

J. Lambiri-Dimaki, *Πρὸς μίαν Ἑλληνικὴν Κοινωνιολογίαν τῆς Παιδείας. [Toward a Greek Sociology of Education]*, vols. I-II, Athens, National Center of Social Research, 1974, pp. 154, 309.

This is a two volume sociological survey in which Dr. Lambiri-Dimaki makes a genuine effort to dispassionately and objectively analyze in depth some of the perennial problems and issues facing higher education in Greece. Volume I which is half the length of Volume II may be considered a prolegomenon to the author's second volume of sociology of higher education proper.

Using a stratification frame of reference, the author has given us two interrelated studies on educational stratification of higher education in Greece. Volume I includes a secondary analysis of existing sociodemographic data of first year students of 1962-63 academic year compiled by most institutions of higher learning in Greece while Volume II represents the major thrust of the analysis based on data collected from a stratified sample of 632 male and female junior students at the prestigious University of Athens in 1964-1965.

Overall the findings and conclusions of both studies reflect a rather rigid system of higher education which favors the upper socioeconomic classes and cultural elites of Greece. Although the study commenced at a time when higher education was still a privilege of the few (since 1964 higher education became free in Greece), it is doubtful that a genuine change has been made ten years later.

More specifically, in the first 60 pages or so of Volume I, the author defines the perimeters of general and specialized areas of sociology including the sociology of education (i.e., scope, concepts, theories, methods, and techniques) by drawing from both classic and contemporary sociological sources. Likewise in the next 60 pages or so (pp. 64-117), the author surveys the comparative research findings of educational stratification in the more advanced western and American societies. She explores the relationship between class, mobility, and the issue of inequality of opportunity in higher education in these societies. While this section is useful and abounds in conceptual and empirical information (with over 100 footnotes in the latter part alone), one could dispense with much of it without it being a detriment to the overall study. The author could, however, incorporate some of these previous research findings bearing directly on her study.

In the last part (pp. 118-139) of Volume I, Dr. Lambiri-Dimaki, in collaboration with statistician Mr. Christ Kelperis, reports her findings concerning a major question: What was the probability of a Greek student in a given socioeconomic class receiving higher education before the latter became free? On the basis of available data on higher education and sociodemographic and economic data on Greek households for 1963-1964, it was found that: *One*, the lower the socioeconomic class of the Greek the less the probability that he will acquire education of higher learning or what they termed the unequal index of opportunity in higher education. *Two*, regardless of her class origins the Greek woman has only one-half the probability in acquiring higher education that her male counterpart does at every class level.

The two major findings on class and sex inequality reported in Volume I are confirmed and expanded by the author's findings and analyses in Volume II. In the first 18 pages of Volume II the author describes her research procedures and techniques including her selection of a sample, interview schedule, and coding. Her final sample

was made up of 632 students at the University of Athens. It is the contention of this reviewer that the author displays a rather defensive posture in these first pages by trying to convince her reader of the scientific validity of her study. The rest of the volume contains the author's major findings and conclusions.

Overall Volume II contains a well of information concerning a number of socio-demographic and social class characteristics including student's age at entering the university, his place of birth, his class and family origins, his style of life and academic progress as a student (pp. 51-190). A synopsis of some of her major findings may be reported as follows: (1) *Age and Entrance*. There is a late entrance of Greek male students to the University compared to females and those in higher socioeconomic classes. This is due according to the author to the late graduation of the student from high school which has failed to adequately prepare him for university entrance examinations. (2) *Place of Birth*. The majority of students attending the University of Athens (66%) came from regions adjacent to the capital - greater Athens, rest of central Greece and Euboea (47%), and from Peloponnesos (19%) while 40% and 11% respectively of the total population live in these regions.

3) *Class Origins*. Using occupation of the student's father as the single index of social class placement, the author identified four major classes: The farming, the working, the middle and the upper classes (pp. 98-99). On the basis of this classification, the author found 41% of the students were of farming and working class origins while 59% were of middle and upper class origins. Despite the large percentage of the farming/working classes, these percentages overwhelmingly favor the middle and upper socioeconomic classes which together comprise approximately one-fifth of the total population (see Volume I, p. 125). Furthermore, while higher education is an important vehicle for social mobility for all classes, it is by far the most important institution for the maintenance of the upper class (author's emphasis).

While occupation is considered by most students of stratification as one of the most important objective indices of social class, it is not considered social class itself. In addition, while the author admits that there are no empirical studies on the occupational prestige hierarchy in Greece, she arbitrarily and subjectively classifies occupations into a four class system. Thus for example, we read that a high school teacher and a university professor are placed in the upper class. The officer corps is stratified into middle and upper classes while the clergy is all placed in the middle class. The author uses farming and working (primarily occupational categories) as lower class designations while there are no occupational equivalents for middle and upper class designations. Put differently, the author's stratification scheme is primarily an occupational prestige hierarchy scheme and not a social class scheme. Furthermore, it is the opinion of this reviewer that most of what the author calls upper class occupations are really middle and upper middle class even by Greek (particularistic) standards.

(4) *Family and Higher Education*. The author found that the father's education had a decisive role on the education of the student. While the percentage of educated fathers was higher than that of the student's mothers, both parents had overall higher education than the rest of the population in the same age cohort (p. 135, Volume II). It was also found that the higher socioeconomic status of the family, the fewer the children and the more likely they will attend the university. Of course these findings

are consistent with those of social class origins. (5) *Student's Life Style*. Greek students rarely if at all get married while attending the university. The author contends that those students who get married before or during their studies come from lower socioeconomic classes.

(6) *Academic Progress*. Author found that female students are more successful in their examinations than male students at every class level, farming or working class (male) students are more successful in their studies than middle and upper class (male) students, and farming class students are more successful in their studies than their working class counterparts. In explaining these rather unusual findings, the author contends that students coming from broader socioeconomic classes (working and farming) are the most ambitious and motivated of their classes. Also farming class students have more time to study than working class students. It is this reviewer's judgement that while these findings may be indicative of individual achievement and mobility of certain farming and working class students, they do not explain the differential levels of educational achievement and social mobility of entire social classes. In other words only selected portions of the various classes, but especially of the lower socioeconomic classes, were able to attend the University of Athens.

In conclusion, the author argues that the most important barrier for an open and more equitable higher education in Greece is not economic but «cultural» or what William Ogburn called the «cultural lag» hypothesis. The author believes that improvement in the economic sector does not automatically contribute to bridging the gap between the culturally hypertrophic Athens and the culturally hypotrophic rural sector. Put differently, while free education may have contributed to an increased awareness of more participation of Greek students in higher education across class and sex levels, it has not contributed to equality of opportunity between and among lower and upper classes in Greece.

This reviewer does not believe that the «cultural lag» between the lower and upper classes is the most important barrier to higher education in Greece. It is economic inequality and a rigid class system between and among classes which creates differential cultural patterns (sub-cultures) and life-styles. If the «cultural lag» hypothesis is correct as the author claims, why for example does the Greek farmer want his children to be educated? Why is the Greek immigration and migration in the last 70 years or so primarily a matter of farming and working classes of Greece and not the middle and upper classes?

In closing, it is the contention of this reviewer that despite some shortcomings this two volume study is an important contribution toward an indigenous development of sociology in general and educational sociology in particular. The author could, however, write one compact volume and include in her sample students from the University of Salonica or other colleges. It is rather difficult to test the reliability of the author's findings on the basis of a case study of the oldest and most prestigious university of Greece.

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