less popular schools, where it is harder to induce high-quality teachers to work and where different peer effects are present.

Again, the extent to which these phenomena harm the least advantaged depends on the details of the school choice program. A voucher system like that proposed by Friedman, in which the government simply subsidizes part of the cost of schooling, allows schools to select students, and requires parents to pay the remainder of the cost after the government subsidy would presumably work considerably to the disadvantage of the least advantaged.

However, voucher systems can be structured to avoid this effect. In the Netherlands, where almost all schools are private and funded through effective vouchers, the vouchers are progressive; considerably more money follows disadvantaged than advantaged students. In England, the funding formula is more opaque, but schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students receive about double the per-pupil funding, and schools may select only according to publicly agreed-on criteria. Oversubscribed schools in the MPCP are required to choose among applicants by a lottery, limiting their ability to cherry-pick students; and the vouchers for the first two decades of the program were limited to low-income students. (For a major study of the first decade of the program, see Witte, 2000.)

Still, all three systems face the problem that better-educated and wealthier parents are better choosers. However, in the default (nonchoice) system, these are exactly the parents who already exercise choice through the housing market and by lobbying their children's schools for special programming. The relevant question when evaluating whether a choice system would be better for the less advantaged than a nonchoice system is not how much better more advantaged parents are as choosers than less advantaged parents but how much better *the state* is at making appropriate educational decisions than are less advantaged parents. The worse the schools attended by less advantaged students in the nonchoice system, the less likely it is that a school choice program will harm them.

Some degree of school choice is an inevitable feature of any system for allocating children to schools. Formal-choice schemes vary considerably in their design, some better and others worse suited to meeting the normative goals of schooling (for more detail, see Brighouse, 2008).

Harry Brighouse

See also Autonomy; Charter Schools; Children's Rights; Right to an Education; Rights: Children, Parents, and Community

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Schooling in the United States: Historical Analyses

Embedded within historical analyses of schooling in the United States are a variety of theoretical perspectives. There is broad agreement about the reasons for the founding of public school systems but considerable disagreement about the factors that have

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shaped the evolving social role of these systems once set in motion. This entry examines theories about both stages of educational development, with special emphasis on the alternative understandings of the purposes and functions of schooling after the founding of the common school system in the mid-19th century.

In the U.S. context, to speak of theories of the history of schooling is perhaps oxymoronic. Unlike their European counterparts, American historians of education have an aversion to engagement with social theory, which arises from the strong Anglo-American tradition of empiricism. The tendency is to focus on the contingencies of time and place and let the story emerge from the data, free of theoretical framing. As a result, this review of theories of the history of schooling draws mostly from sources outside of history itself, in particular from sociology, economics, philosophy, and curriculum theory.

The consensus view is that public schools first arose in the American colonies almost entirely for religious reasons. This rationale emerged from a central tenet of Protestantism, that every Christian needed to have unmediated access to the Word of God, which in turn meant the ability to read the Bible. Communities had to establish schools in order to keep the faith. There was also a less elevated reason for individuals to pursue schooling: Learning to read, write, and figure was a matter of survival in the intensely commercial economy of British North America. But although the latter helps explain the extraordinarily high literacy rate in the colonies compared with the mother country, religion was what drove the establishment of the first public schools.

The common school movement in the second quarter of the 19th century established publicly funded and publicly controlled systems of community schools aimed at making primary education universal. In the consensus view, this happened almost entirely for political reasons. In historical accounts of the founding of universal systems of education in the United States and Europe, the core motivation was to support the creation of the modern nation-state. The idea was to bring people together into a community school, induct in them a sense of citizenship and a common set of useful skills, and lead them from the old world of patriarchal obligation to the modern world of individual achievement by freestanding citizens.

With the history of nearly 200 years of development after the launching of the common school systems in the United States, the consensus begins to fray. One view of the purposes and functions of the system came to dominate and persisted over time, but this position has been open to challenge from a variety of perspectives. The view that has carried the greatest weight, in both academic and popular understandings of the history of schooling, is *meritocratic functionalism*, and the three main contending perspectives are *social reproduction theory*, *status competition theory*, and *postmodern theory*.

These theories of the development of schooling vary in the way they treat a series of fundamental tensions in the understanding of how schools work:

Socialization and selection: Schools serve both of these social functions. They socialize students, imbuing in them the desired social norms and values and giving them the knowledge and skill they need to play social roles effectively. They also select students, directing them toward particular forms of work and positions in the social hierarchy. Theories differ in the relative emphasis they give to these two functions and in the designation of which is cause and which is effect.

Consensus and conflict: Theories differ in the degree to which they see schools as a shared social construction or as an imposition by one group on another.

Function and agency: Theories also differ in the way they conceive the historical processes in the development of schooling. In the functionalist view, schools emerge organically to meet the broad institutional needs of society. In the agency view, school change happens through the actions of individual actors pursuing their own ends.

Substance and form: Some theories stress that the primary effects of schools arise from the substance of what they teach, but others stress that the impact of schooling arises less from the substance of learning than from the form of schooling.

Theoretical grounding: Finally, alternative theories of educational change tend to ground themselves in the work of different theorists. In particular, they tend to stress Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, or Michel Foucault.

Meritocratic Functionalism (Socialization Leading to Selection, Consensus, Function, Substance: Durkheim). It is in the nature of dominant theories that, in the absence of explicit theoretical claims in an analysis, they become the default explanation. This is particularly salient for the case of American

work in the history of education, which avoids theorizing and thus often ends up inadvertently reinforcing the view embodied in meritocratic functionalism. It is also in the nature of dominant theories that they lack a clear label, since they do not seem to constitute a particular theoretical stance on a subject but simply represent what is. Often, meritocratic functionalism is called functionalist or modernization theory, but the proposed label is useful in capturing the theory's two key components.

According to this theory, schooling is functional in that it emerged to provide the full array of specialized skills and attitudes that are necessary for the efficient functioning of a complex modern society. In particular, drawing on economic theory, schools are seen as machines for the production of human capital—central for the development of the managerial economy and, increasingly, the knowledge economy. Schooling is also meritocratic in that it simultaneously emerged as a mechanism for allocating people to jobs (and thus social positions) based on their individual achievement in school. Schools thus constituted a major break point between traditional and modern societies by facilitating the shift from ascribed to achieved status. They offered individuals the opportunity to prove themselves on the level playing field of the classroom and then achieve social mobility according to their merit. Putting together the two elements—functionalism and meritocracy—the theory argues that schools allowed society to get what it needed and individuals to get what they deserved.

In general, historians and social scientists have not been arguing that the school system actually has been achieving both of these goals, only that the tendency has been in that direction. So for schools to be more functional, they have had to tailor teaching more closely to the needs of the modern economy; and for them to be more meritocratic, they have had to offset the ways in which the social position has shaped student performance. But the theory has trouble explaining important characteristics of the history of American schooling: Enrollments expanded long before school learning had economic utility, unequal social outcomes have persisted in spite of increased educational opportunity, and school systems emerged in a much more convoluted and inefficient form than the theory would have predicted.

Social Reproduction (Selection Leading to Differential Socialization, Conflict, Function/Agency, Substance: Marx). This theory challenges the claim that the school system has become gradually more functional and meritocratic over time. The core argument is that selection has driven socialization in schools. Students' social origins have determined the quantity and quality of the schooling they have received, which in turn has channeled them into jobs that have left them largely where they started. Thus, schooling has served to reproduce social inequality. The driving force in the system has not been consensus but a conflict over the allocation of power, money, and prestige; and those who have started out high in these social goods have been able to work the system to their continuing advantage. Schools have functioned to preserve class power. Class systems historically have always sought to preserve privilege for those on top, but what has been distinctive about class reproduction in modern societies is that schools have served to legitimate this process of social reproduction. Schools have taken class advantage and, through a process of educational alchemy, turned it into individual merit. At the end of their school careers, students have emerged with a socially certified label—smart or dumb—which then explained their future social success or failure.

Since legitimating inequality has been the school's central social function, schools have had to establish a modicum of credibility for this claim by allowing some poor students to get ahead and some rich students to fail. So reproduction theory is able to accommodate much of the mixture of mobility and reproduction that has emerged from schooling. But the dominant form of this theory has some of the same problems as meritocratic functionalism. It assumes a system that seems to operate behind the backs of teachers, students, and parents; and it asserts against evidence that schools have been smoothly functional in preserving the system. Another strand of reproduction theory deals with the latter problem by stressing individual agency over social function to account for the amount of dysfunction and resistance that have emerged within the system.

Status Competition (Selection, Conflict, Agency, Form: Weber). Like reproduction theory, status competition theory challenges the idea that unequal outcomes of education are the result of differences in individual merit, but it differs by emphasizing the importance of school in shaping a person's location within a finely graded structure of social stratification rather than within a crudely graded system of social classes. From this perspective, schools emerged

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in response to the positional demands of a variety of status groups rather than the human capital needs of society or the power needs of the dominant class.

This theory sees school systems as developing stratification not only by level (e.g., elementary, secondary, and tertiary) but also by the varying prestige of schools and the programs within schools at each level. Depending on level and prestige, schools and programs have come to teach different status cultures, which correspond to the cultures of particular status groups in the social hierarchy and particular workgroups in the occupational hierarchy. And schools have provided students with a form of cultural currency—grades, credits, and especially academic degrees—that they have been able to exchange for privileged access to social positions, with the most elevated, scarce, and prestigious credentials opening the doors to the highest positions. One form of the theory puts primary emphasis on the role of schools as credentialing institutions, where learning is at best a side effect. The primary strength of this theory is in explaining why school enrollment growth preceded the economic demand for skilled workers and why credential requirements for jobs rose so quickly. A central weakness is the difficulty in explaining why employers and policymakers have been willing to play along with this costly and socially irrational game.

Postmodernism (Socialization/Selection, Conflict, Disciplinary Power, Form as Substance: Foucault). Whereas the first three theories focus on the role of schools in placing students in varying locations in the modern social structure, postmodern theory looks at the role of schools in developing and maintaining a historically specific form of reason—a regime of truth—that has come to constitute modern society. The focus is on the discursive practices (formed in language and bounded by reason) that carry disciplinary power into all realms of social life. Schools have been central in purveying the social science disciplines that undergird this form of power, in constructing metrics (e.g., tests, grades, and degrees) for locating individuals on a normal curve of moral and social value, and in assigning and legitimizing the labels and social categories (smart/dumb, normal/abnormal, worthy/unworthy) that students have borne into adult life.

If other theories of the history of schooling tend to focus on educational inputs and outputs, postmodernism zeroes in on the practices of socialization and selection that are fundamental to the institution. It is particularly adept at showing how schools emerged as the prototypical institutions for constructing modern societies, using language and behavioral science to shape the reasoning, conscience, and social identity of the young. But it is less effective in trying to explain how and why American schools developed over time in historically distinctive patterns.

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See also Apple, Michael; Modernization Theory; Postmodernism

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Schwab, Joseph: The Practical

Joseph Schwab (1909–1988) stands as one of the more important American educational and curriculum theorists of the second half of the 20th century. He made major contributions to the theory and practice of collegiate liberal education, science curricula, and religious and values education, and finally, as will be made clear in this entry, he made important contributions in the series of papers on the "practical," where he outlined a reconceptualization of the metatheory of curriculum making and school improvement. All of his work was based on his experiences of curriculum making, and particularly on his experience in the undergraduate college of the University of Chicago between his first appointment as an instructor in biological sciences in 1937 and the effective end of the "Hutchins College" in 1959. It was in Chicago that he encountered Ralph Tyler (the college's examiner), the philosopher Richard McKeon, and, through McKeon, John Dewey. Much of his work reflects their inspirations and concepts.

Thus, like McKeon and Dewey, Schwab argued that a curriculum should be grounded in the idea of