

Neglected Aspects in the Sociology of Education in Canada

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Le besoin d'une *approche théorique de base* de la sociologie de l'éducation au Canada ayant été constaté, ce document isole les questions dans ce domaine de la sociologie qui devraient être étudiées en vue d'une compréhension plus large des processus d'études de détail et général en matière d'éducation dans ce pays. Ces questions comprennent: (1) les divers aspects de la population de l'école (facteurs socio-économiques . . .), (2) le développement de l'ordre social dans l'école, (3) les processus d'organisation et de groupe, avec des références particulières aux points de vue des personnes concernées, (4) les différentes facettes de la responsabilité dans le cadre de l'organisation pédagogique ainsi qu'entre celle-ci et la société en général, (5) des comparaisons entre les provinces et les régions avec l'accent mis sur les expériences de scolarité.

The development of the sociology of education in Canada has been the subject of three recent articles. Bélanger, Ouellet, and Trotter (1975) focus specifically on the Quebec scene, while Card's (1975) first article on this subject analyses the developments in Anglophone Canada. Card (1976) later looks at the stature of sociology of education in both Francophone and Anglophone Canada. He notes that in the last three decades "sociology of education has grown from a 'no-thing' to a 'thing in itself' in Canadian society" (Card, 1976, p. 3). Despite the fact that there have been significant developments in this field, there are some obvious areas of neglect. The purpose of the present paper is to isolate those areas and pinpoint some of the questions which need to be pursued in our endeavors to strengthen them. But, before focusing on specific areas of research, it is deemed necessary to present a brief note on some theoretical and methodological concerns in sociology in general which are pertinent to future developments in the sociology of education in this country.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

At the outset it should be noted that there is need for dialogue between educationalists who are interested in gaining greater insights into different aspects of education by way of the sociological orientation, and sociologists who study different parts of the educational institution in their attempts to understand interaction processes, organization structures, and societal patterns. The tendency for educational sociologists to focus on finding solutions to what have been defined as practical problems can prove to be

a hindrance to developing any overall perspective or comprehensive understanding of the processes involved. Such was the fate of many of the earlier studies in educational sociology. On the other hand, a sociological focus on grand theories may be of little use in explaining day-to-day interactions in the school, evolving organizational dimensions of the school, and inter-relationships between education and society.

A couple of elements of a theoretical nature need to be considered if we are going to get the most out of our efforts to understand the sociological dimensions of *educating* and *education*. First, use of relevant substantive findings and more-or-less theoretical generalizations from research conducted in other settings can help explain the structure and process in education. For example, since the school is a monopolistic organization, we may be able to use the literature which deals with monopolistic organizations in general to explain the internal structure of the school and its apparent slowness to change in meeting the demands of the individual and society.¹ On another level of analysis, the social psychology of small groups is developing research in a variety of settings and giving insight into a number of processes which are also found in the school.² It would be shortsighted indeed to do research in the sociology of education without mobilizing the knowledge gained in other areas of sociology.

A second and equally important strategy for research which should be utilized more in the sociology of education is the development of *grounded theory*. The basic idea in the development of grounded theory is the attempt to discover theory explicitly from data obtained from research. This strategy is in contrast to that of attempting to verify theory which has already been formulated. A clear desire to develop theory from data is obviously different from the presentation of unanticipated findings which accompanies attempts at verifying and reformulating theory.³ A case for a grounded theory approach to research in the classroom has been presented by Richer (1975). Richer questions the use of cognitive achievement—the dependent variable in most of the studies done in the school—as measured by a standardized-test form of operationalization. The concepts generated in grounded theory should be “*analytic*—sufficiently generalized to designate characteristics of concrete entities, not the entities themselves,” and “*sensitizing*—yield[ing] a ‘meaningful’ picture, abetted by apt illustrations that enable one to grasp the reference in terms of one’s own experience” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 38–39).⁴

Participant observation research which combines sensitizing concepts with a constant comparative technique is one of the better methods for getting at the *bedrock reality* of interaction processes in the school. The advantages for classroom research of participant observation methods, as employed by symbolic interactionists, has been outlined by West (1975, p. 36) to include the possibility for (1) the researcher to be open to input from actors, (2) development of relevant indicators of concepts, (3) incorporation of situational variables, and (4) understanding of how conceptions

of activities shape behavior and how both are changed as interaction evolves. Whatever the source of data, an inductive approach with an emphasis on sensitizing concepts and a constant comparative method will prove to be useful in our endeavors to understand complexities in all dimensions of education. It has been argued that the relative merits of a theory for predicting, explaining, and being relevant cannot be separated from the way it is generated, and "generating grounded theory is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 3). The implication is that this approach to research in education can be meaningful to policy-makers in this area.

While certain topics in the general area of the sociology of education in Canada have received considerable attention, there is a dearth of publications that have used a grounded theory approach. The strategy of the present paper is to point to examples of the work which has been done in the sociology of teaching and learning, and work which has been done on the school and its environment, and to isolate specific issues which can be advantageously pursued from a more grounded theory approach than has usually been the case.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Even though considerable attention has been given to teachers, especially in relation to organizational characteristics of the school, we have a long way to go in empirical research and theoretical development before we understand the complexities of teaching. Stebbins (1975) has used definition of the situation, one of the areas in the sociology of teaching as discussed in Waller's (1932) classical statement, to provide insights, through comparative research in Canada and Jamaica. Waller's work also covers other issues which, if pursued in the Canadian setting, could add to our substantive knowledge, verify or help remodify existing theoretical notions, develop other theories, and have practical implications for those in the school. These issues include the culture of the school, attributes and significance of primary groups in the school, institutionalized leadership of teachers, social distance in teacher-pupil interrelationships, stereotyping of teachers and teachers' reactions to such stereotyping, and the maintaining of an identity in the school. Intertwined with these issues is the exploration of the existing categories that teachers use to distinguish between things to be learned, environments for learning, and varieties of students.

Understanding the complexities of the sociology of teaching cannot be divorced from those of the sociology of learning. The sociology of learning may be seen to include the relationships between a variety of variables and the degree of *success* or *failure* in the school system. These variables include community characteristics, family background, organization of the school, structure of the classroom, sex differences, individual abilities of pupils, teacher characteristics, and models of teaching. The entire social-

ization process of the child is also a concern in the sociology of learning. Traditionally, the socialization process was viewed as a means of social control. It was seen from a reward/punishment perspective where progress or achievement was measured according to the degree to which one had learned to fit into some preconceived notion of a social order that was held for the particular setting. More recently, the processes in the development of language and meaning are being recognized as important dimensions of socialization, crucial to understanding the sociology of learning.

By drawing on works in linguistics and language socialization, Cicourel (1970) focusses on a sociological orientation to "developmental acquisition of rules in children" and suggests the significance of such an approach to the measurement of social organization. He suggests that "the problem of meaning . . . can be stated as how members of a society or culture acquire a sense of social structure to enable them to negotiate everyday activities" (Cicourel, 1970, p. 141). Relatedly, and focussing specifically on the classroom, Heap (1975, p. 57) gives attention to "a type of breakdown" of order "to discover and recover the artful ways, the social practices for seeing, showing, and describing order . . . in classrooms."

Focussing on the social order in the classroom through the development of language and meaning in children would lead to greater understandings of this social order and have pragmatic implications for those involved in it. Examples of the questions in this area of concern include: How are meanings constructed in the classroom? To what extent do *generalized others* and *reference groups* become parts of the meanings an individual gives to different social objects in the school setting? How do they become a part of oneself? How do they help one to get a sense of the evolving social structure which is necessary in order to negotiate one's identities, interactive roles, agendas, and life courses in the school setting? The negotiation of these aspects of one's self and interaction processes must also be analysed. Through such analyses the substantive issues in the school can be isolated and the developmental processes of dealing with them pinpointed, thereby pointing to the social order that in this setting is always in the state of becoming.

THE SCHOOL AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The idea of giving attention to the school and its environment is by no means a new one in either education or sociology. Most of the articles in the Carlton, Colley, and MacKinnon (1977) reader deal with one or more aspects of the dimension of education. However, since the topic covers almost the entire gamut of the institution of education from the micro-level processes in the classroom to the macro concerns of the function of the school in contemporary society, it is not surprising that it has many dimensions which are not adequately understood or researched. The present focus is on group processes, organizational dimensions of the school, facets of accountability, and interprovincial and interregional comparisons.

Group Processes

There has been an increasing awareness of the need to understand the complexities of the structure and processes which are a part of the day-to-day interactions within the school. Some attention has focussed on meanings in classroom situations in general and on teacher definition of disorderly behavior in particular (Stebbins, 1974, 1975; West, 1975) and on the processes of developing a social order in both teacher-pupil and teacher-teacher interactions (Martin, 1976). Several hypotheses, combining reference-group theory and ability in the classroom, have been developed by Richer (1976). Alexander and Farrell (1975) have looked at some aspects of student participation in decision-making in the school, including the amount of student influence, the desire for influence, the decisions which students should participate in, and the outcomes of serving on student government.

Earlier Canadian research which dealt, to some degree, with group processes in the school was conducted through sociometric tests and interaction process analysis. The theoretically oriented research may be categorized according to its focus on (1) definition of the situation, (2) role and self processes, (3) social influence, and (4) social control (Martin & Macdonell, 1978, pp. 52-63). Despite the growing interest in such processes in the school, the complexities of life in teaching-learning arrangements have not been adequately analysed. For example, the multitude of groups which are either imposed on or developed in these arrangements indicates the need for intensive study of their extent, nature, type, and consequences in the day-to-day life of teaching and learning. At the same time, the perspectives of those involved in those groupings need to be considered.

The most easily identifiable groups in the school include those which are a part of the formal structure. They include pupils (1) in any one classroom, (2) at the same grade level, (3) taking the same subjects, (4) in the same ability or performance grouping, and (5) assigned to a specific project. There is also the familiar reference to "peer groups." Important as these groupings are, their meaningfulness in the dynamic aspects of school life should not be overemphasized. The less formal and spontaneous groupings which arise, often within the boundaries of the formally defined groups, need to be isolated and analysed. Such groupings develop along lines of friendship, academic interests, level of achievement, social activities, and goals for particular situations. They should be studied in order to understand the social processes which shape them, their significance in teaching-learning endeavors, and the part they play overall.

Another neglected area of research in the school involves the failure to take the point of view of the pupil into account. Even though the main goals of the educational endeavors are purported to be centred around the pupil, the pupil-perspective of the schooling process is one of the most neglected areas of research in education. Research which includes pupils generally focusses on the expectations others have for them. In particular,

teacher expectations for pupils have been a relatively well-travelled field in education (e.g. Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Garner & Bing, 1973; Ricks & Pike, 1973; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Williams, 1976). The relationship between the aspirations of pupils and their socio-economic background has also been researched (e.g. Breton, McDonald, & Richer, 1972; Porter, Porter, & Blishen, 1973). Pupil expectation of teacher has received much less attention. Even more serious is the failure of research in the classroom to examine schooling processes from the point of view of the pupil.⁵

It has been noted that children are "small, weak, ignorant, incapable" and "lack power and status in comparison with adults." Their behavior is often seen, on the one hand, as being "essentially wicked or mischievous," and on the other as "essentially ignorant, devoid of malice and incapable of doing wrong by their own fault" (Calvert, 1975, p. 11-12). Even when the assumptions are not consciously a part of teachers' predispositions, the associated processes of labelling are evident. From the point of view of the teacher, categories of pupils in the classroom often include *underachievers*, *slow learners*, *good* and *bad* pupils, and *non-negotiable*, *intermittently negotiable*, and *continuously negotiable* pupils. What is the pupil perspective of these labels? More importantly, how do pupils view the teaching processes which are directed at them? How do they view all aspects of the social environment within the school? Adequate answers to these questions can only be obtained through the eyes of the pupils.

Looking at the world from their points of view means that we must accept their versions of it as "reasonable." Silvers (1975, p. 49) has noted that when we fail to do this we are explaining our own accounts of the children's world rather than their understanding of it. While pupils' understanding of their environments may not be necessary for seeing how their behaviors fit the requirements of the curriculum and teachers' expectations of them, they are prerequisites for understanding the forces of influence in self-development, in the development of plans of action by the pupils, and in the overall dynamics of the interactions in pupil and teacher-pupil groupings.

The school contains many groupings of teachers which can also be identified according to whether they were designed as part of the formal organization of the school (e.g. teaching teams, departments, and committees) or whether they developed along lines of common interest, teaching assignments, and educational philosophies. As with analysis of pupil groupings, the perspectives of the members involved must be understood. Their predispositions, definitions of situations, and plans of action should be described and illustrated from their points of view. In other words, they are to be *subjectively* analysed. At the beginning of research using this orientation, conceptual categories or properties of categories are generated; empirical generalizations are exemplified by the data from which they are derived. An attempt is then made to verify or, if necessary, modify these generalizations by analysing their applicability from one set of conditions to another within and between groups.

In addition to pupil groups and teacher groups, the school includes various combinations of teacher-pupil, teacher-administrator, administrator-administrator, and pupil-teacher-administrator groups. Analysis of the processes within and among these groups takes one into the social structure of the school organization.

Organizational Dimensions of the School

Considerable attention has been given to the study of certain bureaucratic dimensions in the school (e.g. Anderson, 1970; Kolesar, 1967; Mackay, 1964; Mansfield, 1967; Punch, 1967; Robinson, 1966; Spady, 1977). The main thrust of these studies has been on the degree to which the school is bureaucratic according to Weber's ideal type, and the relationship between the extent of professionalism and bureaucratization. It is generally concluded that the school is a mixture of more or less bureaucratic and collegial characteristics. The bureaucratic dimensions, in particular, have been studied in relation to decision-making, communication, and alienation in the school. In addition to this group of studies, there have been those who have focussed on the satisfaction of teachers with their work (e.g. Eddy, 1970; Gosine, 1970; Bayne, Note 1; Bourne, Note 2; Greffen, Note 3; Schmit, Note 4). They have noted the relation between teacher satisfaction and the degree of bureaucratization, and the extent to which teachers are locals or cosmopolitans.

Another category of studies within the general framework of organizational analysis of schools are those which have given attention to the relation between actual and preferred roles of teachers in the school, with particular attention to participation of teachers in the decision-making process (e.g. Inkpen, Ponder, & Crocker, 1975; Pallesen, 1970; Simpkins & Friesen, 1969; Francoeur, Note 5).

Despite the attention given to these and other organizationally related dimensions of the school,⁶ many intricacies of the school organization have not been fully analysed. Important questions which could also be studied at the organizational levels of school boards and provincial departments of education include: What are the most salient processes in decision-making in educational organizations and endeavors? Who are the most powerful groups and individuals at different levels of the school organization? What are the sources of their power? How is this power used? What are the consequences of such use on the power-holder and on the recipient of the political process? What are the spheres of group and individual power? How do these spheres overlap? How are the domains and boundaries of social power enhanced and maintained?

It is suggested here that organizational arrangements at all levels of education can be advantageously researched from an interactionist perspective. This perspective necessitates isolation of the *arenas*, that is, the recurring situations which give action and vitality to an organization.⁷ Since an organization becomes viable through the development of policies

and implementation of action carrying out these or remodified plans of action, it is necessary to isolate and analyse the situations where these developments and implementations occur. In such a perspective, bureaucratic elements are considered only to the extent that they enter into, or influence in any way, the interaction processes which constitute the social structure of the organization.

To exemplify further the arena approach to the organization of schooling: the arenas in a school may include administrative staff, academic departments, committees, and other formal and informal groupings of school personnel. Arenas at the school board level may include groups of professionally trained people in different academic disciplines and other areas of specialization, certain combinations of elected or appointed officials and professionally trained people, and other groupings which include members of the administrative or support staff of the organization. The arenas may follow boundaries similar to those located on the organizational chart. But, since there are both administrative and more-or-less-professional staff at every level of the organization of education, the boundaries of arenas will undoubtedly vary from one level to another, and from one time to another at the same level. Power in such organizations may be derived from a variety of sources, including legal-rational, expertise, referent, interaction tactics, and identification. Expertise should be of critical significance in the organization of education. Under this condition, power is both asymmetrical and equal, because the roles of power-holder and power-subject may alternate, depending on the issues being discussed.

Focusing on the school organization as a variant of a professional model, that is, a *social power arena* approach, rather than as a variant of a bureaucratic one, will lead to a greater understanding of the dynamic processes involved. On the one hand, it will keep us from being blinded by the bureaucratic dimensions of the organization. On the other hand, it will direct attention to the entire gamut of structure and process in the organization without excluding the relevant aspects of its bureaucratic and collegial dimensions. The combination of a focus on arenas and the relevant power processes can provide a basis for meaningful analysis of the school and the relationship between the school and its environment.

Facets of Accountability

Several general dimensions to the question of accountability in education deserve sociological analysis and exemplification. For example, study of the interrelationships of organizations within education will include researching their historical developments, their present dynamics, and the future consequences of their interrelations. More specifically, a number of more-or-less separate teacher, administrator, parent, and school board organizations, each with local, district, provincial, and federal levels, form the organizational framework of education in this country. When each organization is considered alone, there is a reciprocal accountability

between it and its members; and yet each organization is, in a way, accountable to the institution of education as a whole. In addition, each organization is in the long term accountable to the public-at-large, because of the nature of the organization's ultimate goals of *educating* and its dependence on financial and other support from the public.

Focussing on teacher organizations, we see that teachers have been obtaining higher educational levels, becoming more specialized, and attempting to acquire more professional capability. Consequently, they want greater control of their work environments, of curriculum content, and of the interaction process in the school. These developments, together with the strengthening of teacher associations, have consequences for their interactions with school boards whose members are either elected by the public at large or appointed by provincial departments of education. The issue is one of identifying the ways in which lay officials who lack the expertise of teachers attempt to influence, direct, or control the educational endeavor. Even professional educators on the school board may have orientations different from those who are not members of the board, with the result that perspectives are incompatible. Again, when school boards seek input, it may come from teachers, administrators, or other specialists within the field of education: what, then, is the relationship between school board, teacher associations, and other organizations in the field of education? Teachers and related professionals may be employees of the school board, and at the same time they may be consultants to the school board. At another level, school boards, teachers, and other organizations in education are accountable to the community. It appears that the processes whereby these organizations develop and maintain accountability to each other and to the public have not been adequately identified and analysed in the Canadian setting. There are both pragmatic and theoretical advantages for giving more attention to such processes. In practice, it can lead to greater co-ordination between the school and society. Frameworks of interorganizational analysis in the educational sphere could be developed which could lead to the generation of both substantive and formal theory in the area of interorganizational relationships.

Another facet to the question of accountability arises when one views the internal processes of school and teacher organizations. In order for teachers to be successful, from the point of view of the school administration, they must cover the required curricula, obtain the appropriate success ratio amongst the pupils, maintain appropriate discipline, follow the rules and regulations of the school, and co-operate with fellow teachers and administrators. Commitment to these goals is necessary in order to maintain one's position in the school and/or advance along some career line. From the point of view of the profession, the teacher should have cosmopolitan orientations and considerable involvement in curriculum development. But as noted by Harp and Richer (Note 6), salary and working conditions are often the main issues in the collective demands of teachers. Ideally,

accountability to the school and to the profession are congruent, and together they are congruent with accountability to the pupil, community, and society. It is suggested here that we do not have sufficient knowledge of this aspect of the organization of education in this country.

The reciprocal nature of the relation between the career-oriented teacher and the university-bound student as outlined by King and Ripton (1970) has been seen as a hindrance to innovativeness in teaching. It can be further suggested that this reciprocity makes it difficult for teachers to respond to the needs of non-university-bound students and to the needs of certain segments of society, as well as to the desires of school officials who propose changes in instruction and evaluation. Hence the importance of the issue of accountability of the school to its students and to society.

The accountability of the school to society has special dimensions, because the school is a monopolistic organization requiring compulsory attendance for the majority of its members. The characteristics of monopolistic organizations generally include indifference to their environments. While the Canadian school, as a monopolistic organization, has made some attempts to monitor its environment, these attempts have often been directed toward the protection of its autonomy, security, and prestige, rather than toward service to its environment as such. Its most obvious attempts to monitor the environment include the growth of parent-teacher and home-school associations.⁸ Voices of discontent from different segments of society during the last decade or so, and the resultant upsurge in *free* schools and *open-plan* schools, both within and outside the formally organized school system, have tended to make the school less monopolistic and more receptive to its environment. This is further evidenced by the concern with community-oriented schools and school-community relations (e.g. Card, 1975; Hodgson, 1972; Lind, 1972). However, the sociological implications of the significance of the monopolistic nature of the school in the Canadian setting have not been adequately analysed, nor has the school's recent concern with its environment been fully studied in relation to its organization, teacher-learning endeavors, teacher organizations, and societal needs and desires.

In the pragmatic concerns of teaching and learning, there are a host of accountability-related issues. Here a sociological orientation, focussing on the subjective approach to developing grounded theory, can enhance both the sociological endeavor to understand social structure and process and the educational desire to be an integral and meaningful part of society. Questions include: What are schools and school curricula designed to teach? Why are they designed the way they are? What is actually learned in the school? Why are so many pupils classified as failures in the school? Why are other pupils defined as being successful? What are the needs of the pupils, of the community, and of the society? These and related questions are not new, but need to be further analysed in the Canadian setting. They get at the core of the strengths and weaknesses of formal education and must be

answered before meaningful and realistic approaches to formal education can be found. A sociological approach will here include analyses of the value climate of the school; the processes of developing and sustaining identities, interactive roles, agendas, and life courses in the school; the instructional plans used in the school; the organizational design of the school; the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the community, the relationship between the school as an organization in its present form and its community environment; alternate organizational designs; social and educational consequences of different teaching–learning models; and the role of school and community members in implementing change.

Interprovincial and Interregional Comparisons

Research on interprovincial and interregional comparisons in education has been done mainly in terms of economic measures of input variables, including capital resources and expenditure per pupil, and in terms of the output variables of formal educational achievement,⁹ which, in turn, is seen in relation to economic measures such as employment and gross national product. In contrast to this emphasis, social processes in the school and the relationship between the schooling experience and the cultural environments of pupils outside the school constitute neglected areas of research. One exception is the study by Breton, McDonald, and Richer (1972). It is suggested here that these dimensions of education must be further studied, because they are at the core of the goals of this institution. It is through the schooling experience that we see *where the action is*, and *where it should be*, if the benefits of education are to be maximized for its clients. For example, *success* or *failure* of education can be assessed only in relation to the cultural dimensions of the population it serves. Output in terms of level of formal education may not be the same as that measured in terms of intellectual and social development, or in terms of contributions to the local cultural mosaic and quality of life.

Concerning social processes within the school, much insight could be gained from well-thought-out interprovincial and interregional¹⁰ comparisons in each of the areas of research discussed thus far in this paper; that is, group processes, organizational dimensions, and the facets of accountability. In addition, research is needed on the degree of acceptance of innovations in all aspects of the school and the consequences of acceptance or lack of acceptance on the educational process;¹¹ the extent, nature, and consequences of conflict in and among the different arenas in the school; school–community relations; and interactions among the various interest groups (parent–teacher associations, teacher associations, school boards, and churches) in the educational endeavor. Basic questions include: What is the function of education? Is the formal education system helping individuals and groups maintain their culture and improve their quality of life within it? Is education more of an alienating force than an integrating one?

There has been a tendency in Canada to emphasize more or less standardized formal education procedures which are aimed at developing an *industrialized urban* culture. But the aims of education, its quality and ultimate success, cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural characteristics of the local community, province, and region. Statistics show that by traditional measures of educational achievement many Canadians are not faring well. This is particularly true for the Atlantic region in comparison with Alberta and Ontario, and for certain native and immigrant groups in relation to the dominant ethnic groups in the country. The inequalities in education and the resultant failure to achieve higher formal educational levels may not be eliminated through greater per pupil expenditures, higher teacher qualifications, and lower teacher–pupil ratio. In fact, educational achievement as seen in participation rates and grade level achieved is not an adequate representation of the achievement, or lack of achievement, of individuals in relation to their culture and quality of life. This is not to suggest that these variables are unimportant in giving an overall picture of Canadian education. Unfortunately, they are often taken as sole measures for interprovincial and interregional comparisons. Instead of relying entirely on such economic measures of educational equality, there is a need to look at the cultural aspects of education, with particular reference to educational processes at a micro level, and see how these processes are related to the community as a social unit. It is important to ask if these processes are designated to get people to move away from their culture or geographic location once they have reached a certain level of formal education. We must also question whether they are designed to change the culture and lives of the people concerned. Relatedly, is it necessary or desirable for all ethnic groups and local entities to be striving for the same socio-economic baseline and industrialized urban-oriented way of life? Should formal education be more oriented towards subpopulations and local entities?¹² The implication here is that we need greater understanding of how the overall goals of formal education are related to the local, provincial, and national environments. In other words, how do the goals match the historical and cultural dimensions of the participants in the formal educational arrangements?

CONCLUSION

Even with the developments in the sociology of education in this country during the last couple of decades, there is much to be done by way of using different theoretical orientations and methodological approaches. In addition to the use of both substantive and formal theories from studies other than those in the sociology of education, the generation of grounded theory within all aspects of education seems to be appropriate for understanding the evolving processes and structures in this institution. Accounting for the perspectives of those involved in day-to-day interactions

at all levels of the schooling endeavor is a prerequisite to a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of the sociology of teaching and learning, the interaction processes in the school, and the relations between the school and its environment.

At the level of pupil groupings the dynamics of both formal and informal processes have not been considered from the pupil perspective. These groupings, together with those of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel, can be viewed from an arena approach. This approach focusses on the action within the organization: the repetitive social situations that make the organization viable are isolated, and the processes within and across these situations are pinpointed. A similar approach can be taken to the many dimensions of accountability between the school and the variety of interest and support organizations which have grown around it, as well as among these organizations and between them and the society which they serve.

The geographical, political, and socio-economic features of this country are such that comparative analysis of the developments in education and the consequences of these developments for its people are often desirable and worthwhile. However, the comparisons should not be confined to traditional economic terms; the focus must be on the schooling experience and the relation between the school and its cultural milieu.

NOTES

Appreciation is expressed to Allan J. Macdonnell for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. Universities, prisons, fire departments, electric utility companies, and government bureaucracies are examples of other organizations which generally do not have competitors. Comparative analyses of certain dimensions of these organizations and the school would be useful for gaining a greater understanding of the organizational processes in the school.
2. The American text by Schmuck and Schmuck (1975) and, to some extent, the British book by Richardson (1967) are examples of the use of findings from small-group research in other settings to analyse the group processes in the school.
3. For a detailed account of discovering grounded theory, see Glaser and Strauss (1967, especially pp. 1-158).
4. For further discussion on sensitizing concepts, see Blumer (1969, pp. 147-52) and Denzin (1970, pp. 12-19). Several examples of such concepts developed from research in Canadian schools are to be found in Martin (1976, especially pp. 34-111).
5. Jackson's (1968) American study of *Life in Classrooms* takes the pupil perspective into account to some degree, but even here it is not adequately dealt with.
6. The role of the principal in the school has been a popular subject in education for a long time. For bibliographies on this subject, see the Canadian Teachers' Federation (1973) and Thom and Hickcox (1973). Attention has also been given to school size (for example, Flower [1967]).
7. The idea of analysing a medical school from an arena perspective has been discussed by Bucher (1970). The suggestion that this is a useful approach to the elementary-secondary school organization is presented in Martin (1975).
8. Historically, more micro and subtle attempts to monitor the school environment were undoubtedly made in small rural communities with two or more schools. It might be

argued that the schools in these settings were not monopolistic. Many of the schools in these communities grew or declined as the churches sought to maintain or increase their memberships. But, even though they were competing against each other, generally these schools did not differ from each other and together they had control over their environments.

9. For example, Cheal (1963); Cousin, Fortin, & Wenaas (1971); Economic Council of Canada (1969); Fleming (1974); Statistics Canada (1973, 1975); Brown (Note 7). A brief critique of the input-output model of research in education has been presented by Richer (1975).

10. The term *interregional* is used here to refer to regions within provinces (for example, urban and rural regions) and regions which cut across provincial boundaries (for example, the Atlantic region).

11. Work on different dimensions of innovativeness in education includes that of Fullan (1972) and Fullan, Eastabrook, Spinner, and Loubser (1972).

12. It is obvious that there is often a great distance between the formal schooling process and the local culture. That between the schooling process in the North and the lives of Eskimo children in their community has been pointed to by Hobart (1970) and Vallee (1967).

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