Handbook of the Sociology of Education

- Provides a comprehensive overview of the field of education as viewed from a sociological perspective
- Experts in the area present theoretical and empirical research on major educational issues
- Includes an analysis of the social processes that govern schooling
- Presents the role of schools in and their impact on contemporary society
- Shows the macro and micro level processes that make up the educational environment

The aim of the Handbook of Sociology of Education is to present the most theoretically grounded and empirically rigorous sociological analyses of schools to date. The authors are distinguished researchers in the field. Their contributions to the Handbook offer major theoretical perspectives on the schooling process and describe significant empirical studies of schools and their effects on individuals and society. The research presented in the Handbook is built on three fundamental tenets of sociology. First, the authors adopt the perspective that schools are a central institution in society. An understanding of the function of schooling in social life is enhanced by viewing schools as interrelated with other societal institutions. The study of how the context of schooling influences education processes is critical to an understanding of school outcomes. Rather than being determined solely by ascribed and achieved characteristics, an individual's cognitive and social development are influenced heavily by the structures and networks in which the individual is embedded. Communities, families, schools, and social groups are critical elements in the educative process. By viewing the school as a societal institution and highlighting the interaction between context and individual behavior, the Handbook chapters provide a broader and deeper understanding of the determinants of learning in contemporary society. The second sociological insight that guides the research in the Handbook is that the school is a social system.