

THURSTON DOMINA, BENJAMIN G. GIBBS, LISA NUNN, ANDREW PENNER, *Education and society. An Introduction to Key Issues in the Sociology of Education*, University of California Press, pp. 328

Education without any doubt plays a central role in organising our development and social identity. Millions of people around the world were in the past as well as will be in the future exposed to some form of formal schooling, regardless of the world's advancement. The reviewed book „Education and society. An Introduction to the Key Issues in the Sociology of Education“ should be compulsory reading for those who have a strong personal understanding of schooling as an institution with its crucial social importance. According to the authors the aim of this publication is to invite the reader into an ongoing conversation about the modern education and society. The writers are among well-known scientists in the field of sociology of education and their work is based both on theory and their own experiences gathered over years.

The book starts with an introduction which describes the structure and mentions the backdrop of this publication. The main source of ideas for the development of this work comes from the annual faculty conference and the Sociology of Education association's meetings. The authors explicitly highlight the opportunity of sharing the excitement of scientific discovery and intense debates among eighty experts while having a meal together. Finally, the publication which consists of three elaborate parts with sixteen chapters together with several case studies is the outcome of those previous, fruitful meetings. Each of the chapters in this volume is written by passionate experts who even sometimes disagree with one another as it should be. The language is attractive, clearly inviting to reflect and very personal through the whole book. But more importantly, every part is finished with a summary of sociological thinking and complex research on described issues.

Part one, written by the experts in the sociology of education offers the reader a broad overview of the field from a global perspective and its recent changes. The title „Theoretical Orientations in the Sociology of Education” presents basic knowledge about the growth of schooling and its role in the stratification system. The question raised by the authors is if the contemporary schools are a compensatory, neutral or exacerbatory institution? Evan Schofer and Douglas Downey are drawing our attention to the differences and similarities in which educational systems exist worldwide. Additionally, the writers managed to present the complex relationship between social inequality and education in the present times.

The chapters and case studies in the second section called „Student Experiences in Education” address some of the social problems such as: gender inequality, race in education, immigrant children, social class, peer sorting and influence. What is great about this part is the unique insight into the student experience within educational institutions. The writers' line of thoughts is very structured and well-presented in this part. The authors put great emphasis to investigate how these experiences vary with researched students' ascriptive traits. The final chapters outline the informal social processes between students in different peer groups as well as interactions between students and teachers in schools.

The last but not least part of this publication is entitled „Schools and Other Educational Organizations”. It was incredibly interesting to me to find out more about the meaning and effects of textbooks and curricula, the interaction between special education and social inequality and in particular about a sociology of the school discipline. Apart from that, the observant reader will get a complex picture of sociological perspectives on school segregation by race or ethnicity or higher education and the labour market. The last part of the book takes on more formal social structures than the previous ones, therefore it helps to define contemporary education and its place in the modern society. Furthermore, the third section consists of two important case studies, which illustrate issues of the school's organisation forms that needs to be adapted to the new realms.

Education and society has a transparent and presentable structure, which helps the reader to connect the ideas and facts to their own educational experience.

This work has led me to the conclusion that the sociology of education should be treated as a contentious and multifaceted field of study. What is more, problems mentioned in this book should be more visible in the contemporary academic discourse. On the whole, I am delighted to broad my mind about why some students experience success while others fall behind in schools. Unfortunately, the social inequality issue is still very global but at least publications like that make us understand the complex relationship between the ways in schools change and the ways in which schools can change the society. Without any concern, the authors of this book managed to present and widely describe difficulties and challenges for present sociology of education. It is felt, therefore, that despite all these years collecting and interpreting information about the world around us has the potential to make our society equitable and forbearing.

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