

BOOK REVIEW

To what ends & by what means? The social justice implications of contemporary school finance theory & policy by Gloria Rodriguez and Anthony Rolle (Eds.) (2007)

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To What Ends and By What Means? The Social Justice Implications of Contemporary School Finance Theory and Policy (2007) presents an unprecedented perspective on the issues of school finance by engaging its readers in how the school finance theory and policy can aid in eliminating existing inequalities and support democratic participation by all members of the society.

Both editors, Gloria M. Rodriguez and R. Anthony Rolle, are scholars in the area of education leadership, finance, and policy. The forward to the book, authored by Patricia Gándara, provides a good lead for this piece by highlighting the contextual, theoretical and policy significance this timely collection of scholarly work offers. An introductory chapter presents editors' definitions for social justice in the context of school finance and invites the readers to take initial an step forward envisioning new possibilities for social justice frameworks in school finance.

The collection of work presented in this volume draws on critical discussions as well as advances a number of established prominent theories and policy views. Such discussions continue to build upon and support a foundation for piecing together novel contextual frameworks to understand how contemporary school finance policies might better support changes needed to improve the educational conditions faced by those individuals and groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in economic, political, and social policy arenas.

In constructing this piece of literature, the editors are very cognizant of how the information is presented by showcasing an array of critical debates on theory and policy. This volume highlights not only conventional but widely debated issues involving equity and adequacy in education finance – a more traditional approach, but takes its readers one step further through an examination of fiscal issues from a social justice perspective.

In all, the book has successfully incorporated the concept of social justice into the field of school finance – a much needed framework that has been underutilized in the field. Discussions exploring normative political theory, critical race theory, school improvement factors, current views on adequacy, community strength framework, resources and policies necessary to provide high quality instruction for English Learner students, eliminating poverty in our local communities, and achieving social justice on an international level, have explored the issues from a socially just perspective as it relates to school finance and how we fund schools.

This timely piece continues to challenge traditional views and established perceptions in the area of school finance in its feat toward a more socially just society – a much needed change that, in the end, affects us all. The book, however, introduces only two sections for readers' deliberation – theory and policy. Thus, making this book more accessible to readers who are academicians or policymakers in the field and less accessible to those who are school and district practitioners. The volume could have been strengthened in its design by including a section on contemporary empirical research in the field in order to make it accessible to a wider scope of audiences.

As I conclude this review, I highly recommend Rodriguez and Rolle's book. This book has not only brought to light a subject that has been widely overlooked, but also managed to incorporate social justice framework in a multitude of discussions pertaining to various aspects of school finance. As a practitioner, policymaker, and an academician, I can truly say that this book has stimulated and challenged my thinking as it

relates to various aspects of school finance and social justice. I am confident that this book will continue to promote a more contemporary outlook on how we perceive school finance and the lens through which we conduct our scholarly writings and analysis.

