set against what governments of the past and sociologists tried to achieve: equality and a decent start for all. The 'New Right' failed to look at education impartially and take account of its requirements. It ignored decades of research, while deciding educational policy according to its own political prejudices.

Although the 'New Right' shifted the political debate in their favour and reformed education, they never captured the moral high ground. Their idea that inefficient public services would be replaced by effective self-reliance, competition and market forces, has not happened to the extent they believed. Britain has remained pro-welfare (Jowell, Witherspoon and

Brook, 1989). The concepts of interventionism, altruism, egalitarianism and state provided education have survived. There are also possible signs of a revival in social democratic principles of the past for the whole of Europe. This to some extent is evident with the European Social Charter, and its aims of social justice, entitlement and workers' rights, crucially this is what the 'New Right' feared would lead to socialism by the back door (Barry, 1989) and in the future prevent their challenge to power. Many of the 'New Right's' education policies may consequently be disregarded forever, such as market forces and opt out. Collectivist education programmes of the past are still possible, and sociologists are well disposed to evaluate this, as much of their work has been concerned with these ideals.

The main problems facing the 'New Right' were two fold: firstly with a political agenda deciding educational policy on its own, devoid of advice, this means teachers no longer played an important role in the initiation of education policy, and LEAs were now subservient to central government. This has ended their old pluralistic partnership with the government, and given power to politicians whose main concern is not for education, but to be elected. This may lead to inherent political bias in the creation of policy and the loss of valuable professional educational experience. Secondly, no political party has ever continually held power, at the moment the Labour party have the upper hand. Therefore once a different group is elected, all educational policies can be changed, and education is again thrown into turmoil. There is no continuity for teachers or pupils and the beneficial factors of the reforms can be lost. Even during the 'New Right's' dominance of politics, according to Glennerster and Midgley (1991) the future political battle will be a backlash against the 'New Right' to improve standards of public services. For King (1987) 'New Right' ideas are

a passing intellectual fashion. The 'New Right' has not solved the problems of education, and its command of policy is certainly not ensured. In essence, the definition of education, of what is important and not, of what direction it should take, remains an arena of struggle based upon the political, economic and ideological aspects of society at a given time (Ball, 1990). Consequently the implementation of policy is not frictionless. We can now only understand education fully by examining it with regard to political, ideological, economic requirements and educational ideas of the past and present. One of the effects of the 'New Right' is that educational debate rather than becoming increasingly narrowly defined, as one might expect from a finite political philosophy, has become more open with new ideas not rooted in the social democratic educational traditions of the past.

It is here where sociology has a vital role to play as it is able to comprehend and appraise educational policies. This is what sociology is all about, the study of the development, organisation and operation of society. I therefore argue that the only way to plan for education's future successfully is to comprehend the historical, socio-economic and cultural nature of education and those involved in it, just ignoring certain aspects will surely lead to failure. It is here where sociology, if used impartially and dialectically, can not only guide but advise, interpret, understand, evaluate and attempt to bring forth all that so many have sought for so long. Sociology has already provided detailed explanations into schooling processes, such as classroom interaction, labelling and teacher/pupil negotiations, how and why education works. Decades of sociological research should not be wasted. But more research is needed to understand the complexities of educational elements, especially in relation to each other. A future sociology has to address this. In the next chapter I will conclude

with what has happened to the sociology of education and then attempt to detail why a future sociology is needed, incorporating a possible framework around which a future sociology of education could progress.

¹Keynes (1936) proposed the role of spending using budgetary fine-tuning to set economic activity. By changing the level of spending governments 'controlled' inflation, unemployment, and by constantly increasing spending governments would stimulate economic growth and prosperity, especially with the development of the welfare state.

²Specifically, the 'New Right' feared the non-competitive ethos of progressive education would produce a generation unable to compete with fierce foreign competitors, which would undermine the economy (Cox and Boyson, 1975).

³Governments cut public spending on education by 10% between 1976 and 1986, though spending rose by 4% from 1987-1989 (p.133, Savage and Robins, 1990).

⁴Control over education and training provides a long term example of the unpublished conflict between the Department of Education and Science and the Department of employment. By the mid 1980's, £110 million had been transferred from the DES to DE schemes, which involved grants to colleges and some secondary schools for business/technology education. But with the 1988 Education Act, the DE challenge for control in secondary and tertiary education was rebuffed and the DES regained control. As for the National Curriculum, it became a compromise between industrialists seeking to modernise education, and conservatives who wanted a traditional grammar school curriculum (Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991).

⁵The government has been accused of systematically underfunding and introducing harmful financial cuts to state education. For instance, even though the government has a commitment to increasing the numbers of students in higher education, especially since other countries have much higher rates, the policy of reducing the value of student grants and introducing loans will discourage large numbers, especially those from the working classes, from entering higher education. Thus limiting public choice. The inadequacy of investment in education is demonstrated by skill shortages in key industries (Savage and Robins, 1990; Dunleavy, Gamble and Peele, 1991). An OECD report stated that Britain during the late 1980's was spending less on education than most other developed countries, and suggested that Britain's education problems could be due to under-funding (OECD, 1992). The implication of this is that educational inequalities between different social groups is probably widening.

⁶'New Right' conservatism is secondary to 'New Right' liberal ideology, as it occurs mainly as a response to liberal economic policies (King, 1987). Hayek (1960), was wary of conservatives as he believed they could not be trusted to defend a free society, as they were opportunists. Even though there remains antagonism between the two, over the role of the state and free market, they are united against social democratic policies and sociologists (Gamble, 1989).

CHAPTER 5

A FUTURE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION.

The Endeavour:

"The courage and imagination with which the development plan is drawn, the energy and judgement with which it is carried into effect, will not only determine the future of our educational system, but may largely shape the future course of the nation's forward march." (The Nation's Schools Ministry of Education, 1945 (in Young (1958), p.7).

The Method:

"The sociological enterprise is now even more pivotal to the social sciences as a whole, and indeed to current intellectual culture generally, than it has ever been before." (p.17, Giddens, 1988).

Sociology Undone?

The conclusion of this study I have split into two parts. Firstly I will answer the central question of 'what has happened to the sociology of education?' This will lead me into asking secondly, 'do we need a future sociology of education?

The development of the sociology of education covers an immensely diverse and changing theoretical field. To be able to explain what has happened to educational sociology it is important to approach the subject as I have done in order to grasp the reasons for educational sociology's specific development, and consequently sociology's potency and vulnerability, which in turn may account for sociology's current debilitated position in education. It has also been important to trace the effects of phenomena outside of sociology as another possible cause of this.

In summing-up, the essence of the evidence appears quite clear. Interactionist and Marxist accounts of education moved sociology beyond the limited and extremely problematic descriptions of education offered by early sociologists. Education was no longer seen as 'fixed' or 'measurable' by so-called 'scientific' sociology. Individuals were now seen to play an important part in creating the social world around themselves. The key to explaining and understanding education appeared to be possible only by learning how individuals interact, understanding the respective roles of pupils and teachers and the social processes involved within and those outside of education. This marked a completely new recognition and improved understanding of education. However, this advanced form of

undertaking sociological research can be seen to be just as problematic as that previously offered by early sociologists.

Certainly, as I have shown within this study, the strength of educational sociology lay in its attempt to discover how education 'worked'. However, the problems created by sociological inquiry, for example, the difficulties between Interactionist and Marxist theorising, were severe. Interactionists undeniably identified specific difficulties of education, yet they offered little guidance on how to improve education and they failed to solve the problems they had pinpointed. Their understanding was therefore wasted. Furthermore, Interactionists' work was only concerned on a micro level. They had ignored macro influences on education. As such they were unable to provide a comprehensive understanding of education. Their work was only applicable to small scale investigations which remained unlinked to any form of overall improvement strategy. Interactionists did not prove they were needed in education and so succeeded in defeating themselves.

The problem with Marxist educational accounts is that they over-emphasised the exploitative capitalist regime and the alleged evils of educational indoctrination. The solution - social revolution, would have been the most difficult to achieve. Marxists also provided no guarantee or even proof that education would be in a better position. The economic determinism of Marxism is overbearing and clouds educational issues. Nevertheless, Marxists were adept in relating education to the wider needs of society. However their methodology suffers from similar problems to that of early sociologists as they had inverted functionalist method and positivist analysis in order to utilise conflict rather than consensus theory. Inevitably Marxism encountered methodological dilemmas it had no answer to.

The shortcoming of both Interactionists and Marxists is that they tried to reduce education to an elementary and manageable form, micro and macro research respectively, when in reality education is more complex. Interactionists promoted their own demise by being too insular in their approach and Marxists encountered severe problems by appertaining education for their own political aims.

What happened to the sociology of education was that these inherent flaws within Interactionism and Marxism created sociology's own nemesis. Pivotal to this process were the divisions and hostility between Interactionist and Marxist theorists, which meant that sociology was in a state of confusion. It was possible to dispute sociology to such an extent that it appeared incompetent. As such, sociological theorising was unable to illustrate ways of solving problems of education, which was part of sociology's purpose after all. The technique of sociologists, often relying on small scale unlinked investigations that were not related to policy, not only left a sphere of research open to more pragmatic considerations, but also meant that the value of sociological research was never shown to be a necessary part of improving education. This central weakness sociologists never overcame. The culmination of the nemesis effect meant that sociology had lost any sense of direction and was therefore highly vulnerable. This opened the way for a new approach in education - that of the 'New Right'.

The question therefore arises of whether sociology solely undermined its relationship with education, or was something else needed to push sociology over the edge into obscurity? I argue that changing social and economic conditions did make a move away from the sociological traditions of the post-war era. However, without the 'New Right' and the way it gained unprecedented control of educational thinking I believe that

sociology could have continued debating educational issues in its own problematic and contended fashion. Considering the failings of educational sociology, this finally leads into the proposition of 'is there a necessity for a future sociology of education?'

Possibilities for Sociology?

As I have shown the 'New Right' took the impetus in educational theorising, and the strength of its position was remarkable. Yet the 'New Right' failed to erase the social democratic ideals of the past, and essentially they did not solve all the problems of education. Furthermore, many new dilemmas have been created. This therefore raises the questions of 'how do we solve the problems of education?' And 'is there a need for a new sociology of education, or has sociology gone forever?'

The 'New Right' has laid the challenge to sociologists. In response I am convinced that a new sociology of education could be extremely useful in the improvement of education. Contrary to the argument of the 'New Right', sociology still has relevance to education, and can be used in its analysis. Yet sociology cannot progress in its past form. This leads into a number of questions I need to answer:

'Why do I believe this, why not leave sociology in the past?'

'What do sociologists have to offer?'

'What is the best plan for sociologists?'

The direction a future sociology should take is vital for a successful renaissance. Throughout my study I have highlighted two main faults with previous sociologies which need to be tackled by future sociologists, *i.e.*

i) The lack of practicality/realism displayed. This is especially noticeable with the discontinuity between macro- and micro-theory.

ii) The failure to link sociology to education policy and have a direct affect on education.

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Using this framework I aim to establish the foundation around which a future sociology could develop. Furthermore I believe that the initial hopes of early theorists are still possible in that sociologists should be aiming at maximising the potential of all children and identifying and overcoming the problems that beset schooling.

Sociological research into education is important because society and its members are often unaware or only partially see the reasons for their actions. Society and education have not just occurred haphazardly, there are many causal events and processes which can be studied, and it is sociology which can identify and analyse the nature and mechanisms of education thus providing for new possibilities. Sociologists are able to achieve this because of the training they have acquired and the development of sociology as a discipline. The aim of sociological research in this case is to gain a better understanding of education. This is crucial as education is central to society, it teaches children social norms as well as setting them on the path for the rest of their lives.

What sociology must do if it is to re-emerge in education is provide clear evidence that it has something to offer. It has to make itself applicable and available to current education issues. Borrowing from the style of the 'New Right', sociology needs to become more involved in the amelioration of education. This does not mean that sociologists should simply say what politicians want to hear, rather they should strive to furnish clear cut evidence to convince teaching professionals and policy makers of ways in which education could be thrust forward. Some examples of questions sociologists could be examining include: how should education be improved for the better with regard to child and parental encouragement? What can be learned from a comparison with European schooling systems

and the way they approach education? Due to increasing technological change and world competitiveness, what important classroom lessons are going to be needed by children to fulfil their potential in the labour and social spheres of future societies/economies? What has been the effect of recent education reforms? And since education has not fulfilled the goals of the 1960's reforms, equal opportunities for all, have the directors of education and government been following a 'hidden agenda'? Sociologists also need to address the issue of school effectiveness and show how teachers and policy makers can improve the operation of schools through such procedures as classroom teaching techniques, the curriculum and performance indicators.

I am furthermore convinced there are lessons to be learned from each of the previous sociologies. There cannot be a successful future sociology without taking account of past work. This is important to enable future sociologists to avoid previous mistakes and build on earlier discoveries. During the course of my study I have detailed the strengths and failures of each of the sociologies. We already know a great deal about education, so in answer to the possible questions I mentioned earlier, I would like to outline the uses successful sociological approaches might be put to and built on, to extend into areas essential to deal with current questions and problems, and the best way to do this by using appropriate methodologies.

Issues which deal only with individual actors and group actions within education require qualitative research. The methods and lessons of Interactionist theorists are important here. It is the study of social interaction within education which can show how success and failure in the classroom is formed by such actions as labelling, stereotypes, language, facial

expression and personal biases. Interactionists were therefore right that education cannot be separated from everyday interaction. Problems of authenticity as in the Willis case (1977), can be overcome with validation by further studies, trends can be identified. An interpretative understanding, often using participant observation, gives an awareness of the meanings, intentions and classifications which make causal connections that help determine the results of schooling. Interpretative sociology also clarified how learning/knowledge is transmitted. From this it can be ascertained how schooling creates and moulds children's attitudes and expectations, how they can be assisted and hindered in their personal development.

Understanding the actors of education and their perceptions of schooling must be part of a future sociology. Only then will sociologists be able to see how education operates on a day to day basis. From this understanding it is possible to improve education by taking direct account of the needs of those involved. One reason why reforms of the past have not achieved the desired success is partly because they have not specifically addressed the participants themselves, or their ideas and values.

Yet researchers must not fall into the same trap as Interactionists. They have to be aware of wider pressures that affect social interaction, and explain individual and group actions with reference to such influences. For instance, relationships of power in education, as emphasised so forcefully by Marxists, are important as they may set the limits to interaction and hence child development. Education was intended to increase children's potential, but schooling is not a simple process of just instructing children as the 'New Right' and early theorists believed, education may inadvertently be reinforcing social and economic inequalities. This possibility should be examined in greater detail. Additionally Marxist

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theory gives insights into class differences and its influence on education. Marxists are therefore right that education cannot be isolated from wider social pressures, such as political and economic structures. For example, what are the current economic requirements of education, and why? Marxists questioned how far the institutions of society affect individual actors within education. Still, many Marxists were not dispassionate and over-emphasised the constraint exerted by structures and failed to examine their potential enabling actions. This relationship is also worthy of further objective study.

However there are too many inherent problems within the previous sociologies, as I have demonstrated during the course of this study, for these to give a thorough educational account. Sociology cannot progress successfully in a self-disputed and confused state. The pivotal weakness is that sociologists have too often taken refuge in narrowly defined areas and limited concepts that appear easier to research and defend against criticism. This work is important, but fails to present a full picture of education. I argue that a future sociology must attempt to capture more of the processes of education to gain a more complete understanding, by analysing each part of education and putting it together to attain the whole picture. This is what previous sociologists failed to do. From my study I have therefore come to the conclusion that the major failing of educational sociology to date is that it has been theoretically incomplete. Education is more complex than authors have been prepared to admit. The dichotomous nature of educational research between the study of macro phenomena (for example social systems and institutions), and micro analysis (involving social interaction and individual school case-studies) is extremely prolific. This discontinuity in research I believe is extremely damaging. The separation of research into

smaller categories can be illuminating, but fails to give a true and complete account of education. The creation and reproduction of social life cannot be separated from the reproduction of macro structures. Education is a two-way process of constant change between these two. Separate research makes it difficult to adequately appreciate how education has evolved, the processes of social change and the operation of education.

Theorists interested in micro or macro research (Interactionist and Marxist sociologists respectively) have largely ignored the significance of either social institutions or individual actions on the processes of education which jointly shape educational experience. They both failed to recognise the interconnected and inseparable nature of action and institutions on one another: micro interaction builds into the reproduction of structures, and macro institutions affect the smallest of interactions (Giddens, 1988). Each group has consequently avoided a wide range of evidence/knowledge which is needed to be incorporated into sociological analysis in order to answer specific questions thoroughly. Sociologists in the past made the mistake of separating education into rigid classifications which bear little resemblance to the reality of education: there is no boundary between the two, so why should there be in sociology? Without including both areas research is limited as neither operates without the other.

When future sociologists ask questions concerning education they have to understand the interwoven relationship between individuals and the structures/institutions of education. This will enable them to move beyond the limitations of previous sociologies. For example when researching the creation and reproduction of educational realities, early sociologists Davis and Moore (1945) believed in the functional and efficient placement of children by schools. Yet Willis (1977) presented an

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exceptional Interactionist study which attempted to take account of macro economic influences. Willis demonstrated how the interaction of a group of working-class children placed them in subsequent occupations rather than the efforts of teachers. The blame for educational failure was thus transferred from individual children's inadequacies (early sociology) to the meanings of interaction with relation to macro economic needs (Marxist Interactionist theory). Both theories arrived at similar conclusions: working-class children do badly in education. Yet without Willis' explanation there is no consideration of exactly how children are affected by education, and how in turn they are reinforcing structural relations in society.

The key point is that it is the very complexity of educational processes which means it is impractical for researchers to adopt a singular approach as presented by previous sociologies. Willis' work indicates there are factors influencing educational choice and these need to be examined more thoroughly to gain a clearer understanding of what is happening in education. More research is needed into educational relationships, and this technique could be used to comprehend what constraints are placed on children by institutions of education, how children respond and what effect this has on the institutions? An adequate explanation of education therefore requires a sophisticated study of individual/structure correlation. This can be aided with a diagnosis of the lessons and links between previous sociologies, which can be most useful in transcending former theoretical difficulties.

Future sociologists are also able to take account of the history of education and sociology, and benefit dramatically from past experience. Concerning education, historical analysis will reveal previous examples of what policies have achieved, for instance, were grammar schools as

effective as the 'New Right' presumed? Related to this is comparative research. Comparing one social context to another is difficult, but can be especially useful when considering educational differences between countries. For example, how is Germany's education system different to Britain's, and are there any apparent benefits or drawbacks in it? Sociologists are best placed to undertake this type of research as sociology as a discipline has vast experience with comparative analysis, including cultural and political awareness. Regarding sociology, historical research can be used to evaluate methodological ideas and their development, to identify strengths and weaknesses. Sociology has a lot to offer. As such the foundations upon which a future sociology could be built are well placed.

Yet my study illustrates that the tendency of sociology is to divide due to fundamental differences of method and belief. These inherent divisions have crippled sociological effectiveness in the past. I believe that the way to overcome this situation to a large extent is to tackle the single major division in sociology - to combine macro and micro research, and also to address policy issues. Sociology needs to have a specific direction, to establish objectives for improving education and ways of achieving these objectives. This represents a new type of educational sociology because:

    i) There develops a new sociological awareness - connected macro and micro techniques.

    ii) Policy issues are taken into account.

These are the two crucial prerequisites a future sociology has to undertake. Sociology cannot go back to the way things were. The old type of sociological analysis has ended, sociologists met their own nemesis. Sociology has to move forward. Within this there is a need for future

research to be policy orientated. Sociologists can not afford to stand away from policy issues. The only way to improve education is to be involved.

There has continually been a distinctive gap between the reforms of education and research into education. For Barker (1995) Education Acts since 1944 have been based upon insufficient research. The origins of the 1988 Education Reform Act were various, but did not include research. Barker concludes that the lesson that is continually disregarded is that reforming education without undertaking research is perilous.

The reforms of education are extremely important as they can change the lives of millions of children. Consequently there is a vital need for effective research to take place, especially over political considerations. Unresearched reforms at worst can be acutely damaging. The Eleven Plus wasted talent, and comprehensivisation did not achieve its objectives of equality for all. What appears to be vital, is that research needs to take account of what goes on inside schools and why. Those who implement reforms need to understand the processes of education, and this is what sociologists have been attempting to do for decades. This is why sociology is now in such a good position, it can reap past lessons and progress. Only by taking account of and utilising a combined micro and macro approach can sociologists explain education fully. From this researchers will have a greater awareness of the possibilities of education and an improved ability to predict the outcome of educational procedures and policies.

The best way to make sociological research applicable to education is for sociologists to state what needs to be looked at, and provide a framework for debate within which policy recommendations and possible solutions can be evaluated. It is also no longer possible for authors to simply provide basic descriptions and explanations. Sociological investigation of

the past has primarily been based upon critical inquiry of education and education has benefited from this, however, critique alone does not present the way forward anymore. To be effective and prove the value of sociology researchers have to be involved in the actual improvement of education. There is no point in understanding the working of education if we cannot act on this information. There are already signs that the 'New Right's' approach of market solutions is not achieving expectations, especially since these have forced constant government intervention in education. Consequently more research and policy debate is needed. Debate in the past has advanced sociological theory. Theoretical disagreements will always be part of sociology, however, the severe fragmentation of sociology which occurred and led to the nemesis effect, is not an inevitable outcome of sociological inquiry. Rather, sociology as an area of study should be aiming to produce a range of ideas and policy recommendations which policy makers can use.

Sociological ideas in the past have only played an important part in influencing grass roots levels of education. The school system has been affected by sociological research which has enlightened school behaviour, and sociology has been especially important in shaping university and teacher training courses (Giddens, 1993). The extent of this is difficult to ascertain (Williamson, 1990) however and therefore possible for anti-sociologists such as the 'New Right' to dismiss as irrelevant. Nevertheless there has always been a link between sociology and education. Sociology has been influential in various reports into education, such as the Crowther Report (1959), the Newsom Report (1963) and the Plowden Report (1967). Although, with the rise of the 'New Right' sociology has been pushed out of policy. This has occurred at a time when the creation and implementation of

policy has become extremely important in education due to the fundamental reforms of the 'New Right'. Policy relevance is consequently vital.

Sociology should be at the frontier of analysis and in a position to influence fundamental education policies, this should be part of the sociologist's role. The boundary separating sociology from social policy has never been clear. Sociology needs to operate as a reflective critical enterprise in pursuit of improving education, capable of making policy recommendations. Sociologists should not try to reinvent early sociological ideas of instantly solving education's problems by doing a, b, and c, this has never worked. Future sociologists need to evaluate policies, past and present, define which teaching methods are most effective, for instance progressive education or the 'New Right's' calls for back to basics, and state which methods would improve education and why. They need to communicate with policy makers and those involved in education, teachers and children, to be effective. Researchers should also identify where the most urgent questions are, and then offer guidance to deal with them.

The potential contribution of sociology to social policy and education is tremendous. Sociology is able to deal specifically with the subject matter of society, such as the culture, attitudes and language of those involved, the institutions of education, especially with regard to social changes that will affect education. Sociologists can interpret and define events and offer explanations as to how and why education operates. In doing so, they provide knowledge about ourselves, schooling and society. In questioning the nature of society, the consequences of actions and institutions, sociology is able to show the functioning of and give a lucid understanding of education. The more we understand, the better able we are

to produce better policies and improve the effectiveness of schooling, for example by making teachers aware of the consequences of their actions.

Sociology can therefore provide information from which governments and educationalists can understand the complexities of education, and decisions of policy can be made more successfully. In America, sociological research is viewed as fundamental for informed policy creation, and in Russia sociology is used to tackle social problems (Calvert and Calvert, 1992). Furthermore sociologists can concentrate upon educational problems over long periods, which by the nature of elective governments, the latter cannot usually undertake.

I firmly believe that a future sociology could have a dramatic effect in the improvement and development of education. When sociologists study education, they become a potential force for intervention in education, and sociology has inherent capabilities and experience to offer new ideas and possibilities for education. For this reason alone there is plenty to justify the future existence of the sociology of education.

"EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO THE NEW WORLD" (p.66)

BERTRAND RUSSELL:
On Education 1926.

APPENDICES.

Appendix 1

The response to the early geneticists and psychologists' claim of genetic superiority of the middle-classes could not have been more severe. *The Sunday Times* (24.10.1976) accused Burt (1965) of falsifying his statistical research findings in order to support his own pre-conceived ideas. The 'unscientific' nature of his work was dramatic, and yet it had been accepted as pure fact. For instance, Burt arrived at answers accurate to three decimal places by using different sets of data. This in itself is a statistical impossibility. He must have therefore worked 'backwards' to fit his data to his already arrived at hereditary predictions. His work was 'rubbished'. Giddens (1989) confirmed these findings on Burt's (1977) work. This revelation was explosive as Burt had influenced the development of British education. His work had played a decisive influence in the separation of the social classes in the 1944 Education Act, the effects of which are still evident for Nobbs (1983).

Similarly Jensen (1967) created an academic storm when, using Burt's work, he stated that IQ differences between blacks and whites was due to genetic differences. For Kamin (1977) any differences were due to social and cultural dispositions and not genetic inheritance. Also the average IQ difference between blacks and whites is substantially less than the variations within each group (p.433, Kamin, 1977). Much of the problem was that a great deal of the geneticists' work was based on IQ tests which are today

seen to be full of inherent problems and invalid (Douglas, 1964; Swift, 1964; Labov in Giglioli, 1980). As far back as 1954 the *Early Leaving Report* discredited the middle-class emphasis in Eleven Plus IQ tests.

Hereditary ideas under closer examination immediately reveals further problems. The probability of a child inheriting the same genetic factors as its parents is unlikely because the possible composite possibilities from the parents' genes is over 1,000,000. Furthermore, no evidence supports the claim that heredity elements are segregated by socio-economic factors (p.64, Davis, 1965). For Labov, notions of deprivation were alarming, as they focus attention on imaginary difficulties of the child while avoiding the actual problems of schooling, and it is this which gives credence to the theory of genetic inferiority (p.180, Giglioli, 1980).

Even though writers of the period attempted to prove the genetic superiority of one class over another, of males over females, of whites over blacks, they never achieved the conclusive factual evidence that 'scientific' methodology demanded. With the rebuff of the genetic/heredity argument this weakened the support for the early sociologists hypothesis of the working-classes being innately deficient. Now that such classifications of intellectual and cultural differences were deemed to be incorrect, this also opened the door to increasing questioning of the way early sociologists had defined and classed social phenomena.

Appendix 2

Tables 3, 4, 5 and figure 5 show the effect of children being placed into different streams. It appears that when 'less able' children are placed in upper streams they improve academically, whilst if 'clever' children are put in lower streams their work deteriorates. It has been estimated that at least one in six, possibly one in four pupils were placed in the wrong stream (p.93, Joan C. Barker Lunn, 1970).

Table 3: *The Outcome of Streaming.*

Measured Ability at Eight Years	Stream:	
	Upper Change in Score 8-11 Years	*Lower* Change in Score 8-11 Years
41-45	+5.67	-0.95
46-48	+3.70	-0.62
49-51	+4.44	-1.60
52-54	+0.71	-1.46
55-57	+2.23	-1.94
58-60	+0.86	-6.34

(+ = Improvement, - = Deterioration)
(Source: p.115, Douglas, 1964)

The notion is that:-

Figure 5: *The Compelling Action of Streaming.*

```
                    |    IQ    Three Years   IQ
Low IQ Children     |
   Placed in        |    90    ->   ->   ->   98
  "A" Stream        |
                    |
_____|_____
                    |
High IQ Children    |
   Placed in        |    99    ->   ->   ->   89
  "F" Stream        |
```

(From Douglas, 1964)

Table 4: Academic Progress of Children Who Conformed, and of Those Who Were Still in the Wrong Stream at the End of a Year (Standardized Scores).

Stream	Arithmetic		English	
Too Low	Conformed	Still Wrong	Conformed	Still Wrong
Year A	108.54	107.59	105.94	109.48
Year B	99.79	107.37	100.43	108.78
No. of Pupils	52	46	47	55
Too High	Conformed	Still Wrong	Conformed	Still Wrong
Year A	96.28	90.78	97.31	93.06
Year B	108.37	92.55	103.28	93.34
No. of Pupils	60	60	52	52

(Source: p.93, Joan C. Barker Lunn, 1970)

Interactionist research into the consequences of streaming has predominantly shown the negative effect streaming has on all but 'A' stream pupils. For instance:

Table 5: Leaving Intentions by School, Comprehensive Stream and Social Class.

School	Social Class	% Leaving in 4th Year	% Leaving in 5th Year	% Leaving in 6-8th Year	N= (100%)
Grammar	m/c	0	10	90	68
	w/c	0	28	72	29
Comprehensive 'A' Stream	m/c	0	50	50	16
	w/c	0	87	13	23
Comprehensive 'B-D' Streams	m/c	20	60	20	15
	w/c	40	56	4	98
Secondary Modern	m/c	32	47	21	19
	w/c	40	52	8	52

(m/c = middle-class, w/c = working-class)
(Source: pp.38-39, Ford, 1969)

The above table demonstrates that comprehensive school streaming has determining effects on children: 'A' stream children stay at school longer and gain more opportunity to pass examinations. They are also directed towards 'O' Levels, while 'B' and 'C' streams aim for C.S.E.'s. Those in the 'D' stream are not expected to pass any examinations. Streaming is therefore deciding educational success, and consequently social class inequalities represented within stream organisation are highly significant in this. A case in point is that by the 4th year 13% of middle and 40% of working-class pupils intend leaving school (pp.38-39, Ford, 1969) (for corroboration see Jackson, 1964, 1970).

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