



September 2004

*Remaking America's School Systems: Now Separate and Unequal.* Milton Schwebel.

Andrea Anderson  
University of California, Berkeley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Anderson, Andrea (2004) "Remaking America's School Systems: Now Separate and Unequal. Milton Schwebel.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 31 : Iss. 3 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol31/iss3/17>

This Book Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



though overworked, spend too much time revising wording of Informed Consent forms without understanding the full context of Informed Consent processes for the types of populations typically studied by SBES research (e.g. ethnic and language minorities and vulnerable populations). The Panel also maintains that IRBs apply higher than necessary protection standards for research that poses little or no risks to participants.

The Panel recommends that the federal Office for Human Rights Protection (OHRP) develop procedures and guidelines for Informed Consent that are suitable for alternative populations (including ethnic and language minorities). OHRP should also provide more specific direction about the conditions under which Informed Consent can and should be waived. To better protect confidentiality, OHRP and IRBs should develop and implement "best practice" techniques to protect privacy and confidentiality. Flexibility should be allowed when researchers use microdata that already incorporate such techniques. Both OHRP and IRBs should better tailor waived and expedited reviews according to minimal risk involved with SBES research participants.

The book's strength is in its systematic and clear presentation of the findings and recommendations, and the comprehensiveness of scope. One issue that should concern social work researchers is the lack of social work involvement in any of the committees, hearings, and Panel membership. In order to represent the unique perspective of social work research, social work leadership and research organizations must find ways to become actively involved in future development of policies regarding the protection of research participants in SBES research.

*Ed Cohen, University of California, Berkeley*

Milton Schwebel, *Remaking America's School Systems: Now Separate and Unequal*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003. \$39.95 hardcover, \$29.95 papercover.

It is widely agreed upon that the public school system in the United States is not meeting the educational needs of its students. Urban schools in particular are known to have a hard time employing and retaining qualified teachers and often lack basic supplies and adequate facilities. Milton Schwebel agrees, but takes a different view than that of most proponents of educa-

tional reform. He denies the education system in the United States is has ever been in crisis or that it is currently in crisis. Instead, he describes the situation as an endemic, ongoing problem wherein a large portion of students receive an inferior education.

Schwebel claims that, contrary to popular belief, America's public schools are fulfilling their function. Impoverished schools are providing society with the workers it needs to fill the lowest paying jobs. Those in the upper class are content to let these students receive a below average education because it assures that they will not compete with their own children for high status, well paying positions. Those in power, those who create policy and those with money, have the educational system they want. Therefore, they are unwilling to pay for a decent and effective public educational system.

The author believes that until Americans feel a moral obligation to provide all students with an equal educational opportunities, nothing will change. Minor reforms will come and go, perhaps well-intentioned and strong in the beginning, but they will continue to become so watered down and poorly enforced by the time they are put into practice that no long lasting change will be perceptible. According to Schwebel, the United States has three school systems. The first is comprised of schools that everyone would want their children to attend. Supported by the community, filled with ample resources, and staffed by qualified, well-paid teachers, these are the schools that produce America's future leaders. The second gives its students basic skills and knowledge, and provides society with reliable workers. The third educational system serves the urban and rural poor. These are the schools with few resources, little parental involvement, permanent substitutes, low attendance and graduation rates, and students who oftentimes fail to learn even the most basic skills.

Schwebel's matter of fact tone and easy to understand writing style makes this book of interest to more than simply those in the field of education. He gives suggestions for improvements and solutions to the problems that plague our educational system. His measures aim to do away with the third school system and strengthen the second. Some are short-term, to be put in place by teachers and community members. However, most of his recommendations would take many years to accomplish and

require the collaboration of policy makers, community leaders, parents, voters, and school districts.

Schwebel recognizes the vastness of the problem when he recommends such things as guaranteed full-time employment, national health insurance, parent-as-teacher training classes, free public preschool, after school programs in all elementary and middle schools, and a higher value placed on teachers, with corresponding pay. He ends the book with the acknowledgement that support for his proposals need political and broad-based support and that all sections of society would have to be committed to change. Although the challenge is great, he points out that several organizations that have already initiated this type of work. Despite the book's pessimistic thesis, the author remains hopeful that the situation can be changed.

*Andrea Anderson, University of California, Berkeley*

Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003. \$19.95 papercover.

Although most social policy writing has focused on the state and non-profit sectors in the provision of welfare, the importance of the family in meeting needs and managing social problems has now been recognized. This has come about largely through the efforts of feminist social policy scholars who have stressed the way most people's well-being is shaped by nurturing and caring behaviors within families. However, while much more attention is now being paid to the family in social policy scholarship, it has not changed the focus on state provision within the subject. Most of the literature continues to view the state as the primary institution for promoting people's welfare.

Arlie Hochschild's latest book is not written from a social policy perspective but it makes a major contribution to the field by showing that an understanding of the changing family and its interface with the market—that other neglected dimension of social policy analysis—is crucial for the analysis of social support, caring and social welfare today. Hochschild is a highly respected sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley whose previous books on family issues, feminism and social care have