

Schools ^{3rd Edition} and Society

A Sociological Approach to Education



Jeanne H. Ballantine ■ Joan Z. Spade

Schools ^{3rd Edition} and Society

Jeanne H. Ballantine •

To the next generation, our grandchildren,

Cosette, Chloe, Joseph, and Daniel

Hannah, Caleb, and Kai

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A Sociological Approach to Education

Jeanne H. Ballantine ■ Joan Z. Spade
Wright State University SUNY College at Brockport



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8/20/08 This Book Belongs
to Eric Graham

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PREFACE

The challenge we struggled with as we selected material for this book was how to present sociology of education to students in a way that provides both an overview and a balanced picture of a complex field. We addressed the challenge by creating a text that provides students with an overview of the scope, perspectives, and issues in the sociology of education. We drew on our many years of experience in researching, publishing, and teaching sociology of education. Our goal was to involve students by presenting well-rounded and provocative summaries of major areas in the field. Individual articles cover a combination of classical foundations in the field and topics most often discussed by instructors. According to recent survey data¹, the most frequently taught topics are stratification, the social context of education, schools as organizations, and diversity in education.

Schools and Society is designed to appeal to both graduate and upper-level undergraduate students. The text is divided into parts that are preceded by introductions outlining issues in the topic area and summarizing the contributions of the articles in each major subject area. The articles, written by leading scholars, are presented within a systematic framework that provides an overview of the field. These articles introduce major theoretical perspectives and include classic studies, current issues, and applications of knowledge to particular educational problems. Although

this book is not about educational policy per se, many of the readings have practical and policy implications for education.

To accomplish the goal of presenting a comprehensive and theoretically balanced overview of the field, we used the following criteria to select articles that:

1. Illustrate major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and the complexity of education, including how to study it and how it has been studied;
2. Blend classic studies with newer, sometimes controversial topics;
3. Apply to students who are likely to take the course in various majors—sociology, education, and others;
4. Exhibit writing at a level of sophistication appropriate to students in advanced undergraduate or graduate courses;
5. Concentrate on materials drawn from a wide range of sources, including journals, scientific studies and reports, and commentaries; and
6. Use the open systems approach to provide a framework for an overview of the field and analysis of a disparate group of topics.

The articles selected were tested for readability and interest level with graduate and undergraduate students. Those articles included were seen as useful and important contributions to understanding the field. Changes were made in

¹American Sociological Association. (2004). *Teaching sociology of education*. Washington, DC: Teaching Resources Center.

both selections and the introductions to the readings as a result of their comments.

Each part begins with an introduction to show the interrelationships between the parts. Preceding each article are introductory remarks and questions to guide students to key aspects of the article and to tie it to other articles in the reader.

This reader can be used alone, with a text, or with other readings or monographs. The readings included are appropriate for a variety of courses focusing on the study of education, such as Sociology of Education, Social Foundations of Education, Social Contexts of Education, and the like. This book may be used in departments of sociology as well as education.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

The editors, **Jeanne Ballantine** and **Joan Spade**, have known each other for many years through their involvement in The American Sociological Association and Sociology of Education Section activities. This project started when Joan asked if Jeanne planned to update her reader. Thus, a collaboration began over 10 years ago, with the two meeting in hotel rooms at conferences and visiting each other to develop and conceptualize this anthology. This collaboration continues with the publication of the third edition.

Jeanne H. Ballantine is professor of sociology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. She received an M.A. from Columbia University and a Ph.D. from Indiana University, with a specialty in sociology of education. She has been teaching and writing for over 30 years and has written or coauthored several texts: *Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*, *Teaching Sociology of Education*, *Sociological Footprints*, and *Our Social World: Introduction to Sociology*. She has also published in other areas, including gender and teaching of sociology, and has been an active member of sociology

of education organizations, including the ASA Section on Sociology of Education, AERA, and the ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Education. She has won numerous awards, including the ASA Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award.

Joan Z. Spade is professor of sociology at the State University of New York, College Brockport in Brockport, New York. She received her M.A. from the University of Rochester and her Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has been teaching and writing in the field for over 20 years and is coeditor of *Implementing Educational Reform: Sociological Perspectives on Educational Policy* and author of articles in sociology of education on stratification and grouping practices in education. She also publishes in other areas, including gender and family, and is coeditor with Catherine G. Valentine of *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities*. Currently she is researching academic governance in higher education. She is a member of ASA, including the ASA Section on Sociology of Education, the Eastern Sociological Society, and Sociologists for Women in Society.

INTRODUCTION

Schooling is ubiquitous in the world, making education a major institution in societies. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any industrialized or industrializing society without a system of schools, from preschool to graduate level. Sociologists who study education examine schools from a variety of perspectives. The readings in this book introduce the primary sociological perspectives on educational systems and survey major issues in the field. The following illustrates some topics and questions addressed by sociologists of education:

How does the physical setup and organization of schools affect students' learning and interpersonal relationships within schools? (Part II)

In what ways do the informal relationships and expectations in schools affect student learning and experiences in school? (Part III)

How is the knowledge that we teach our children constructed and selected for our schools? (Part IV)

What external ideas and organizations affect the way we teach our children? (Part V)

How do students' race, social class, and gender affect their school experiences and reflect systems of inequality in society? (Parts VI and VII)

How is higher education organized, and how has that system evolved? (Part VIII)

How do schools in the United States compare to those in other countries? (Part IX)

What factors bring about changes in societies' educational systems? (Part X)

We address these and many other questions by providing an overview of major theoretical perspectives in Part I and end by considering change and reform of educational institutions in Part X. Throughout this book, readings look at how schools work, how they affect students and society, and how they might work differently. We look at the current condition of education and consider educational change and policy issues, all of which help us to understand the complex matrix of relationships and activities within schools. We hope this knowledge about educational issues will help you make more effective decisions as students, parents, taxpayers, and perhaps educators. After reading this book, you should have gained some understanding of the fields of sociology and education, what both fields contribute to the study of educational systems, and some specific issues of concern to sociologists and education professionals.

WHAT CAN SOCIOLOGISTS TELL US ABOUT EDUCATION?

Sociological analyses of education give us a deeper understanding of the form and purpose of education in a society and the interactions of people within educational organizations. Sociologists study structures and organizations of social systems, including education, family, religion, economics, politics, and health. Social institutions,

such as education, constitute the major structural components of any society. Sociologists of education focus on the institution of education and the structure, processes, and interaction patterns within it. These aspects of education vary greatly across societies. In some societies, children learn their proper roles primarily by observing elders and imitating or modeling adult behavior. In other societies, children attend formal schools from a young age and learn the skills and knowledge needed for survival within the school context.

Education and other institutions are interdependent in a society. Change in one brings change in others. For instance, a family's attitudes toward education will affect the child's school experience, as you will read in this book.

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The analysis of educational systems falls into two main areas: process and structure. At whatever level of analysis we study the educational system of a society, processes are at work. These are the action parts of the system, bringing the structure alive. Examples of processes include teaching, learning, communication, and decision making, as well as those formal and informal activities that socialize students into their place in school and later life roles. These are the dynamic parts of the educational system.

However, we cannot ignore the structure of a system, including the hierarchy or roles people play—administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and, of course, students—as well as the organization of learning—classroom and school layout, types of schools, and structure of curriculum. Nor can we ignore the school's environment, which consists of groups, organizations, other institutions, and even the global society outside the school, all of which influence school functioning. For instance, parents may put pressure on schools to select particular books (Part IV), communities may provide unequal academic opportunities to different groups of students

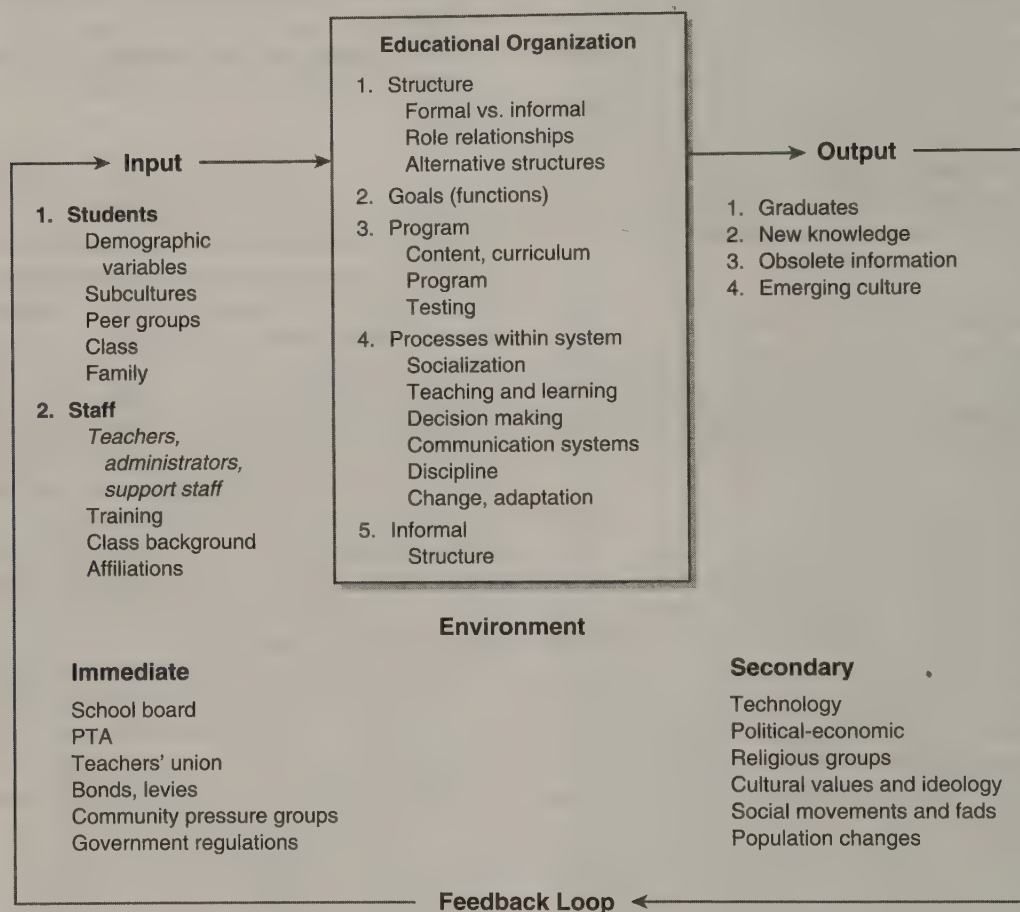
(Part VI), and the federal and state political-economic structures shape policies and resources available to schools (Parts V, VII, and IX). In short, no school exists in a vacuum. This open systems perspective is the uniting theme in this book.

THE OPEN SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE¹

The open systems perspective looks at the educational system as a whole, integrated, dynamic entity. Unfortunately, most research studies focus on only parts of the whole system, and most theoretical perspectives have biases or limitations by focusing on one part. An open systems perspective is not a panacea for all the problems we face when trying to get the total picture, but this perspective can help us conceptualize a whole system and understand how the small pieces fit together into a working unity. The open systems perspective provides a useful way of visualizing many elements in the system; it helps to order observations and data and represents a generalized picture of complex interacting elements and sets of relationships. The perspective modeled in Figure I.1 refers to no one particular organization or theoretical perspective but rather to the common characteristics of many educational settings.

Although this figure lists the component parts of a total system, it does not imply that one theory is better than another for explaining situations or events in the system. Neither does it suggest which is the best methodology to use in studying the system. The figure does allow us to visualize the parts we will be reading about in this book and help us to see where they fit and what relationship they bear to the system as a whole.

Figure I.1 shows the basic components or processes in any social system. These components are the organization, the environment, input, output, and feedback. We will discuss each of these parts briefly as it relates to the educational system in the following sections.

Figure I.1 Open Systems Approach to Education

Step 1: Organization

Focus your attention on the center box, the organization. This refers to the center of activity and is generally the central concern for the researcher. This box can represent a society (such as the United States), an institution (such as education), an organization (such as a particular school), a subsystem (such as a classroom), or an

interaction (such as between teachers and students or between peers). For purposes of discussion, we shall refer to this as "the organization." It is in the organization that activities take place, illustrating that the organization is more than structure, positions, roles, and functions. Within the organizational boundaries is a structure consisting of parts and subparts, positions and roles. Although we speak of the organization as though it were

a living entity, we are really referring to the personnel who carry out the activities of the organization and make decisions about organizational action. The processes in the system bring the organization alive. Decision making and formulation of rules by key personnel, communication between members of the organization, socialization into positions in the organization, teaching in the classroom—these are among the many activities that are constantly taking place.

These processes do not take place in a vacuum. The decision makers holding positions and carrying out roles in the organization are constantly responding to demands from both inside and outside the organization. For example, the principal of a school must respond to many different constituencies, including federal, state, and local agencies; district personnel; parents; teachers; students; and even neighbors who live near the school. The boundaries of the organization are not solid but rather remain flexible and pliable in most systems to allow the system to respond to its environment. We call this *open boundaries*, or an open system.

Capturing the relationships in the school can tell us as much about its functioning as observing formal roles and structure. For example, students' experiences depend on their social class backgrounds, the responses of school staff to their behavior within schools, and the actions of students and staff that create school cultures.

Step 2: Environment

An open system implies that there is interaction between the organization and the environment outside the organization. The environment refers to everything that surrounds the organization and influences it in some way. Typically the environment includes other surrounding systems. For schools, an important aspect of the environment is financial—where they get their money. What rules are imposed on schools is another critical factor, as schools exist within a maze of social, political, and legal expectations, such as the recent No Child Left Behind legislation.

Another is the employment market and job skills needed at a particular time. For each school organization, the crucial factors in its environment will differ and change over time.

Organizations depend on their environments to meet many of their resource requirements and to obtain information. Every school and school district faces a different set of challenges from its environment. There are many necessary and desired interactions with the environment, and some that are not so pleasant. The interaction of the school with the environment takes place in our systems model in the form of input and output.

Step 3: Input

The organization receives input from the environment in such forms as information, raw materials, personnel, finances, and new ideas. Furthermore, persons who are members of the organization are also part of surrounding communities and bring into the organization influences from the environment.

Some environmental inputs are mandatory for the organization's survival; others vary in degree of importance. For most organizations, some inputs are undesirable but unavoidable: new legal restrictions, competition, or financial pressures. The organization can exert some control over inputs. For instance, schools have selection processes for new teachers, textbooks, and other curricular materials. Schools have less control over other inputs, such as which students they serve. Certain positions in the organization are held by personnel who act as buffers between the organization and its environment. For example, the secretary who answers the phone has a major controlling function and so, too, in a very different manner, does the principal of a school.

Step 4: Output

Output refers to the material items and the non-material ideas that leave the organization, such elements as completed products, wastes, information, evolving culture, and new technology. There

may be personnel in boundary-spanning positions, bridging the gap between organizations and their environment. Personnel with responsibility for selling the organization's product serve this function, whether they work in a placement office for college graduates or in the central administrative offices of a school district creating newsletters for the local taxpayers and others.

The normal production of new knowledge in colleges and universities in the form of research papers and articles represents output from these educational institutions. As you will read in Part VIII, the country saw a critical need for this production of scholarly knowledge when the former Soviet Union launched a space vehicle, Sputnik, well before the United States was prepared to do so, thus imposing new demands for the amount and types of knowledge generated by higher educational institutions.

Step 5: Feedback

A key aspect of a systems model is the process of feedback. This process implies that an organization's leaders are constantly learning about and adapting to changes and demands in the environment as a result of news it receives. For instance, the organizational personnel compare the current state of affairs with desired goals and environmental feedback to determine new courses of action. The feedback may be positive or negative, requiring differing responses. Top administrators of our educational institutions are, in many ways, managers of this system of feedback.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The open systems perspective described above and in Figure I.1 can serve us in many ways. It provides an organizing framework for this book. This perspective can also help to promote interdisciplinary study, as illustrated in many readings in this book. As Kenneth Boulding (1956), an early systems theorist, stated:

The first signs [of an interdisciplinary movement] are usually the development of hybrid disciplines.

... It is one of the main objectives of General Systems Theory to develop these generalized areas and by developing a framework of general systems theory to enable one specialist to catch relevant communication from others.

A discussion of the fields of education and sociology must include numerous related fields: economics and school financing; political science, power, and policy issues; the family and child; church-state relationships; health and medical care for children; humanities and the arts; and the school's role in early childhood training, among others.

We structured this book to embrace the complexity of education, in terms of both what is studied and how it is studied, within the open systems perspective. Each part in the book focuses on an aspect of the open systems perspective and contributes to the overview of educational systems. In selecting readings for the book, we sought to blend theory and classical readings with more recent studies to provide both background for current arguments as well as an understanding of new directions in sociology of education. Although we focus primarily on research within sociology of education, we also include relevant readings from other areas. The readings included represent a broad range of topics in the field; however, an attempt to cover all areas is not possible because the topic of education is multifaceted and very complex. When we leave out topics, we try to address them briefly in the introductions to the parts of this book.

For each part, we provide an introduction both to the area of education we are studying and the research in that area. Each reading also includes an introduction and questions for you to consider as you read. We encourage you to read within the parts, but consider the whole as exemplified by the open systems perspective presented in this introduction.

Part I presents an overview of major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives to understanding educational systems—from functionalism to branches of conflict and interaction theory—along with some observations on interpretation of educational data. These theoretical and

methodological perspectives provide the explanations for why things are the way they are in educational systems. This part provides the frameworks that are used to understand how schools work and to explain why things are as they are in schools.

Part II focuses on schools and educational systems as organizations and roles of teachers within the organization. This is Step 1, what goes on within the educational organization. The readings provide a sample of the rich literature on formal organizations, structures, and roles within schools.

Part III also focuses inside the educational organization, but on the less formal aspects of the system. This part of the book looks at what really happens in the training and learning process. Several readings in Part III are taken from ethnographies, research using participant observation to study interactions between individuals in the schools.

Part IV considers what knowledge is presented in schools and how that knowledge is selected. These readings illustrate how the processes of determining curricula are affected by the culture and environmental factors external to schools.

Part V moves to the environment, the larger context within which the educational system operates. The environment can influence the educational system through control of finances, law, public opinion, and attitudes toward schools, as well as what knowledge is presented.

Part VI delves into a key process in schools and societies—social stratification. Readings explore how the stratification process in the larger society shapes the inputs and outputs as well as educational organizations. This part examines inequalities of race, social class, and gender in schools and school-related relationships.

Part VII looks at programs and policies established to bring equality and equity into educational systems. The attempts at equality and equity include laws, changes in school structures, and attempts to change classroom interactions. These efforts toward equality are not always successful. This part explores both the development of the reform efforts and the consequences.

Part VIII considers the top levels of the educational system—higher education. The readings illustrate how this part of the educational system also includes both formal and informal structures and is reflected in the larger environment. Again, issues of inequality are addressed, both historically and in current contexts as we consider the role of higher education in the United States and globally.

Part IX illustrates that educational systems around the world are interrelated through the needs of the global community. Aspects of educational systems around the world are becoming increasingly similar. However, features of local and national environments also influence curricula, testing, and preparation of young people for their roles in a complex world.

Part X considers how educational systems change and may change in the future. It is important to understand how educational systems work. It is also important to consider alternatives and try to understand why alternatives to current educational systems are difficult to design and implement.

As you read about the different parts of educational systems in this book, we hope you develop a deeper understanding of the role of education both in your life and in the society as a whole.

NOTES

1. From *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis* (6th ed.), by J. H. Ballantine, in press, Chapter 1. Copyright by Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Reprinted with permission of Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

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PART I

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION?

Theories and Methods

How do sociologists understand education and contribute to informed decision making and change in educational institutions? They start with perspectives or theories that guide their search for knowledge, and use the scientific method as they analyze data. Theories are attempts to explain, generalize, and predict, in this case the patterns and practices of educational systems. Theories are carefully structured explanations or arguments that are applied to real-life situations. As such, you can apply more than one theory to explain a phenomena. An understanding of different theoretical approaches gives you different ways of thinking about educational systems.

Sociologists of education examine many parts of educational systems—interaction, classrooms and peer groups, school organizations, and national/international systems of education. That is a broad mandate, and a fascinating one. Sociologists see education as one of the major institutions that constitutes society; they place the study of education in a larger framework of interconnected institutions found in every society. These institutions include family, religion, politics, economics, and health, in addition to education.

Theories guide research and policy formation in the sociology of education and provide logical explanations for why things happen as they do, helping to explain, predict, and generalize about questions related to schools. It is from the theories and the resulting research that sociologists of education come to understand educational systems.

Following the open systems perspective discussed in the Introduction enables us to visualize the roles individuals play, interactions, class dynamics, questions of equal opportunity within individual school organizations, dynamics within schools, relationships between institutions in the society, and the conflicts that arise between and within educational institutions. The readings in Part I focus on the usefulness of major theoretical perspectives for understanding different levels of education. Different theories focus on different parts of the educational system or different aspects of education; each theory has its strengths and limitations for studying educational systems. First we look at the roots of sociology of education and how these early ideas have influenced contemporary theorists. The first reading by Jeanne Ballantine and Joan Spade discusses key theories used by sociologists of education. This is followed by Alan Sadovnik's reading exploring contemporary postmodern perspectives.

Emile Durkheim is generally considered to be the first sociologist to write about education. He was a French professor of pedagogy at the Sorbonne in Paris and used sociology to study education, a field in which he lectured and wrote about for much of his career until his death in 1917. In his major works (*Moral Education*, *The Evolution of Educational Thought*, and *Education and Society*) Durkheim defined the field of sociology of education and contributed to its early content. He was particularly concerned with the functions of education for society, the relationship between education and social change, the role of education in preparing young people to adhere to societal norms, and the social system that develops in classrooms and schools.

✱ Defining the main purposes or functions of educational systems, functional theory provides the foundation for much sociological work, both classical and modern. As laid out by Durkheim and others, these functions are the important purposes of education, especially in preparing the young to become members of society; they are at the root of functional discussions of education. Sociologists using the functional perspective see the survival of society at stake; if a society fails to train its members in the skills and knowledge necessary for perpetuating that society, order and social control will be compromised.

Durkheim and other functionalists were concerned with how educational systems work in conjunction with other parts of society to create a smooth-running social system. In the excerpt in Part I, he discusses the role that schools play in socializing the young. *Moral Education*, the focus of Durkheim's excerpt, helps lay the foundation for more recent functionalist writers.

The second major theoretical perspective, historically, is conflict theory. Conflict theorists ask how schools contribute to the unequal distribution of people into jobs in society so that more powerful members of society maintain the best positions and the less powerful groups (often women and racial and ethnic groups) are "allocated" to lower ranks in society. The larger issue for conflict theorists is the role education plays in maintaining the prestige, power, and economic and social position of the dominant group in society. Contemporary sociologist Randall Collins provides an overview of conflict theory, discussing the use of Weber's concepts of "status groups" to point out the strong relationship between students' social class origins, their preparation in school, and the jobs they move into after school. Weber argued that schools teach and maintain particular "status cultures," that is, groups in society with similar interests and positions in the status hierarchy. Located in neighborhoods, schools are often rather homogeneous in their student bodies and teach to the local constituency, thus perpetuating status cultures.

Karl Marx and Max Weber set the stage for contemporary conflict theories, and the reading by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis provides an example of this perspective. The conflict theorists' argument is that those who dominate capitalist economic systems also control other institutions in society, such as education. Capitalists use these institutions to maintain power, although not without resistance by some students and community groups.

In their reading, Bowles and Gintis present a classical Marxist conflict perspective as they argue that schools reproduce the economic class structure by providing more opportunities for students from privileged backgrounds. The few who dominate repress the many who have primarily their wage labor to sell. For the few to maintain their positions, they reinforce distinctions of sex, ethnic origin, social class, and status; using the educational system is one means of dominating.

Functional and conflict theorists have been debating functions of education since Marx's and Durkheim's times. Each function of education has generated controversy.

Conflict theorists, for instance, point out problems in the functionalists' interpretation of each function, a debate you will observe throughout this book. As you peruse the readings in this book, you will be able to associate many of the issues discussed with one of these controversial functions. Conflict theorists are concerned with the results of testing, tracking, and placement of children from various backgrounds; examples of their concern and analysis are presented in readings by Randall Collins, Bowles and Gintis, and other readings in Parts II, VI, and VII.

The third major theoretical perspective in sociology of education is interaction theory, a microlevel theory that Ballantine and Spade describe as focusing on the symbols, processes, and interactions taking place in schools. Carolyn Riehl discusses the contributions of qualitative research, which uses an interaction perspective. Qualitative research studies typically focus on interpersonal behavior and interaction at the micro-level of analysis rather than society as a whole to understand how individuals use symbols to construct the reality of their daily lives. This method of studying education involves listening to people and using their realities to understand larger educational issues. In interpretive theory, individuals are active players in shaping their culture, not merely shaped by structural forces. By studying the way participants in the process of schooling construct their realities, researchers can decode the meaning of education for participants.

The final reading in this part brings us full-circle in our discussion of understanding education. Theories provide the framework for studying educational interactions and systems. Research examines data to test theories (as shown in Gerald Bracey's reading). Analysis of data generally involves use of statistics. How these statistics are interpreted can influence the outcomes of research and policies based on these statistical analyses. The Bracey reading suggests that we use caution as we look to statistics to understand education.

As you read Part I, try to picture the open systems perspective with its many parts, activities, participants, structures, environment, processes, and conflicts. These readings provide an overview of theoretical perspectives to understand parts of the education system and interrelationships between parts. Following this, each part of the educational open system is examined, from schools as organizations to processes that take place in schools and environmental forces affecting schools. Some readings take an institutional perspective, looking at broad issues affecting the institution of education; others focus on individuals, schools, or classrooms; still others consider interaction processes in schools. All can be placed in the context of the educational system, and all should prepare you for the issues presented in the following parts of the book.

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1

GETTING STARTED

Understanding Education Through Sociological Theory

JEANNE H. BALLANTINE AND JOAN Z. SPADE

For over a half a century, *Why Johnny Can't Read* (Flesch, 1955) and numerous other books explored problems in school systems, from classroom dynamics to school policies such as tracking and testing, to national and international issues affecting education. Each of us has opinions about schools; these opinions, particularly if held by people in powerful positions in society, often translate into policy decisions related to schools and votes on tax levies. Sociological theories provide sociologists and policy makers with a framework to view educational systems in more depth and understand the research that sheds light on what happens in schools, enabling informed decisions about school policies. In this reading, we outline key elements of several major theoretical approaches in sociology of education and give examples of studies that use these approaches: micro-level interaction theories including symbolic interaction and rational

choice theories, and macro-level functional and conflict theories, plus reproduction, resistance, and feminist theories.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do theories in the sociology of education help us understand educational systems?
2. What are some research questions that micro- and macro-level theorists might address? How do they differ?
3. Think of a current issue in education of interest to you and consider how each of the theories discussed in this reading would help to explain that issue.

To understand how education systems work—or don't work—social scientists develop theories providing logical arguments to explain schools and society. Theories inform research on

education and provide valuable insights into levels of analysis represented by the parts in this book. Some theories have limited use, but others stand the test of time and have relevance beyond the immediate circumstances that generated them.

The purpose of this discussion is to review some of the leading theoretical approaches in the sociology of education used to understand how scholars develop questions about educational systems that organize their research. The discussion of theories in this reading is divided by levels of analysis. Micro-level explanations focus on the individual, such as how teachers, administrators, students, parents, or others perceive and respond to educational settings and how their responses shape interactions. For example, we can use micro-level theories to understand how teachers respond differently to some children based on their gender or social class of their families. Macro-level explanations, on the other hand, focus on the institution of education and how schools fit into the larger social structure. As such, macro-level theorists might study different levels of funding for schools in school districts across social class communities or compare the structure of education or educational reforms across counties, states, or countries. Our discussion of these theories begins with micro-level explanations and moves to macro-level theoretical perspectives.

MICRO-LEVEL THEORIES OF EDUCATION

Efforts to understand “why Johnny can’t read” are often at the micro-level of analysis; they focus on interactions and experiences in the classroom between the student and others, often attributing failure to the students themselves or their teachers. *Interaction theorists* focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the situation and assume that individuals socially construct their lives based on the environments in which they find themselves. With origins in the field of social psychology, symbolic interaction theories

link individuals with their immediate social contexts, groups, and society.

Symbolic Interaction Theory

Symbols are the concepts or ideas that we use to frame our interactions. These concepts can be expressed by words or gestures; they define reality and affect our sense of self and the social hierarchies which surround us. As such, children are viewed as active participants in making distinctions between one another and are therefore agents in creating the social reality in which they live. For example, popularity is a major issue for many children, especially in middle-school years. Popularity is mostly a function of being visible and having everyone know who you are, but it also specifies a symbolic hierarchy of social power. Sometimes popularity is gained by representing the school in an athletic contest, by being attractive, or by being in a leadership position. The difficulty is that positions of popularity are scarce. Thus, competition is created, and some individuals are going to be “losers,” with negative social power, while a few others are “winners” in this socially defined popularity contest. Consider also the example of academic grouping. No matter what teachers or administrators call reading groups and different levels of English, mathematics, or sciences classes, children quickly learn whether they are “good” or “bad” students. Symbols define students’ and teachers’ existences—specifying who is “bright,” “cooperative,” “trouble,” “good,” and so forth. Symbols define what experiences are “good” or “bad.” In other words, symbols create our social reality.

Considerable inequality occurs in the symbols students bring with them to school. Children from families who cannot afford to purchase desired clothing or other status symbols, or send their children to sports training or camp are more likely to be the “losers.” Those who “win” are more likely to have access to symbolic resources, including higher class-based language patterns and social experiences; they are valued, and given special privileges in the classroom or

school. These students, who exude privilege in the symbols they bring with them, are more likely to develop leadership skills and generally feel good about themselves (Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995).

Symbolic interaction theory has its roots in the works of G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley on the development of the self through social interaction, whether in school or in other areas of life. “Individuals sharing a culture are likely to interpret and define many social situations in similar ways because of their common socialization, experiences, and expectations” (Ballantine & Roberts, 2007). Students look to others, particularly their teachers, to understand their “place” in this culture. Common norms evolve to guide behavior. Students learn through interaction how they are different from others based on individual experiences, social class, and status.

Nothing is taken for granted in interaction theory; what most people accept as given is questioned and studied. Thus, the question of “why Johnny can’t read” begins with Johnny’s “social construction of reality,” as well as the socially constructed realities of his teachers, school administrators, parents, and others; this is embedded in the interactions between teachers and students (Berger & Luckmann, 1963). Add to the puzzle complex interactions that are complicated by the race, class, and gender of students and teachers (e.g., Carter, 2006).

Interaction theories are an extension and critique of macro-level theories, focusing on what teachers and students *do* in school. They grew from reactions to the macro-level forces of structural-functional and conflict theories, which focused on the big picture—structure and processes in organizations. The macro approaches miss the dynamics of everyday school interactions and life in classrooms that shape children’s futures. Interaction theorists question things most people don’t question, such as how students get labeled and tracked in schools; they ask questions about the most common, ordinary interactions between school participants. Sociologists of education using this approach are likely to focus on students’

attitudes, values, and achievements, such as their motivations to do well in school; students’ self-concepts; and how interactions between peers, students, teachers, and principals are shaped by the social class backgrounds of all participants (see Lareau & Horvat, Reading 31 in this volume).

Labeling theory is a theoretical approach stemming from the symbolic interactionist perspective (Goffman, 1967). If Johnny is told often enough that he is stupid and can’t do the work, the label of “stupid” can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if he comes to incorporate that label into his sense of “self.” Of course, teachers and others who create and reinforce the label, often continue to respond to Johnny as if that symbol is an accurate reflection of his abilities. Using labeling theory we can better understand how teacher expectations based on students’ race, class, ethnic background, gender, religion, or other characteristics affect students’ self-perceptions and achievement levels.

Labeling theory helps us to understand how micro-level interactions in the school contribute to individuals’ formations of their sense of “self.” Young people from 6 to 18 years old spend much of their time in school or school-related activities; therefore, *student* is a status that has enormous impact on how one sees oneself. Interaction with others in school affects the student’s sense of self. The image that is reflected back to someone—as student or as teacher, for example—can begin to mold one’s sense of competence, intelligence, and likeability. The school creates a symbolic structure that influences how individuals make sense of their reality and interact with others. Official school positions such as president of the student council, lower-level reader, or athlete can become important elements of a student’s “self.”

The powerful interactions between labelers and labeled have been studied in schools. An early study found that students in classrooms where the teachers were told that students in their classes were “late bloomers” and would “blossom” that year achieved much more attention than students in classrooms where the teacher had no expectations for students, even

though students in both classrooms were similar in ability (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968).

The processes of labeling by assigning students in academic/non-academic tracks and ability groups serve to reproduce inequalities in society. Low-income students are often placed in low-ability groups, which can become a “life sentence” affecting achievement and future opportunities. Interactions between participants in the school and classroom give insight into the labeling process. For example, in a classic study, Rist found that teachers formed expectations for students based on their race, class, ethnicity, and gender and that these expectations had long-term effects on students’ achievement and sense of themselves (Rist, 1970, 1977). The result is that low-income students are more likely to be placed in lower-ability groups that do not reflect their actual ability (Rist, 1970, 1977; Sadovnik, 2004).

Outside-of-school statuses become an important basis for many interactions in schools. In addition to social class, gender is reinforced in social interactions in the classroom as shown in research findings indicating that girls struggle more with self-esteem, especially in middle school, than do boys (AAUP, 2001). Sadker and Sadker (1994) have found clear and distinct patterns in the way teachers interact with boys and girls in the classroom. Teachers tend to call on boys more, wait longer for boys’ responses to questions, and expect boys to “act out” more in the classroom. Girls, on the other hand, are expected to be quiet and compliant, and teachers tend to “do” things for girls, rather than push them to succeed. Given how gendered expectations shape interactions in the classroom, it is not surprising that girls tend to struggle with self-esteem issues at adolescence.

Furthermore, these patterns of gender and class differences vary by race and ethnicity (Carter, 2006; Grant, 2004). The point is that schools are powerful institutions, and the interactions within them heavily influence how children think about themselves and their futures. Students from different social classes, races, genders, and sexual orientations bring different orientations, patterns, and behaviors into the schools, resulting in unique symbolic and interactional experiences.

Rational Choice Theory

While rational choice theory does not ignore symbols and interactions, the theory focuses on the assumption that there are costs and rewards involved in our individual decisions within the classroom and/or school. According to rational choice theory, if benefits outweigh costs, the individual is likely to make the decision to act in order to continue receiving benefits. If costs outweigh benefits, the individual will seek other courses of action. In education, the question is how weighing of costs and benefits influences decisions about educational choices by students, teachers, and administrators in the conduct of school experiences.

Students who consider dropping out of school likely go through some analysis, comparing benefits of staying in school such as ability to get a better job, versus costs to themselves, for instance their battered self-esteem in schools. Whether we would agree that they have assessed the costs and the benefits correctly is not the point; the issue is how individuals evaluate the benefits and costs at a given moment in making what theorists describe as a “rational choice.”

Rational choice theory can also be applied to the issue of teacher retention. Teachers have an extremely high dropout rate, with roughly half of all new teachers in the United States currently leaving the profession within 5 years (Lambert, 2006). Rational choice theorists would explain this in terms of the perceived costs—relatively low salary for a college graduate; minimal respect from parents, students, and administrators; long days for 9 months of the year; little opportunity to participate in teaching- and job-related decisions (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). Teachers compare these to the benefits of teaching—the feeling of making a contribution to society and helping children; time off in the summer; and enjoying aspects of teaching, coaching, or directing. When costs are seen as higher than benefits, teachers “leave” the profession either literally or figuratively, resulting in high teacher burnout and dropout rates (Dworkin, 2007).

Rational choice theory extends interactionist theories and is useful as we try to understand decision making of individuals in schools.

MACRO-LEVEL THEORIES OF EDUCATION

Whereas micro-level theories focus on interpersonal interactions between individuals and in small groups within larger educational systems, macro-level explanations focus on larger societal and cultural systems. As such, schools as organizations, the processes of teaching and learning, and the interactions within schools and classrooms are viewed as part of larger social contexts (Brookover, Erickson, & McEvoy, 1996).

Functional Theory

Functional theory helps us to understand how education systems work and what purpose education serves in societies. We devote some pages to this theory because of its historical importance and influence on the field today. Many other theories arose as reactions to or modifications of functional theory. This theory starts with the assumption that education, as an institution in society, operates to facilitate the smooth functioning of society along with other social institutions. There is a relationship between schools and other institutions in society; institutions work together to maintain the functioning of society. Each part—education, family, political and economic systems, health, religion—works together to create a functioning social system. Each part contributes some task necessary to the functioning and survival of the whole society just as multiple parts of the body work together to keep us healthy and active. As such, in functionalist theory, schools are analyzed in terms of their functions, or purposes, in the whole system (see a discussion of school functions below). The degree of interdependence among parts in the system relates to the degree of integration among these parts; all parts complement each other, and the assumption is that a smooth-running, stable system is well integrated. Shared values, or consensus, among members are important components of the system, as these help keep it in balance.

Functional theories of education originated in the work of Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) who contributed a method for viewing schools and an explanation of how schools help to maintain

order in societies. According to Durkheim, a major role of education in society was to create unity by providing a common moral code necessary for social cohesion. Durkheim's major works in education were published in collections entitled *Moral Education* (1962), *The Evolution of Educational Thought* (1977), and *Education and Society* (1956). In these works, he set forth a definition of education that has guided the field.

In *Moral Education* (1962), Durkheim outlined his beliefs about the function of schools and their relationship to society [see Reading 3 in this part]. Moral values are, for Durkheim, the foundation of the social order, and society is perpetuated through its educational institutions, which help instill values and a sense of moral order in the youngest members of society. In this work, he analyzed classrooms as “small societies,” or agents of socialization, reflecting the moral order of the social system at that time. The school serves as an intermediary between the *affective morality* of the family and the rigorous morality of society. Discipline is the morality of the classroom, and without it the classroom can become like an undisciplined mob, according to Durkheim. Because children learn to be social beings and develop appropriate social values through contact with others, schools are an important training ground for learning social skills and the “rules” of the larger society.

Functionalists also argue that the passing on of knowledge and behaviors is a primary function of schools, one necessary to maintain order and fill needed positions in society. Following Durkheim, sociologists see the transmission of moral and occupational education, discipline, and values as necessary for the survival of society. Thus, schools play a very important role in carrying out the functions that education provides for the larger society.

Durkheim was concerned primarily with value transmission for the stability of society. He did not consider the possible conflict between this stable view of the values and skills, and what is necessary for changing emerging industrial societies. He argued also that education should be under the control of the state, free from special interest groups; however, as we know, most

governments are subject to influence from interest groups and changes in society. For example, as you will read in Part IV, pressure from the community can shape curriculum content in schools.

Instrumental in the development of modern functional theory was the work of Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 1959). He saw education as performing certain important tasks or “functions” for society, such as preparing young people for roles in a democratic society. Parsons argued that female elementary school teachers (he assumed all elementary school teachers should be female) play a role in transitioning children from the home and protection of mother to schools where a more impersonal female role socializes children to meet the less personal and more universal demands of society (Parsons, 1959). This linking of teachers to their role in the larger society is only one example of how functionalists have viewed the role of teachers (see Ingersoll and Perda, in Part II).

Other functionalists argued that some degree of inequality is inevitable in society because the most challenging positions required attracting the most talented individuals who must spend time and money educating themselves to fill these important roles. These theorists argue that schools are part of a large system in which individuals who dedicate themselves to training for these higher-level occupations would receive greater rewards in terms of income and prestige (Davis & Moore, 1945). This functionalist view sees achievement in schools as based on merit, not one’s status. Thus, the function of education is to support capitalism, allowing those with the most “merit” to achieve and fill higher-level positions in society.

Functional theorists today build on the base provided by Durkheim, Parsons, and others. For example, Dreeben (1968) considered the social organization of schools, while others examined the values taught in school and how these lead to greater societal consensus and preparation for one’s role in society.

Social scientists who research and interpret events from the functional perspective see as central the functions of education for society

(Ballantine, 2001, pp. 7–9). The following outlines in more detail the major functions that education serves in societies.

Socialization: Teaching Children to Be Productive Members of Society

Societies use education to pass on essential information of their culture—values, skills, and knowledge necessary for survival. Sometimes this process occurs in formal classrooms, sometimes in informal places. For example, in West African villages children may have several years of formal education in a village school, but they learn rights, wrongs, values, and future roles informally by observing their elders and by “playing” at the tasks they will soon undertake for survival. The girls help pound cassava root for the evening meal while boys build model boats and practice negotiating the waves. Mainly the elite—sons and daughters of the rulers and the wealthy—receive formal education beyond basic literacy in most developing countries (Ballantine & Roberts, 2007).

By contrast, elders and family members in developed societies cannot teach all the skills necessary for survival. Formal schooling emerged to meet the needs of industrial and postindustrial societies, furnishing the specialized training required by rapidly growing and changing technology. Schools also provide the cultural socialization important in heterogeneous societies, where diverse groups must learn rules that maintain social cohesion and order. Children receive socialization messages from teachers, the formal curricula, and the routine practices and rules of everyday classroom life (Brint, Contreras, & Mathews, 2001; also see Gracey in Part III).

School Socialization Enhances Personal and Social Development

Most people remember their first day of elementary school, marking a transition between the warm, loving, accepting world of the family and a more impersonal school world that emphasizes discipline, knowledge, skills, responsibility, and obedience. In school, children learn that they must prove themselves; they are no longer

accepted regardless of their behaviors as they were in their families. They must meet certain expectations and compete for attention and rewards. They also must prepare to participate in their society's political and economic systems, in which a literate populace is necessary to make informed decisions on issues.

Citizens expect schools to respond to the constant changes in societies. In multicultural societies such as Israel, France, and England, school socialization helps to integrate immigrants by teaching them the language and customs and by working to reduce inter-group tensions. The challenge is to provide comparable educational opportunities to all groups.

Selection and Training of Individuals for Positions in Society

Most people have taken standardized tests, received grades at the end of a term or year, and asked teachers to write recommendation letters. Functionalists see these activities as part of the selection process prevalent in competitive societies with formal education systems. Schools distribute credentials—grades, test scores, and degrees—that determine the college or job opportunities available to individuals in society, the fields of study individuals pursue, and ultimately individual status in society. For example, selection criteria determine who gets into the “best” colleges or even into college at all, thereby sealing one’s “place” in society.

Promoting Change and Innovation

Institutions of higher education are expected to generate new knowledge, technology, and ideas, and to produce students with up-to-date skills and information required to lead industry and other key institutions in society. In our age of computers and other electronic technology, critical thinking and analytical skills are essential as workers face issues that require problem solving rather than rote memorization. Thus, the curriculum must change to meet the needs of the social circumstances. Familiarity with technological equipment—computers, Internet resources, electronic library searches, and so forth—becomes

a critical survival skill for individuals and society. Lack of training in these areas fosters further division of social classes and reduces chances for social mobility, yet may also function to fill jobs that require little advanced training and are otherwise unappealing, such as collecting trash.

Consider the example of India, which has top-ranked technical institutes training their graduates to meet changing world needs. The highly skilled graduates are employed by multinational companies around the world, and companies in Europe and the United States send information to India for processing and receive it back the next morning because of the time difference. Well-trained, efficient engineers and computer experts working in India for lower wages than in many developed countries have become an essential part of the global economy (Drori, 2006; Friedman, 2005).

Latent Functions of Education

In addition to these planned, formal functions, students experience latent functions—unintended, unorganized, informal consequences of the educational process. For example, schools keep children off the streets until they can be absorbed into productive roles in society, serving an informal “babysitting” function. Schools also provide young people with a place to congregate, which in turn fosters a “youth culture” of music, fashion, slang, dances, dating, and sometimes gangs. At the ages when social relationships are being established, especially with the opposite sex, and colleges serve as “mating” and “matching” places for young adults, schools are the central meeting place for the young. Education also weakens parental control over youth, helps them begin the move toward independence, and provides experiences in large, impersonal secondary groups (Ballantine & Roberts, 2007).

Functional theorists believe that when the above social functions are not adequately addressed, the educational system is ripe for change. The structure and the processes within the educational institution remain stable only if the basic functions are met.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists challenge the functionalist assumptions that schools are ideologically and politically neutral and that schools operate based upon meritocracy, with each child able to achieve to the highest level of his or her own ability. Conflict theorists argue that inequality is based on one's position in the social system, not merit, and that schooling privileges some children and disadvantages others. There are several branches of conflict theory, which include different explanations of the role education systems play in maintaining inequality. Recent theories integrate ethnicity, race, and gender issues and add politics and culture to the traditional Marxist class and economic issues. In addition, issues of "reproduction and resistance" are recent additions to the conflict perspective. Origins of conflict theory are situated in the writings of Marx (1971) and later Max Weber (1958a, 1958b, 1961).

In contrast to functional theory, conflict theory assumes a tension in society created by the competing interests of individuals and groups. Conflicts occur even when teachers, students, parents, and administrators agree on the rules. Each group obeys the rules even though the rules are not in their best interests because they may not see alternatives or fear the consequences of not obeying. However, conflict theorists disagree on whether participants in the education system always conform or have no choices. The roots of conflict thought are outlined below, and contemporary conflict theory, originating in the 1960s, is discussed.

The foundation for conflict theory begins with Karl Marx (1818–1883); he was outraged over the social conditions of the exploited workers in the class system that resulted from the French Revolution and the growth of capitalism. He contended that the economic structure of capitalism created competing groups, the "haves" and the "have-nots," who lived in a constant state of tension (conflict) over resources that one had and the other wanted. The basis of this struggle is that the "haves" control economic resources and thus have power, wealth, material goods, privilege (including access to the best schools

and education), and influence. The "have-nots" present a constant challenge as they seek a larger share of economic resources for their own survival. According to Marx, the "haves" often use coercive power and manipulation to hold society together. However, power can also be maintained by ideology—controlling ideas, or what people believe to be true. Conflict theorists view change as inevitable, as conflicts of interest should lead to the overthrow of existing power structures. Marx believed that class conflict would continue until the capitalist system of economic dominance was overthrown and replaced by a more equitable system.

Marx argued that schools create and maintain inequality by teaching students an ideology that serves the interests of the rich and instills in students a sense of "false consciousness." That is, students in schools learn to accept the myth of meritocracy, that all have an equal chance of achieving. Those who buy into this ideology and fail often believe that their failure is due to their own shortcomings and lack of ability. Students learn to internalize their own lower position in society and their lowly fate, thus accepting a "false consciousness" and legitimizing the wealth and power of capitalists.

Weber's Contributions to the Sociology of Education

Max Weber (1864–1920) was said to have argued with Marx's ghost because he believed that conflict in society was not based solely in economic relations. He argued that inequalities and potential conflict were sustained in different distributions of status (prestige), power (ability to control others), and class (economic relations). While Weber also felt that conflict was a constant possibility, he focused more on power relationships between groups and differences in status that create a structure of inequality in societies.

Weber provided a less systematic treatment of education than Durkheim. His work in the field of sociology, however, has contributed to our understanding of many aspects of education. He is noted for his contributions to the understanding of bureaucracy and for the concept of *status*

group relationships. In fact, he writes that the primary activity of schools is to teach particular “status cultures.” Power relationships and the conflicting interests of individuals and groups in society influence educational systems, for it is the interests and purposes of the dominant groups in society that shape the schools.

Weber (1961) spoke of the “tyranny of educational credentials” as a prerequisite for high-status positions. This theme is discussed by Randall Collins (1979) [see Reading 4 in this part], another conflict theorist following in Weber’s tradition. Collins focuses on “credentialism,” or the increased requirements for higher-level positions used by more advantaged individuals to further their status (Collins, 1979). The rapid expansion of educational qualifications, faster than the number of jobs, has led to “credential inflation,” yet what the school curriculum teaches is not necessary for most jobs. The result is that the credentials required for jobs keep increasing.

Within the school there are “insiders” whose status culture, Weber believes, is reinforced through the school experience, and “outsiders” who face barriers to success in school. As we apply these ideas to school systems today to explain the situation of poor and minority students, the relevance of Weber’s brand of conflict theory becomes evident. His theory deals with conflict, domination, and status groups struggling for wealth, power, and status in society. Education is used by individuals and society as a means to attain desired ends. Relating this to Karl Marx’s writings on conflict theory, education produces a disciplined labor force for military, political, or other areas of control and exploitation by the elite. Status groups differ in property ownership; cultural status, such as ethnic group membership; and power derived from positions in government or other organizations.

Weber, however, can also be considered a functionalist whose writings, using cross-cultural examples and exploring preindustrial and modern societies, shed light on the role of education in different societies at various time periods (Weber, 1958a). In preindustrial times, education served the primary purpose of a differentiating agency that trained people to fit into

a way of life and a particular “station” in society. With industrialism, however, new pressures faced education from upwardly mobile members of society vying for higher positions in the economic system. Educational institutions became increasingly important in training people for new roles in society.

In his essay “The Rationalization of Education and Training” (Weber, 1958b), Weber points out that rational education develops the “specialist type of man” versus the older type of “cultivated man” described in his discussion of educational systems in early China (Weber, 1958a). Again we see the relevance of Weber’s writings: Today’s institutions of higher education are debating the value of vocationally oriented education versus education for the well-rounded person.

Conflict Theory Today

Marx and Weber set the stage for the many branches of conflict theory advocated by theorists today. Research from the conflict theorists’ perspective tends to focus on those tensions created by power and conflict that ultimately cause change. Some conflict theorists, following from Marx’s emphasis on the economic structure of society, see mass education as a tool of capitalist society, controlling the entrance into higher levels of education through the selection and allocation function and manipulating the public. Marx argued that schools contributed to a “false consciousness,” the equivalent of teaching students that the oppressive conditions that shape their lives cannot be changed and they must simply accept their situations. Many conflict theorists believe that until society’s economic and political systems are changed, school reform providing equal access to all children will be impossible (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Conflict theorists studying education systems point out that differences in the achievement of students are not based on their ability or intelligence; rather, schools reflect the needs of the powerful, dominant groups in society and serve to perpetuate a capitalistic system. Students have different teaching and learning experiences resulting from teacher expectations that affect

their achievement. For instance, teacher expectations may differ for poor students who have more limited language skills or speak with a dialect and lack middle-class dress, appearance, and manners. There is also debate about the role that differential funding of schools and other resources have on achievement of students.

Poor and minority students are more likely to be placed or tracked into lower reading and academic groups, placements which are hard to change. These groups are given different curricula; the higher class students receive more mentally challenging curricula that prepare them to think creatively and make decisions, and lower class students experience less challenging curricula that are slow and more likely to lead students to drop out of school. Thus, students are labeled by teachers and the education system, and in turn define themselves as successful or not. This process serves to reproduce inequalities in society.

Other theorists apply early conflict theory arguments to the school and classroom level of analysis. For example, Willard Waller believes that schools are in a state of constant potential conflict and disequilibrium; teachers are threatened with the loss of their jobs because of lack of student discipline; academic authority is constantly threatened by students, parents, school boards, and alumni who represent other, often competing, interest groups in the system; and students are forced to go to schools, which they may consider oppressive and demeaning (Waller, 1932/1965, pp. 8–9). Although larger conflicts between groups in society may be the basis for these within-school patterns, the focus of some conflict theorists is not on these larger societal reasons.

An excellent example of how more recent theorists have applied the larger societal explanation is seen in Bowles and Gintis's (1976) "correspondence theory," which takes a more macro view of schools, particularly as schools function to reproduce inequality and create class and power differences in societies. They argue that schools reproduce capitalist society through the student selection and allocation processes that create hierarchies within societies, socializing students into these hierarchies of power and

domination, and legitimizing the hierarchies by claiming they are based on merit. Following the assumptions of Marx, they argue that school structure is based on the needs and standards of the dominant capitalist group in society and thus serves the purposes of that group. Students both bring into and take away different cultural competencies. The bottom line is that schools motivate higher class students to achieve and decrease ambitions of others, creating a "false consciousness" (Apple, 1993, 1996).

Reproduction and Resistance Theories

Expanding upon Marx's conceptualization of false consciousness, another branch of conflict theory called *cultural reproduction and resistance theories* argues, very generally, that those who dominate capitalistic systems mold individuals to suit their own purposes. These theorists considered how forms of culture are passed on by families and schools to shape individuals' views of their worlds (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

The concept of *social reproduction* was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Europe to explore the claim that schools actually *increase* inequality in the process of "teaching." During this period when equality was a central interest, the idea that schools might be contributing to societies' inequalities led to studies of the possibility that schools and families were actually perpetuating social class structures. Following from Marx, schools were viewed as part of a *superstructure* along with family, politics, religion, culture, and economy, organized around the interests of the dominant capitalist group. The dominant group needed workers with good work habits, skills, and loyalty to produce products and services needed by capitalists in exchange for their labor. Schools served the needs of the dominant group by teaching students their roles in society and perpetuating the belief that the system was a fair and merit-based way to select workers.

Two concepts are particularly critical in the development of reproduction and resistance

theories. The concept of *cultural capital* was introduced in the 1970s primarily by Pierre Bourdieu, and *social capital* was introduced by James S. Coleman (1988), but with a rich history leading up to his usage of the term. *Social capital* refers to the social resources students bring to their education and future engagement in school or community, resulting in building of networks and relationships they can use as contacts for future opportunities. Ultimately, these networks are connections that make achievement possible and connect individuals to the larger group. Several researchers have applied this concept to the study of students, teachers, and teaching. For instance, connections students make in elite private schools and alumni connections through private schools and colleges enhance future economic capital. Coleman's concept of social capital was used to explain the role of schools in reproducing social class.

Cultural capital refers to cultural practices, including language patterns and experiences such as visits to museums, that provide knowledge of middle- and upper-class culture—the culture of schools. Cultural capital allows students from middle and upper classes to convert home and school advantages to economic advantage (Lareau, 1989). Dominant groups pass on privilege to their children via exposure to the dominant culture so that students with cultural capital know how schools work and what to do to be successful (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). All individuals have cultural capital. The form of cultural capital one has is an indicator of one's status. A child who can speak the teacher's "language" is likely to fare better in school than one who has not been exposed to the cultural capital of the schools and dominant groups in society. Not only do students coming from these homes do better academically and have higher academic qualifications, but this early socialization can lead to later economic capital. This is often an unconscious process, occurring through exposure and contacts with others who value cultural capital. Of course, all students are exposed to cultural capital, yet that of disadvantaged groups does not facilitate school achievement.

Schools reproduce inequality both in the interactions and the structure of education. For example, different curricula in different tracks create a system of educational inequality for students that perpetuates differences in cultural capital. While the assignment of students to learning groups is supposed to be based upon explicit criteria such as test scores or completion of previous work, in actuality cultural capital plays a considerable role in who is assigned to groups. As early as pre-school children experience different expectations from teachers (Lubeck, 1985). As noted earlier, Rist (1977) found that children were assigned to groups in kindergarten based upon dress and speech patterns. Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade (1987) and Lucas (1999) found that family social class background was a strong predictor of the high school "track" in which students were placed. The end result is that students from working class backgrounds learn more basic skills and follow rules because they are "behind" and are expected to cause problems in the classroom. Those from upper classes learn how to make decisions, be creative and autonomous, and prepare for college (Anyon, 1980; Miller, Kohn, & Schooler, 1985). At the college level, students are again tracked into two- or four-year educations with differences in the curriculum, goals for educational outcomes, and economic results for students (Pincus, 1980, 2002).

Teachers also bring varying degrees of cultural capital to schools and classrooms. Some teachers come from working- and middle-class backgrounds and bring that cultural capital to the education system, both in their own training and in how they teach others. However, in some cases, the students they teach may bring a different cultural capital to the classroom, cultural capital that is either higher or lower in the hierarchy of power and wealth. Parents with "higher" cultural capital tend to be more involved in their children's schooling and more able to provide their children with stronger educational experiences and more at ease with the cultural capital of the school (Lareau, 1989 [see also Lareau and Horvat in Part VI]).

Of key importance is the role cultural capital plays in *reproduction* (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) [see Reading 5 in this part]. Access to the dominant class depends on capital gained from cultural, economic, social, and symbolic sources. The bottom line is that students from the dominant class obtain more (and often higher quality) education. This type of analysis can apply to understanding the process of reproduction at the individual student, classroom, school, or system level of analysis.

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The concept of cultural capital has been used in a number of studies of schools and classrooms. Consider McLaren's study (1989) of his experiences as a middle-class white teacher teaching in an inner-city school, facing violence and hostile parents: "His difficulties to communicate and motivate the disadvantaged students from minority groups, public housing, and broken families were due to his dissimilar white, middle class background. . . . This cultural chasm did not occur while he worked in a suburban school at an earlier time" (Madigan, 2002, p. 123).

Another study of social capital shows how resources in the family, community, and school serve as capital assets for improving student academic performance and psychological well-being (Schneider, 2002, p. 548). This study points out that active involvement of parents at home with their children on homework and educational decisions can influence social capital and future opportunities. Consider a study of Mexican-origin high school students, and the student advice networks and friendship networks, especially those of teachers and other school personnel. Whether students were bilingual made a difference in their access to social capital, particularly those networks that connected them to future opportunities (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Resistance theorists go beyond social reproduction theories by arguing that teachers and students are not passive participants in the school process, and that they do not always follow the expectations that result in social reproduction. For example, students may resist their socialization into certain roles in society (Willis, 1979)

just as teachers do not have to accept their role in facilitating reproduction. Teachers may work with all students to give them more equal chances in the system. Teachers can empower students with curricula that are participatory, affective, problem solving, multicultural, democratic, interdisciplinary, and activist (Shor, 1986).

The conflict theory perspectives discussed above imply a volatile system with the ever-present possibility of major disruption because of the unequal distribution of status, cultural capital, economic means, power, and other resources. The approach can be useful in attempting to explain situations of unequal power; however, for the most part, neither conflict theory nor functional theory focuses on the individual, the individual's "definition of the situation," or interactions in the educational system (Ballantine, in press, pp. 11–13).

Feminist Perspectives on Education

Feminist theorists have echoed the need to "hear" other voices in the education system, in particular women's voices, and to pay more attention to the situation of women. Much of the history of social science theory is a history interpreted by men, generally white men in the European tradition. Feminists see the world from a different perspective, one that represents a sometimes forgotten element in past theoretical interpretations of education systems, one in which women were essentially denied education for most of the history of the United States and some other countries (Deem, 1980; Spender, 1987).

While there are many branches of feminist theory, we mention several ideas that influence the understanding of schools. Early writings on gender and schooling expressed the concern that girl students and female teachers faced certain injustices. Different theorists related inequalities faced by women to differential access, different treatment and exploitation, patriarchy, and male dominance. This led to examination of educational policy and how it affected girls, women, and their future opportunities. Thus, as postmodernists were pointing out that certain voices were not being heard, feminists were setting an

agenda for research and writing to expose problems faced by women (Dillabough & Arnot, 2002). Unfortunately, while women have made many gains in educational attainment over the last century, many inequalities remain. As late as 1994, Sadker and Sadker found that girls were treated differently in the classroom—that girls were not called upon as often as boys and essentially not challenged as much as boys in the same classrooms. This discrepancy in classroom “treatment” likely contributes to a disproportionate number of men who go on to higher paying, more prestigious careers as indicated by the lower number of women who pursue mathematics and science degrees [see Reading 33 by Mickelson in Part VI].

Not all feminist scholarship on education focuses on describing gender inequalities. Much of feminist scholarship focuses on the critical perspective at the macro-level with concern about gender issues in educational environments and reproduction of gender inequality in schools. Feminists also link their theory to practice, as is the case with critical theorists, resulting in connections between policy and research. Thus, feminist theory and pedagogy relies on “lived experience.” Unfortunately, early feminist theory did not recognize differences or incorporate the experiences of women of color, women from other cultures, and women from different identities or political persuasions.

More recently feminist theorists are struggling with trying to understand the intersection of different categories of difference and inequality. Students are not treated solely based upon gender, but race/ethnicity, social class background, and other categories of difference and inequality such as sexual orientation intersect to create complex patterns of oppression and suppression not captured by either early feminist theories or other theories discussed in this reading. Research by Grant (2004) finds that teachers use Black girls to run errands in the classroom and, with findings similar to Ferguson (2000), that Black boys are viewed by teachers as “trouble” long before they do anything wrong. Gender alone does not explain fully the experiences of children across categories of difference and inequality.

CONCLUSION

There is a long and broad tradition of social science and sociological theories, beginning with the coining of the word “sociology” by August Comte in 1838. These theories provide a range of explanations that can be used to examine issues and problems in educational systems and better understand the role of teachers and teaching in schools and society. All theories evolve. As described, interaction, functional, and conflict theories have gone through stages that attempted to explain the educational systems of the time and to react to previous theories that were inadequate to explain concerns of the education system. Recent trends see schools as “contested terrain” for determining curricula that meet diverse needs. Race, class, and gender issues have become dominant themes in this recent literature. Sadovnik discusses postmodern theory and trends in the next reading.

In short, different theorists help us to think differently as we attempt to explain why schools work as they do. This broad range of theories presents many alternative ways of thinking about schools and is valuable as policy makers and researchers try to find solutions to the multitude of problems plaguing education today, in both developed and developing countries.

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

ALAN R. SADOVNIK

In recent years, sociologists studying schools have focused on several themes, most related to understanding why groups of students perform so differently in school, resulting in inequality. Sadovnik points to several recent theories that, although grounded in these earlier frameworks, provide important explanations that bridge the gap between macro- and micro-level theories. Here he discusses Bernstein's code theory and Bourdieu's description of cultural capital.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What issue is Bernstein addressing with his "code theory"?
2. What are the main themes of postmodern-critical theory and what problems can it help explain?

3. What do the more recent theoretical explanations contribute to bridging the gap between the micro- and macro-level analyses?
4. As you read other parts of the book, ask how they fit within the theoretical framework presented by Sadovnik.

CODE THEORY: BASIL BERNSTEIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION¹

Code theory is the term used to describe the theoretical and empirical project of British sociologist Basil Bernstein (1924–2000). This perspective is concerned with how the macro-level (social, political, and economic structures and

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institutions) is dialectically related to the way in which people understand systems of meaning (codes). Code theory combines conflict theory with interactionist theory to examine these structures that construct class barriers and support economic and social inequality in society (Rist, 1970). For over three decades, Bernstein was one of the centrally important and controversial sociologists, whose works influenced a generation of sociologists of education and linguists. From his early works on language, communication codes, and schooling to his later works on curriculum and pedagogy (teaching methods), Bernstein attempted to produce a theory of social and educational codes (meaning systems) and their effect on social reproduction. Although structuralist in its approach, Bernstein's sociology drew on the essential theoretical orientations in the field—Durkheim, Weber, Marx, and interactionist theories—and provided the possibility of an important synthesis.

Bernstein's early work on code theory was highly controversial because it discussed social class differences in language that some labeled a deficit theory. Nonetheless, the work raised crucial questions about the relationships among the social division of labor, the family, and the school. He explored how these relationships affected differences in learning among social classes. His later work (1977a) began the difficult project of connecting macropower and class relations to the microeducational processes of the school. Whereas class reproduction theorists such as Bowles and Gintis (1976) [see Reading 5 in this part] offered an overtly deterministic view of schools, viewing education as exclusively influenced by the economy without describing or explaining what goes on in schools, Bernstein's work promised to connect the societal, institutional, interactional, and intrapsychic levels of sociological analysis. In doing so, it synthesized the classical theoretical traditions of the discipline: Marxist, Weberian, and Durkheimian.

The concept of "code" is central to Bernstein's structural sociology. From the outset of its use, the term refers to a "regulative principle which underlies various message systems, especially

curriculum and pedagogy" (Atkinson, 1985, p. 136; 1981). Bernstein's early work on language (1958, 1960, 1961a, 1961b) examined the relationship between public language, authority, and shared meanings (Danzig, 1995, pp. 146–147). By 1962, Bernstein began to develop code theory through the introduction of the concepts of restricted and elaborated codes (1962a, 1962b). In *Class, Codes, and Control*, Volume 1 (1973), Bernstein's sociolinguistic code theory was developed into a social theory examining the relationships between social class, family, and the reproduction of meaning systems.

For Bernstein, there were social class differences in the communication codes of working-class and middle-class children, differences that reflect the class and power relations in the social division of labor, family, and schools. Based upon empirical research, Bernstein distinguished between the restricted code of the working class and the elaborated code of the middle class. Restricted codes are context dependent and particularistic, whereas elaborated codes are context independent and universalistic. For example, when asked to tell a story describing a series of pictures, working-class boys used many pronouns, and their stories could only be understood by looking at the pictures. Middle-class boys, on the other hand, generated descriptions rich in nouns, and their stories could be understood without the benefit of the pictures (Bernstein, 1970).

Although Bernstein's critics (see Danzig, 1995) argued that his sociolinguistic theory represented an example of deficit theory (alleging that he was arguing that working-class language was deficient) Bernstein consistently rejected this interpretation (see Bernstein, 1996, pp. 147–156). Bernstein argued that restricted codes are not deficient, but rather are functionally related to the social division of labor, where context-dependent language is necessary in the context of production. Likewise, the elaborated code of the middle classes represents functional changes necessitated by changes in the division of labor and, as a result, by the middle class's new position in reproduction rather than production. That schools require an elaborated code for success means that

working-class children are disadvantaged by the dominant code of schooling, not deficient. For Bernstein, difference becomes deficit in the context of macro-power relations.

By the third volume of *Class, Codes, and Control* (1977a), Bernstein developed code theory from its sociolinguistic roots to examine the connection between communication codes and curriculum and teaching methods. In this respect, code theory became concerned with the processes of schooling and how they related to social class reproduction. Bernstein's quest for understanding the microprocesses of schooling led him to continue to pursue the fruitful avenue of inquiry developed in his article "Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible" (1977b). In that article, Bernstein analyzed the significant differences between different forms of educational transmission and suggested that social class differences in curriculum and pedagogy are related to inequalities of educational achievement between working-class and middle-class students. Schools that serve middle-class students have different curricula and teaching methods than schools that serve working-class students, and these differences result in educational inequality. The article clearly demonstrated that sociologists of education had to do the difficult empirical work of looking into the world of schools and of linking educational practices to the larger institutional, societal, and historical factors of which they are a part.

Over the past 25 years, Bernstein developed this approach into a systematic analysis of pedagogic discourse and practices. First, he outlined a theory of pedagogic rules that examines the "intrinsic features which constitute and distinguish the specialized form of communication realized by the pedagogic discourse of education" (1990b, p. 165). Second (1990a), he related his theory of pedagogic discourse to a social-class base and applied it to the ongoing development of different educational practices.

In keeping with the Durkheimian roots of his theory, Bernstein's inquiry into the organization (curriculum) and transmission of knowledge (pedagogy) sought to relate changes in schooling

to the evolution of the social division of labor. In "Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible" (1977b), he demonstrated how modern education represents conflicts between the old and new middle classes and provided an illuminating examination of how schooling is structurally related to shifts in social structure. Moreover although Bernstein was not a Marxist, he incorporated class and power relations into an overall structural theory, as he does in all his work.

Bernstein's work on pedagogic practices and discourse was concerned with the production, distribution, and reproduction of official knowledge and how this knowledge is related to structurally determined power relations. What is critical is that Bernstein was concerned with more than the description of the production and transmission of knowledge; he is concerned with its consequences for different groups. Once again, Bernstein returned to the manner in which social class and power relations affect pedagogic practice. Through a careful and logical consideration of the inner workings of the dominant forms of educational practice, Bernstein contributed to a greater understanding of how the schools (especially in the United Kingdom and United States) reproduce what they are ideologically committed to eradicating—social-class advantages in schooling and society. Bernstein's analysis of the social-class assumptions of pedagogic practice is the foundation for linking microeducational processes to the macrosociological levels of social structure and class and power relations.

From his early work on code theory to the later works on pedagogic discourse (1990b) and pedagogic practices (1990a), Bernstein's project sought to link microprocesses (language, transmission, and pedagogy) to macroforms. That is, he sought to understand how cultural and educational codes and the content and process of education are related to social class and power relations.

Bernstein's project, then, from his early work on language, to the development of code theory, to the work on curriculum and pedagogic practice, was to develop a systematic structuralist theory that provides an analytic description of the way in which the educational system is related to

the social division of labor. Because his work deals with so many of the themes central to the development of sociological theory, he is often portrayed as a neo-Marxist, a functionalist, a Weberian conflict theorist, or an interactionist. Taken as a whole, however, code theory has at its core the goal of his entire project: to develop a Durkheimian structuralist theory that analyzes the way in which changes in the division of labor create different meaning systems and codes, that provides analytic classifications of these systems, and that incorporates a conflict model of unequal power relations into its structural approach.

Despite the criticisms that Bernstein's work is sometimes complex and difficult, it is undeniable that it represents one of the most sustained and powerful attempts to investigate significant issues in the sociology of education. Over 35 years ago, Bernstein began with a simple but overwhelming issue: how to find ways to "prevent the wastage of working-class educational potential" (1961a, p. 308). Taken as a whole, Bernstein's work provided a systematic analysis of the relationship between society, schools, and the individual and of how schooling systematically reproduces social inequality.

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PIERRE BOURDIEU

Like Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu (1931–2002) (Bourdieu, 1973, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) attempted to test empirically a theory of society, culture, and education that synthesizes Durkheim and Marx (Swartz, 1997). As the director of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne in Paris, Bourdieu and his research colleagues provided a theoretical and empirical understanding of culture and stratification. As Collins (Collins & Makowsky, 1993, p. 259) notes, for Bourdieu "culture itself, is an economy. . . . Stratification in the cultural economy and in the material economy are reciprocally related. For Bourdieu, culture is a realm of power

struggle, related to the struggle over the means of violence that characterizes the realm of politics."

Thus, Bourdieu's central concepts of cultural capital and symbolic violence, which were developed in Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (1977), are used to understand how schooling is part of a symbolic process of cultural and social reproduction. Symbolic violence is "power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force" (Collins & Makowsky, p. 259). This type of power is found not only in schooling but in other educational realms, including such arenas as child-rearing, museums, musical and artistic institutions. Although schools appear to be neutral, they actually advantage the upper and middle-classes through their symbolic representations. These classes possess cultural capital, or symbolic representations of cultural domination, such as language, ideas, and knowledge of music, art, and literature, all of which have important exchange value in the educational and cultural marketplace. Therefore, while all children possess cultural capital, some are advantaged by possessing the cultural capital represented in schools. Drawing upon the functionalism in the sociology of Durkheim and the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, Bourdieu, like Bernstein, provided more of a conflict, neo-Marxist dimension that demonstrates that cultural capital reproduces social classes and that schooling reproduces cultural capital unevenly among social classes. Schooling corresponds to the dominant interests of society; as a result, upper- and middle-class forms of cultural capital become codified in the school's curriculum. Unlike functionalists, Bourdieu and Bernstein did not view these patterns as leading to social cohesion and agreement but rather to class domination.

Bourdieu was not without his critics. According to Collins (1971; Collins & Makowsky, 1993, p. 264), "Bourdieu's theory is completely closed. It is totally cynical, totally pessimistic. We are eternally doomed to stratification. . . . We cannot get outside our skins; we can only change places inside an iron circle."

This view, as Collins suggests, fails to point out the intense organizational and societal conflicts that often result in some reshaping of social stratification (p. 265). Nevertheless, Collins and Makowsky (1993) include Bourdieu as among the most influential European sociologists of the late 20th century.

POSTMODERN-CRITICAL THEORY²

Postmodernism developed out of a profound dissatisfaction with the modernist project of enlightenment and reason. Beginning with the poststructural writings of Jacques Derrida (1973, 1981, 1982) and Jean Baudrillard (1981, 1984), social theorists, particularly in France, questioned the appropriateness of modernist categories for understanding what they saw as a postmodern world, a world that transcended the economic and social relations of the industrial world that modernist thought had sought to understand. In particular, the work of Jean Francois Lyotard (1984) rejected the Marxist perspective and the rational Enlightenment and modernist assumptions underlying Marxist theory and sought to create a different theory for the late 20th century.

It is important to begin by defining modernist social theory. In both sociology and philosophy, modernist theory traces its intellectual heritage to the Enlightenment. From the classical sociological theory of Marx (1971), Marx and Engels (1947), Weber (1978), and Durkheim (1893/1947, 1938/1977), to the pragmatist philosophy of Dewey (1916, 1927/1984), and to the social theory of Jürgen Habermas (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1987), what is usually referred to as modernist theories had a number of things in common. First, they believed in progress through science and technology, even if they were skeptical of positivist social science. Second, they emphasized the Enlightenment belief in reason. And third, they stressed Enlightenment principles such as equality, liberty, and justice.

Postmodernist thought consists of many inter-related themes. First, postmodernism insists on what Lyotard (1984) has labeled the rejection of

all metanarratives. By this, Lyotard meant that modernist preoccupation with grand, total, or all-encompassing explanations of the world need to be replaced by localized and particular theories. Second, postmodernism stresses the necessary connection between theory and practice as a corrective to the separation of them in much modernist thought. Third, postmodernism stresses the democratic response to authoritarianism and totalitarianism. In particular, Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), Giroux (1991), and McLaren and Hammer (1989) call for a democratic, emancipatory, and antitotalitarian theory and practice, with schools seen as sites for democratic transformation. Fourth, postmodernism sees modernist thought as Eurocentric and patriarchal. Giroux (1991), Lather (1989), Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989), and others provide an important critique of the racism and sexism in some modernist writings and of the failure of modernism to address the interests of women and people of color. Fifth, postmodernist theorists believe that all social and political discourses are related to structures of power and domination. Sixth, postmodernism stresses what Burbules and Rice (1991) term “dialogue across differences.” Recognizing the particular and local nature of knowledge, postmodern theorists call for the attempt to work through differences rather than to see them as hopelessly irreconcilable. Thus, postmodern theories of education call for teachers and students to explore the differences between what may seem like inherently contradictory positions in an effort to achieve understanding, respect, and change.

Although much of postmodern theory developed as a critical theory of society and a critique of modernism, it quickly became incorporated into radical writings on education that are often called critical theory. Critical educational theory, which over the past two decades has involved an interdisciplinary mixture of social theory, sociology, and philosophy, has been profoundly affected by postmodernist thought. In particular, by the 1980s critical theories of education, which from the late 1970s attempted to provide an antidote to the over-determinism of Bowles and Gintis (1976), regularly incorporated postmodern

language and concerns. There have been numerous postmodern theories of education or applications of postmodernism to education, which will be referred to as postmodern-critical theory.

Postmodern-critical theories of education often draw heavily on the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1972, 1985, 1987), whose influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) became the foundation for critical educational theory in the United States (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Postmodern-critical theories of education are similar to neo-Marxist theory with respect to curriculum and pedagogy. A school of thought called critical pedagogy (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, ch. 1) stresses the classroom as a site for political action and teachers as agents of change.

Of all the postmodern-critical theorists in the United States, Giroux's work represents the most sustained effort to develop a postmodern theory of education and to connect it to previous radical theories, including those of neo-Marxism, postmodern-critical theory, and resistance theory (which argues that working-class and minority students resist the middle-class values of schooling). Giroux (1991, pp. 47–59) outlines principles of critical pedagogy, which he states are based on the insights of modernism, postmodernism, and feminism. Thus, he provides a synthesis of three of the important theoretical systems in the 20th century and from these he develops a critical pedagogy, the function of which is to transform teachers, schools, and ultimately society.

First, Giroux argues that education must be seen not only as producing knowledge, but political subjects as well (1991, p. 47). Thus, schooling must be linked to a critical pedagogy aimed at the development of democratic education. Second, Giroux indicates that ethics need to be a central concern of postmodern theories of education and critical pedagogy. Third, critical pedagogy should focus on postmodern concerns with difference and should do so in a politically transformative manner. According to Giroux, students need to understand the social construction of different voices and identities, how they are related to historical and social forces, and how they can be used as the basis for change. Incorporating different voices into the curriculum and the

subsequent student reflection upon these voices need to be connected to the conception of a democratic community. Fourth, the concern for difference needs to be translated into a critical language that allows for competing discourses and rejects any master narratives or curriculum canons. Fifth, critical pedagogy needs to create new forms of knowledge out of analysis of competing discourses and from voices historically absent from traditional canons and narratives. Thus, pedagogic practice is seen as a political activity, with curriculum development no longer viewed as a technocratic exercise concerned with educational goals and objectives but rather with providing students with new forms of knowledge rooted in a pluralistic and democratic vision of society.

Giroux continues to build upon his earlier work; in his sixth argument he suggests that a postmodern-critical pedagogy must provide a sense of alternatives through a "language of critique and possibility" (1991, p. 52). Critical pedagogy as critique of what exists and a development of what is possible is central to a project of social transformation. Seventh, critical pedagogy must be related to a view of teachers as transformative intellectuals. In his work on postmodernism, Giroux develops a theme central to his earlier work and connects it to a view of democratic public life. Giroux calls for teachers to be involved not only within schools but to connect their voices to democratic politics in their communities and within society in general. Critical pedagogy needs to engage students and teachers in the systematic discovery of alternatives to institutional racism, classism, and sexism through the inclusion of the voices of marginalized groups. Such an enterprise should not be, Giroux warns, merely exercises in giving voice to the voiceless; it needs to connect their voices to political strategies aimed at social change.

Sadovnik (1995b) points out a number of problems with postmodern-critical theories of education. First, postmodern theories of education often are written in a language that is difficult to understand. While this is problematic for all academic work, it is more so for a theory that purports to provide an agenda for critique and change in the school. Second, they usually

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eschew empirical methods to study schools. As a result, they are sometimes long on assertion and short on evidence. Finally, and most importantly, postmodernist theories of education often fail to connect theory to practice in a way that practitioners find meaningful and useful. Although this does not suggest that postmodernists write exclusively for practitioners, if one of the stated aims of theorists such as Giroux is to develop teachers as transformative intellectuals and to provide a critical pedagogy for school transformation, then the problem of language is of central importance. How can we have dialogues across difference if teachers are excluded from the dialogue?

What separates postmodern-critical theory from the rest of the sociology of education is the absence of empirical evidence. Although many of the sociological perspectives discussed in this reading are conceptual and theoretical, theory is the foundation for empirical research. For example, functionalist theory resulted in a rich empirical research project on the relationship between education, achievement, and mobility. Conflict theory resulted in a rich array of comparative, historical, and empirical research on the relationship between education and social reproduction, between educational expansion and labor market requirements, and on the beliefs in citizenship. Interactionist theory resulted in a rich variety of qualitative, ethnographic studies of schools and classroom practices, describing how school processes related to social stratification.

Postmodern-critical theory does not provide sufficient empirical research to test its often tautological propositions. Therefore, although it represents an important social theory, it fails to live up to the promise of sociology: to develop a scientific, empirically tested set of propositions about how the social world works.

CONCLUSION

The sociology of education originated in the concerns of classical sociology in the 19th and

early 20th centuries. It came of age in the 1960s onward and concentrated on the significant questions regarding meritocracy and equality. Contemporary theories in the sociology of education have attempted to synthesize the major theories in the field, functionalism, conflict theory and interactionism, and have provided a rich theoretical foundation for empirical work. At the same time, the concern with educational inequalities has resulted in a preoccupation with empirical, mostly quantitative investigations of school effects. Using large data sets such as High School and Beyond and the National Education Longitudinal Study, these investigations have focused on school processes such as tracking and their effects. Although these studies have provided important findings on educational outcomes and the independent effects of schooling, family and other student background characteristics, they have often lacked theoretical sophistication. As a response to this, postmodern-critical theory emerged, but it lacked sufficient empirical evidence to support its claims.

As we enter the 21st century, the sociology of education is at a crossroads. The 20th century represented the attempt to refine and empirically test the theoretical insights of the classical sociology of the 19th century. Postmodern-critical theorists provided a radical critique of what they saw as the overly scientific, quantitative nature of much of the research in the sociology of education, but they have gone too far. In the coming years, sociologists of education need to combine varied research methodologies, quantitative and qualitative, to examine the most important question common to functionalist and conflict theory: to understand why students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do less well in school and to provide pragmatic policy recommendations for successful school reform. Although sociological theory in the sociology of education will continue to be an important part of this project, the separation of theory, research, and practice needs to be diminished.

ENDNOTES

1. This section is adapted from "Basil Bernstein's theory of pedagogic practice: A structuralist approach," by A. R. Sadovnik, January 1991, *Sociology of Education*, 64(1), pp. 48–63. Reprinted by permission of The American Sociological Association.
2. This section is adapted from Sadovnik (1995b).

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3

MORAL EDUCATION

EMILE DURKHEIM

Early functionalist Emile Durkheim was an educator and sociologist. As such he wrote extensively on the functions of education in society, including the function of discipline for socializing the child to be a good citizen. In this reading, Durkheim provides insights into the education system, insights that guided later generations of theorists. First, he points to what he considers inevitable inequalities in educational outcomes as children come into the system from different backgrounds and exit with preparation for specialized positions in society. However, all children must learn a common base of knowledge to provide a common foundation that holds people together in society. Durkheim argues that leaders in each society have an idea of what skills and knowledge people need to develop, and education's responsibility is to help the child understand the importance of collective life. Durkheim also discusses the importance of rules, or discipline, in classrooms. If it is lacking, the class is like a "mob" of agitated students. Families

are less disciplined by nature, but schools mirror adult society and prepare the young for their parts in society.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the role of discipline in schools, according to Durkheim? Does discipline serve the same function today? Explain.
2. How can schools instill discipline? Give an example.
3. What does Durkheim mean when he says we must develop the "habit" of self-control and constraint? Give an example.
4. In what ways does Durkheim lay the groundwork for the sociological approach to education used in other selections?

There is a whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the child's conduct. He must come to class regularly, he must arrive at a specified time and with an appropriate bearing and attitude. He must not disrupt things in class.

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He must have learned his lessons, done his homework, and have done so reasonably well, etc. There are, therefore, a host of obligations that the child is required to shoulder. Together they constitute the discipline of the school. It is through the practice of school discipline that we can inculcate the spirit of discipline in the child.

Too often, it is true, people conceive of school discipline so as to preclude endowing it with such an important moral function. Some see in it a simple way of guaranteeing superficial peace and order in the class. Under such conditions, one can quite reasonably come to view these imperative requirements as barbarous—as a tyranny of complicated rules. We protest against this kind of regulation, which is apparently imposed on the child for the sole purpose of easing the teacher's task in inducing uniformity. Does not such a system evoke feelings of hostility in the student toward the teacher, rather than the affectionate confidence that should characterize their relationship?

In reality, however, the nature and function of school discipline is something altogether different. It is not a simple device for securing superficial peace in the classroom—a device allowing the work to roll on tranquilly. It is the morality of the classroom, just as the discipline of the social body is morality properly speaking. Each social group, each type of society, has and could not fail to have its own morality, which expresses its own make-up.

Now, the class is a small society. It is therefore both natural and necessary that it have its own morality corresponding to its size, the character of its elements, and its function. Discipline is this morality. The obligations we shall presently enumerate are the student's duties, just as the civic or professional obligations imposed by state or corporation are the duties of the adult. On the other hand, the schoolroom society is much closer to the society of adults than it is to that of the family. For aside from the fact that it is larger, the individuals—teachers and students—who make it up are not brought together by personal feelings or preferences but for altogether general and abstract reasons, that is to say, because of the social function to be performed by the teacher, and the immature mental condition of the students. For all these reasons, the rule of

the classroom cannot bend or give with the same flexibility as that of the family in all kinds and combinations of circumstances. It cannot accommodate itself to given temperaments. There is already something colder and more impersonal about the obligations imposed by the school: They are now concerned with reason and less with feelings; they require more effort and greater application. And although—as we have previously said—we must guard against overdoing it, it is nevertheless indispensable in order that school discipline be everything that it should be and fulfill its function completely. For only on this condition will it be able to serve as intermediary between the affective morality of the family and the more rigorous morality of civil life. It is by respecting the school rules that the child learns to respect rules in general, that he develops the habit of self-control and restraint simply because he should control and restrain himself. It is a first initiation into the austerity of duty. Serious life has now begun.

This, then, is the true function of discipline. It is not a simple procedure aimed at making the child work, stimulating his desire for instruction, or husbanding the energies of the teacher. It is essentially an instrument—difficult to duplicate—of moral education. The teacher to whom it is entrusted cannot guard it too conscientiously. It is not only a matter of his own interest and peace of mind; one can say without exaggeration that the morality of the classroom rests upon his resolution. Indeed, it is certain that an undisciplined class lacks morality. When children no longer feel restrained, they are in a state of ferment that makes them impatient of all curbs, and their behavior shows it—even outside the classroom. One can see analogous situations in the family when domestic education is overly relaxed. In school, this unwholesome ferment of excitement, the result of a failure of discipline, constitutes a more serious moral danger because the agitation is collective. We must never lose sight of the fact that the class is a small society. Thus, no member of this small group acts as though he were alone; each is subject to the influence of the group, and this we must consider most carefully.

A class without discipline is like a mob. Because a given number of children are brought together in the same class, there is a kind of general stimulation deriving from the common life and imparted to all the individual activities—a stimulation that, when everything goes along normally and is well directed, emerges as more enthusiasm, more concern about doing things well than if each student were working individually. But if the teacher has not developed the necessary authority, then this hyperactivity degenerates into an unwholesome ferment, and a genuine demoralization sets in, the more serious as the class is larger. This demoralization becomes obvious in that those elements of least moral value in the class come to have a preponderant place in the common life; just as in political societies during periods of great flux, one sees hosts of harmful elements come to the surface of public life, while in normal times they would be hidden in the shadows.

It is important, therefore, to react against the discredit into which, for a number of years, discipline has tended to fall. Doubtless when one examines the rules of conduct that the teacher must enforce, in themselves and in detail, one is inclined to judge them as useless vexations; and the benevolent feelings, which childhood quite naturally inspires in us, prompt us to feel that they are excessively demanding. Is it not possible for a child to be good and yet fail to be punctual, to be unprepared at the specified time for his lesson or other responsibilities, etc.? If, however, instead of examining these school rules in detail, we consider them as a whole, as the student's code of duty, the matter takes on a different aspect. Then conscientiousness in fulfilling all these petty obligations appears as a virtue. It is the virtue of childhood, the only one in accord with the kind of life the child leads at that age, and consequently the only one that can be asked of him. This is why one cannot cultivate it too conscientiously. . . .

GENERAL INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

To understand clearly the important role that the school environment can and should play in moral

education, we must first realize what the child faces when he comes to school. Up to that point he has only been acquainted with two kinds of groups. In the family the sentiment of solidarity is derived from blood relationships; and the moral bonds that result from such relationships are further re-enforced by intimate and constant contact of all the associated minds and by a mutual interpenetration of their lives. Then there are little groups of friends and companions—groups that have taken shape outside the family through free selection. Now, political society presents neither of these two characteristics. The bonds uniting the citizens of a given country have nothing to do with relationships or personal inclinations. There is therefore a great distance between the moral state in which the child finds himself as he leaves the family and the one towards which he must strive. This road cannot be travelled in a single stage. Intermediaries are necessary. The school environment is the most desirable. It is a more extensive association than the family or the little societies of friends. It results neither from blood relationships nor from free choice, but from a fortuitous and inevitable meeting among subjects brought together on the basis of similar age and social conditions. In that respect it resembles political society. On the other hand, it is limited enough so that personal relations can crystallize. The horizon is not too vast; the consciousness of the child can easily embrace it. The habit of common life in the class and attachment to the class and even to the school constitute an altogether natural preparation for the more elevated sentiments that we wish to develop in the child. We have here a precious instrument, which is used all too little and which can be of the greatest service.

It is the more natural to use the school to this end since it is precisely groups of young persons, more or less like those constituting the social system of the school, which have enabled the formation of societies larger than the family. With respect to animals, Espinas has already demonstrated that groupings of birds and mammals could not have taken shape if, at a certain moment in their lives, the young had not been induced to separate from their parents and formed

societies of a new type, which no longer have domestic characteristics. Indeed, wherever the family keeps its members to itself it is easily self-sufficient; each particular family tends to live its own life, an autonomous life—tends to isolate itself from other families so as to provide more easily for itself; under these conditions, it is clearly impossible for another society to be formed. The small group appears only where the new generation, once it has been brought up, is induced to free itself from the family setting to lead a collective life of a new sort. Similarly, if, from the very beginning, inferior human societies are not limited to one household, if they comprise even in their humblest form a number of families, it is largely because the moral education of children is not undertaken by their parents, but by the elders of the clan. The elders would assemble the young, after they had reached a given age, to initiate them collectively into the religious beliefs, rites, traditions—in a word, to everything constituting the intellectual and moral patrimony of the group. Because of this gathering of the young into special groups, determined by age and not by blood, extrafamilial societies have been able to come into being and perpetuate themselves. The school is precisely a group of this kind; it is recruited according to the same principle. The gatherings of young neophytes, directed and taught by the elders, which we can observe in primitive societies, are already actual school societies and may be considered as the first form of the school. In asking the school to prepare children for a higher social life than that of the family, we are only asking something that is quite in accord with its character.

Furthermore, if there is a country in which the role of the school is particularly important and necessary, it is ours [France]. In this respect, we are living under quite special conditions. Indeed, with the exception of the school, there is no longer in this country any society intermediate between the family and the state—that is to say, a society that is not merely artificial or superficial. All the groups of this kind, which at one time ranged between domestic and political society—provinces, communes, guilds—have

been totally abolished or at least survive only in very attenuated form. The province and the guild are only memories; communal life is very impoverished and now holds a very secondary place in our consciousness. . . .

For morality to have a sound basis, the citizen must have an inclination toward collective life. It is only on this condition that he can become attached, as he should, to collective aims that are moral aims par excellence. This does not happen automatically; above all, this inclination toward collective life can only become strong enough to shape behavior by the most continuous practice. To appreciate social life to the point where one cannot do without it, one must have developed the habit of acting and thinking in common. We must learn to cherish these social bonds that for the unsocial being are heavy chains. We must learn through experience how cold and pale the pleasures of solitary life are in comparison. The development of such a temperament, such a mental outlook, can only be formed through repeated practice, through perpetual conditioning. If, on the contrary, we are invited only infrequently to act like social beings, it is impossible to be very interested in an existence to which we can only adapt ourselves imperfectly.

If, then, with the exception of the family, there is no collective life in which we participate, if in all the forms of human activity—scientific, artistic, professional, and so on—in other words, in all that constitutes the core of our existence, we are in the habit of acting like lone wolves, our social temperament has only rare opportunities to strengthen and develop itself. Consequently, we are inevitably inclined to a more or less suspicious isolation, at least in regard to everything concerning life outside the family. Indeed, the weakness of the spirit of association is one of the characteristics of our national temperament. We have a marked inclination toward a fierce individualism, which makes the obligations of social life appear intolerable to us and which prevents us from experiencing its joys.

The school is a real group, of which the child is naturally and necessarily a part. It is a group other than the family. Its principal function is not,

as in the case of the family, that of emotional release and the sharing of affections. Every form of intellectual activity finds scope in it, in embryonic form. Consequently, we have through the school the means of training the child in a collective life different from home life. We can give him habits that, once developed, will survive beyond school years and demand the satisfaction that is their due. We have here a unique and irreplaceable opportunity to take hold of the child at a time when the gaps in our social organization have not yet been able to alter his nature profoundly, or to arouse in him feelings that make him partially rebellious to common life. This is virgin territory in which we can sow seeds that, once taken root, will grow by themselves. Of course, I do not mean that education alone can remedy the evil—that institutions are not necessarily demanding legislative action. But that action can only be fruitful if it is rooted in a state of opinion, if it is an answer to needs that are really felt. Thus, although we could not at any time do without the school to instill in the child a social sense, although we have here a natural function from which the school should never withdraw, today, because of the critical situation in which we find ourselves, the services that the school can render are of incomparable importance. . . .

To bind the child to the social group of which he is a part, it is not enough to make him feel the reality of it. He must be attached to it with his whole being. There is only one effective way of doing this, and that is by making his society an integral part of him, so that he can no more separate himself from it than from himself. Society is not the work of the individuals that compose it at a given stage of history, nor is it a given place. It is a complex of ideas and sentiments, of ways of seeing and of feeling, a certain intellectual and

moral framework distinctive of the entire group. Society is above all a consciousness of the whole. It is, therefore, this collective consciousness that we must instill in the child.

Of course, this penetration of the child's consciousness is effected in part by the mere fact of living, by the autonomous play of human relations. These ideas and sentiments are all around the child, and he is immersed in them by living. But there is another operation much too important to leave to chance. It is the business of the school to organize it methodically. An enlightened mind must select from among the welter of confused and often contradictory states of mind that constitute the social consciousness; it must set off what is essential and vital; and play down the trivial and the secondary. The teacher must bring this about and here again history will furnish him the means to this end.

The point is that to imbue children with the collective spirit it is useless to analyze it abstractly. On the contrary, they must be put in direct contact with this collective spirit. Now, what is the history of a people if not the genius of that people developing through time? By making the history of their country come alive for the children, we can at the same time make them live in close intimacy with the collective consciousness. Is it not through intimate and prolonged contact with a man that we finally get to know him? In this respect, a history lesson is the lesson of experience. But since our national character is immanent in historical events, the child would neither see nor feel them if the teacher did not try to set them off in bold relief, especially highlighting those events that merit it. Once again, the point is not to give a course on the French character. All that is needed is a knowledge of what it is and how to disentangle it from the welter of facts.

4

CONFLICT THEORY OF EDUCATIONAL STRATIFICATION

RANDALL COLLINS

Education prepares students for their position and roles in society. Randall Collins relates education to occupations by using conflict theory. In the excerpt that follows, he uses Max Weber's concept of status groups to point out that schools prepare the young to fit an occupational position commensurate with their status in society. The type of education students receive seals their future status because their education is viewed as appropriate preparation for future jobs.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What role does education play in preparation for membership in a status group?
2. According to conflict theory as presented in both Sadochnik's and Collins's readings, how are education and occupation related?
3. What is the role of conflict in Collins's theory?

The conditions under which educational requirements will be set and changed may be stated more generally, on the basis of a conflict theory of stratification derived from Weber (1968, pp. 926–939; see also R. Collins, 1968), and from advances in modern organization theory fitting the spirit of this approach.

STATUS GROUPS

The basic units of society are associational groups sharing common cultures (or “subcultures”). The core of such groups is families and friends, but they may be extended to religious, educational, or ethnic communities. In general, they comprise all persons who share a sense of status equality based on participation in a common culture: styles of language, tastes in clothing and decor, manners and other ritual observances, conversational topics and styles, opinions and values, and preferences in sports,

arts, and media. Participation in such cultural groups gives individuals their fundamental sense of identity, especially in contrast with members of other associational groups in whose everyday culture they cannot participate comfortably. Subjectively, status groups distinguish themselves from others in terms of categories of moral evaluation such as "honor," "taste," "breeding," "respectability," "propriety," "cultivation," "good fellows," "plain folks," etc. Thus the exclusion of persons who lack the ingroup culture is felt to be normatively legitimated.

There is no a priori determination of the number of status groups in a particular society, nor can the degree to which there is consensus on a rank order among them be stated in advance. These are not matters of definition, but empirical variations, the causes of which are subjects of other developments of the conflict theory of stratification. Status groups should be regarded as ideal types, without implication of necessarily distinct boundaries; the concepts remain useful even in the case where associational groupings and their status cultures are fluid and overlapping, as hypotheses about the conflicts among status groups may remain fruitful even under these circumstances.

Status groups may be derived from a number of sources. Weber outlines three: (a) differences in life style based on economic situation (i.e., class); (b) differences in life situation based on power position; (c) differences in life situation deriving directly from cultural conditions or institutions, such as geographical origin, ethnicity, religion, education, or intellectual or aesthetic cultures.

STRUGGLE FOR ADVANTAGE

There is a continual struggle in society for various "goods"—wealth, power, or prestige. We need make no assumption that every individual is motivated to maximize his rewards; however, since power and prestige are inherently scarce commodities, and wealth is often contingent upon them, the ambition of even a small proportion of persons for more than equal shares of these goods sets up an implicit counter-struggle

on the part of others to avoid subjection and disesteem. Individuals may struggle with each other, but since individual identity is derived primarily from membership in a status group, and because the cohesion of status groups is a key resource in the struggle against others, the primary focus of struggle is between status groups rather than within them.

The struggle for wealth, power, and prestige is carried out primarily through organizations. There have been struggles throughout history among organizations controlled by different status groups, for military conquest, business advantage, or cultural (e.g., religious) hegemony, and intricate sorts of interorganizational alliances are possible. In the more complex societies, struggle between status groups is carried on in large part within organizations, as the status groups controlling an organization coerce, hire, or culturally manipulate others to carry out their wishes (as in, respectively, a conscript army, a business, or a church). Organizational research shows that the success of organizational elites in controlling their subordinates is quite variable. Under particular conditions, lower or middle members have considerable de facto power to avoid compliance, and even to change the course of the organizations (see Etzioni, 1961).

This opposing power from below is strengthened when subordinate members constitute a cohesive status group of their own; it is weakened when subordinates acquiesce in the values of the organization elite. Coincidence of ethnic and class boundaries produces the sharpest cultural distinctions. Thus, Catholics of immigrant origins have been the bulwarks of informal norms restricting work output in American firms run by WASPs, whereas Protestants of native rural backgrounds are the main "rate-busters" (O. Collins, Dalton, & Roy, 1946). Selection and manipulation of members in terms of status groups is thus a key weapon in intraorganizational struggles. In general, the organization elite selects its new members and key assistants from its own status group and makes an effort to secure lower-level employees who are at least indoctrinated to respect the cultural superiority of their status culture.

Once groups of employees of different status groups are formed at various positions (middle, lower, or laterally differentiated) in the organization, each of these groups may be expected to launch efforts to recruit more members of their own status group. This process is illustrated by conflicts among whites and blacks, Protestants and Catholics and Jews, Yankee, Irish and Italian, etc., found in American occupational life (Dalton, 1951; Hughes, 1949). These conflicts are based on ethnically or religiously founded status cultures; their intensity rises and falls with processes increasing or decreasing the cultural distinctiveness of these groups, and with the succession of advantages and disadvantages set by previous outcomes of these struggles which determine the organizational resources available for further struggle. Parallel processes of cultural conflict may be based on distinctive class as well as ethnic cultures.

EDUCATION AS STATUS CULTURE

The main activity of schools is to teach particular status cultures, both in and outside the classroom. In this light, any failure of schools to impart technical knowledge (although it may also be successful in this) is not important; schools primarily teach vocabulary and inflection, styles of dress, aesthetic tastes, values and manners. The emphasis on sociability and athletics found in many schools is not extraneous but may be at the core of the status culture propagated by the schools. Where schools have a more academic or vocational emphasis, this emphasis may itself be the content of a particular status culture, providing sets of values, materials for conversation, and shared activities for an associational group making claims to a particular basis for status.

Insofar as a particular status group controls education, it may use it to foster control within work organizations. Educational requirements for employment can serve both to select new members for elite positions who share the elite culture and, at a lower level of education, to hire lower and middle employees who have acquired a general respect for these elite values and styles.

Tests of the Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification

The conflict theory in its general form is supported by evidence (1) that there are distinctions among status group cultures—based on both class and ethnicity—in modern societies (Kahl, 1957, pp. 127–156, 184–220); (2) that status groups tend to occupy different occupational positions within organizations (see data on ascription cited above); and (3) that occupants of different organizational positions struggle over power (Crozier, 1964; Dalton, 1959). The more specific tests called for here, however, are of the adequacy of conflict theory to explain the link between education and occupational stratification. Such tests may focus either on the proposed mechanism of occupational placement, or on the conditions for strong or weak links between education and occupation.

Education as a Mechanism of Occupational Placement

The mechanism proposed is that employers use education to select persons who have been socialized into the dominant status culture: for entrants to their own managerial ranks, into elite culture; for lower-level employees, into an attitude of respect for the dominant culture and the elite which carries it. This requires evidence that: (a) schools provide either training for the elite culture, or respect for it; and (b) employers use education as a means of selection for cultural attributes.

Historical and descriptive studies of schools support the generalization that they are places where particular status cultures are acquired, either from the teachers, from other students, or both. Schools are usually founded by powerful or autonomous status groups, either to provide an exclusive education for their own children, or to propagate respect for their cultural values. Until recently most schools were founded by religions, often in opposition to those founded by rival religions; throughout the 19th century, this rivalry was an important basis for the founding of large numbers of colleges in the U.S., and of the

Catholic and Lutheran school systems. The public school system in the U.S. was founded mainly under the impetus of WASP elites with the purpose of teaching respect for Protestant and middle-class standards of cultural and religious propriety, especially in the face of Catholic, working-class immigration from Europe (Cremin, 1961; Curti, 1935). The content of public school education has consisted especially of middle-class, WASP culture (Becker, 1961; Hess & Torney, 1967; Waller, 1932, pp. 15–131).

At the elite level, private secondary schools for children of the WASP upper class were founded from the 1880s, when the mass indoctrination function of the growing public schools made them unsuitable as means of maintaining cohesion of the elite culture itself (Baltzell, 1958, pp. 327–372). These elite schools produce a distinctive personality type, characterized by adherence to a distinctive set of upper-class values and manners (McArthur, 1955). The cultural role of schools has been more closely studied in Britain (Bernstein, 1961; Weinberg, 1967) and in France (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964), although Riesman and his colleagues (Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Riesman, 1958) have shown some of the cultural differences among prestige levels of colleges and universities in the United States.

Evidence that education has been used as a means of cultural selection may be found in several sources. Hollingshead's (1949, pp. 360–388) study of Elmtown school children, school dropouts, and community attitudes toward them suggests that employers use education as a means of selecting employees with middle-class attributes. A 1945–1946 survey of 240 employers in New Haven and Charlotte, N.C., indicated that they regarded education as a screening device for employees with desirable (middle-class) character and demeanor; white-collar positions particularly emphasized educational selection because these employees were considered most visible to outsiders (Noland & Bakke, 1949, pp. 20–63).

A survey of employers in nationally prominent corporations indicated that they regarded college degrees as important in hiring potential managers, not because they were thought to ensure technical skills, but rather to indicate "motivation"

and "social experience" (Gordon & Howell, 1959, p. 121). Business school training is similarly regarded, less as evidence of necessary training (as employers have been widely skeptical of the utility of this curriculum for most positions) than as an indication that the college graduate is committed to business attitudes. Thus, employers are more likely to refuse to hire liberal arts graduates if they come from a college which has a business school than if their college is without a business school (Gordon & Howell, 1959, pp. 84–87; see also Pierson, 1959, pp. 90–99). In the latter case, the students could be said not to have had a choice; but when both business and liberal arts courses are offered and the student chooses liberal arts, employers appear to take this as a rejection of business values.

Finally, a 1967 survey of 309 California organizations (R. Collins, 1971) found that educational requirements for white-collar workers were highest in organizations which placed the strongest emphasis on normative control over their employees. Normative control emphasis was indicated by (i) relative emphasis on the absence of police record for job applicants, (ii) relative emphasis on a record of job loyalty, (iii) Etzioni's (1961) classification of organizations into those with high normative control emphasis (financial, professional services, government, and other public service organizations) and those with remunerative control emphasis (manufacturing, construction, and trade). These three indicators are highly interrelated, thus mutually validating their conceptualization as indicators of normative control emphasis. The relationship between normative control emphasis and educational requirements holds for managerial requirements and white-collar requirements generally, both including and excluding professional and technical positions. Normative control emphasis does not affect blue-collar education requirements. . . .

HISTORICAL CHANGE

The rise in educational requirements for employment throughout the last century may be explained using the conflict theory, and incorporating

elements of the technical-functional theory into it at appropriate points. The principal dynamic has centered on changes in the supply of educated persons caused by the expansion of the school system, which was in turn shaped by three conditions:

Education has been associated with high economic and status position from the colonial period on through the twentieth century. The result was a popular demand for education as mobility opportunity. This demand has not been for vocational education at a terminal or commercial level, short of full university certification; the demand has rather focused on education giving entry into the elite status culture, and usually only those technically oriented schools have prospered which have most closely associated themselves with the sequence of education leading to (or from) the classical Bachelor's degree (R. Collins, 1969, pp. 68–70, 86–87, 89, 96–101).

Political decentralization, separation of church and state, and competition among religious denominations have made founding schools and colleges in America relatively easy, and provided initial motivations of competition among communities and religious groups that moved them to do so. As a result, education at all levels expanded faster in America than anywhere else in the world. At the time of the Revolution, there were nine colleges in the colonies; in all of Europe, with a population forty times that of America, there were approximately sixty colleges. By 1880 there were 811 American colleges and universities; by 1966, there were 2,337. The United States not only began with the highest ratio of institutions of higher education to population in the world, but increased this lead steadily, for the number of European universities was not much greater by the twentieth century than in the eighteenth (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962).

Technical changes also entered into the expansion of American education. As the evidence summarized above indicates: (a) Mass literacy is crucial for beginnings of full-scale industrialization, although demand for literacy could not have been important in the expansion of education beyond elementary levels. More importantly, (b) there is a mild trend toward the

reduction in the proportion of unskilled jobs and an increase in the promotion of highly skilled (professional and technical) jobs as industrialism proceeds, accounting for 15% of the shift in educational levels in the twentieth century (Folger & Nam, 1964). (c) Technological change also brings about some upgrading in skill requirements of some continuing job positions, although the available evidence (Berg, 1970, pp. 38–60) refers only to the decade 1950–1960. Nevertheless, as Wilensky (1964) points out, there is no “professionalization of everyone,” as most jobs do not require considerable technical knowledge on the order of that required of the engineer or the research scientist.

The existence of a relatively small group of experts in high-status positions, however, can have important effects on the structure of competition for mobility chances. In the United States, where democratic decentralization favors the use of schools (as well as government employment) as a kind of patronage for voter interests, the existence of even a small number of elite jobs fosters a demand for large-scale opportunities to acquire these positions. We thus have a “contest mobility” school system (Turner, 1960); it produced a widely educated populace because of the many dropouts who never achieve the elite level of schooling at which expert skills and/or high cultural status are acquired. In the process, the status value of American education has become diluted. Standards of respectability are always relative to the existing range of cultural differences. Once higher levels of education become recognized as an objective mark of elite status, and a moderate level of education as a mark of respectable middle-level status, increases in the supply of educated persons at given levels result in yet higher levels becoming recognized as superior, and previously superior levels become only average.

Thus, before the end of the nineteenth century, an elementary school or home education was no longer satisfactory for a middle-class gentleman; by the 1930s, a college degree was displacing the high school degree as the minimal standard of respectability; in the late 1960s, graduate school or specialized professional

degrees were becoming necessary for initial entry to many middle-class positions, and high school graduation was becoming a standard for entry to manual laboring positions. Education has thus gradually become part of the status culture of classes far below the level of the original business and professional elites.

The increasing supply of educated persons . . . has made education a rising requirement of jobs. . . . Led by the biggest and most prestigious organizations, employers have raised their educational requirements to maintain both the relative prestige of their own managerial ranks and the relative respectability of middle ranks. Education has become a legitimate standard in terms of which employers select employees, and employees compete with each other for promotion opportunities or for raised prestige in their continuing positions. With the attainment of a mass (now approaching universal) higher education system in modern America, the ideal or image of technical skill becomes the legitimating culture in terms of which the struggle for position goes on.

Higher educational requirements, and the higher level of educational credentials offered by individuals competing for positions in organizations, have in turn increased the demand for education by populace. The interaction between formal job requirements and informal status cultures has resulted in a spiral in which educational requirements and educational attainments become ever higher. As the struggle for mass educational opportunities enters new phases in the universities of today and perhaps in the graduate schools of the future, we may expect a further upgrading of educational requirements for employment. The mobilization of demands by minority groups for mobility opportunities through schooling can only contribute an extension of the prevailing pattern.

CONCLUSIÓN

It has been argued that conflict theory provides an explanation of the principal dynamics of rising educational requirements for employment in America. Changes in the technical requirements of jobs have caused more limited changes in particular jobs. The

conditions of the interaction of these two determinants may be more closely studied.

Precise measures of changes in the actual technical skill requirements of jobs are as yet available only in rudimentary form. Few systematic studies show how much of particular job skills may be learned in practice, and how much must be acquired through school background. Close studies of what is actually learned in school, and how long it is retained, are rare. Organizational studies of how employers rate performance and decide upon promotions give a picture of relatively loose controls over the technical quality of employee performance, but this no doubt varies in particular types of jobs.

The most central line of analysis for assessing the joint effects of status group conflict and technical requirements are those which compare the relative importance of education in different contexts. One such approach may take organization as the unit of analysis, comparing the educational requirements of organizations both to organizational technologies and to the status (including educational) background of organizational elites. Such analysis may also be applied to surveys of individual mobility, comparing the effects of education on mobility in different employment contexts, where the status group (and educational) background of employers varies in its fit with the educational culture of prospective employees. Such analysis of "old school tie" networks may also simultaneously test for the independent effect of the technical requirements of different sorts of jobs on the importance of education. International comparisons provide variations here in the fit between types of education and particular kinds of jobs which may not be available within any particular country.

The full elaboration of such analysis would give a more precise answer to the historical question of assigning weight to various factors in the changing place of education in the stratification of modern societies. At the same time, to state the conditions under which status groups vary in organizational power, including the power to emphasize or limit the importance of technical skills, would be to state the basis elements of a comprehensive explanatory theory of the forms of stratification.

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5

SCHOOLING IN CAPITALIST SOCIETIES

SAMUEL BOWLES AND HERBERT GINTIS

In this excerpt from their classical application of Marxist theory to the institution of education, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis argue that schools reproduce the social class system. This occurs because students from higher status families have more opportunities. Structuring school systems to mirror social status is but one means, but an important one, by which the privileged maintain their status in society.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the basic Marxist argument described by Bowles and Gintis?
2. How does Marxism view the role of schools in society?
3. How does this reading relate to the other discussions of conflict theory by Alan Sadvnik, Randall Collins, and Max Weber?

of productive resources, while most—aside from personal possessions—own only their labor power. The U.S. economy exhibits the most extensive and complete wage-labor system in the history of civilization. This system, which emerged historically as a progressive force in the service of economic productivity and the ethos of individuality and personal freedom, has long become repressive and anachronistic, an obstacle to further human progress. The many must daily acquiesce to domination by the few, giving rise to the systemic perpetuation of extensive inequalities—not only between capital and wage labor, but among working people as well. The stability and security of these economic power relationships require the creation and reinforcement of distinctions based on sex, race, ethnic origin, social class, and hierarchical status.

The educational system, basically, neither adds to nor subtracts from the degree of inequality and repression originating in the economic sphere. Rather, it reproduces and legitimates a preexisting pattern in the process of training and stratifying the work force. How does this occur? The heart of the process is to be found not in the content of the educational encounter—or the process of information

The most critical aspect of U.S. capitalism is that a few people own and control the bulk

transfer—but in the form: the social relations of the educational encounter. These correspond closely to the social relations of dominance, subordination, and motivation in the economic sphere. Through the educational encounter, individuals are induced to accept the degree of powerlessness with which they will be faced as mature workers.

The central prerequisite for personal development—be it physical, emotional, aesthetic, cognitive, or spiritual—lies in the capacity to control the conditions of one's life. Thus a society can foster personal development roughly to the extent that it allows and requires personal interaction along the lines of equal, unified, participatory, and democratic cooperation and struggle. Needless to say, these very conditions are those most conducive to social and economic equality. The U.S. educational system, in the present nexus of economic power relationships, cannot foster such patterns of personal development and social equality. To reproduce the labor force, the schools are destined to legitimate inequality, limit personal development to forms compatible with submission to arbitrary authority, and aid in the process whereby youth are resigned to their fate.

Hence we believe—indeed, it follows logically from our analysis—that an equal and liberating educational system can only emerge from a broad-based movement dedicated to the transformation of economic life. Such a movement is socialist in the sense that private ownership of essential productive resources must be abolished, and control over the production process must be placed in the hands of working people.

The goals of such a revolutionary socialism go beyond the achievement of the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe. These countries have abolished private ownership of the means of production, while replicating the relationships of economic control, dominance, and subordination characteristic of capitalism. While the abolition of private property in the means of production has been associated with a significant reduction in economic inequality, it has failed to address the other problems with which we have dealt. . . . The socialism to which we aspire goes beyond the legal question of property to the concrete social question of economic democracy

as a set of egalitarian and participatory power relationships. While we may learn much about the process of building a socialist society from the experiences of the Soviet, Cuban, Chinese, and other socialist peoples—and indeed, may find some aspects of their work downright inspiring—there is no foreign model for the economic transformation we seek. Socialism in the United States will be a distinctly American product growing out of our history, culture, and struggle for a better life. . . .

Just as the philosophers of ancient Greece could not conceive of society without master and slave and the Scholastics of medieval times without lord and serf, so, today, many cannot conceive of society without a controlling managerial hierarchy and a subservient working class. Yet neither technology nor human nature bar the way to democratic socialism as the next stage in the process of civilization. Unalienated work and an equal distribution of its products is neither romantic nostalgia nor postindustrial Luddism. The means of achieving social justice and of rendering work personally meaningful and compatible with healthy personal development are as American as apple pie: democracy and equality.

What is the role of education in this process? In the context of U.S. capitalism, a socialist education is a revolutionary education. Our objective for U.S. schools and colleges here and now is not that they should become the embryo of the good society but that struggles around these institutions, and the educational process itself, should contribute to the development of a revolutionary, democratic socialist movement. An ideal education for a socialist society may, in some respects, be irrelevant to the task of bringing that society into existence. This danger is not intrinsically great, however, for the struggle to liberate education and the struggle to democratize economic life are inextricably related. The social relations of education can be altered through genuine struggle for a democratic and participatory classroom, and for a reorganization of power in education. The process of creating a socialist educational system for the United States, if successful, renders the contradictions among administrators, teachers, and students

nonantagonistic in the sense that the day-to-day outcomes of their struggles may be the positive, healthy development of both structures and individuals beneficial to all parties concerned. The experience of struggle and control promotes personal growth, forges solidarity, and prepares the student for a future of political activity in factory and office. The consciousness nurtured in such an integrated educational encounter is one of self-worth, cooperation, and an implacable hostility to arbitrary authority.

Even following a successful transformation of formal power relationships in the economic sphere, education will be part of the struggle for democratization of substantive social relationships. The educational system will be set the task of preparing youth for a society which, while geared toward the progressive realization of revolutionary goals, still bears the technological and cultural heritage of the present system. In this setting, the social relations of education will themselves be transitional in nature. For instance, the elimination of boring, unhealthy, fragmented, uncreative, constraining, and otherwise alienated but socially necessary labor requires an extended process of technological and organizational change in a transitional phase. The shift to automated, decentralized, and worker-controlled technologies requires the continuous supervision and cooperation of the workers themselves. Any form this takes in a transitional society will include a constant struggle among three groups whose ultimate interests may converge, but whose daily concerns remain distinct: managers concerned with the development of the enterprise, technicians concerned with the scientific rationality of production, and workers concerned with the impact of innovation and management on job satisfaction and material welfare. The present educational system does not develop in an individual the capacities of cooperation, struggle, autonomy, and judgment appropriate to this task. The need for developing innovative educational forms is here paramount. . . .

The drive for an egalitarian and liberating educational system must be an essential element of a socialist movement. Indeed, the process-oriented nature of the educational encounter can

render political activity in the school system exemplary for the rest of society. We offer five guidelines toward a socialist strategy for education. First, revolutionary educators—teachers, students, and others involved in education—should vigorously press for the democratization of schools and colleges by working toward a system of participatory power in which students, teachers, parents, and other members of the community can pursue their common interests and rationally resolve their conflicts. Second, the struggle for democratization should be viewed as part of an effort to undermine the correspondence between the social relations of education and the social relations of production in capitalist economic life. Socialist educational reform must consciously move toward equating liberated education with education for economic democracy. . . . Third, a movement for socialist education must reject simple antiauthoritarianism and spontaneity as its guiding principles. We must develop and apply a dialectical educational philosophy of personal development, authority, and interpersonal relationships as sketched above. Fourth, revolutionary educators must be in the forefront of the movement to create a unified class consciousness. Socialist teachers must not only demand control over their activities; we must also extend this control to students and to the broader community. We must fight for curriculum which is personally liberating and politically enlightening; we must reject our pretensions as professionals—pretensions which lead only to a defeatist quietism and isolation—and ally with other members of the working class. We must expand their demands to include the use of educational resources by parents, workers, community groups, and the elderly; and finally, we must fight for egalitarian educational practices which reduce the power of the schools to fragment the labor force. Fifth, socialist educators should take seriously the need to combine a long-range vision with winning victories here and now. In the long march through the institutions, reforms must be sought which satisfy the immediate needs of students, teachers, and parents. Pie-in-the-sky politics must be rejected in favor of a program of revolutionary reforms built around such issues as

democracy, free classrooms, open enrollment, adequate financial aid for needy students, and development of a critical antidiscriminatory and socialist content of education.

We cannot move forward through the Band-Aid remedies of liberal educational reform. The people of the United States do not need a doctor for the moribund capitalist order; we need an undertaker. Nor can the political challenge facing

us be met through the spontaneous efforts of individuals or groups working in isolation. The development and articulation of the vision of a socialist alternative, as much as the ability to meet today's concrete human needs, requires a mass-based party able to aid in the daily struggles of working people throughout the United States and committed to a revolutionary transformation of the U.S. economy.

6

Write Summary
By Oct 18th
1st test

BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE

Contributions of Qualitative Research to the Sociology of Education

CAROLYN RIEHL

Theories provide the framework for study, and methods guide the collection and processing of data. The last two readings in Part I focus on methods used to understand schools and obtain and interpret information on educational systems. Some methods are more appropriate than others to test each theory and questions derived from that theory. The following reading addresses the uses of qualitative research. Qualitative research uses methods that gather observational, communicative, or documentary data from real settings, in this case educational settings. Data is analyzed from an interpretive perspective (using nonmathematical methods) and taps information not accessible through quantitative studies. Studies using qualitative methods address the cultural context of school organizations and the processes of teaching and learning. The goal

is to see the process of education as continually evolving, not caught at one point in time as quantitative studies must be. Riehl reviews the contributions of this methodology to understand educational inequality, socialization and identity formation, school organization, and educational policy.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are differences in the way macro-level conflict theory and micro-level qualitative/interpretive studies view schools?
2. How might the contributions of qualitative studies differ from quantitative studies of educational inequality, socialization and identity formation, school organization, and educational policy?
3. How would a qualitative researcher approach studies of classroom dynamics?

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WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Defined most broadly, qualitative research draws a large net around any research that uses methods of gathering observational, communicative (natural discourse or interview), or documentary (artifactual) data derived from natural settings. Qualitative researchers analyze their data in nonmathematical ways to understand the world on its own terms. Such research can be, and has been, used to address the kinds of questions raised by positivist and realist epistemologies. For example, on occasion, qualitative researchers seek causal explanations for social phenomena that are valid and reliable across time and space and that hold together in logical systems of concepts, assumptions, and propositions (B. P. Cohen, 1989). Maintaining the objectivity of the researcher is especially important in this tradition, to prevent bias from creeping into the research process. Whether used inductively to generate “findings” that are incorporated into the formulation of theoretical concepts and assertions or deductively to demonstrate the validity of theoretical generalizations in local instances, qualitative research methods have produced many studies that have illustrated that “the positivist and postpositivist traditions linger like long shadows over the qualitative research project” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 9). This is an expansive perspective on qualitative research.

A more restrictive perspective situates qualitative research within more explicitly interpretive traditions, including social interactionism, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, postmodernism, feminist studies, critical theory, and cultural studies. These interpretive traditions draw from an array of methodologies that incorporate not only particular methods for the collection and analysis of empirical materials, but particular philosophical approaches to the nature of knowledge and the role of persons in the world, the nature of the research enterprise, and the role of the researcher. They veer away from the determinism and objectivity of positivism and its variants and are more focused on probing and interpreting cases of lived experience than on making generalizable assertions. They are also

more self-conscious about the researcher’s role in co-creating, observing, interpreting, and representing the natural world. There is more awareness of the “hermeneutic circle” in which the researcher seeks others’ interpretations of their worlds and experiences but then overlays them, to a greater or lesser degree, with her or his own interpretations. As Geertz (1973, p. 9) observed, “What we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to.”

Although various interpretive frameworks may differ in their epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises, they share in common the core belief that interpretation of social life is valued highly and valued more than explanation and prediction. They all assert that reality is at least partly socially constructed by people who are living it. The meanings held by actors regarding their actions, whether latent or explicit, are primary. The researcher’s own interpretive activity is always present, albeit bracketed and problematized. Even more, there can be no fixed, universal laws in the social sciences because such generalizations are fatally unstable as human actors adjust their own interpretations of their lived experience, and thus their actions, in light of the interpretations presented by social science—a “double hermeneutic” that suggests that meaning making human beings are not unaware of others making meaning about them (Giddens, 1984).

In all forms of qualitative research that focus on developing interpretations of lived experience, the methods of data collection, analysis, and reporting are intended to help uncover and interpret meaning. Although it has remained relatively constant regarding this core purpose, interpretive qualitative research has undergone a rapid evolution in the past several decades, characterized by ferment over issues, such as the politics and ethics of field research; different methods for gathering empirical materials; the relative privileging of informants’ own meaning structures versus the interpretations offered by researchers; power dynamics between researchers and the researched; the representation of research in written and other forms; and the uses to which research is put, including its role in transformative

social practice. These are powerful tensions, and they have expanded the field such that different discourse communities within qualitative research do not always recognize one another.

One key feature of qualitative research, especially in its newer and more interpretive forms, is its interdisciplinary nature. Qualitative researchers tend not to hold themselves to *a priori* theoretical or analytic perspectives in seeking to understand the phenomena they study. This statement implies, for our present purposes, that not only do sociologists of education range beyond their own discipline and subdiscipline in doing interpretive research, but that scholars who do not consider themselves primarily sociologists also wander into and across the territory of sociology. As a result, it is not often easy to determine what the sociology of education is or who sociologists of education are (Metz, 2000). As this broadening conversation develops, as the questioners and the perspectives multiply, in part through qualitative research, the sociology of education has the opportunity to be—or runs the risk of being—transformed.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

I now turn to a discussion of some ways in which qualitative research, especially that which is most self-consciously interpretive, both within and outside the sociological tradition, has influenced the sociology of education. This discussion is organized around four overlapping substantive themes:

- studies of inequality and the differential effects of schooling on students' academic achievement and their place in the social order,
- schooling and the development of persons (socialization to societal norms, values, and roles and identity formation),
- how schools function as organizations, and
- policy issues in education.

Research on Educational Inequality

Sociological research on educational inequality has primarily examined the ways in which social background, including social class, race-ethnicity, and gender, is linked to the distribution

of educational and social opportunities and outcomes. A secondary focus has been on the distribution of opportunities in schools, particularly in terms of curriculum tracking and ability grouping. This research tradition has long been dominated by quantitative studies that have documented the influence of social structure on inequality, a core sociological concern. It has, however, been criticized for treating the school as a “black box” (Karabel & Halsey, 1977) and for reducing complex educational and social processes to simple measurable variables. Qualitative research has helped to answer these criticisms by attempting to illuminate the mechanisms that produce educational inequality, particularly those that emerge over time and turn on the socially constructed meaning of events. Studies of family capital and of tracking and ability grouping are prominent examples.

Family Capital

Addressing the question of how families' social advantages are transmitted to their children through the educational process, researchers have drawn from the theories of Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b) and Coleman (1988) on cultural and social capital to explore how parents and students use forms of capital to further their educational goals and how schools respond. Interpretive studies from a variety of perspectives have yielded several key insights about the nature of family capital and how it is used that had not previously been apparent.

For example, it is now clear that language skills are an important cultural resource for children, a fact long recognized abroad (e.g., Bernstein, 1979) but rarely attended to in American sociology of education. Sociolinguistic studies of children's use of spoken and written language (e.g., Ball, 1995, 1996; Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983) have shown how social-class positions are reproduced through the ways in which children's language patterns are valued or devalued by schools. Parents' language skills also can be an important resource, as Brantlinger, Majd-Jabbari, and Guskin (1996) showed in their study of the rhetorical strategies used by white,

middle-class mothers to form rationales for why they sought segregated and stratified schools for their children, even while they advocated a liberal set of beliefs about educational opportunity for all.

Families have other forms of capital in addition to language, including strategic knowledge of schooling, material resources, social networks, power, and time. A key finding from qualitative research is that the forms of capital available to families must be activated in ways that are valued by schools to influence children's educational experiences and outcomes. This is one of the lessons of Lareau's (1989) well-known study of how parents deploy class-linked cultural and social capital on behalf of their children's schooling. Lareau found that middle-class parents were able to use financial resources, knowledge about schooling, and interpersonal skills to customize their children's education, while working-class parents had more difficulty generating productive interactions with schools.

More recent work has further developed the conditions under which cultural capital can be activated. For example, Lareau and Horvat's (1999) study of parents, educators, and community members in a small, ethnically diverse town found that the white parents were more able to develop the kinds of trusting, cooperative, and deferential family-school relationships that the educators hoped for. When the black parents voiced their concerns about their children's treatment in school, the educators interpreted these communications negatively, and their distress resulted in "moments of exclusion." Social class had a mediating effect, however, because the middle-class black parents were more likely than the low-income black parents to influence their children's school experiences by intervening in ways that the schools defined as helpful, such as requesting regular meetings or monitoring their children's homework carefully.

These sociologically inclined interpretive studies emphasize disjunctures between the forms of capital valued by schools as they are typically constituted and those available to parents and students from low-income, racial-ethnic minority groups. They have been supplemented

by research by anthropologists who have been critical of schools' devaluing of the resources and actions of cultural minorities, which these researchers position more positively within the cultural practices of minority groups. For example, Delgado-Gaitan (1994) described how a Latino family used *consejos*, or "nurturing advice," as a means of empowerment to help their children navigate the divide between their home and school cultures. In conversations, the parents exhibited their support for their children, expressed their values about schooling, and helped their children develop successful approaches to the situations they encountered in school. They did not alter their actions to create more congruence between home and school, but instead used *consejos* as an effective cultural practice to assist and support their children. Valdes (1996) documented a comparable process among other immigrant Mexican families, and Delgado-Gaitan (1992) elaborated on the cultural resources available to Mexican American children in their homes.

Similarly, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) studied Latino families' "funds of knowledge," the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills the families had that contributed to their functioning and well-being. They found that the networks through which funds of household knowledge developed were flexible, active, and multidimensional. Exchanges of knowledge were reciprocal, creating mutual obligations and trusting relationships, and the children were active participants. Moll et al. observed that problems ensued in schools because the children's classrooms tended to be isolated from these community resources and learning practices.

In addition, qualitative research on culturally responsive teaching, especially the teaching practices of African American teachers (e.g., Foster, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992) challenges the notion that schools and teachers are invariant in their preference for certain forms of family capital. These studies have shown that when teachers explicitly honor and incorporate into the school the language styles, interaction patterns,

knowledge, and other forms of cultural capital of racial ethnic minority children, the children's learning increases.

Tracking-Ability Grouping

Within-school stratification processes, generated by the differential placement of students into ability groups and curriculum tracks, were first explored empirically in qualitative research (e.g., Hollingshead, 1949), but over the past several decades, most research that has examined social differences in the allocation of individuals to curricular positions and the consequences of placement for subsequent educational opportunities and achievements has relied on quantitative methodologies. These studies have not, however, revealed just how students' status origins are translated into curriculum placements. Qualitative studies have added considerably to our understanding of the processes by which individuals are allocated to curricular positions and what these positions mean for future achievements. With only a few exceptions, they have been pursued squarely within the domain of the sociology of education.

An early line of research showed how teachers' and counselors' assessments of students, often influenced by attributes associated with social class, influence students' curriculum placements through "gatekeeping" mechanisms (e.g., Cicourel & Kitsuse, 1963; Eder, 1981; Erickson, 1975; Rosenbaum, 1976). In this vein, Oakes and Guiton (1995) found that decisions about curricular offerings and students' assignments to tracks and courses were based, in part, on educators' assumptions about ability and motivation that linked race and social characteristics with particular expectations for students' achievement.

Qualitative studies have also shown that curriculum placement is not entirely a rational process that is designed either for meritocratic sorting on the basis of students' abilities and educational needs (Parsons, 1959) or for social class reproduction (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), but instead is often an imperfect response to organizational,

institutional, and even personal exigencies. For example, Finley (1984) found that high school English teachers created track differentiations on the basis of their own needs and aspirations and then competed for high-status students. Through this process, both the teachers and the students became tracked. Useem (1992) interviewed administrators in a large set of school districts and found that students' placements in middle school mathematics classes were influenced by administrators' idiosyncratic beliefs about course taking as well as by organizational factors, such as school size and class vacancies.

DeLany (1991; cf. Caret & DeLany, 1988) documented how scheduling decisions in four high schools were made on the basis of resource constraints, state and local regulations, and limited information-processing capabilities instead of strictly on students' characteristics and curricular needs. Riehl, Pallas, and Natriello (1999) used case studies of four high schools to explore how the scheduling process was fraught with such inefficiencies and inaccuracies that students suffered from the loss of instructional time while their course placement errors were being corrected, quite apart from the effects of being in one course level versus another. Mehan, Hertweck, and Meihls (1986) studied the process by which elementary school students were referred for special education. They found that the designation of a student as "educationally handicapped" depended heavily on organizational, fiscal, and legal constraints that were not even associated with the student. These constraints were embedded in the routine ways in which teachers made referrals, conducted diagnostic testing, and made committee decisions for placement. In effect, by creating a category for the "educationally handicapped," schools were required to create differences among students and to treat them differently.

Qualitative case studies have also shown that the meaning of a particular track or group placement is socially constructed and contextual. In Page's (1991) study of lower-track classrooms in two high schools, the meaning for students (and teachers) of being in one track or another

depended heavily on the curriculum knowledge that was presented in the track. In some settings, regular classes presented “high-status” knowledge and lower-track classes were not necessarily stigmatizing, while in other settings they were. Page observed that an important aspect of curriculum differentiation was not so much how lower-track classes were different from regular classes, but how they were simultaneously different and similar. She concluded that the lower-track classes in the middle-class school were “caricatures” of the school’s regular, college preparatory classes, whereas in the working-class school, they were “hyperbolic versions” of the school’s regimented and disciplined regular classes. Taken together, this extensive body of qualitative research on tracking has helped to illuminate and clarify the “black box” of assignment processes in schools—ironically, by rendering them with more complexity than is possible in quantitative studies.

Research on Socialization Processes and Identity Formation

Questions of the production of students’ achievement are related to a second set of school “effects”—socialization and identity formation. Socialization refers to the students’ acquisition of the norms, values, and roles of society, and identity formation refers to the development of a sense of self, including the self situated within broader social contexts. Early theoretical and empirical work in sociology and the sociology of education paid much attention to socialization issues, and most of the empirical work was qualitative, often embedded in studies of communities (e.g., Dreeben, 1968; Hollingshead, 1949; Lynd & Lynd, 1929; Meyer, 1970). Recent qualitative studies have extended these contributions by developing accounts of schools as mediating institutions that prepare students for life in the wider social environment of adulthood.

For example, in *Growing Up American*, Peshkin (1978), an educational anthropologist, described how schools in the small Midwestern town he called Mansfield socialized students to remain in the community. The localistic

orientation of teachers who worked in Mansfield because they preferred small-town life, a plethora of extracurricular activities that engaged adults as well as children, and local norms for appropriate levels of academic achievement all created an ethos, consistent throughout the school and community, in which students’ aspirations and accomplishments were circumscribed.

Similarly, in *God’s Choice*, Peshkin (1986) described the socialization of students through the organization of what he came to believe was a “benign total institution,” built in the perceived truth of Christian fundamentalism but also, like Mansfield High School, capitalizing on the resonance between the school and students’ home worlds. In contrast, in *Places of Memory*, Peshkin (1997) described the ambivalence of students in a New Mexico pueblo village who were educated in an off-reservation boarding school, which provided appealing employment and economic possibilities, but also tore the students away from their home culture. The students responded to this dilemma with persistent feelings of malaise and low achievement, which, in turn, kept them consigned to their native communities.

Early studies of socialization adopted a largely functionalist perspective that was consistent with the accommodating structural-functionalist cast of much American social theory of the pre- and post-World War II eras. However, as American society became increasingly diverse, socialization processes came to be seen as less natural and benign, and their implications for the development of group and individual identity were raised. As the following descriptions indicate, interpretive research has drawn attention to conflict and contestation in control over identity and socialization and has explored how schools are implicated in these processes.

Achievement Identity and Socialization

In school, students learn important lessons about what they may achieve and where they are likely to fit into the larger social structure of adult life; they develop achievement identities by fashioning interpretations of these lessons that are

meaningful to them. Qualitative research has illuminated how challenging this meaning making can be for students who do not succeed in school and how much it relies both on structural constraints imposed on students and on students' own choices and actions. Willis's (1977) study of white working-class male students in England and MacLeod's (1987) study of white and black males in America are two prominent interpretive accounts of how students develop a sense of themselves in light of their performance in school. Willis's "lads" claimed an identity that was oppositional to the dominant middle-class achievement ideology in their school (a game that they were likely to lose), but ironically, this resistance kept them bound to their working class origins. The two groups of youths that MacLeod studied perceived different possibilities for their future, but in doing so, both had to reckon with their mediocre academic achievement. The black "Brothers" came to believe that they could achieve in school and in later life and therefore blamed themselves for their poor performance in school. The white "Hallway Hangers" rejected the achievement ideology of their school as unfair and illegitimate and developed other sources of self-esteem, but their bravado did not protect them completely from feelings of shame and failure.

Other studies have also shown how difficult it is for marginalized students like the "lads" and "Hallway Hangers" to sustain a critical consciousness about education and achievement. Fine (1991) described high school students and former students, most of whom were cultural minorities, who had attended a school where considerable effort was made to render their experiences and even their presence invisible and to silence their voices of opposition. She found that dropouts lost their critical edge and developed "immobilizing regrets" (p. 103) as they struggled after leaving school. R. B. Stevenson and Ellsworth (1993, p. 266) also found that dropouts "reclaimed for themselves the blame for dropping out," so they could recall their school experiences positively despite their post-school failures. Consistent with these studies, O'Connor (1999) found that the high-achieving African American students in her

study were articulate about the structural constraints on achievement that race, social class, and gender presented. In contrast, the low-achieving students tended to minimize the impact of these social identities; they cited hard work and desire as more important explanations for students' achievement and the lack of effort and will as explanations for poor performance.

Gender Identity and Socialization

Qualitative studies have also provided insights into how schools and schooling shape the gender identities that children and youths develop. Thorne's (1993) and Lensmire's (1994) books showed how routine activities in elementary schools—recess on the playground and writing workshops, respectively—can reinforce gender stereotypes and gender inequalities that are imported from children's lives outside school. Peer relations have also been shown to be important at the elementary and secondary levels as students strive to be popular by behaving in gender-stereotyped ways. Adler, Kless, and Adler (1992) found that in elementary school, boys formed their gender identity and became popular by internalizing the male ethos of physicality, autonomy, and "coolness," while girls became popular on the basis of attributes associated with social class, including the ability to purchase things, the quality and style of clothing, and where they lived.

At the middle school level, Eder, Evans, and Parker's (1995) study showed how adolescents' language—gossip, sexual harassment, insults, and teasing—is used to reproduce gender roles and occasionally to challenge them. Valli's (1986) ethnography of a high school cooperative education program indicated that female students acquired, and sometimes resisted, gender ideologies of the office worker as sex object and as wife and mother through such factors as the program's attention to students' personal appearance; available visual representations of office workers; students' own experiences on job placements; the use of different forms of address for male and female workers; and the teacher's emphasis on

her own identity as a mother, even though she professed a strong feminist orientation. These gender-socialization patterns persist into higher education as well, where, for example, female students' attention is diverted from academic strivings to the market for romance. This is the message of Holland and Eisenhart's (1990) *Educated in Romance*, which locates peer groups as the source of a culture of romance that values women more for their attractiveness to men than for their career potential.

Racial-Ethnic Identity and Socialization

Qualitative researchers have also applied close interpretive lenses to study racial identity and socialization. A number of works have delved into the actual experiences of cultural minorities, resisting tendencies to essentialize race-ethnicity and probing the actions and reactions that construct racial identity.

One line of qualitative research in this area has illuminated how schools and school learning provide (or fail to provide) a context in which students can develop a racial identity. J. Cohen (1993) showed that for some working-class African American students in an urban high school, explicit learning about their cultural histories provided crucial foundations for identity development, but this kind of learning did not take place in school. Her observation was reinforced by Epstein (1997), who explored the sources of historical knowledge for European American and African American students and found that few of the African American students considered the information they gained from teachers in schools to be trustworthy accounts of their cultural heritage.

While some qualitative studies have documented the lack of attention to cultural identity in schools, others have explored the ways in which schools can impose problematic cultural identities on students. For example, S. J. Lee (1996) studied four Asian American student groups in a high school: Korean-identified, Asian-identified (a pan-Asian group), New Waver (primarily refugees from working-class

and poor families), and Asian American-identified students. Each group had a distinctive self-definition and different experiences in the school. Lee concluded that the "model minority" stereotype that is frequently imposed on all students of Asian descent, regardless of their subgroup identities, is harmful for several reasons. It directs people's behavior in ways that can be discriminatory, is used to suppress potentially justifiable claims of inequality among Asian students, and erases the experiences of those Asian students who cannot or do not achieve high levels of academic success.

Interpretive researchers have begun to use a language-constitutive perspective to examine the institutional contexts within which students' racial-ethnic identities are formed. Lopez (1999) studied four different discourses in the lives of three migrant boys: those of student, classmate, family member, and friend. Using the notion of discourse as an "identity kit" of talk and behavior that signals one's membership in a particular discourse community, Lopez found within each discourse community a persistent ignorance and devaluing of the other discourses. It was not surprising that the boys encountered many problems trying to negotiate among these competing discourses, with clear consequences for their sense of self and their educational trajectories.

Finally, interpretive studies have also shown the interaction between racial-ethnic identity and achievement identity, particularly racial and ethnic minority students' motives and behaviors regarding their academic performance. Fordham (1996) found that the actions of African American students that are typically interpreted as evidence of laziness or a lack of intelligence could be viewed as political acts of resistance grounded in the maintenance of a black identity that avoids the white "other." This more sophisticated account of identity construction extends the well-known "burden of acting white" argument she developed with Ogbu (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Fordham (1993) also explored the links between gender, racial-ethnic identity, and achievement, noting that some black females were the most successful students at "Capital High," but also the least

visible, because they were “passing” for someone they were not by mimicking the dominant cultural image of the white American female and ultimately the white male.

Research on How Schools Work

Interest in features of the school as a social organization was evident when the sociology of education emerged as a distinct subdiscipline, and research activity in this area has continued to thrive. In this overview, I focus on the contributions of qualitative research to just two aspects of this work: the organization and character of teaching and authority relations in schools.

The Organization and Character of Teaching

Waller’s (1932) early treatise described schools as work contexts for teachers and discussed how their characteristics as occupational settings sometimes were at odds with the educational purposes of schooling. Thirty years later, Bidwell (1965) presented an influential analysis of the school as a formal organization and reintroduced many of Waller’s ideas, including the troubled relationship between the organization of teaching as work and the intrinsic nature of teaching and learning. Recently, research in this domain has examined the ways in which schools are shifting from being organized around routine, bureaucratized forms of teaching to teaching as a complex and collegial task.

Qualitative research has illuminated the organizational conditions that facilitate teaching as a professional activity, specifically exploring structures, processes, and norms that help to constitute schools as professional communities for teachers and identifying the barriers that can restrict professional community (e.g., Little, 1982; Louis et al., 1995; McLaughlin, Talbert, & Bascia, 1990; Westheimer, 1998). For example, Little (1982) described how shared norms of collegiality and experimentation in schools encouraged teachers to take risks and learn to teach differently. In a follow-up study, Little (1990)

showed that genuine collegiality was unlikely to occur in schools unless teachers were able to pursue interdependent teaching roles and tasks. Louis and her associates (1995) drew on case studies of schools to describe the social and human resources (such as trust and respect and facilitative leadership) and the structural conditions (like adequate communication structures, physical proximity, and school autonomy) that support teachers’ professionalism. In contrast, Siskin and Little’s (1995) collection of studies of high school subject departments explored the barriers to professionalism imposed by departments functioning as separate communities that foster fragmented versions of learning through balkanization and the exercise of power.

In the midst of this attention to the organizational conditions of teaching, there has also been an increase in interpretive research on the nature of teaching and the meanings it holds for teachers themselves, a topic to which researchers have been relatively slow to turn (Van Galen & Eaker, 1995). Analytic perspectives on the moral dimensions of teaching helped to initiate this enterprise (e.g., Noddings, 1992), but ethnographies of teaching have constituted the bulk of this line of inquiry.

Interpretive qualitative research has been particularly valuable in demonstrating how teachers’ social origins and personal commitments shape their orientations toward teaching and their experiences as teachers. One example is Casey’s (1993) narrative study of teaching. Casey drew on the hermeneutic theories of Mikhail Bakhtin to develop group biographies of three sets of teachers she interviewed: religious Catholic women (nuns), Jewish women, and African American women. She found that each group of women shared a dominant discourse about teaching. The nuns expressed an “existential discourse” in which themes of freedom and responsibility, laced with a strong religious perspective, grounded their teaching for social change. The Jewish women articulated a “pragmatic discourse” about the need for activists to be ingenious and adaptive, and the African American women used a “signifying discourse,” reflecting their awareness of double consciousness, or the

“oblique inter-section of black and white meanings within black narrative” (p. 112). For Casey, these narratives represented three distinctive strategies for enacting the role of teacher.

Lubeck (1985) also explored the influences of teachers’ cultural backgrounds on their teaching by comparing the child-rearing strategies of two sets of women: black women teachers at a working-class Head Start center and white women teachers in a middle-class preschool. Lubeck observed patterns of teaching that were consistent with the teachers’ cultural backgrounds and personal circumstances. On the one hand, the Head Start teachers, who all lived in extended family situations, worked closely together and reinforced the collective values of the African American culture. On the other hand, the white teachers, who all lived in nuclear families, tended to work alone with the children and to encourage in them the values of individualism and self-expression. Lubeck concluded that a distinct form of cultural transmission was operating through both sets of teachers.

A third example of interpretive research on the nature of teaching is Weiler’s (1988) study, which explored how women teachers and administrators in two urban secondary schools attempted to enact their commitments to feminism (in principle, if not always in name) and critical pedagogy. Weiler observed that these teachers and administrators entered teaching through circuitous routes that were laced with gendered expectations and structural limitations on their life choices, as well as opportunities to develop a critical social consciousness. They sought to teach and administer in ways that challenged dominant ideologies and institutional forces in their schools. This work was not always easy because the women encountered resistance when their values conflicted with the cultural values of students and their families, those of other teachers, or those of the broader institutional structures of schooling. Weiler concluded that studying feminist teachers brings into high relief the complexities of gender, racial, and class dynamics in schools; shows how schools mirror the tensions of the wider society; and

demonstrates the fragile but enduring possibility of promoting transformative education in state-sponsored institutions.

These interpretive studies of how teachers construct careers and identities are of interest sociologically because they have potential implications for the social organization of teaching. They provide a bridge between curriculum theorists and teacher educators who are concerned with teaching itself and sociologists who investigate the organization of teaching. Ideally, the organizational context of teaching should reflect a deep understanding and appreciation of what teaching can and should be, especially in the minds of its practitioners.

Order and Authority in Schools

Another fundamental issue regarding how schools work as organizations is the problem of order and authority. Sociologically minded theorists and researchers have largely ignored behavioral and managerial approaches to discipline and control and have instead tried to understand the deeper sources of order and authority in schooling. Some have focused on the essentially coercive nature of the school, following Goffman’s (1961) explication of a “total institution.” Others have developed a structural perspective on the problem of order. For example, D. L. Stevenson’s (1991) study of a first-grade class in a low-income community found that deviant students were a “collective resource” in the classroom because they enabled the teacher to articulate, through words as well as rewards and sanctions, expected behaviors and desired performance. Hence, deviant students helped clarify the boundaries of acceptable behavior for all the students.

Still other theorists and researchers have explored order and authority in terms of the value orientations of schools as communities, in which relational norms and patterns help to maintain cohesion and order. These ideas were developed conceptually by Bryk and Driscoll (1988) and by V. E. Lee, Bryk, and Smith (1993). In this vein, Zane (1994) studied four Philadelphia high schools that were involved in

restructuring and found that their “fetish” about discipline receded into the background as the schools became more relationally oriented and more democratic. The nature of discipline shifted from the control of individual students to a focus on the life of students’ minds and on better relations. The faculty observed a decrease in disciplinary problems as a result of the students’ higher self-esteem, better relationships between students and teachers, and students taking ownership of controlling things themselves.

The most prominent and enduring approach to the study of authority and order in schools, however, examines the embedded nature of control ideologies and mechanisms in schools, particularly the connections between behavioral control and the control of students’ learning. This approach characterizes McNeil’s (1988) influential study of social studies teaching in four high schools. McNeil found that the teachers maintained orderly classrooms partly through their control over the knowledge to which the students had access. By using “defensive teaching” strategies, such as omission, simplification, and fragmentation, the teachers preserved their authority and kept the students in line. She discovered that when the school principals placed a premium on behavioral control, the teachers were more likely to try to control their students by controlling knowledge. In contrast, when the principals minimized their concern for strict behavioral control of the students, the teachers were free to create lively classroom environments with open access to knowledge for the students.

McNeil’s study expanded on connections between learning and behavioral control that were first articulated by Metz (1978) in her ethnography of two recently desegregated junior high schools. Metz, like McNeil, found that students’ behavior was heavily influenced by the attitudes and practices of faculty members regarding the goals of both academic learning and order. Her analytic framework reflects a complex perspective on the divergent organizational imperatives (especially technology and structure) that relate to the pursuit of learning goals and control goals in schools. Resisting

oversimplification, Metz nevertheless concluded that in the school where the teachers adopted a more consistently “incorporative” teaching style, maintaining more control over the curriculum in a subject-centered approach, the students were compliant but uncommitted learners, and their behavior, both in the classrooms and in the general school environment, was similarly compliant. In contrast, in the school where teacher factions openly disagreed about the use of an incorporative teaching style versus a learner-centered, “developmental” style, the students’ behavior in the classrooms and corridors was more unruly, but the students were more actively engaged. The teachers reported to Metz that the principals were crucial to the character of the schools. In the former school, the principal sought order and safety, using a “benign but firm” hand with the students and even co-opting the teachers’ potential for mischief by creating committees and assigning work that would divert the teachers’ creative energies. In the latter school, the principal responded to the teachers’ divergent views by delegating decisions and permitting more autonomy throughout the school.

These connections between learning and authority are also evident in Oyler’s (1996) ethnography of a first-grade classroom in Chicago. Oyler argued that positive authority relations in the classroom, in this instance power-sharing social relationships, were essential for supporting and facilitating a constructivist approach to literacy.

Research on Educational Policy

The sociology of education has made important contributions to educational policy since at least the publication of the Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966). Much of this work has been instrumental, using a technical rationality to examine whether and how various policy initiatives and educational practices can enable schools to achieve particular ends. The key contributions of interpretive qualitative research, however, lie in examining how the targets of educational policies actually experience these policies, who actually benefits from various

policies, and how policies serve—or fail to serve—multiple institutional or social ends.

Educational policies are crafted globally and enacted locally. Interpretive research has been extremely helpful in producing descriptions of local contexts that can hinder or subvert the implementation of policies. For example, Lareau and Shumar's (1996) ethnographic study of children from different racial-ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds illustrated that educational policies regarding parent-school relationships may not support reform unless they take into account differential social resources and unequal power relationships among parents from different backgrounds. Similarly, Wells and Oakes's (1996) study of detracking reform showed how elite parents could use a variety of strategies to pressure schools to reinstitute curricular differentiation. This is important evidence that class-linked micropolitical maneuvering can undermine both top-down and bottom-up systemic reform initiatives. The capacity of interpretive research to examine micropolitics also helps to illuminate the interests of various actors who participate in educational policy initiatives. For example, Mickelson's (2000) case study of the involvement of businesses in school reform in Charlotte, North Carolina, illustrated how the actions of some individuals within particular structures of corporate-school partnership were able to advance corporate self-interests, while other actors were able to resist corporate incursions into education and advance broader public policy goals.

Other qualitative studies have examined how policy actors function in interaction with a system, not just other individuals. For example, Wells's (2000) comparison of charter schools in England and the United States examined the impact of context, specifically the absence or presence of neoliberal political traditions, on the formation of educational policy. In this study, as well as in an earlier study (Wells et al., 1999), Wells interpreted the actions of actors according to the beliefs they held and observed how their beliefs influenced the development of macro-policy structures, which, in turn, influenced local educational agencies.

Wells's studies and those of other qualitative researchers have demonstrated the importance of the discursive formation of educational policy.

That is, they have illustrated how the development and implementation of policy is dependent on language-embedded constructions of meaning that influence understanding and action. This body of work has linked individual policy makers' beliefs and actions, through discursive framings of meaning, with the constitution of wider institutional norms and structures. For example, Rhoades (1987) used interviews and analyses of documents to examine how educational beliefs and convictions and the structural conditions that convert them into group ideologies framed reformers' efforts to overhaul secondary education in Britain. Similarly, Davies's (1999) study of the discourse processes framing multicultural and religious goals in Canadian educational policy documented how shifts in frames of meaning made policy change possible. . . .

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from this review of qualitative research in, and related to, the sociology of education. First, qualitative research continues to generate rich, contextualized, process-sensitive understandings of phenomena that have sociological import. Interpretive research offers a different authoritative voice that reflects the meanings of local actors and actions over the more remote and disinterested perspective of positivism's "universal subject." The more that qualitative researchers are attuned to the experiences of diverse actors in diverse contexts in education, the more this research will result in a productive enrichment of the traditionally dominant voices and themes of the sociology of education.

Second, in each of the substantive domains noted in this review, qualitative research continues to draw the sociology of education closer to the realms of educational policy and practice. This trend has positive benefits for the practical

utility of the field's scholarship, but it may run the risk of muting sociology's critical edge and unique vantage point (Bidwell, 1999). As many observers of the subdiscipline's history have pointed out (e.g., Dreeben, 1994; Lagemann, 2000; Trent, Braddock, & Henderson, 1985), an important and enduring tension is whether the field should pursue the development of scientific knowledge about schooling within a broad sociological perspective ("the sociology of education") or the development of knowledge, including normative and abstract theory and applications, that responds more directly to the problems of educational practice ("educational sociology"). The liveliness and utility of the sociology of education depends on how it positions itself regarding these alternatives.

Finally, it should be clear from this review that qualitative research that is situated squarely within a sociological framework is enlivened by the encounter with studies conducted from more distant, but related perspectives and disciplines. Pursuing interdisciplinarity carries risks by weakening the "self-correcting context of a disciplinary community" (Page, 2000, p. 105). However, numerous scholars (e.g., Apple, 1995; Bourdieu, 1990; Noblit & Pink, 1995) have noted the close connections that sociology persistently has with other domains of inquiry. In writing about the "chaos of disciplines," Abbott (2001, p. 6) claimed that sociology is "irremediably interstitial" and, moreover, that all academic disciplines are rejuvenated by borrowing ideas from one another. If his claim is correct, then perhaps the sociology of education directly pursues its own well-being by drawing from the research efforts of other disciplines and subdisciplines to expand its own questions, perspectives, and research methodologies.

It is inconceivable to imagine how the sociology of education would have developed in the past quarter century without qualitative studies. It is just as inconceivable to imagine the future of the sociology of education without more, new, and different kinds of qualitative research. From where will they emerge? If the sociology of education continues, through its qualitative research

traditions, to explore the territories it shares with other domains that address questions of education and social life, it could become an indispensable focal point for the study of education in the new century. As Calhoun (1995, p. 65) noted:

The first of the sociologist's tasks—and perhaps the most important and problematic—is the constitution of the object of study. . . . There is always room for variation in approaches to constitution of objects of study, for trade-offs between more local detail and wider comparison, for example, or for emphasizing different aspects of social life—structure, action, culture, power, function, etc. The point is to see the process as basic and never ending, and to subject it to our continuing critical attention, rather than to imagine that it is somehow settled once and for all, or merely a matter of operational definition.

If past evidence is any indication, the future of the sociology of education will be won, at least in part, by the efforts of qualitative researchers to define their own new objects of study.

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HOW TO AVOID STATISTICAL TRAPS

GERALD W. BRACEY

How to Lie with Statistics and *Damned Lies and Statistics* are two books that point out the complications in interpreting the meaning of statistics. Data do not always support the conclusions drawn in research and reports, yet parents, educators, and policy makers rely on statistics to make sense of the educational scene and trends. We have discussed theories that provide the framework for study; statistics are used to summarize data collected to test theories. Thus, as Bracey illustrates, knowing how to interpret statistics is crucial for understanding research on schools.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What role do statistics play in helping researchers understand educational systems?
2. Why is it important to have more than one statistical result?
3. What are cautions mentioned by Bracey in interpreting statistics?
4. What does Bracey recommend we do to insure more accuracy in research results?

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics. This quote from Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of England under Queen Victoria, demonstrates that the field of statistics has needed to defend its honor since its inception in Europe centuries ago.

The original term for statistics, *political arithmetic* (Best, 2001), might be more accurate. Statistics are rarely neutral. Those who collect them have a purpose—sometimes benign, sometimes not—and translate the information to serve that purpose. For example, some people, including representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, say that statistics reveal an “obesity crisis” in the United States. Other people, including some financed by the food industry, allege that the “obesity crisis” is a false alarm spread by drug companies that want the standards for diseases constantly made stricter so that they can define more people as patients and sell them expensive drugs. It’s true that the numbers accepted as indications of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and high blood sugar have all become much lower in the last decade.

Contradictory claims like these may be one reason why people say that you can prove anything

“How to Avoid Statistical Traps” by Gerald W. Bracey. From the May, 2006 issue of *Educational Leadership* 63(8), p. 78–82. Used with Permission. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.

with statistics. You can't, but people will certainly try to prove their particular viewpoints by using only those numbers that serve their purposes.

MORE THAN ONE NUMBER

You need more than one statistic to get a full picture of just about anything. Educators whose performance is being judged solely by annual standardized test scores will appreciate this point.

As I was writing this, an article in *The New York Times* gave three statistics for various nations' greenhouse gas emissions: total emissions, per capita emissions, and emissions per industrial output (Barringer, 2006). Using total emissions, the United States is number one by far, with China second and Russia third. Using per capita emissions, the United States is still number one and Russia is still third, but Canada is second. (China has lots of people and is still largely a rural nation despite its rapid urbanization.) Using industrial output, Russia is first, China second, and the United States fifth. (Russian and Chinese industries are not as clean as U.S. industries.)

Which statistic is best? All of them together. Using only one would be like evaluating a center fielder only on his batting average or a quarterback only on yards gained per pass. You need more than one statistic to paint a complete picture.

Similarly, a recent e-mailer asked me whether a preschool program, which produced a four-month gain in vocabulary and math and cost \$6,000 per kid per year, was worth it. I said that I couldn't tell. For one thing, the program likely produced health, socialization, and other outcomes besides the two mentioned. In addition, the real value of the program might not be clear for years: It took long-term evaluations of the outcomes of the Perry Preschool Project and the Chicago Family Centers project to establish that society gained about \$7 for every dollar invested in these programs (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984; Reynolds, 2001).

PRINCIPLES OF DATA INTERPRETATION

Despite the limitations of individual statistics and public cynicism about being able to prove anything, people remain remarkably trusting when it comes to statistics. Best (2001) observes that "Most of the time, most people simply accept statistics without question" (p. 4). This acceptance would be dangerous at any time, but given today's polarized politicization of education (and virtually everything else), it is particularly hazardous now. Educators can avoid this danger by following some basic principles of data interpretation.

Go Back to the Data

Many people call the National Commission on Excellence in Education's 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* "the paper *Sputnik*" because it focused attention on education in the same way *Sputnik* did in 1954. Some still refer to it today as a "landmark" study. It's a landmark, all right: a golden treasury of selected, spun, distorted, and even manufactured statistics.

After opening with a blast of Cold-Warrior rhetoric, the good commissioners listed 13 indicators of the "risk," all referring to test scores. For example, "Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school." Given that achievement tests at the time were the principal means of selecting kids for gifted and talented programs, how could this possibly be true? When I sought an answer from some commissioners and their staff members, no one could remember where this statistic came from. How convenient.

Another statistic was, "Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower." The United States has no program to test students graduating from college that would yield a statistic showing their "average tested achievement." What on earth could this mean? These examples illustrate a vital principle of data interpretation: If you find a statement the least bit suspect, ask to see the raw data.

Beware of Selectivity

Some of the other indicators in *A Nation at Risk* illustrate perhaps the most common misuse of statistics: selecting a statistic that, although accurate in itself, paints an incomplete and misleading picture. For instance, the report claimed that “there was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments in 1969, 1973, and 1977.” This was true.

But the statement refers only to science, and only to 17-year-olds. What about the 9- and 13-year-olds also tested in national assessments? No “steady decline” in science for them. What about math? What about reading? No hint of any decline in either subject for any of the three age groups (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2000).

The commissioners had nine trend lines available from NCES data (three ages times three subjects). Only one could be used to support crisis rhetoric, and that was the only one the commissioners mentioned.

Compare Rhetoric With the Numbers

Perhaps the most dangerous statistic is the one that Joel Best calls the *mutant* statistic. This statistic begins life as a legitimate datum, but mutates into something new and wrong. Best (2001) gives the example of the claim, widely circulated, that 150,000 women die in the United States each year from anorexia. The U.S. Census

Bureau’s *Statistical Abstract of the United States* shows that 55,000 women ages 15–44 die each year of all causes. Even if anorexia had killed all 55,000, given that anorexia mostly affects young women, it is unlikely that we can find another 95,000 anorexia victims younger than 15 and older than 44. In fact, the proper statistic is that 150,000 women *suffer* from anorexia—and even this number is probably a bit inflated because it was produced by an activist group attempting to call attention to the problem.

Mutant statistics afflict education data as well. *Washington Post* pundit George Will wrote in one column that almost half of Chicago’s public school teachers sent their own children to private schools (Will, 1993a). This was true. The figure was 43 percent at the time, and that was the highest proportion in the United States. (Religion figured strongly in the Chicago teachers’ decisions.) But over a period of six months, Will’s neurons replaced “Chicago” with “the nation”; in another column, he wrote, “Nationally about half of urban public school teachers with school-age children send their children to private schools” (Will, 1993b). This was not true. According to data from the 2000 census, 17.5 percent of all urban families and 21.5 percent of urban public school teachers send their children to private schools. The rate ranges from 43.8 percent of teachers in the Philadelphia/Camden metro area down to 1.7 percent in Oklahoma City. In 21 of these top 50 cities, teachers use private schools less than urban families do (Doyle, DeSchryver, & Diepod, 2004).

Figure 7.1 Pass Rates and Average Scores Tell a Different Story

Pass rate—Gap closed by 10 points			Average scores—Gap increased by 8 points		
	2004	2005		2004	2005
Black students	60%	70%	Black students	62	68
White students	100%	100%	White students	78	92
Gap	40	30	Gap	16	24

These are hypothetical data. Score needed to pass = 60.

Will's brain might have been addled by the work of Denis Doyle, whose reports using data from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses have promoted the idea that public school teachers do send their kids to private schools in larger numbers than the general public does (Doyle, 1995; Doyle, DeSchryver & Diepold, 2004; Doyle & Hartle, 1986). Doyle refers to teachers as "connoisseurs" of education, implying that if they send their kids to private schools, they must know something that the rest of us don't. He writes,

With teachers choosing private schools, the truth is self-evident: While they work in public schools, they choose private schools for their own children because they believe they are better. (Doyle, 1995)

This statement creates the impression that all public school teachers in all types of communities use private schools. But if we look beyond the rhetoric to the actual statistics, we find these figures for the United States as a whole (Doyle, 1995; Doyle, DeSchryver, & Diepold, 2004):

	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>General public</i>
1990	12.1%	13.1%
2000	10.6%	12.1%

The numbers show that teachers made less use of private schools than the general public did. What's more, despite all the lionization of private schools and the demonization of public schools during the 1990s, a smaller proportion of both teachers and the general public had children in private schools in 2000 than in 1990.

Make Sure That Groups Are Comparable

The statistics on the percentages of children sent to private schools point to another principle of data interpretation: When comparing groups, make sure the groups are comparable. Teachers

and the general public are not comparable. Teachers are more likely to have at least a bachelor's degree and less likely to live below the poverty line. We need to consider the implications of these and similar factors before we draw conclusions about the two groups' public school-private school choices.

This principle often comes into play in figuring out the impact of high-stakes graduation tests. In 2004, Massachusetts announced that 96 percent of its seniors had passed the state test and would graduate. This was true, but it was true only for people who had begun the 2003-2004 school year as seniors and who were still in school. Many in the class of 2004 were no longer present and accounted for. When that cohort of students started 9th grade, it contained 78,000 students; by the time it reached 12th grade, there were only 60,000. Eighteen thousand students had decamped (Wheelock, 2004).

We don't know what happened to these students. Some, of course, left the state and might well have passed the test and graduated if they had remained. But others were retained in grade and were no longer in the class of 2004. Some failed and dropped out or sought a General Equivalency Diploma. If we look at how many who started as 9th graders in the class of 2004 eventually graduated, we find rates ranging from 54 percent for Latino students to 80 percent for white students (Wheelock, 2004). We can't draw an accurate conclusion about the effects of high school graduation exams unless we consider all the groups, including those that did not graduate on time.

Know the Difference Between Rates and Scores

The Massachusetts example also illustrates another principle of data interpretation: Be aware of whether you are dealing with rates or scores. The two metrics can paint very different pictures of a situation. These days, most states are reporting some kind of rate: percent passing, percent proficient, or percent meeting state standards. But if we focus only on the proficiency cutoff, it

doesn't matter whether the student exceeds it by one question or 40. We're looking at how many kids can jump over the barrier, not at how high they jump.

Moreover, using passing rates instead of scores can obscure the fact that the white-minority achievement gap may be increasing. Consider the theoretical data in Figure 7.1. If we look only at passing rates, black students have reduced the gap from 40 percent to 30 percent. But if we look at scores, the gap has actually increased from 16 points to 24 points.

This discrepancy might not be so important if the passing score actually meant something in terms of performance in the real world. But it doesn't. These passing scores are totally arbitrary. Some readers might recall that in my recent report on the condition of public education (Bracey, 2005). I awarded a Golden Apple to a student in Ohio because he refused to take the Ohio Proficiency Tests. It was not his act of defiance that garnered him a prize; it was the reasons he gave:

In 13 years of testing, Ohio has failed to conduct any studies linking scores on the proficiency test to college acceptance rates, dropout rates, college grades, income levels, incarceration rates, scores on military recruiting tests, or any other similar statistic. [The student was admitted to several colleges.] (p. 140)

Do the Arithmetic

Here's a final principle of data interpretation to examine on your own: Do the arithmetic. In 1995, an article in an education periodical (not *Educational Leadership*) stated that "Every year since 1950, the number of American children gunned down has doubled." Sit down with a calculator and a sheet of paper on which you write in one column the years from 1950 to 1994. Then assume that one child was "gunned down" in 1950 and let the figure double for each successive year. Have fun.

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

What Is Sociology of Education?

Using the open systems model from the Introduction, draw a detailed systems model of a school with which you are familiar. Using a classroom as the unit of analysis, diagram the structure of the room, the relationships between teacher and students, the hierarchy of the school, and the environment of the classroom. Your model may include other classes, the department head or principal, the superintendent, or the school board. Also include rules, laws, or other regulations and local and

familial factors that could affect the classroom as the unit of analysis.

Using the basic ideas of the theoretical approaches discussed in Part I, outline what each perspective would consider when attempting to understand a specific school. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in explaining the educational system as it relates to that school?

Using an academic data base, look up one of the theoretical approaches and find recent articles that use the approach in understanding education. Use the “and” function, and ask for “EDUCATION” AND “CONFLICT THEORY” or any other theory.

PART II

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ROLES

The bell rings, lockers slam, conversations end, and classroom doors shut as the school day begins. We are all familiar with these signs that the formal school day is about to start. Schools provide the framework for meeting certain goals of societies and preparing young people for future statuses and roles. School organizations, just as other organizations, have formally stated goals, criteria for membership, a hierarchy of offices, and a number of informal goals, such as friendship and sharing of interests. Although individual schools around the world share a number of similarities in their structures and roles, they also have their own distinct personalities, an aspect of schools that is discussed in Part III.

Part II provides analysis of the formal part of the educational system: the structure, stated goals, and roles. We start by examining the organizations and activities or processes that make schools work. To do this, we consider schools as organizations with goals, and with participants carrying out roles of administrators, teachers, students, and support staff. The processes of teaching and learning take place in the schools to help fulfill the goals of schools. Each distinctive part and subpart of the educational system contributes to the overall goals.

Educational systems share characteristics with organizational bureaucracies in other sectors of society, such as business and government; examples of similarities include the formal rules and regulations, hiring based on merit, and firing based on job performance. However, some of these organizational characteristics conflict with the goals of schools; for example, to some members of the community, students are “clients”; to others they are “workers” or “products”; and to others they are youth to be molded into ideal citizens.

The broad functions and goals of schools are common knowledge and shared by many people. However, there is conflict over how to carry out those functions and goals—what curriculum to teach, what courses to offer, how to best prepare all students for society, among other issues. Conflicts occur within the school, between the school and school board and community, with different groups in communities, and between schools and the government. Even religious and political interest groups want a say in what schools teach and how they teach it. These conflicting goals will be seen in readings throughout the text.

Although the organizational goals of schools call for educating all students, not all students meet the requirements for passing to the next grade level or for graduating, especially when exams are administered to promote and graduate students. However to give up on these students, that is, to “fire” them, would be to lose societal resources. Therefore, schools cannot be run by the same rules and under the same efficiency model as business

organizations. Schools are expected, according to their goals, to prepare students for the next generation by transmitting shared knowledge, societal values, and ideals; foster cognitive and emotional growth; and sort and select students into different categories—college material, gifted, talented, slow, rebellious, and so forth—with consequences for future adult status.

The readings in Part II discuss educational organizations from large systems to individual classrooms, and roles within schools. Beginning with the broadest responsibilities, state and federal legislators make decisions about laws governing schools and money spent in schools. Local school boards and superintendents translate these broad mandates into policies to meet the goals of the local district. To begin our exploration of schools as organizations, Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben focus on schools and classrooms as the unit of analysis. Their reading covers events that take place in schools, the division of labor in schools, the roles of participants, the organization of classrooms, and how time structures the day in schools and classrooms.

Organizationally, schools are divided into classrooms, the day into periods, teachers into subject areas and rank, and students into groups by grades or performance on examinations (Hurn, 1993; Parsons, 1959). Like other formal organizations, schools have memberships composed of individuals holding different status positions necessary to carry out the functions and goals of the school. Each position holder has certain roles to perform, for example, administering, teaching, learning, and providing support functions, such as driving the bus and preparing the meals. These activities are the processes of schools, the means to meet goals. In considering the functions of schools, Talcott Parsons focuses on the school class and its purposes in meeting the goals for schools.

Debates over how to make schools more effective for student achievement stimulate social science research. A key research question has focused on a defining dimension—the most effective size of schools and classrooms; policies and funding reflect this interest if not always the research findings. Bruce Biddle and David Berliner review studies of class size and the impact of class size on student learning, considering the effect of size on school organizations and processes of teaching and learning.

Principals are responsible for the management of the local building; their roles put them in the middle between superintendents and school boards on the one hand and teachers on the other. Principals must negotiate solutions to differences between these other participants. Who has influence over what happens in schools is based in part on the social, cultural, and economic capital held by school leaders (see Spillane, Hallett, & Diamond, 2003). Decisions on policies, practices, and reforms in schools come from leaders, usually principals or experienced and influential teachers. How these leaders gain influence and respect is the topic of James Spillane, Tim Hallett, and John Diamond's reading on "Forms of Capital and the Construction of Leadership."

About 3.5 million persons in the United States are employed as elementary and secondary school teachers (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005). The number of public school teachers has risen at a greater rate than that of students in the past 10 years, resulting in a decline in student/teacher ratios from 17 to 15.5 students per teacher (NCES, 2005). In addition, 5 million people served as professional, administrative, and support staff in schools and colleges. Many sociologists of education have focused on the roles of teachers in educational organizations. The two readings about teachers review who they are, what conditions they face, how much control they have in their jobs, and

dissatisfaction and burnout resulting from, among other things, lack of control. Richard M. Ingersoll and David Perda discuss the criteria for professional status, where teachers meet these criteria, and where they fall short, and Gary Dworkin examines the effects of school reforms since the 1980s on teachers' jobs, and teacher reactions to the changes.

Teachers have direct contact with the children they are educating. Although they are responsible for their students, teachers are not completely autonomous. This presents a dilemma for many teachers, who feel they should have power to make decisions for the children they teach (Dworkin, 2007; Dworkin & Townsend, 1994). Lack of control is one factor leading to teacher burnout (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2002). In addition, teachers' salaries have held even for the past few years (NCES, 2005). For students, discussed in Part III, school is a gathering place for young people of similar ages. It facilitates the formation of peer groups that influence how the formal goals of schools are carried out (see Part III).

After studying these readings, you should have a clearer idea of the organization of schools and what sociologists of education look for in the formal organization of schools. Part III continues this exploration by examining the informal system in schools and the roles of students.

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8

HOW SCHOOLS WORK

REBECCA BARR AND ROBERT DREEBEN

This excerpt from Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben's book, *How Schools Work*, discusses the functioning of schools and classrooms. The authors examine different levels of Organization (units of analysis) from district offices to instructional groups in classrooms; they identify distinct events that take place in each unit, and how what happens in one unit affects others. They also discuss the roles and division of labor of some participants. Within classrooms there are instructional groups, often by ability level of students. Organization of time is another determinant of how schools work. From the length of the class period and day to the number of days in a year, the way time is structured affects opportunities to learn. The importance of this excerpt is in providing the methods and framework needed to understand the organization of educational systems and how schools work.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are topics to consider when studying how schools work?
2. What methods can be used to study how schools work?
3. What is the division of labor that influences classroom activities? Roles?
4. Can you relate what you read here to a school system with which you are familiar?

Our formulation begins with the idea that school systems are organizations that like others can be readily subject to sociological analysis. In all organizations labor is divided, which means that different activities are carried out in the different parts and that the parts are connected to each other in a coherent way. The parts of

school systems are very familiar. They consist of a central administration with jurisdiction over a school district as well as local administrations situated in each school with responsibility for what happens therein. The business of schooling, mainly instruction, takes place in classrooms run by teachers; and teachers preside not only over classes but over parts of them as well when they rely upon grouped forms of instruction. We will show how the work that gets done in district offices, schools, classes, and instructional groups is different in character, that these separate jurisdictions are locations for carrying on different sorts of activities. Indeed, this proposition is true for teachers as classroom instructors and as group instructors in that teachers do different things in organizing a class from what they do while instructing subgroups within it. Part of the answer to our question of how schools work, then, is to be found by identifying the distinct events happening at each level of school system organization.

A second part of the answer can be found by discovering how the events characteristic of one level influence those taking place at another. It would be a strange organization indeed if the parts were hermetically sealed off from each other; if, for example, what the principal did had no bearing on what teachers did and if what teachers did made no difference for what students did and learned. Yet it is precisely the failure to come up with satisfactory answers to these questions that has caused so much grief in our understanding of educational effects. The answer must come from identifying correctly what the activities are and from being able to trace their antecedents and effects across pathways that connect one level to another.

The third part of the answer pertains not so much to what to look for as it does to how to look for it. School systems, like other forms of social existence, are characterized by variability. We can learn about their workings by attending to the different ways that comparable parts act: different schools in the same system, different classes in the same school, different groups in the same class. What can vary in these levels of school organization is the way in which resources are

allocated, transformed, and used. A particular resource, like books, may be purchased by the district office. All fourth grade mathematics texts, for example, can then be distributed to each elementary school, thence to be stocked in each fourth grade class. Thus, a simple process of resource transmission takes place. From there, teachers in the same school may use the text in almost identical ways or in vastly different ways depending on how they organize their instructional programs. The program itself determines the instructional use, and hence the meaning, of the resource. Accordingly, insofar as the school is no more than a transmission belt for transporting books from the district office to the classroom, school-by-school comparisons will show similar activities. Class-by-class comparisons in textbook use, however, might show sharp contrasts. Depending upon the nature of those class contrasts, they may average out to show no school differences or bunch up to show marked school differences. In either case, it is the comparison of events at the same level—school and class in these examples—that tells us what is going on.

THE FORMULATION

Levels of Organization

Labor in school systems is divided; it is differentiated by task into different organizational levels in a hierarchical arrangement. While we customarily think about hierarchies as pertaining to relations of authority, rank, and power, they not only are manifestations of stratification and status distinction, but also represent organizational differentiation, a manifestation of labor being specialized and other resources distributed to different locations, of the elements of production having been both separated and tied together in some workable arrangement. We are concerned here with hierarchy in this latter sense.

In an educational division of labor, school systems comprise several levels of administrative and staff officers as well as “production” workers occupying positions with district, school, and

classroom jurisdictions. In addition, school systems are differentiated according to the resources they use, such as time and physical objects—like books—that constitute instructional materials. As we shall indicate shortly, time is a resource that has meaning at all levels of the hierarchy, but its meaning has different manifestations at each level. Textbooks, by contrast, are productive resources only inside classrooms. School systems also contain one additional element: students who are both the clients of the organization, the intended beneficiaries of its services, and, because schools are engaged in effecting change in children, productive resources in their own right because they participate directly and actively in their own learning.

When organizations are differentiated, it is because their parts make distinct contributions to the overall productive enterprise. This means that people located hierarchically at different places perform different kinds of activities; it also means that resources come into play in different ways depending upon where they are utilized in the productive process. A complete formulation of school production, therefore, should identify all relevant combinations of people, time, and material resources at each hierarchical level.

More specifically, school systems characteristically contain a managerial component responsible for centralized financial, personnel, procurement, plant maintenance, and supervisory functions applicable to all their constituent elements. This component is also engaged in direct dealings with agencies of the federal and state governments as well as with locally based interest groups and units of municipal government. Activities occurring at this managerial level have nothing directly to do with running schools or teaching students but rather are concerned with the acquisition of resources, with general supervision, and with the maintenance of relations with the surrounding community including suppliers of labor. We refer to this as the district level of organization; its jurisdiction includes all schools in the district.

Even though districts are divided into levels (elementary and secondary) related to the ages of

students, and some are also divided into geographical areas as well as functional units, we are primarily concerned—at the next lower hierarchical level—with schools. Contrary to conventional belief, schools are not organizational units of instruction. They are structures akin to switching yards where children within a given age range and from a designated geographical area are assigned to teachers who bring them into contact with approved learning materials, specified as being appropriate to age or ability, during certain allotted periods of time. Schools deal in potentialities; they assemble a supply of teachers, of students, and of resources over a given period of time. Their central activities are the assignment of children to specific teachers, the allocation of learning materials to classrooms, the arrangement of a schedule so that all children in the school can be allotted an appropriate amount of time to spend on subjects in the curriculum, and the integration of grades so that work completed in one represents adequate preparation for the next.

These activities are the primary responsibility of school principals; they are core functions peculiar to the school level of organization. This is so because decisions affecting the fate of all classrooms in a school are not likely to be left to individuals (teachers) who have in mind primarily classroom interests rather than whole school interests and whose self-interest puts them in a poor position to settle disputes among equals. Nor are they likely to be left to district-wide administrators, whose locations can be too remote and jurisdictions too widespread to allow them to make informed decisions about local school events.

While these decisions constitute the peculiar core activities of school level administration, they by no means exhaust the responsibilities of school administrators, which frequently include such matters as planning curriculum; establishing disciplinary standards; and making school policies for homework, decorum in public places, and the like. But while such concerns are frequently characteristic of school administration, they are not peculiar to it because district-wide administrators and teachers also participate

in them at the school level in fulfilling responsibilities within their own respective jurisdictions.

While instruction is not the business of the school, it is the business of classrooms and of teachers responsible for the direct engagement of students in learning activities. Aggregations of children are assigned to specific teachers who direct their activities and bring them into immediate contact with various sorts of learning materials. These activities are more than potentialities because children's active engagement working with teachers and materials is what enables them to learn.

Because classes contain diverse aggregations of children, it is not automatic that the instruction appropriate for one member of the aggregation will be appropriate for another. Hence, teachers in the lower grades characteristically create an additional level of suborganization to manage activities not easily handled in a grouping as large as the class. For example, in primary grade reading, there are suborganizations called instructional groups that represent still another level of organizational differentiation.

Finally, there are individual students. It is only individuals who work on tasks, and it is only they who learn; so that while work tasks might be set for all students in the class or in a group, the individual members vary in how much work they do and in how much they learn.

We argue here not only that school systems can be described by their constituent organizational levels, but that the events, activities, and organizational forms found at each level should be seen as addressing distinct as well as partially overlapping agendas. Districts, schools, classes, and instructional groups are structurally differentiated from each other; and what is more they make different contributions to the overall operation of the school system. . . . We recognize that not all schools have precisely the same organizational pattern. In the upper elementary grades, for example, formalized instructional groups characteristically used for primary level reading might or might not be employed; and in secondary schools, which lack self-contained classrooms, a departmental level of organization

usually appears as does formal tracking that distinguishes students largely on the basis of ability within schools but not within classes. Despite these variations, the general principle of differentiated structures and agendas holds.

Linkages Between Levels

If organizational levels are as distinct as this analysis suggests, how is it possible to think about a coherent production process for the whole school district organization? How should the connections between levels be formulated? We contend that each level of a school system has its own core productive agenda even though certain activities are performed at more than one level. That is, productive events of differing character occur at each level to effect outcomes that are themselves characteristic of each level. For example, a school outcome becomes a productive condition in classes yielding in turn a class outcome; the class outcome in turn becomes a productive element for instructional groups yielding a group outcome; and so on. We see, then, a set of nested hierarchical layers, each having a conditional and contributory relation to events and outcomes occurring at adjacent ones.

Consider an example of how levels of organization are connected to each other to constitute school production. As we observed earlier, classroom characteristics do not directly affect individual learning; they influence the formation of instructional groups. This might seem to be a strange statement since everyone knows that classroom teachers are responsible for instructing all children in a class. However, the teacher's job, we maintain, is first to transform an aggregation of children into an arrangement suitable for establishing an instructional program. In first grade reading, this usually means creating instructional reading groups. Hence, before any instruction takes place, decisions are made about how to arrange the class; whether to teach everyone together in one group, as in recitation; whether to establish subgroups in which only some children work intensively with the teacher while the others proceed by themselves with

little supervision; whether to set everyone to work independently at their desks to perform at their own rate such more or less individualized tasks as are contained in workbooks.

The results of these classroom decisions are not instructional, nor do they appear as individual learning. They are alternative grouping arrangements which should be thought of as class outcomes, or values. We must draw a distinction between what teachers do in organizing classes for instruction and the instruction they actually provide for the groupings of children that make up classroom organization. Down the road, those grouping arrangements influence individual learning through a chain of connections consisting of instructional activities. Individual learning, however, is not itself a class outcome. As our story unfolds, we will show how class grouping arrangements determine certain characteristics of the groups composing them, in particular the level of children's ability characteristic of each classroom group. As it turns out, this level of ability is a direct determinant of certain instructional activities undertaken by teachers, who treat differently composed groups in different ways.

One form this treatment takes is the amount of material covered, which we construe as an outcome, or value, created by instructional groups. (Note again: individual learning is not a group outcome any more than it is a class outcome.) Then, depending on how much material children cover over a given span of time, in combination with their own characteristics, they learn proportionally more or less. In sum, group arrangements are the value created at the class level, coverage the value at the group level, and learning the value at the individual level. Note particularly that the activities and outcomes characteristic of each level are qualitatively distinct—grouping, coverage, learning—and that they are linked together in a coherent manner.

Most readers will have recognized that we have been describing aspects of the familiar phenomenon of ability grouping, but not in a familiar way. Instead of simply distinguishing students according to whether they belong to

homogeneous or heterogeneous groups, which is the usual (and not very illuminating) way of studying grouping, we have tried to identify distinct though related activities that refer to sets of decisions that constitute class organization, grouped instruction, and individual learning.

This brief analysis shows the concatenation of distinct activities that constitute and surround classroom instruction. An implication of this analysis is that we can take any single educationally relevant resource and trace its manifestations across several hierarchical levels of school system organization. . . . To illustrate the logic of the formulation, we will consider here the resource of time.

A school district administration makes three kinds of decisions about time. The first reveals its responsibilities of law enforcement to the state: the schools must remain open for a stipulated number of days to qualify for state aid. While this enforcement of state law places an outside limit on time available for teaching, it does not bear directly on teaching, instruction, or learning. Furthermore, when the length of the academic year is combined with a determination about the length of the school day, the second type of district decision is made: how much time teachers (and other employees) will work as part of a contractual agreement with suppliers of labor. The third type of decision pertains to when the schools will start and finish each academic year, open and close each day, and recess for vacations, decisions that determine when and whether parents can leave the household for work and arrange for the care of very young children. Basic time considerations, then, at the district level of organization are tied up with law enforcement, labor contracts, and the integration of the school system with households in the community; and district outcomes can be defined in these terms.

School systems, of course, do not hire teachers in general, but teachers who instruct in particular subjects in secondary schools and in a variety of basic skills in elementary schools. Hiring teachers by subject and skill presumes that curricular priorities have been established, which means that decisions have been made

about how much time will be devoted to each segment of the curriculum: to English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, and so on, in secondary schools; to reading, arithmetic, science, social studies, and so on, in elementary schools. At the level of schools, these decisions become manifest in the time schedule, a formal statement written in fine-grained time units of how much time will be devoted to each subject matter and to extracurricular pursuits.

The school schedule is really a political document that acknowledges the influences of administrative directives and the preferences of teachers and parents expressing varying views about the welfare of the student body, of individual students, and of different types of students. It embodies past decisions about how much ordinary instruction there will be, in which subjects, at which more or less desirable times, and in which more or less desirable places. It expresses how segregated or desegregated classes will be in response to higher level administrative directives as well as the integration of the handicapped in regular and special classes. These resultant priorities conventionally expressed in the time schedule are an outcome of school level organization.

The curricular priorities expressed in the school time schedule represent temporal constraints upon the work of teachers in classrooms. While in secondary schools the order of classes throughout the day is established by the schedule itself, in elementary schools the teachers themselves arrange activities within the confines of daily time allotments, deciding which activities come earliest in the day, which next, and which last, with some flexibility about how long each successive activity will last. In addition to determining which activities take place during the "better" and "worse" times of the day, teachers also establish, within school guidelines and across parts of the curriculum (reading, arithmetic, science), how long instruction will last in each of a variety of classroom formats (whole class, grouped, individual instruction) and how much time gets wasted through interruptions, poor planning, and transitions between activities. At the classroom level, then, teachers allocate

time in ways that bear directly upon instruction by determining the amount of time that students will have available for productive work in various subject areas.

Finally, given the time that teachers make available for productive work, students then decide how much of that time to use and to waste, and in so doing influence the amount they will learn.

What we have done here is to trace the allocation of time through the layers of school system organization to show how it takes on different manifestations as district, school, class, and individual phenomena. We have also shown how the nature of time at one level becomes a time condition for events occurring at the next lower level.

What our formulation does is very simple. It locates productive activities at all levels of the school system that in more common but less precise parlance are known as administration and teaching. It also states that productive activities specific to levels produce outcomes specific to levels. Accordingly, we distinguish carefully between the productive processes that constitute the working of school organization from the outcomes, or values, produced by those processes. They are not the same thing, although they have commonly been confused in discussions about educational effects. The distinction between production and value not only is important conceptually, but provides a principle that ties the parts of the levels of school organization into a coherent pattern.

The formulation also carries us some distance in thinking about how the effectiveness of schools should be viewed. The common practice of using individual achievement (or aggregations of individual achievement) as a primary index to gauge whether schools are productive is of limited value because there are other outcomes that are the direct result of productive processes occurring at higher levels of school system organization. There is no question that achievement is an important outcome at the individual level; it may or may not be an important outcome at other levels, as our previous analyses of time and grouping indicate. Perhaps, for example, the properly understood

outcome of instructional groups is a group-specific rate of covering learning materials or the amount of time a teacher makes available for instruction, outcomes that when considered at the individual level are properly construed as conditions of learning. An important class level outcome may be the creation of an appropriate grouping arrangement or the establishment of a productive time schedule, both of which are conditions bearing on the nature of group instruction.

Similarly, at the school level, the important outcomes may be the allocation of time to curricular

areas that makes enough time available for basic skill subjects, an assignment of teachers to classes that makes the most appropriate use of their talents or that provides equitable work loads, or the appropriate coordination of skill subjects from year to year so that children are prepared for the work of the succeeding grade. At the district level, perhaps negotiating labor contracts that satisfy employees, administrators, and the taxpayers, or having a satisfactory book and materials procurement policy represent significant outcomes.

THE SCHOOL CLASS AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

TALCOTT PARSONS

In these excerpts from a classical 1959 piece in the functionalist tradition, Talcott Parsons considers functions of schools that help hold society together. In focusing on the school class, he looks at the school as an agency of socialization, preparing the young members of society for their adult roles. Schools sort students into college and non-college groups early in the student's career. Parsons also points out the relationships between family and peer groups and schools. As you read his description of the school class, keep in mind the functionalist perspective and how it is presented in his discussion.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What functions of school are carried out in the classroom? How are they carried out?
2. How do family and family background interact with a child's school experience?

3. What factors affect the elementary child's achievement in school? How does achievement relate to future chances?
4. How does the perspective presented in this reading compare to the discussions of functionalism in Part I presented by Ballantine and Spade and by Durkheim?

This essay¹ will attempt to outline, if only sketchily, an analysis of the elementary and secondary school class as a social system, and the relation of its structure to its primary functions in the society as an agency of socialization and allocation. While it is important that the school class is normally part of the larger organization of a school, the class rather than the whole school will be the unit of analysis here, for it is recognized both by the school system and by the individual pupil as the place where the "business" of formal education actually takes place. In elementary schools, pupils of one grade are

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typically placed in a single "class" under one main teacher, but in the secondary school, and sometimes in the upper elementary grades, the pupil works on different subjects under different teachers; here the complex of classes participated in by the same pupil is the significant unit for our purposes.

THE PROBLEM:

SOCIALIZATION AND SELECTION

Our main interest, then, is in a dual problem: first, of how the school class functions to internalize in its pupils both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles, and second, of how it functions to allocate these human resources within the role-structure of the adult society. The primary ways in which these two problems are interrelated will provide our main points of reference.

First, from the functional point of view the school class can be treated as an agency of socialization. That is to say, it is an agency through which individual personalities are trained to be motivationally and technically adequate to the performance of adult roles. It is not the sole such agency; the family, informal "peer groups," churches, and sundry voluntary organizations all play a part, as does actual on-the-job training. But, in the period extending from entry into first grade until entry into the labor force or marriage, the school class may be regarded as the focal socializing agency.

The socialization function may be summed up as the development in individuals of the commitments and capacities which are essential prerequisites of their future role-performance. Commitments may be broken down in turn into two components: commitment to the implementation of the broad values of society, and commitment to the performance of a specific type of role within the structure of society. Thus a person in a relatively humble occupation may be a "solid citizen" in the sense of commitment to honest work in that occupation, without an intensive and sophisticated concern with the implementation of society's higher-level values.

Or conversely, someone else might object to the anchorage of the feminine role in marriage and the family on the grounds that such anchorage keeps society's total talent resources from being distributed equitably to business, government, and so on. Capacities can also be broken down into two components, the first being competence or the skill to perform the tasks involved in the individual's roles, and the second being "role-responsibility" or the capacity to live up to other people's expectations of the interpersonal behavior appropriate to these roles. Thus a mechanic as well as a doctor needs to have not only the basic "skills of his trade," but also the ability to behave responsibly toward those people with whom he is brought into contact in his work.

While on the one hand, the school class may be regarded as a primary agency by which these different components of commitments and capacities are generated, on the other hand, it is, from the point of view of the society, an agency of "manpower" allocation. It is well known that in American society there is a very high, and probably increasing, correlation between one's status level in the society and one's level of educational attainment. Both social status and educational level are obviously related to the occupational status which is attained. Now, as a result of the general process of both educational and occupational upgrading, completion of high school is increasingly coming to be the norm for minimum satisfactory educational attainment, and the most significant line for future occupational status has come to be drawn between members of an age-cohort who do and do not go to college.

We are interested, then, in what it is about the school class in our society that determines the distinction between the contingents of the age-cohort which do and do not go to college. Because of a tradition of localism and a rather pragmatic pluralism, there is apparently considerable variety among school systems of various cities and states. Although the situation in metropolitan Boston probably represents a more highly structured pattern than in many other parts of the country, it is probably not so extreme as to be misleading in its main features. There,

though of course actual entry into college does not come until after graduation from high school, the main dividing line is between those who are and are not enrolled in the college preparatory course in high school; there is only a small amount of shifting either way after about the ninth grade when the decision is normally made. Furthermore, the evidence seems to be that by far the most important criterion of selection is the record of school performance in elementary school. These records are evaluated by teachers and principals, and there are few cases of entering the college preparatory course against their advice. It is therefore not stretching the evidence too far to say broadly that the primary selective process occurs through differential school performance in elementary school, and that the "seal" is put on it in junior high school.

The evidence also is that the selective process is genuinely assortative. As in virtually all comparable processes, ascriptive as well as achieved factors influence the outcome. In this case, the ascriptive factor is the socioeconomic status of the child's family, and the factor underlying his opportunity for achievement is his individual ability. In the study of 3,348 Boston high school boys on which these generalizations are based, each of these factors was quite highly correlated with planning college. For example, the percentages planning college, by father's occupation, were: 12 per cent for semi-skilled and unskilled, 19 per cent for skilled, 26 per cent for minor white collar, 52 per cent for middle white collar, and 80 per cent for major white collar. Likewise, intentions varied by ability (as measured by IQ), namely, 11 per cent for the lowest quintile, 17 per cent for the next, 24 per cent for the middle, 30 per cent for the next to the top, and 52 per cent for the highest. It should be noted also that within any ability quintile, the relationship of plans to father's occupation is seen. For example, within the very important top quintile in ability as measured, the range in college intentions was from 29 per cent for sons of laborers to 89 per cent for sons of major white collar persons.²

The essential points here seem to be that there is a relatively uniform criterion of selection operating to differentiate between the college and the

non-college contingents, and that for a very important part of the cohort the operation of this criterion is not a "put-up job"—it is not simply a way of affirming a previously determined ascriptive status. To be sure, the high-status, high-ability boy is very likely indeed to go to college, and the low-status, low-ability boy is very unlikely to go. But the "cross-pressured" group for whom these two factors do not coincide³ is of considerable importance.

Considerations like these lead me to conclude that the main process of differentiation (which from another point of view is selection) that occurs during elementary school takes place on a single main axis of achievement. Broadly, moreover, the differentiation leads up through high school to a bifurcation into college-goers and non-college-goers.

To assess the significance of this pattern, let us look at its place in the socialization of the individual. Entering the system of formal education is the child's first major step out of primary involvement in his family of orientation. Within the family certain foundations of his motivational system have been laid down. But the only characteristic fundamental to later roles which has clearly been "determined" and psychologically stamped in by that time is sex role. The postoeidial child enters the system of formal education clearly categorized as boy or girl, but beyond that his role is not yet differentiated. The process of selection, by which persons will select and be selected for categories of roles, is yet to take place.

On grounds which cannot be gone into here, it may be said that the most important single predispositional factor with which the child enters the school is his level of independence. By this is meant his level of self-sufficiency relative to guidance by adults, his capacity to take responsibility and to make his own decisions in coping with new and varying situations. This, like his sex role, he has as a function of his experience in the family.

The family is a collectivity within which the basic status-structure is ascribed in terms of biological position, that is, by generation, sex, and age. There are inevitably differences of performance relative to these, and they are rewarded

and punished in ways that contribute to differential character formation. But these differences are not given the sanction of institutionalized social status. The school is the first socializing agency in the child's experience which institutionalizes a differentiation of status on nonbiological bases. Moreover, this is not an ascribed but an achieved status; it is the status "earned" by differential performance of the tasks set by the teacher, who is acting as an agent of the community's school system. Let us look at the structure of this situation.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS

In accord with the generally wide variability of American institutions, and of course the basically local control of school systems, there is considerable variability of school situations, but broadly they have a single relatively well-marked framework.⁴ Particularly in the primary part of the elementary grades, i.e., the first three grades, the basic pattern includes one main teacher for the class, who teaches all subjects and who is in charge of the class generally. Sometimes this early, and frequently in later grades, other teachers are brought in for a few special subjects, particularly gym, music, and art, but this does not alter the central position of the main teacher. This teacher is usually a woman.⁵ The class is with this one teacher for the school year, but usually no longer.

The class, then, is composed of about 25 age peers of both sexes drawn from a relatively small geographical area—the neighborhood. Except for sex in certain respects, there is initially no formal basis for differentiation of status within the school class. The main structural differentiation develops gradually, on the single main axis indicated above as achievement. That the differentiation should occur on a single main axis is insured by four primary features of the situation. The first is the initial equalization of the "contestants'" status by age and by "family background," the neighborhood being typically much more homogeneous than is the whole society.

The second circumstance is the imposition of a common set of tasks which is, compared to most other task areas, strikingly undifferentiated. The school situation is far more like a race in this respect than most role-performance situations. Third, there is the sharp polarization between the pupils in their initial equality and the single teacher who is an adult and "represents" the adult world. And fourth, there is a relatively systematic process of evaluation of the pupils' performances. From the point of view of a pupil, this evaluation, particularly (though not exclusively) in the form of report card marks, constitutes reward and/or punishment for past performance; from the viewpoint of the school system acting as an allocating agency, it is a basis of selection for future status in society.

Two important sets of qualifications need to be kept in mind in interpreting this structural pattern, but I think these do not destroy the significance of its main outline. The first qualification is for variations in the formal organization and procedures of the school class itself. Here the most important kind of variation is that between relatively "traditional" schools and relatively "progressive" schools. The more traditional schools put more emphasis on discrete units of subject-matter, whereas the progressive type allows more "indirect" teaching through "projects" and broader topical interests where more than one bird can be killed with a stone. In progressive schools there is more emphasis on groups of pupils working together, compared to the traditional direct relation of the individual pupil to the teacher. This is related to the progressive emphasis on co-operation [sic] among the pupils rather than direct competition, to greater permissiveness as opposed to strictness of discipline, and to a de-emphasis on formal marking.⁶ In some schools one of these components will be more prominent, and in others, another. That it is, however, an important range of variation is clear. It has to do, I think, very largely with the independence-dependence training which is so important to early socialization in the family. My broad interpretation is that those people who emphasize independence training will tend to be those who favor relatively

progressive education. The relation of support for progressive education to relatively high socioeconomic status and to "intellectual" interests and the like is well known. There is no contradiction between these emphases both on independence and on co-operation and group solidarity among pupils. In the first instance this is because the main focus of the independence problem at these ages is vis-à-vis adults. However, it can also be said that the peer group, which here is built into the school class, is an indirect field of expression of dependency needs, displaced from adults.

The second set of qualifications concerns the "informal" aspects of the school class, which are always somewhat at variance with the formal expectations. For instance, the formal pattern of nondifferentiation between the sexes may be modified informally, for the very salience of the one-sex peer group at this age period means that there is bound to be considerable implicit recognition of it—for example, in the form of teachers' encouraging group competition between boys and girls. Still, the fact of coeducation and the attempt to treat both sexes alike in all the crucial formal respects remain the most important. Another problem raised by informal organization is the question of how far teachers can and do treat pupils particularistically in violation of the universalistic expectations of the school. When compared with other types of formal organizations, however, I think the extent of this discrepancy in elementary schools is seen to be not unusual. The school class is structured so that opportunity for particularistic treatment is severely limited. Because there are so many more children in a school class than in a family and [because] they are concentrated in a much narrower age range, the teacher has much less chance than does a parent to grant particularistic favors.

Bearing in mind these two sets of qualifications, it is still fair, I think, to conclude that the major characteristics of the elementary school class in this country are such as have been outlined. It should be especially emphasized that more or less progressive schools, even with their relative lack of emphasis on formal marking, do

not constitute a separate pattern, but rather a variant tendency within the same pattern. A progressive teacher, like any other, will form opinions about the different merits of her pupils relative to the values and goals of the class and will communicate these valuations to them, informally if not formally. It is my impression that the extremer cases of playing down relative evaluation are confined to those upper-status schools where going to a "good" college is so fully taken for granted that for practical purposes it is an ascribed status. In other words, in interpreting these facts the selective function of the school class should be kept continually in the forefront of attention. Quite clearly its importance has not been decreasing; rather the contrary. . . .

NOTES

I am indebted to Mrs. Carolyn Cooper for research assistance in the relevant literature and for editorial work on the first draft of this paper. The principal source for these statements is a study of social mobility among boys in ten public high schools in the Boston metropolitan area, conducted by Samuel A. Stouffer, Florence R. Kluckhohn, and the present author. Unfortunately the material is not available in published form.

1. From *Harvard Education Review*, 29 (Fall 1959), 297-313. Copyright ©1959 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved.

2. See table from this study in J.A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1953), p. 283. Data from a nationwide sample of high school students, published by the Educational Testing Service, show similar patterns of relationships. For example, the ETS study shows variation, by father's occupation, in proportion of high school seniors planning college, of from 35 per cent to 80 per cent for boys and 27 per cent to 79 per cent for girls (From *Background Factors Related to College Plans and College Enrollment Among High School Students* [Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1957]).

3. There seem to be two main reasons why the high-status, low-ability group is not so important as its obverse. The first is that in a society of expanding

educational and occupational opportunity the general trend is one of upgrading, and the social pressures to downward mobility are not as great as they would otherwise be. The second is that there are cushioning mechanisms which tend to protect the high status boy who has difficulty "making the grade." He may be sent to a college with low academic standards, he may go to schools where the line between ability levels is not rigorously drawn, etc.

4. This discussion refers to public schools. Only about 13 per cent of all elementary and secondary school pupils attend non-public schools, with this proportion ranging from about 22 per cent in the

Northeast to about 6 per cent in the South. U.S. Office of Education, Biennial Survey Education (*Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1954-56*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959, Chapter ii, "Statistics of State School Systems, 1955-56," Table 44, p. 114).

5. In 1955-56, 13 percent of the public elementary school instructional staff in the United States were men (*Ibid*, p. 7).

6. This summary of some contrasts between traditional and progressive patterns is derived from general reading in the literature rather than any single authoritative account.

SMALL CLASS SIZE AND ITS EFFECTS

BRUCE J. BIDDLE AND DAVID C. BERLINER

Debates over ideal school and class size have pitted policy makers and politicians against each other, and stimulated many researchers to study the issue. Conservative versus liberal politicians argue for larger versus smaller schools based on "the research," but the research presents a mixed picture. The question that is sometimes overlooked is the effect of large versus small schools on equality of educational opportunity, especially in overcrowded schools and classes (Ready, Lee & Welner, 2004). Biddle and Berliner present an overview of research and projects addressing size issues, especially the relationship of size to achievement of students.

Ready, D. D., Lee, V. E., & Welner, K. G. (2004, October). Educational equity and school structure: School size, overcrowding, and schools-within-schools. *Teachers College Record*, 106(10), 1989-2014.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does research show about class size and achievement?
2. For whom is understanding of this issue important?
3. How do these findings relate to discussions of equality of educational opportunity in Readings 6 and 7?

Studies of the impact of class size on student achievement may be more plentiful than for any other issue in education. Although one might expect this huge research effort to yield clear answers about the effects of class size, sharp disagreements about these studies' findings have persisted.

Advocacy groups take opposite stances. The American Federation of Teachers, for example, asserts that

taken together, these studies . . . provide compelling evidence that reducing class size, particularly for

"Small Class Size and Its Effects" by Bruce J. Biddle and David C. Berliner. From the February 2002 issue of *Educational Leadership* 59(5), p. 12-23. Used with permission. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.

younger children, will have a positive effect on student achievement. (Murphy & Rosenberg, 1998, p. 3)

The Heritage Foundation, by contrast, claims that “there’s no evidence that smaller class sizes alone lead to higher student achievement” (Rees & Johnson, 2000).

Reviewers of class size studies also disagree. One study contends that “large reductions in school class size promise learning benefits of a magnitude commonly believed not within the power of educators to achieve” (Glass, Cahen, Smith, & Filby, 1982, p. 50), whereas another claims that “the . . . evidence does not offer much reason to expect a systematic effect from overall class size reduction policies” (Hanushek, 1999, p. 158).

That the American Federation of Teachers and the Heritage Foundation sponsor conflicting judgments is easy to understand. But why have reviewers come to such divergent views about the research on class size, and what does the evidence really say?

EARLY SMALL FIELD EXPERIMENTS

To answer these questions, we must look at several research traditions, beginning with early experiments on class size. Experiments have always been a popular research technique because investigators can assign their subjects randomly to different conditions and then compare the results of those conditions—and this human intervention can appear to provide information about causes and effects. Experiments on class size, however, are nearly always done in field settings—schools—where uncontrolled events can undermine the research and effect results.

Small experimental studies on the effects of class size began to appear in the 1920s, and scores of them emerged subsequently. In the 1960s, informal reviews of these efforts generally concluded that differences in class size generated little to no effect. By the late 1970s, however, a more sophisticated research method, meta-analysis, had been invented, which facilitated

the statistical assembly of results from small-but-similar studies to estimate effects for the studies’ populations. Reviewers quickly applied meta-analysis to results from early experiments in class size (Educational Research Service, 1980; Glass et al., 1982; Glass & Smith, 1979; Hedges & Stock, 1983) and eventually emerged with a consensus that short-term exposure to small classes generates—usually minor—gains in students achievement and that those gains are greater in the early grades, in classrooms with fewer than 20 students, and for students from groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

Most of these early class size experiments, however, had involved small samples, short-term exposures to small classes, only one measure of student success, and a single education context (such as one school or school district). Poor designs had also made results of some studies questionable. Researchers needed to use different strategies to ascertain the effects of long-term exposure to small classes and to assess whether the advantages of early exposure to small classes would generalize to other successes and be sustainable.

SURVEYS

Survey research has provided evidence on the effects of class size by analyzing naturally occurring differences in schools and classrooms and by asking whether these differences are associated with student outcomes.

Well-designed surveys can offer evidence about the impact of variables that experiments cannot manipulate—such as gender, minority status, and childhood poverty—but survey research cannot easily establish relationships between causes and effects. For example, if a survey examines a sample of schools where average class size varies and discovers that those schools with smaller classes also have higher levels of student achievement, has the survey ascertained that class size generated achievement? Hardly. Those schools with smaller classes might also have had more qualified

teachers, better equipment, more up-to-date curriculums, newer school buildings, more students from affluent homes, or a more supportive community environment—factors that may also have helped generate higher levels of achievement. To use survey data to make the case for a causal relation between class size and student outcomes, then, researchers must use statistical processes that control for the competing effects of other variables.

Serious surveys of education achievement in the United States began in the 1960s with the famous Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966). Written by authors with impressive reputations and released with great fanfare, this massive, federally funded study involved a national sample and took on many issues then facing education. Today, most people remember the report for its startling claim that student achievement is almost totally influenced by the students' families and peers and not by the characteristics of their schools. This claim was widely accepted—indeed, was greeted with dismay by educators and endorsed with enthusiasm by fiscal conservatives—despite flaws in the report's methods that were noted by thoughtful critics.

Since then, researchers have conducted surveys to establish whether differences in school funding or in the reforms that funds can buy—such as small class sizes—are associated with desired education outcomes. Most of these surveys, usually designed by economists, have involved questionable design features and small samples that did not represent the wide range of U.S. schools, classrooms, or students.

Fortunately, a few well-designed, large-scale surveys have investigated class size directly (see, for example, Elliott, 1998; Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Wenglinsky, 1997). These studies concluded that long-term exposure to small classes in the early grades can be associated with student achievement; that the extra gains that such exposure generates may be substantial; and that such gains may not appear with exposure to small classes in the upper grades or at the secondary school levels.

TRIAL PROGRAMS AND LARGE FIELD EXPERIMENTS

Other types of small class research have addressed some of the shortcomings of early experiments and surveys. In the 1980s, state legislatures in the United States began political debates about the effects of small class size, and some states began trial programs or large-scale field experiments.

Tennessee's Project STAR

Such an experiment shortly appeared in Tennessee's Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) arguably the largest and best-designed field experiment ever undertaken in education (Finn & Achilles, 1990; Finn, Gerber, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Folger, 1989; Grissmer, 1999; Krueger, 1999, 2000; Krueger & Whitmore, 2001; Mosteller, 1995; Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 1999).

In the mid-1980s, the Tennessee legislature funded a four-year study to compare the achievement of early-grade students assigned randomly to one of three conditions: *standard classes* (with one certificated teacher and more than 20 students); *supplemented classes* (with one teacher and a full-time, noncertificated teacher's aide); and *small classes* (with one teacher and about 15 students). The study began with students entering kindergarten in 1985 and called for each student to attend the same type of class for four years. To control variables, the study asked each participating school to sponsor all three types of classes and to assign students and teachers randomly to each type. Participating teachers received no prior training for the type of class they were to teach.

The project invited all the state's primary schools to be in the study, but each participating school had to agree to remain in the program for four years; to have the class *rooms* needed for the project; and to have at least 57 kindergarten students so that all three types of classes could be

set up. Participating schools received no additional support other than funds to hire additional teachers and aides. These constraints meant that troubled schools and those that disapproved of the study—and schools that were too small, crowded, or underfunded—would not participate in the STAR program, so the sample for the first year involved “only” 79 schools, 328 classrooms, and about 6,300 students. Those schools came from all corners of the state, however, and represented urban, inner-city, suburban, and rural school districts. The sample population included majority students, a sizable number of African American students, and students receiving free school lunches.

At the beginning of each year of the study, the sample population changed somewhat. Some participating students had moved away, been required to repeat kindergarten, or left the study because of poor health. Other families moved into the districts served by STAR schools, however, and their children filled the vacant seats. Also, because attending kindergarten was not then mandatory in Tennessee, some new students entered the STAR program in the 1st grade.

In addition, some parents tried to move their children from one type of STAR class to another, but administrators allowed only a few students to move from a standard class to a supplemented class or vice versa. By the end of the study, then, some students had been exposed to a STAR class for four years, but others had spent a shorter time in such classes. These shifts might have biased STAR results, but Alan Krueger’s careful analysis (1999) concluded that such bias was minimal.

Near the end of each year, STAR students took the Stanford Achievement Test battery and received separate scores for reading, word-study skills, and mathematics. Results from these tests were similar for students who were in the standard and supplemented classes, indicating that the presence of untrained aides in supplemented classes did *not* contribute to improving student achievement. Results for small classes were sharply different, however, with long-term exposure to small classes generating substantially

higher levels of achievement and with gains becoming greater the longer that students were in small classes.

STAR investigators found that the students in small classes were 0.5 months ahead of the other students by the end of kindergarten, 1.9 months ahead at the end of 1st grade, 5.6 months ahead in 2nd grade, and 7.1 months ahead by the end of 3rd grade. The achievement advantages were smaller, although still impressive, for students who were only exposed to one, two, or three years of small classes. STAR investigators found similar (although not identical) results for word-study skills and mathematics.

Small-class advantages appeared for all types of students participating in the study. The gains were similar for boys and girls, but they were greater for impoverished students. African American students, and students from inner-city schools—groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

These initial STAR findings were impressive, but would students who had been exposed to small classes in the early grades retain their extra gains when they entered standard size classes in 4th grade? To answer this question, the Tennessee legislature authorized a second study to examine STAR student outcomes during subsequent years of schooling.

At the end of each year, until they were in the 12th grade in 1997–1998, these students took the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills and received scores in reading, mathematics, science, and social science. The results showed that average students who had attended small classes were months ahead of those from standard classes for each topic assessed at each grade level. Figure 10.1 displays results from some of these tests, showing for example, that when typical students who had attended small classes in the early grades reached grade 8, they were 4.1 months ahead in reading, 3.4 months ahead in mathematics, 4.3 months ahead in science, and 4.8 months ahead in social science.

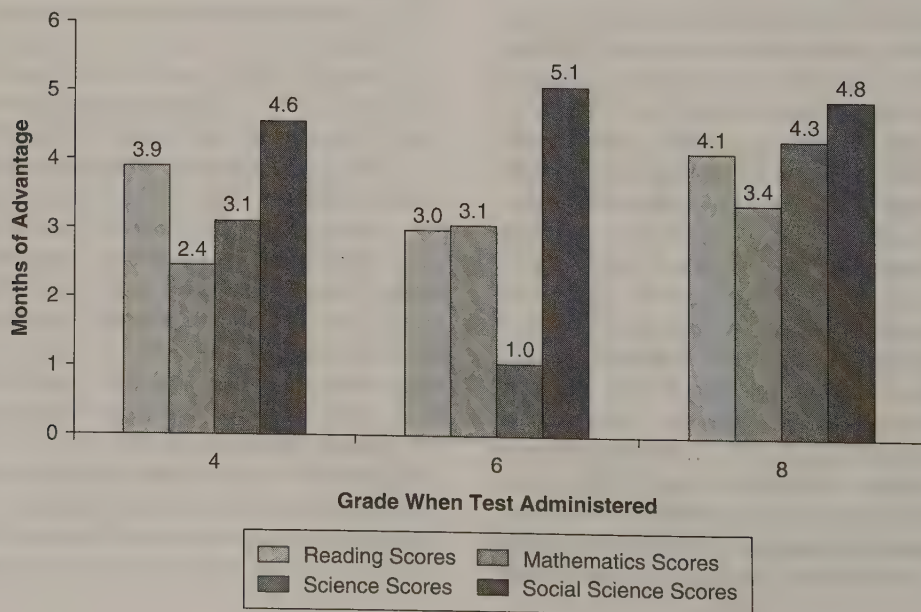
Students who had attended small classes also enjoyed other advantages in the upper grades.

They earned better grades on average, and fewer dropped out or had to repeat a year. And when they reached high school, more small class students opted to learn foreign languages, study advanced-level courses, and take the ACT and SAT college entrance examinations. More graduated from high school and were in the top 25 percent of their classes. Moreover, initial published results suggest that these upper-grade effects were again larger for students who are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

Of students who opted to take the ACT or SAT exams as high school seniors, roughly 44 percent of those from small classes took one or both of these tests, whereas only 40 percent of those from standard classes did so. The difference, however, was far greater for African American students. Instruction in small classes during the early grades had eliminated more than half of the traditional disadvantages that African American students have displayed in participation rates in the ACT and SAT testing programs.

Taken together, findings from the STAR project have been impressive, but they are not necessarily definitive. The STAR student sample did not quite match the U.S. population, for example, because very few Hispanic, Native American, and immigrant (non-English-speaking) families were living in Tennessee in the middle-1980s. Also, news about the greater achievement gains of small classes leaked out early during STAR project, and one wonders how this may have affected participating teachers and why parents whose children were in other types of classes did not then demand that their children be reassigned to small classes. Finally, the STAR schools had volunteered to participate, suggesting that the teachers and principals in those schools may have had strong interests in trying innovative ideas. Questions such as these should not cause us to reject the findings from the STAR project, but we should keep in mind that this was a single study and that, as always, other evidence is needed to increase certainty about class size effects. . . .

Figure 10.1 Average Months of Grade-Equivalent Advantage in Achievement Scores for Students Who Experienced One or More Years of Small Classes



Findings from Project STAR have prompted class size reduction efforts in other states. One type of effort focuses on increasing the number of small, early-grade classes in schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Like project STAR, the SAGE program (Wisconsin's Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program) studied schools that had volunteered for the program and provided them with sufficient funds to hire additional teachers. The SAGE program, however, involved more Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students than had the STAR project.

After the announcement of findings from the initial effort, the Wisconsin legislature extended the SAGE program to other primary schools in the state. Therefore, what began as a small trial project has now blossomed into a statewide program that makes small classes in the early grades available for schools serving needy students.

The California Class Size Reduction Program

In 1996, California began a class size reduction program that has been far more controversial than such programs elsewhere. In earlier years, California had experienced many social problems, and major measures of achievement ranked California schools last in the United States. That year, however, a fiscal windfall became available, and then-governor Pete Wilson announced that primary schools would receive \$650 annually for each student (an amount later increased to \$800) if they would agree to reduce class sizes in the early grades from the statewide average of more than 28 students to not more than 20 students in each class (Hymon, 1997; Korostoff, 1998; Stecher, Bohrnstedt, Kirst, McRobbie, & Williams, 2001).

Several problems quickly surfaced. First, the California definition of a small class was larger than the size recommended in other studies. In fact, the size of small classes in California matched the size of standard classes in some other states. On the other hand, some California schools had been coping with 30–40 students in each classroom in the early grades, so a reduction to 20 students constituted an improvement.

The second problem was that the program's per-student funding was inadequate. Contrast the SAGE program's additional \$2,000 for each student with the \$650 or \$800 offered by California. Nevertheless, the lure of additional funding proved seductive, and most California school districts applied to participate. This inadequate funding imposed serious consequences on poorer school districts, which had to abolish other needed activities to afford hiring teachers for smaller classes. In effect, then, the program created rather than solved problems for underfunded school districts.

In addition, when the California program began, many of its primary schools were overcrowded, and the state was suffering from a shortage of well-trained, certificated teachers. To cope with the lack of space, some schools created spaces for smaller classes by cannibalizing other needed facilities such as special education quarters, child care centers, music and art rooms, computer laboratories, libraries, gymnasiums, or teachers' lounges. Other schools had to tap into their operating budgets to buy portable classrooms, resulting in delays in paying for badly needed curricular materials or repairs for deteriorating school buildings. And to staff their smaller classes, many schools had to hire teachers without certification or prior training.

So far, results from the California program have been only modest. Informal evidence suggests that most students, parents, and teachers are pleased with their schools' smaller classes. And comparisons between the measured achievements of 3rd grade students from districts that did and did not participate in the early phases of the program have indicated minor advantages for California's smaller classes. These effects, however, have been smaller than those reported for the STAR and SAGE programs.

In many ways, the California initiative has provided a near-textbook case of how a state should *not* reduce class size. After failing to conduct a trial program, California adopted an inadequate definition of class size, committed insufficient funds to the initiative, and ignored serious problems of over-crowding and teacher shortages. This example should remind us that

small classes are not a panacea for education. To be effective, programs for reducing class size need careful planning and consideration of the needs and strengths of existing school systems.

WHAT WE NOW KNOW ABOUT SMALL CLASSES

What should we conclude about the effects of small classes? Although the results of individual studies are always questionable, a host of different studies suggest several conclusions.

- When planned thoughtfully and funded adequately, small classes in the early grades generate substantial gains for students, and those extra gains are greater the longer students are exposed to those classes.
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades are larger when the class has fewer than 20 students.
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades occur in a variety of academic disciplines and for both traditional measures of student achievement and other indicators of student success.
- Students whose classes are small in the early grades retain their gains in standard size classrooms and in the upper grades, middle school, and high school.
- All types of students gain from small classes in the early grades, but gains are greater for students who have traditionally been disadvantaged in education.
- Initial results indicate that students who have traditionally been disadvantaged in education carry greater small-class, early-grade gains forward into the upper grades and beyond.
- The extra gains associated with small classes in the early grades seem to apply equally to boys and girls.
- Evidence for the possible advantages of small classes in the upper grades and high school is inconclusive.

Tentative Theories

Why should reducing class size have such impressive effects in the early grades? Theories

about this phenomenon have fallen largely into two camps.

Most theorists focus on the teacher, reasoning that small classes work their magic because the small class context improves interactions between the teacher and individual students. In the early grades, students first learn the rules of standard classroom culture and form ideas about whether they can cope with education. Many students have difficulty with these tasks, and interactions with a teacher on a one-to-one basis—a process more likely to take place when the class is small—help the students cope. In addition, teachers in small classes have higher morale, which enables them to provide a more supportive environment for initial student learning. Learning how to cope well with school is crucial to success in education, and those students who solve this task when young will thereafter carry broad advantages—more effective habits and positive self-concepts—that serve them well in later years of education and work.

The need to master this task confronts all students, but doing so is often a more daunting challenge for students who come from impoverished homes, ethnic groups that have suffered from discrimination or are unfamiliar with U.S. classroom culture, or urban communities where home and community problems interfere with education. Thus, students from such backgrounds have traditionally had more difficulty coping with classroom education, and they are more likely to be helped by a reduction in class size.

This theory also helps explain why reductions in class size in the upper grades may not generate significant advantages. Older students normally have learned to cope with standard classrooms and have developed either effective or ineffective attitudes concerning academic subjects—and these attitudes are not likely to change just because of a reduction in class size.

The theory also suggests a caution. Students are likely to learn more and develop better attitudes toward education if they are exposed to well-trained and enthusiastic teachers, appropriate and challenging curriculums, and physical environments in their classrooms and schools

that support learning. If conditions such as these are not also present, then reducing class size in the early grades will presumably have little impact. Thus, when planning programs for reducing class size, we should also think about the professional development of the teachers who will participate in them and the educational and physical contexts in which those programs will be placed.

A second group of theories designed to account for a class size effect focuses on the classroom environment and student conduct rather than on the teacher. We know that discipline and classroom management problems interfere with subject-matter instruction. Theories in this group argue that these problems are less evident in small classes and that students in small classes are more likely to be engaged in learning. Moreover, teacher stress is reduced in small classes, so teachers in the small class context can provide more support for student learning. Studies have also found that small instructional groups can provide an environment for learning that is quite different from that of the large class-room. Small instructional groups can create supportive contexts where learning is less competitive and students are encouraged to form supportive relationships with one another.

Theories such as these suggest that the small class environment is structurally different from that of the large class. Less time is spent on management and more time is spent on instruction, students participate at higher levels, teachers are able to provide more support for learning, and students have more positive relationships. Such processes should lead both to greater subject-matter learning and to more positive attitudes about education among students, with more substantial effects in the early grades and for those groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

These two theories are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, both may provide partial insights into what happens in small classes and why small class environments help so many students. Collecting other types of evidence to assess such theories directly would be useful,

particularly observational studies that compare the details of interaction in early-grade classes of various sizes and surveys of the attitudes and self-concepts of students who have been exposed to classes of different sizes. Unfortunately, good studies of these effects have been hard to find.

Policy Implications and Actions

Given the strength of findings from research on small classes, why haven't those findings provoked more reform efforts? Although many state legislatures have debated or begun reform initiatives related to class size, most primary schools in the United States today do not operate under policies that mandate small classes for early grades. Why not?

This lack of attention has several causes, among them ignorance about the issue, confusion about the results of class size research and ineffective dissemination of those results, prejudices against poor and minority students, the politicizing of debates about class size effects and their implications, and practical problems associated with adopting small classes.

Recent debates about class size have become quite partisan in the United States, with Democrats generally favoring class size reductions and Republicans remaining hostile to them. Responding to President Bill Clinton's 1998 State of the Union address, the U.S. Congress set up a modest program, aimed at urban school districts with high concentrations of poverty, which provided funds for hiring additional teachers during the 1999 and 2000 fiscal years. This program enabled some districts to reduce class sizes in the early grades, and informal results from those cities indicated gains in student achievement.

Republicans have been lukewarm about extending this program—some apparently believing that it is ineffective or is merely a scheme to enhance the coffers of teacher's unions—and have welcomed President George W. Bush's call for an alternative federal program focused on high-stakes achievement tests and using results from those tests to apply sanctions to schools if they do not perform adequately.

The major problems standing in the way of reducing class sizes, however, are often practical ones. In many cases, cutting class sizes means hiring more teachers. With the looming shortage of qualified teachers, recruiting more teachers may be even more difficult than finding the funds to pay their salaries. Further, many schools would have to find or create extra rooms to house the additional classes created by small class programs, which would require either modifying school buildings or acquiring temporary classroom structures.

In many cases, meeting such needs would mean increasing the size of public school budgets, a step abhorred by fiscal conservatives and those who are critical of public education. The latter have argued that other reforms would cost less and be more effective than reducing class sizes. In response to such claims, various studies have estimated the costs of class size reduction programs or compared their estimated costs with those of other proposed reforms. Unfortunately, studies of this type must make questionable assumptions, so the results of their efforts have not been persuasive.

Nevertheless, reducing the size of classes for students in the early grades often requires additional funds. All students would reap sizable education benefits and long-lasting advantages, however, and students from educationally disadvantaged groups would benefit even more. Indeed, if we are to judge by available evidence, no other education reform has yet been studied that would provide such striking benefits. Debates about reducing class sizes, then, are disputes about values. If citizens are truly committed to providing a quality public education and a level playing field for all students regardless of background, they will find the funds needed to reduce class size.

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11

FORMS OF CAPITAL AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP

Instructional Leadership in Urban Elementary Schools

JAMES P. SPILLANE, TIM HALLETT, AND JOHN B. DIAMOND

Not much would happen in schools without leadership because every idea or reform needs guidance. The questions posed here are what is an educational leader and why do teachers follow certain leaders? The authors argue that capital is an important ingredient in leadership; principals and influential teachers with human, social, cultural, and economic capital can gain legitimacy among "followers" who respect their abilities and knowledge. The importance of leaders for educational systems is illustrated by institutions that

function smoothly, deal with conflicts constructively, and carry out reforms.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do the four forms of capital result in leadership? What does each form contribute?
2. According to this reading, what does it take to have effective educational leaders?
3. How can effective leaders stimulate reform efforts?

From Spillane, J. P., et al., "Forms of Capital and the Construction of Leadership: Instructional Leadership in Urban Elementary Schools." *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), pp. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10-11, 12, Table 1. Copyright © The American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

FRAMING THE WORK

The Bases of Leadership

Research has recognized the importance of the leadership of principals in creating incentives and opportunities for teachers to learn (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Liberman, Falk, & Alexander, 1994; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989). Yet it has also shown that leadership extends beyond those at the top of organizations (Heenan & Bennis, 1999; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Lipman-Blumen, 1996). Instructional leadership is not the exclusive purview of the principal, since teachers and other professionals play important roles (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Smylie, 1989; Smylie & Denny, 1990). Teachers often assume leadership roles in a manner distinct from more formal leaders, creating professional communities and relations of trust that support learning and instructional change (Bidwell, 2001; Siskin, 1994). Networks of teachers that extend beyond the local school can also have a significant influence on teachers' work (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999; Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey, 1996; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Taken together, this literature suggests that leadership is a distributed phenomenon, spread across multiple actors in schools (Gronn, 2000; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 1999, 2001).

Scholars have developed diverse typologies to describe the kinds of influence and power that are involved in leadership (Bass, 1990; Butler & Harrison, 1960; Earle, 1997; French & Raven, 1959; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Read, 1974; Weber, 1968). Although formal positions of authority are important in instructional leadership, research indicates that teachers' perception of the principal's expertise or human capital is also critical (N. Johnson, 1984; Treslan & Ryan, 1986) and that a principal's interactive style can motivate teachers to change (G. S. Johnson & Venable, 1986; Treslan & Ryan, 1986). For

example, Blase and Blase (1999) and Blase and Kirby (1993) reported that principals who engage in such practices as soliciting advice and opinions while praising teachers better motivate teachers to improve instruction. Scholars have also identified social capital as a basis of teachers' leadership (Clift et al., 1995; S. M. Johnson, 1990; Liberman, Darling-Hammond, & Zuckerman, 1991; Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Louis et al., 1996). Specifically, social capital, in the form of valued social networks, mutual trust and respect, and a sense of obligation and responsibility, are defining characteristics of teachers' leadership for instruction (Smylie & Hart, 1999).

Scholars have also debated the manner in which leaders and followers constitute leadership. Whereas leader-centric models that focus on the thoughts, actions, and traits of leaders are common (Likert, 1967; Mouton & Blake, 1984; Stodgill 1950; White & Lippit, 1960; Yukl, 1981), some scholars have argued convincingly for a "follower-centric" approach that emphasizes how followers conceptualize leadership.

Follower-centric approaches have merit because for leaders to lead, followers must take heed and follow (Lindblom, 1977). Weber (1968, p. 212) went so far as to state that "every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance." Meindl (1995, pp. 330–331) argued that followers are "more influenced by *their* constructions of the leader's personality than they are by the 'true' personality of the leader. It is the personalities of leaders as imagined or constructed by followers that become the object of study, not 'actual' or 'clinical' personalities per se." Although Meindl correctly drew attention to the role of followers in leadership, he has been criticized for downplaying the *substance* upon which followers make their constructions of leadership, which emerges and changes over time as a product of concrete human actions (Schneider 1998, p. 313; see also Ehrlich, 1998). As Lord and Maher (1991, p. 11) stated, "the locus of leadership is not solely in a leader or solely in followers. Instead, it involves

behaviors, traits, characteristics, and outcomes produced by leaders as these elements are interpreted by followers.”

Building on these literatures, we developed an integrated model to account for the relationship between leaders and followers and the multiple bases of leadership. On the one hand, we are interested in the various tasks in which leaders engage. On the other hand, we also recognize that it is difficult for leaders to lead against the resistance of followers. We therefore posited a dynamic relationship that is not characterized by domination by leaders or pure construction by followers. Rather, we believe that as they go about the tasks of leadership, people enact forms of capital. In valuing the forms of capital enacted by others, followers attribute leadership to them. In the process, leaders make use of the capitals they possess, and followers value the forms of capital enacted by leaders. There is substance to the relationship, such that what occurs is neither a limitless nor an abstract construction based on leaders’ assumed characteristics, but more of an assembly of leadership based on the forms of capital that leaders enact and how this capital is valued by followers. In our study, we examined how the species of capital in teachers’ construction of leadership are situated in particular contexts (namely, subject area) and vary, depending on the leaders’ role (e.g., administrative, specialist, teacher).

FORMS OF CAPITAL

Broadly speaking, *capital* can be defined as resources that are acquired, accumulated, and are of value in certain situations or, to use the lingo of economists, are of worth in particular markets. In our study, we centered on four forms of capital as the basis of leadership: human, cultural, social, and economic. In what follows, for the sake of clarity, we discuss these forms of capital as analytically distinct. However, forms of capital are related in important ways (Coleman, 1988), and teachers in our sample rarely mentioned a form of capital in isolation when constructing others as leaders.

Human capital involves a person’s knowledge, skills, and expertise and is acquired through the development of skills and capabilities that enable people to perform in new ways (Becker, 1964; Coleman, 1988; Schultz, 1961). An appreciation of human capital is found in the literature on instructional change that emphasizes the expertise of leaders (N. Johnson, 1984; Treslan & Ryan, 1986). When followers value the human capital of leaders, human capital becomes a basis for the construction of leadership.

Since Bourdieu (1979) introduced the term, cultural capital has been used in a variety of ways (Lamont & Lareau, 1988), from the consumptive tastes of social classes (Bourdieu, 1984) to taking art courses in school (DiMaggio, 1982). Our use is related to what Bourdieu (1986) termed “embodied” cultural capital, referring to internalized dispositions acquired through the life course and manifested in behaviors or “practice” (Bourdieu, 1979, 1990). Like Lareau (1987) and Lareau and Horvat (1999), we emphasize acquired ways of being and doing, enduring interactive styles that are of value in particular contexts. These styles act as a cultural tool kit (Swidler, 1986), providing a range of behaviors that enable and constrain people to interact with others (Hallett, 2002), *aside from* any substantive content they have. Whereas human capital manifests itself in the content of an interaction between a leader and a follower about instruction, cultural capital manifests itself in the *stylistic form* of the interaction. In this sense, the interactive style of a leader matters (Blase & Blase, 1999; Blase & Kirby, 1993), but only to the extent that others in the situation *value* this style. When valued, cultural capital becomes a basis for the construction of leadership.

Social capital takes the form of social networks but also concerns the relations among individuals in a group or organization. Such networks result from the prevalence of norms, such as trust, collaboration, and a sense of obligation (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998). Finally, economic capital includes money and other material resources, such as books, curricular materials, and computers.

Forms of capital can be understood only within interactive contexts (Farkas, 1996; Lareau, 1989; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). The model presented here is not a simplistic trait-based understanding of leadership. Rather, people and the forms of capital they possess matter, but only to the extent that others in the situation *value* those forms of capital as legitimate bases of leadership. When a potential leader possesses certain forms of capital *and* followers value them, followers attribute leadership on the basis of these forms of capital. Hence, to become a leader, one must undergo a *process of valuation*: On the basis of the possession of human, cultural, social, and economic capital, potential leaders must be constructed as “valid” by followers, who then attribute leadership to them. However, because actors enter situations in which particular forms of capital have already been defined as “valid,” this construction or “valuation” is not entirely voluntary (Lee, 1998). . . .

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP AND FORMS OF CAPITAL

Of the 84 teachers in our sample, 70 (83.3 percent) indicated that the principal shaped their instructional practices, and 24 (28.6 percent) mentioned the assistant principal. Yet 67 (79.8 percent) teachers identified other teachers as influential. However, to grasp instructional leadership fully, we had to move beyond the simple

identification of an influential other to an understanding of the multiple bases on which others are constructed as leaders.

Human Capital

In discussing influences on their practices, the teachers often referred to the knowledge, skill, and expertise (human capital) of others. Human capital was invoked more often when the teachers constructed other teachers as leaders than when they constructed administrators as leaders (see Table 11.1). Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 38 (45.2%) cited human capital in constructing other teachers as leaders.

The teachers constructed other teachers as leaders according to the types of expertise other teachers possess. . . .

When the teachers constructed principals as leaders on the basis of human capital, they often did so in relation to knowledge about classroom teaching: “He understands it, knows it, has done it himself.” In cases like these, the teachers valued the principals’ expertise and knowledge as former teachers and constructed them as leaders on the basis of this human capital. Principals’ legitimacy often comes from classroom experience and knowledge of instructional practices, not simply from their position, professional status, or the process through which they were allocated to their professional positions. As with previous examples, this relationship is situated in a subject-area context, in this case, reading.

Table 11.1 Teachers’ Construction of Leadership to Other Teachers, Administrators (Principal and Assistant Principal), and Specialists, by Form of Capital (84 teachers interviewed)

Form of capital	Teachers		Administrators		Specialists	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Human capital	45.2	38	21.4	18	7.1	6
Cultural capital	59.5	50	70.2	59	8.3	7
Social capital	50.0	42	15.5	13	3.6	3
Economic capital	27.4	23	23.8	20	0.0	0

Note: Table 11.1 must be interpreted with some caution. See the text on page 100 for an explanation.

Cultural Capital

In discussing cultural capital here, our emphasis is on the possession of certain interactive styles, habitual ways of being and doing that are acquired throughout the life course and used in social interaction. When others value these styles, this cultural capital becomes a basis of leadership, especially when the teachers in our study constructed the administrators as leaders. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 59 (70.2 percent) mentioned cultural capital when they constructed the principal or assistant principal as influential (see Table 11.1).

Social Capital

A third type of capital evident in the construction of leadership is social capital. While social capital is relational in nature, for those who are involved in the relationship, it can become a kind of possession. In constructing leaders, the teachers in our study frequently referred to their social networks or connections. . . . Social capital is an important basis for the construction of leadership. It seems to be especially important in the construction of other teachers as leaders: Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 42 (50 percent) cited social capital in explaining why other teachers were influential, compared to 13 (15.5 percent) who did so for administrators and 3 (3.6 percent) who did so for specialists.

Economic Capital

Although economic capital figures in teachers' constructions of leadership, it is less prominent than is human, cultural, or social capital. This fact is particularly interesting in the case of principals, whom we would suspect would be constructed as leaders on the basis of their economic capital (e.g., access to material resources). The teachers we interviewed referred to economic capital in the form of money and material resources, at times constructing those who controlled these resources as leaders.

. . . The construction of leadership does not presume intent by leaders. On the one hand,

potential leaders may be acting intentionally, using impression management to enact forms of capital in highly visible ways (Hallett, 2002). On the other hand, people use capital in their daily practices, even if they are not consciously making an effort to be leaders. Thus, someone who has no intention of becoming a leader may be constructed as a leader by others on the basis of his or her use of valued capital, and leadership (and organizations) is not an entirely rational process. People are often unwitting leaders, and it is not surprising that when followers label someone a leader, the leader may respond by saying, "I am?"

FORMS OF CAPITAL AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

On the basis of our interviews with the teachers, it is possible to examine the relative importance of the various forms of capital as a basis for leadership for different actors in the schools we studied. Our analysis is tentative, however, because the teachers we interviewed rarely cited forms of capital in isolation. Rather, they discussed numerous forms of capital when constructing others as leaders, for example, both human capital and cultural capital or cultural capital and social capital. Hence, Table 11.1 must be interpreted with some caution. The table is based on interviews with 84 teachers from eight schools. Because the interviewees often cited multiple people and capital in one interview, the columns and rows cannot be added down and across, and they do not add up to 100 percent. The percentages represent the percentages of teachers who cited a particular form of capital in reference to a particular person or position. Comparisons across the forms of capital and people/positions involved should examine only the numbers (not the percentages) because the reference point is the number of teacher interviews, not the total number of references to a particular form of capital or position/person.

One striking pattern is the importance of cultural capital (interactive style) for all leaders. A valued interactive style is a crucial basis of leadership construction for both teachers and administrators (see Table 11.1).

Cultural capital appears to be especially important for administrators as leaders. The teachers in our study most frequently cited this “interactive style” when constructing their administrators as leaders, with human, social, and economic capital piling in comparison. This finding is interesting because both rational-legal and institutional perspectives would suggest that administrators would be constructed as leaders on the basis of expertise (human capital), material resources (economic capital), or the assumption that they possess such capital. However, our data support other research that suggested that the way in which principals interact with teachers also motivates change (Blase & Blase, 1999; Blase & Kirby, 1993).

The importance of cultural capital as a basis of administrative leadership raises an interesting question: If administrators are constructed as leaders mostly on the basis of their “style,” who are the true guardians and transmitters of knowledge about instruction in schools? Our data indicate that teachers are the ones who possess this human capital, and teachers are more likely to be constructed as leaders on the basis of their human capital than are administrators (see Table 11.1). This is especially so when we look at the dismal score for “specialists.” These numbers seem to indicate that teachers believe that important knowledge, skills, and expertise in relation to instruction rest with other “ordinary” teachers.

The patterns we identified point to the situated nature of leadership. Namely, *the construction of leadership is situated in particular types of interactions*. For administrators (as leaders), the construction of leadership is situated in interaction with teachers and is based primarily on the cultural capital of the administrators (teacher-administrator interactions). For teachers (as leaders) the construction of leadership is situated in interactions with other teachers (teacher-teacher interactions) and is based primarily on cultural capital, but also on human and social capital.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By focusing on instructional leadership as an influence relationship that motivates, enables,

and supports teachers’ efforts to learn about and change their teaching practices, we examined how teachers construct influential others as leaders on the basis of valued forms of human, cultural, social, and economic capital. Although our model centers on how followers construct leaders, it does not portray leadership as an abstract construction that is devoid of what leaders do in practice. Rather, in our model, followers construct leaders on the basis of valued forms of capital as enacted by leaders. Furthermore, our account illustrates how the construction of leadership is situated in different interactions, with teachers constructing different leaders according to the subject area; constructing school administrators as leaders largely on the basis of cultural capital; and constructing teachers as leaders on the basis of cultural, social, and human capital.

Of course, forms of capital are not the only bases of instructional leadership in schools. At times, teachers in our study discussed the leadership of an influential other in terms of rational-legal positioning. In stating why she discussed a particular lesson with her principal, one teacher said: “I went to Dr. Ordonez because she’s the principal. I wanted to be sure that I was doing the right thing.” This teacher explained her principal’s influence only in terms of position. Yet for the vast majority of the teachers in our sample, position alone was not a sufficient basis of leadership: Only 7 of the 84 teachers (8.3 percent) cited position alone when discussing the influence of administrators. Furthermore, in some schools, teachers *do not* value their bosses, *do not* construct them as instructional leaders, and *do not* turn to them for advice about instructional matters. Moreover, even when followers talk about positional leaders, they do not always emphasize positions in the hierarchy. Instead, the construction of leadership involves an evaluation by followers, indicating that the actions of a potential leader are appropriate and desirable within a socially constructed system (Suchman, 1987). These constructions move beyond mere “position” to include other valued bases of leadership (forms of capital). Therefore, it is not surprising that leadership in schools is distributed

(Spillane et al., 2001) and that many of those who are identified as leaders are not positional leaders.

Given that leadership is socially constructed, institutional theory may suggest that the legitimacy of leaders (and hence the forms of capital attributed to them) result from a rationalization of formal structures and teachers' expectations of those who hold specific positions within organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In other words, the qualities attributed to leaders could be assumed from the positions they hold whether or not they actually have these qualities. Given prior work, one may suspect that positional leaders would be seen as possessing substantial human capital (e.g., knowledge and expertise) on the basis of the process through which they were allocated to their positions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and economic capital (e.g., access to resources) because of their position within the organizational hierarchy. In contrast to these expectations, our findings (grounded in specific instructional influences reported by teachers) suggest that teachers most often construct administrators as leaders because of their cultural capital or interactive style, rather than their human or economic capital. Expertise (human capital) and access to resources (economic capital) were mentioned far less often than cultural capital when the teachers we interviewed described the influence of school administrators. The attributions that teachers in our study made to positional leaders did not match what we would expect if they emerged solely from institutionalized myths about those in leadership positions.

Forms of capital and the construction of leadership are an important point of reflection for school reformers. At the core of many recent policy initiatives is an attempt by state governments and local school districts to exert much stronger leadership for instruction through a variety of accountability mechanisms and standards. Our research indicates that accountability measures and other external policy levers coexist or work in tandem with leadership processes that are based on forms of capital. To be sure, accountability measures influenced instruction in the classrooms that we studied. For example,

41.7 percent (35) of the teachers in our sample mentioned Chicago Public Schools' standards and frameworks as influencing their instructional practices. In addition, 46.4 percent (39) indicated that standardized tests shaped their instructional practices. However, as we mentioned earlier, the vast majority of our teachers cited *other people* as influential, a relationship that gains clarity through a consideration of human, cultural, social, and economic capital.

The next step in developing a model of capital and the construction of leadership involves moving from the broadly illustrative interview data presented here to the everyday interactions between teachers and administrators and teachers and teachers. It is through these seemingly mundane interactions that potential leaders enact forms of capital and followers value these capitals and attribute leadership accordingly. Likewise, leaders influence followers through social interaction. We are also exploring three other areas of related interest: (1) the relationship between the tenure of school leaders and the forms of capital used in the attribution of leadership; (2) the connections between different forms of capital, including human and social capital and cultural and social capital; and (3) the relationship between subject matter and forms of capital used in the attribution of leadership.

Understanding capital and the construction of leadership raises important questions for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners. What is missed when we ignore these processes? Can policies mandate the construction of leadership? Probably not, because it would be difficult to govern the interactions through which leadership is constructed. Then how do we train potential leaders? Considerable resources are spent trying to equip people with the "human capital" that is presumed to be necessary for leadership, but what of the other forms of capital? Our data indicate that cultural capital is an especially important basis for the construction of leadership, but how do leaders acquire cultural capital? Can we educate potential leaders for the cultural capital needed for leadership, or does cultural capital require a different, longer socialization process?

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12

THE STATUS OF TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

RICHARD M. INGERSOLL AND DAVID PERDA

Teachers are often considered the backbone of schools; without them there would be no school. Thus, understanding teachers' roles is key to understanding the educational system. Discussions of organizations often include information about the roles people occupy within them. One aspect of roles that distinguishes organizations is the type of workers they employ. Professionals have a high degree of control over their work environments, high prestige, and relatively high compensation compared to nonprofessionals. This designation is not without controversy, and it is often at the foundation of many labor disputes. Whether teachers qualify as professionals is one of these debates. Richard M. Ingersoll evaluates each criterion of professionalization as it applies to teachers and concludes that teachers generally fall into a category called "semiprofessionals."

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What criteria differentiate professionals from other types of workers?
2. Where do teachers meet or fall short of these criteria?

3. Could/will teachers ever gain professional status?
4. Compare the status of teaching as a profession with the description of teachers' status in the next reading by Dworkin. Does this comparison support Ingersoll's contention that teachers are not professionals?

Professionalization has long been a source of both hope and frustration for teachers. Since early in the 20th century, educators have repeatedly sought to promote the view that elementary and secondary teaching is a highly complex kind of work, requiring specialized knowledge and skill and deserving of the same status and standing as traditional professions, like law and medicine. This movement to professionalize teaching has, however, been marked by both confusion and contention, much of which centers around what it means to be a profession and to professionalize a particular kind of work. To some, the essence of a profession is advanced training and, hence, the way to best professionalize teaching is to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills through professional development. For others, the essence of a profession lies in the

attitudes individual practitioners hold toward their work. In this view the best way to professionalize teaching is to instill an ethos of public service and high standards—a sense of professionalism—among teachers. For even others, the focus is on the organizational conditions under which teachers work; in this view, the best way to professionalize teaching is to improve teachers' working conditions. As a result of this wide range of emphases, it is often unclear whether education critics and reformers are referring to the same things when they discuss professionalization in teaching.¹

Although education reformers often disagree over what is meant by profession, professionalism, and professionalization, students of occupations, notably sociologists, do not. The study of work, occupations and professions has been an important topic in sociology for decades, and researchers in this subfield have developed what is known as the professional model—a series of organizational and occupational characteristics associated with professions and professionals and, hence, useful to distinguish professions and professionals from other kinds of work and workers.² These include rigorous training and licensing requirements, positive working conditions, an active professional organization or association, substantial workplace authority, relatively high compensation, and high prestige. From this viewpoint, occupations can be assessed according to the degree to which they do or do not exhibit the characteristics of the professional model. The established or “traditional” professions—law, medicine, university teaching, architecture, science, engineering, in particular—are usually regarded as the strongest examples of the professional model. There are, of course, large variations both between and within these professions in the degree to which they exhibit the professional model. Moreover, most professions have been and are currently undergoing change in the degree to which they exhibit the attributes of the professional model, that is, in their degree of professionalization or deprofessionalization.³

Sociologists have also been careful to distinguish professionalization from professionalism. The former refers to the degree to which occupations exhibit the structural or sociological attributes, characteristics and criteria identified with the professional model. The latter refers to the attitudinal or psychological attributes of those who are considered to be, or aspire to be considered as, professionals. From the latter perspective, a professional is someone who is not an amateur, but is committed to a career and to public service. Although professionalism is often considered part of the professionalization process, sociologists do not consider it a reliable indicator of the professional model. Members of established professions do not necessarily exhibit a higher degree of the attitudes associated with professionalism than do those in less professionalized occupations. For instance, those with a strong service orientation—who place more importance on helping others and contributing to society and less importance on material rewards such as income and status—are less likely to be found in some of the traditional professions, such as law, and more likely to be found in occupations such as nursing and teaching that traditionally have not been categorized as full professions (Ingersoll, 2003b; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Rosenberg, 1981).

This chapter attempts to theoretically and empirically ground the debate over the status of teaching as a profession. The focus of this analysis is on professionalization or the characteristics of school workplaces and teaching staffs, and not on professionalism or the attitudes of individual teachers. My primary point is that much of the educational discussion and literature on teaching as a profession has overlooked some of the most basic characteristics that sociologists have used to distinguish professions from other kinds of occupations. I empirically ground the subject by presenting a range of representative data from the best sources available. From these data I developed a series of indicators of the traditional characteristics of the professional model and used them to assess the professionalization of teaching. These include:⁴

1. credential and licensing requirements for entry
2. induction and mentoring programs for entrants
3. professional development support, opportunities and participation
4. specialization
5. authority over decision-making
6. compensation levels
7. prestige and occupational social standing

These, of course, are not the only characteristics used to define professions, nor are they the only kinds of criteria used to distinguish or to classify work and occupations in general. But they are among the most widely used indicators of professions and professionals and are the subject of much discussion in reference to teachers and schools.

In a series of background analyses of these empirical indicators, I found large differences in professionalization among different kinds of schools. Consistent with other research on school organization, I found school sector (public/private) and poverty-level, in particular, to be the most significant factors related to professionalization (Ingersoll, 1997, 2003b).

Below, I will briefly describe each of the classic indicators of professionalization I examined, and then I will summarize what the data tell us about levels of professionalization in teaching and the extent to which it varies across these different types of schools.

HOW PROFESSIONALIZED IS TEACHING?

Credentials

To sociologists, the underlying and most important quality distinguishing professions from other kinds of occupations is the degree of expertise and complexity involved in the work itself. In this view, professional work involves highly complex sets of skills, intellectual functioning and knowledge that are not easily acquired and not widely held. For this reason, professions are often referred to as the “knowledge-based”

occupations. But even if laypeople were to acquire these complex sets of skills and knowledge, rarely would they be able to practice as professionals. Entry into professions requires credentials. That is, entry into professions typically requires a license, which is obtained only after completion of an officially sanctioned training program and passage of examinations. Indeed, it is illegal to do many kinds of work, professional and not, from plumbing and hair-styling to law and medicine, without a license.

These credentials serve as screening or “gate-keeping” devices. Their rationale is protection of the interests of the public by assuring that practitioners hold an agreed-upon level of knowledge and skill, and by filtering out those with substandard levels of knowledge and skill. The importance of such credentials is evidenced by the practice, commonly used by professionals, such as physicians, dentists, architects and attorneys, of prominently displaying official documentation of their credentials in their offices.

Given the importance of credentials to professions, not surprisingly, upgrading the licensing requirements for new teachers has been an important issue in school reform. (Licenses for teachers are known as teaching certificates and are issued by states.) But it has also been a source of contention. On one side are those who argue that entry into teaching should be more highly restricted, as in traditional professions. From this viewpoint, efforts to upgrade certification requirements for new teachers will help upgrade the quality and qualifications of teachers and teaching.

On the other side are those who argue that entry into teaching should be eased. Proponents of this view have pushed a range of initiatives, all of which involve a loosening of the entry gates: programs designed to entice professionals into mid-career changes to teaching; alternative certification programs, whereby college graduates can postpone formal education training, obtain an emergency teaching certificate, and begin teaching immediately; and Peace Corps-like programs, such as Teach for America, which seek to lure the “best and brightest” into understaffed schools. These alternative routes into the occupation claim the same rationale as the more

restrictive traditional credential routes—enhanced recruitment of talented candidates into teaching—but the ultimate consequence of such initiatives, intended or not, can be deprofessionalization. That is, traditional professions rarely resort to lowering standards to recruit and retain quality practitioners.

Conflict over the ease of entry into teaching is reflected in the degree to which schools and districts actually require a full state-approved certificate in the field to be taught⁵ and passage of a national, state or school examination by applicants for teaching positions. The data (the two top rows of Table 12.1) show that most, but not

all, public districts do, indeed, require applicants to have certification in the field to be taught, and to have passed an exam. In contrast, private schools are far less inclined to use these restrictions. Less than one third of private schools require certificates and only a quarter required exams of new hires. This reflects a double standard in public-private state regulations; many states do not require private school teachers to hold state certification (Tryneski, 2007). It also contrasts sharply with traditional professions. Hospitals, whether they are public or for-profit, for instance, would rarely hire unlicensed doctors and nurses to fill regular staff positions.⁶

Table 12.1 Levels of Teacher Professionalization in Schools, by Type of District or School

	<i>Public</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
		<i>Low poverty</i>	<i>High poverty</i>	
Credentials				
% requiring full certification for hiring	77	87	74	32
% requiring exam for hiring	71	79	75	25
Induction				
% beginning teachers participating in induction program	86	90	86	61
Professional development				
% schools with annual professional development activities	96	95	97	81
% teachers participating in professional organization activities	94	93	96	83
% teachers receiving funding for professional development	66	69	64	64
Specialization				
Mean % in-field teaching	77	81	71	58
Authority				
<i>Over teacher hiring</i>				
% with influential board/district	25	18	29	35
% with influential principal	88	93	83	91
% with influential faculty	27	33	24	13
<i>Over teacher evaluation</i>				
% with influential board/district	17	17	20	19
% with influential principal	93	95	92	93
% with influential faculty	20	23	22	18

(Continued)

(Continued)

Compensation				
% with retirement plan	91	88	93	60
Mean starting salary (\$)	29,061	32,830	28,815	23,318
Mean maximum salary (\$)	53,851	66,615	51,447	39,304

From *School and Staffing Survey (SASS)*, 1987–2004, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

This does not mean, of course, that private schools are not selective in who they hire as teachers. Private schools are, indeed, often very selective in their choice of teaching candidates, but they far less frequently use hiring criteria associated with professions. They are, however, not uniform in this deprofessionalization. There are distinct differences in the use of these hiring criteria among private schools, depending upon their orientation. Catholic schools, in particular, are far more likely than other private schools to require certificates and tests of their new hires.

Induction

In addition to initial formal training and preparation, professional work typically requires extensive training for new practitioners upon entry. Such training is designed to pick up where pre-service training has left off. That is, while credentials and examinations in many professions are usually designed to assure that new entrants have a minimum or basic level of knowledge and skill, induction programs for practitioners are designed to augment this basic level of knowledge and skill. As a result, entry to professions typically involves both formal and informal mechanisms of induction—internships, apprenticeships or mentoring programs. Sometimes these periods of induction can be prolonged and intensive, as in the case of physicians' internships. The objective of such programs and practices is to aid new practitioners in adjusting to the environment, to familiarize them with the concrete realities of their jobs and also to provide a second opportunity to filter out those with substandard levels of skill and knowledge.

In teaching, mentoring, apprenticeship and induction programs have been the subject of much discussion among reformers. The teaching occupation has long been plagued by high attrition rates among new staff (Ingersoll, 2003a) and, reformers argue, one of the best ways to increase the efficacy and retention of new teachers is to better assist them in coping with the practicalities of teaching, of managing groups of students and of adjusting to the school environment.

The data suggest these attempts at professionalization have had some success: over the past decade the numbers of schools with assistance programs has increased. In the public sector, in 1990–1991 about one half of first-year teachers participated in formal induction programs of one sort or another; by 2003–2004 this had increased to 86 percent. The proportion of beginning teachers in private schools who participated in formal induction programs has been lower than public school teachers, but this has also increased over the past decade.

However, the data also show that induction programs vary widely in the number and kinds of activities and supports they include. The most comprehensive include a wide range of components, such as mentoring by veterans, structured planning time with teachers in one's field, orientation seminars, regular communication with an administrator, a reduced course load and a classroom assistant. Moreover, in an advanced statistics analysis of these data, we have found that while induction makes a difference for teacher retention, it depends on how much one receives. Beginning teachers who receive comprehensive induction packages have far higher retention than those who receive fewer supports (see Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Professional Development

Beyond both pre-service basic training and mentoring for beginners, professions typically require ongoing in-service technical development and growth on the part of practitioners throughout their careers. The assumption is that achieving a professional-level mastery of complex skills and knowledge is a prolonged and continuous process and, moreover, that professionals must continually update their skills, as the body of technology, skill and knowledge advances. As a result, professionals typically belong to associations and organizations that, among other things, provide mechanisms, such as periodic conferences, publications and workshops, for the dissemination of knowledge and skill to members. Moreover, professionalized workplaces typically both require and provide support for employee development. These include on-site workshops, financial support for conferences, coursework, skill development and sabbaticals.

Professional development has been one of the most frequently discussed and advocated teacher reforms in recent years. In the 1990s improvement in the professional development of teachers was made one of eight major national education goals, introduced by a commission of governors and the President (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). Again, the data present a picture of success in the provision of support for, and teacher use of, professional development.

Data on three indicators of teacher professional development are displayed in Table 12.1: the percent of schools that provided professional development programs for the teaching staff during regular school hours; the percent of teachers who participated in workshops, seminars or conferences provided by their school or by external professional associations or organizations; and the percent of teachers who received financial support for college tuition, fees or travel expenses for participation in external conferences or workshops during that school year.

What is striking about the data on professional development is its consistency across schools. Most schools, both public and private, provide professional development, most teachers participate in workshops or activities either

sponsored by their schools, or sponsored by external professional organizations, and most teachers also receive financial support of some sort for external professional development activities. These data are an impressive set of indicators of this aspect of professionalization. However, they, of course, do not tell us about the quality or length of these professional development programs and activities.

Specialization

Given the importance of expertise to professions, it naturally follows that one of the most fundamental attributes of professions is specialization—professionals are not generalists, amateurs, or dilettantes, but possess expertise over a specific body of knowledge and skill. Few employers or organizations would require heart doctors to deliver babies, real estate lawyers to defend criminal cases, chemical engineers to design bridges or sociology professors to teach English. The assumption behind this is that because such traditional professions require a great deal of skill, training and expertise, specialization is considered necessary and good. In contrast, the other part of the assumption is that non-professions and semi- or low-skill occupations require far less skill, training and expertise than traditional professions and, hence, specialization is assumed less necessary.

Despite the centrality of specialization to professionalization, there has been little recognition of its importance among education reformers, even among proponents of teacher professionalization. Indeed, some school reformers have argued that teacher specialization, especially at the elementary school level, is a step backward for education because it does not address the needs of the “whole child,” unduly fragments the educational process and, hence, contributes to the alienation of students (e.g.,Sizer, 1992).

To assess the degree of specialization in teaching and the degree to which teachers are treated as professionals with expertise in a specialty, I examine the phenomenon known as out-of-field teaching—the extent to which teachers are assigned to teach subjects which do not

match their fields of specialty and training. Out-of-field teaching is an important but little understood problem. It is misunderstood because it is usually confused with teacher training. Most researchers and reformers assume, wrongly, that out-of-field teaching is due to a lack of training or preparation on the part of teachers. The source of out-of-field teaching lies not in a lack of education or training on the part of teachers, but in a lack of fit between teachers' fields of preparation and their teaching assignments. Out-of-field teaching is a result of misassignment—when school principals assign teachers to teach subjects for which they have little background. It is important because otherwise qualified teachers may become highly unqualified when assigned out of their fields of specialty.

Assessing the extent of in-field or out-of-field teaching is one way of assessing the importance of professional specialization in the occupation of teaching—it provides a measure of the extent to which teachers are treated as if they are semi- or low-skill workers whose work does not require much expertise or, alternatively, as if professionals whose work requires expertise in a specialty. Table 12.1 presents a measure of in-field/out-of-field teaching—the average percent of secondary-level classes in which teachers do have at least a college minor in the fields taught.⁷

The data show that an emphasis on specialization in one's area of expertise often does not hold in secondary level teaching. Teachers at the secondary school level are assigned to teach a substantial portion of their weekly class schedules out of their fields of specialty. For example, in public schools, teachers, on average, spend only about three quarters of their time teaching in fields in which they have a college major or even a minor. This lack of specialization is more widespread in high-poverty schools. But, again, these comparisons are overshadowed by public/private differences.

Private school teachers are far more often assigned to teach subjects out of their fields of training than are public school teachers—just over half of a private school teacher's schedule is in fields for which they have basic training. However,

there are differences among private schools (not shown here). Teachers in non-sectarian private schools have higher levels of in-field teaching than do teachers in other private schools. On average, teachers in non-sectarian schools spend about two thirds of their schedules teaching in field; in contrast, in-field levels in religious private schools are lower—about half their class loads.

Authority

Professionals are considered experts in whom substantial authority is vested and professions are marked by a large degree of self-governance. The rationale behind professional authority is to place substantial levels of control into the hands of the experts—those who are closest to and most knowledgeable of the work. Professions, for example, exert substantial control over the curriculum, admissions and accreditation of professional training schools; set and enforce behavioral and ethical standards for practitioners; and exert substantial control over who their future colleagues are to be. Sometimes this control is exerted through professional organizations. For instance, gaining control over (and sharply limiting) medical school admissions by the American Medical Association was a crucial factor in the rise of medicine from a lower status occupation to one of the pinnacle professions (Starr, 1982). Other times control is exerted directly in workplaces and, as a result, professionalized employees often have authority approaching that of senior management when it comes to organizational decisions surrounding their work. In the case of hospitals, physicians traditionally were the senior management. Academics, for another example, often have substantially more control than university administrators over the hiring of new colleagues and, through the institution of peer review, over the evaluation and promotion of members and, hence, over the ongoing content and character of the work of the profession.

The distribution of power, authority and control in schools is one of the most important issues in contemporary education research and policy. Indeed, this issue lies at the crux of many current reforms, such as teacher empowerment,

site-based management and school restructuring. But it is also a source of contention. Some hold that schools are overly decentralized organizations in which teachers have too much workplace autonomy and discretion. Others hold the opposite—that schools are overly centralized in which teachers have too little influence over school operations. Part of this confusion arises because of differences in the domain analyzed; most focus on how much autonomy teachers have in their classrooms over the choice of their texts or teaching techniques. Others focus on how much power faculties collectively wield over school-wide decision making, such as budgets.⁸ Here I focus on faculty influence over two issues traditionally controlled by professionals—peer hiring and peer evaluation.

Table 12.1 displays the frequency of schools in which principals report the school board (and district if in the public sector), the faculty and themselves, to have substantial decision-making influence over two activities—staff evaluation and hiring.⁹ The data paint a picture of a steep organizational-level hierarchy, with principals at the top.

Overall, principals clearly view themselves as powerful actors in reference to decisions concerning teacher evaluation and hiring. In comparison to principals, teachers appear to have little professional authority over these school decisions, at least from the viewpoint of principals. In every kind of school, principals report faculty to be influential far less often than they are themselves. However, in comparison to school boards, teachers' professional authority is equal or higher in public schools more, but lower in private schools.

Consistent with conventional wisdom, the hierarchy in some ways is less steep in affluent than in poor public schools; faculty in poor schools are less often reported to be influential, especially over hiring, and boards are more often influential. But, especially over hiring, private school teachers are less often empowered than those in public schools, counter to conventional wisdom that private schools teachers are delegated more workplace influence than public school teachers (e.g., Chubb & Moe, 1989).

Compensation

Professionals typically are well compensated and are provided with relatively high salary and benefit levels throughout their career span. The assumption is that, given the lengthy training and the complexity of the knowledge and skills required, relatively high levels of compensation are necessary to recruit and retain capable and motivated individuals.

Teacher salaries have been a much discussed topic amongst teacher reformers. But, unfortunately, data on teacher salaries have often been misleading. Teacher salary analyses typically focus on the average salary levels of teachers of particular types or in particular jurisdictions. Comparing average teacher salaries for different kinds of teachers or schools can be misleading because teacher salary levels are often standardized according to a uniform salary schedule, based on the education levels and years of experience of the teachers. Especially with an aging teaching workforce, it is unclear if differences in average salary levels are due to real differences in the compensation offered to comparable teachers by different schools, or are due to differences in the experience and education levels of the teachers employed. That is, schools with older teachers may appear to offer better salaries, when in fact they do not.

A more effective method of comparison across schools is to compare the normal salaries paid by schools to teachers at common points in their careers. Start-of-career salary levels provide some indication of how well particular kinds of workplaces are able to compete for the pool of capable individuals. End-of-career salary levels provide some indication of the ability of particular kinds of workplaces to retain and motivate capable individuals. The gap between starting salaries and end-of-career salaries provides some indication of the extent of opportunity for promotion, and the range of monetary rewards available to employees as they advance through their careers.

Table 12.1 shows data on the normal starting and maximum teacher salaries offered in the different kinds of schools in the 2003–2004 school

year. Of course, salary data such as these quickly get “old” due to inflation. However, my analysis is not concerned with absolute salary values, but with comparisons—which have shown little change over time. I make four comparisons: how salaries vary across different types of schools; the gap between teachers’ start-of-career and end-of-career salaries; how beginning teachers’ salaries compare with those of other recent college graduates and, finally, how teachers’ salaries compare to those in other occupations. These are revealing comparisons to make and get at the status of teaching as a profession. Data on the provision of retirement benefits are also displayed.¹⁰

Consistent with conventional wisdom (Kozol, 1991), there are differences in the compensation afforded to teachers in public schools; for instance, public schools serving high-poverty communities pay less than schools in more affluent communities. But the differences between public and private schools are even greater. Teachers in private schools are paid far less than in public schools, and also are less likely to be provided with a retirement plan by their school. The average starting salary was about 25 percent more in public schools than in private schools. Moreover, the public-private salary gap widens as teachers progress through their careers. The average maximum salary (the highest possible salary offered) for public school teachers was almost 40 percent more than for private school teachers. Among private schools, there are also large differences in compensation. Non-Catholic religious private schools pay their starting teachers a salary that is just above the official federal poverty line.

In order to place teachers’ salaries in perspective, it is useful to compare them to the salaries earned in other lines of work. Traditionally teachers have been called the “economic proletarians of the professions” and the data bear this out (Mills, 1951). Table 12.2 shows that the salaries of new college graduates who have become teachers are considerably below those of new college graduates who chose a number of other occupations. For instance, the average salary (one year after graduation) for 2000 college graduates who

became teachers was almost 50 percent less than the average starting salary of their classmates who took computer programming jobs.

Table 12.2 Mean Annual Salaries of New Bachelor Degree Recipients in Selected Occupations (2000–2001)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Salary</i>
Managers/executives	\$75,470
Computer programmers	50,158
Engineers/architects	47,205
Sales	36,521
Military	35,917
Mechanics	35,818
Editors/writers/reporters	29,506
Teachers (K-12)	26,609
Laborers	24,387
All occupations	\$28,478

From *Baccalaureate and Beyond Survey: 2000–2001*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

These differences remain throughout the career span. For instance, data collected in 2005 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the average annual salaries of teachers were far below those of traditional professionals, such as college professors, scientists, pilots and lawyers (see Table 12.3).

Table 12.3 Mean Annual Salaries of Selected Occupations (2005)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Salary</i>
Surgeons	\$177,690
Dentists	115,640
Lawyers	110,520
Pilots	100,300
Law professors	95,570
Physicists	91,480
Pharmacists	88,650
Veterinarians	77,710
Education administrators	69,430
Architects	68,560
Chemists	63,470

Psychology professors	61,980
Sociology professors	61,700
Accountants	58,020
Secondary school teachers	49,400
Middle school teachers	47,890
Elementary school teachers	46,990
Kindergarten teachers	45,250
Preschool teachers	25,150

From *National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, 2005, Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Prestige

Professions are high status, high prestige occupations. In other words, they are respected and envied. Prestige and status, unlike salary, power or professional development, at first glance, might seem very difficult to empirically assess because they are highly subjective. But, like other attitudes, public perceptions of which kinds of occupations are more or less prestigious can be assessed and, indeed, for over fifty years sociologists have

studied how the public evaluates the relative prestige of occupations. Table 12.4 presents some of the results from the best known studies of occupational prestige.¹¹ These data are useful to illustrate how the status of teaching compares to other occupations and also to compare the relative status of different levels of teaching. The data clearly show that, as expected, the traditional professions are very prestigious. Teaching, like many of the other female dominated occupations, is rated in the middle. Teaching is less prestigious than law, medicine and engineering, but it is more prestigious than most blue collar, such as truck drivers, and pink collar work, such as secretaries. The status of teaching also changed slightly from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. Both elementary and secondary teaching went up in prestige, but kindergarten and pre-school teaching went down. The result is a distinct status hierarchy within the teaching occupation; secondary teachers are slightly higher status than elementary teachers. Both are substantially higher status than kindergarten and pre-school teachers.

Table 12.4 Relative Prestige of Selected Occupations (ranked by 1972 scores)

Occupation	Score		Occupation	Score	
	1972	1989		1972	1989
Physicians	82	86	Funeral directors	52	49
Professors	78	74	Athletes	51	65
Lawyers	76	75	Bank tellers	50	43
Judges	76	71	Police	48	60
Physicists & astronomers	74	73	Secretaries	46	46
Dentists	74	72	Mail carriers-Postal service	42	47
Architects	71	73	Plumbers	41	45
Aerospace engineers	71	72	Tailors	41	42
Psychologists	71	69	Carpenters	40	39
Chemists	69	73	Barbers	38	36
Clergy	69	69	Bakers	34	35
Chemical engineers	67	73	Truck drivers	32	30
Secondary school teachers	63	66	Cashier	31	29
Registered nurses	62	66	Painters, construction, & maintenance	30	34
Elementary school teachers	60	64	Cooks	26	31
Authors	60	63	Waiters & waitresses	20	28
Pre-K and kindergarten teachers	60	55	Maids	18	20
Actors & directors	55	58	Garbage collectors	17	28
Librarians	55	54	Janitors/Cleaners	16	22
Social workers	52	52			

From *General Social Survey*, 1972 and 1989. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.

Implications

This paper attempts to ground the ongoing debate over teacher professionalization by evaluating teaching according to a series of classic criteria used to distinguish professions from other kinds of work. The data show that, on the one hand, almost all elementary and secondary schools do exhibit some of the important characteristics of professionalized workplaces. On the other hand, and despite numerous reform initiatives, almost all schools lack or fall short on many of the key characteristics associated with professionalization. Clearly, teaching continues to be treated as, at best, a "semi-profession" (Lortie, 1969, 1975).

But there are also large variations in the degree of professionalization, depending on the type of school. Consistent with conventional wisdom, low-income schools are, in a number of ways, less professionalized than are the more affluent public schools. The most striking differences are those between public and private schools. The teaching job in private schools is in some important ways less professionalized than in public schools. Moreover, there are distinct differences within the private sector, often overlooked in public/private comparisons. In most ways, the least professionalized of schools are non-Catholic religious private schools. This has important implications for current school reform and policy. It suggests there may be an overlooked but fundamental clash between teacher professionalization and school privatization reforms, such as some school choice initiatives. It also suggests that privatization may lead to an unintended consequence—the further deprofessionalization of teaching.

These data raise some obvious questions. What difference does professionalization make for those in schools? What are the implications of variations among schools in professionalization? To be sure, research and reform concerned with teacher professionalization typically assumes that professionalization is highly beneficial to teachers, schools and students. The rationale underlying this view is that upgrading the teaching occupation will lead to improvements in the motivation, job satisfaction and efficacy of teachers,

which, in turn, will lead to improvements in teachers' performance, which will ultimately lead to improvements in student learning (e.g., Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). If we accept this assumption, in other words if we assume that professionalization attracts capable recruits to an occupation, fosters their expertise and commitment, and, ultimately, provides assurance to the public of quality service to the public, then these data do not yield a reassuring portrait of the teaching occupation.

This logic and these assumptions seem reasonable enough. Indeed, equivalent arguments are regularly used by proponents of professionalization in any number of other occupations and also by defenders of the status quo in the traditional professions. However, just as in other occupations and professions, very little empirical research has ever been done to test such claims. It is difficult to find, for instance, empirical research examining the direct effects of the high levels of training, power, compensation and prestige accorded to physicians.

It is important, however, to ask these kinds of questions because proponents of professionalization, in teaching and elsewhere, ignore an important stream of literature in the sociology of work, occupations and professions that illuminates the downside to professionalization. For instance, medicine, long considered among the pinnacle professions and the clearest example of work that has successfully become professionalized over the past century, has been the subject of a great deal of criticism. The focus of this criticism is the negative consequences of the power and privilege of professionalization—monopolistic control over medical knowledge and the supply of practitioners, antagonism toward alternative medical approaches, a power imbalance in the physician/client relationship (e.g., Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1986; Starr, 1982). From this viewpoint, professionalization in medicine has brought many benefits, but it also incurs costs. The implication of this line of thought is that it is important to distinguish both the benefits and costs of professionalization and also to specify for whom both of these apply.

In other follow-up research projects, I and colleagues have analyzed the effects of various

indicators of professionalization on teachers themselves—specifically their engagement or commitment to teaching; on conflict in schools and on teachers' actual rates of retention and turnover (see, e.g., Ingersoll, 1997, 2003b; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). We found that most of the above indicators of professionalization do, indeed, positively effect teacher commitment, school climate and teacher retention. Several, however, particularly stood out for their strong effects: faculty autonomy and decision-making influence; the effectiveness of assistance for new teachers; and teachers' salaries and benefits.

ENDNOTES

1. For examples of the literature on teacher professionalism and professionalization, see Lortie, 1969, 1975; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Little, 1990; Rowan, 1994; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1993; Labaree, 1992.

2. For examples of the sociological literature on professions, see, e.g., Mills, 1951; Hughes, 1965; Etzioni, 1969; Vollmer & Mills, 1966; Hall, 1968; Larson, 1977; Collins, 1979; Starr, 1982; Freidson, 1984, 1986; Abbott, 1988; Hodson & Sullivan, 1995.

3. There is an important stream of sociological research on the proletarianization, bureaucratization and deprofessionalization of some traditional professions. See, for example, Freidson, 1984, 1986.

4. Unless noted, the data for these indicators are from the U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). This is the largest and most comprehensive data source available on elementary and secondary teachers. SASS was conceived to fill a long-noted void of nationally representative data on the staffing, occupational, and organizational aspects of elementary and secondary schools. To date, five independent cycles of SASS have been completed—1987–1988, 1990–1991, 1993–1994, 1999–2000, 2003–2004. Each cycle includes several sets of linked questionnaires: for each school sampled, for the principal or headmaster of each school, for the central district administration for each public school and for a sample of teachers within each school. In each cycle, the effective sample sizes are about: 5,000 school districts, 11,000 schools and 55,000 teachers. The SASS data presented in this analysis are primarily from the 2003–2004 cycle.

5. In Table 12.1, Low poverty refers to schools where 10% or less of the students receive publicly funded free or reduced price lunches. High poverty refers to schools where over 50% do so. Small school size refers to schools with less than 300 students enrolled. Large schools are those with 600 or more students. Middle categories of school poverty and size are not shown. In Table 12.1, "full" certification refers to all those with regular, standard, full or advanced certification. It does not include temporary, emergency, alternative or provisional certificates.

6. Of course, many organizations, such as hospitals and universities, are characterized by a growing secondary labor market of "adjunct" jobs and positions. These are often very similar in work content to regular positions, but are otherwise highly deprofessionalized, i.e., with lower levels of compensation, authority, specialization, prestige, etc. For examples of the literature on primary and secondary labor markets, see Simpson & Simpson, 1983.

7. The data on % in-field teaching are from the 1993–1994 SASS. For a detailed report of my research on out-of-field teaching, see my article *The Problem of Underqualified Teachers in American Secondary Schools* (1999).

8. For a more detailed discussion of the debate over school control and centralization/decentralization and a more detailed analysis of the data on decision-making influence, see Ingersoll (2003b).

9. The measures of decision-making influence are drawn from principals' answers to the question: "how much actual influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the following activities: hiring new full-time teachers and evaluating teachers." For three groups: school boards (or district if public sector), principals themselves and faculty. Each group or person is defined as being "influential" if the mean score for the activity was greater than or equal to 4, on a scale of 1 = none to 4 = a great deal of influence.

10. The retirement plan measure indicates only whether a school or district offers a retirement plan; it does not account for differences in the worth or coverage of plans.

11. In the early 1960s, sociologists, working with the General Social Surveys (GSS) and Census data, developed an occupational prestige scale based on rankings of the social standing of occupations by a nationally representative sample of respondents. These scales have been replicated and refined over the past two decades. For information on the GSS and the occupational prestige scales and data, see Davis and Smith (1996).

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13

SCHOOL REFORM AND TEACHER BURNOUT

ANTHONY GARY DWORKIN

Each U.S. presidential administration puts forth a plan to reform schools. Each proposed reform impacts the structures and roles in schools. Where the impact is most noticeable is in classrooms as reforms affect teachers—their lesson plans, curricula, classroom structure, discipline procedures, use of time, focus of lessons, and goals for students. Because of the frequent change, sometimes implying teachers are at fault for failures, many teachers experience burnout resulting from alienation, and the teaching profession loses personnel. Dworkin discusses school reforms that result in burnout.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What school reforms initiated by politicians have taken place and are taking place in school classrooms across the United States?
2. What are causes of teacher burnout?

3. How is burnout related to school reform proposals?
4. What is the relationship of teachers to school reforms suggested in Part VII?

The concept of “burnout” originated in a publication in the *Journal of Social Issues* by the clinical psychologist H. J. Freudenberger in 1974. For him, burnout represented a malaise frequently experienced by human service professionals, including social workers, mental health workers, nurses, and teachers, who come to see themselves as “wearing out.” When their clients, patients, and students do not seem to improve, recover, or learn, the human service workers experience emotional exhaustion and lose their sense of accomplishment. They no longer perform their tasks effectively, and sometimes even no longer care about the welfare of their clients. Soon after publication of Freudenberger’s article other psychologists isolated three central themes

in burnout: emotional exhaustion, loss of a sense of personal accomplishment, and depersonalization, or the blaming of the client, patient, or students for the malaise experienced by the human service professional (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1978a, 1978b, 1993; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Most psychological researchers describe burnout as an inability to cope with an array of life stressors. This approach tends to ascribe "blame" for burnout to the victims of burnout and proceeds to offer a panoply of strategies to enhance coping ability (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Cedoline, 1982; Farber, 1991; Gold & Roth, 1993; Pines, 1993; Shaw, Bensky, & Dixon, 1981; Swick & Hanley, 1983).

Alaya Pines (1993) characterized burnout as an existential crisis linked to a sense of meaninglessness. That is, to the extent that professionals come to incorporate their work into their self-image, a frequent occurrence in industrialized and post-industrialized societies, any condition that diminishes the personal assessment of the value of that work likewise diminishes the assessment of self-worth. When this happens, Pines argues, human service professionals come to ask, "Why am I doing what I am doing?"—a question reflecting self-doubt and a crisis of existence.

Not all views of burnout focus on individual factors associated with the ability to cope with stress. The sociological view arises out of the structural construct of alienation. Here, burnout includes all of Seeman's (1959, 1975) dimensions of alienation, including powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and estrangement. Alienation has organizational and social structural roots and therefore its redress ought not to focus on improved individual coping skills, but rather on structural change. Stress can still be a precipitating factor in the sense of burnout, as it is in the psychological models, but the causal elements of burnout are seen within the structure of the school or the structure of the educational system that creates teacher expectations (Dworkin, 1987, 1997, 2001; Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003; Dworkin & Townsend, 1994; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Saha & Dworkin, 2004).

When professionals are unable to negotiate agreements on role performances or to determine

what are the role expectations within a human service organization, they develop a sense of powerlessness (Shinn, 1982), which soon leads to a sense of meaninglessness. In addition, individuals withdraw from social relationships within the organization (isolation) and question whether continued participation in the organizational role is consistent with their self-conception (estrangement). The burned out individuals begin to blame their clients, students, or patients for failing to improve. Finally, burned out professionals come to feel that the organizational setting is characterized by a degree of normlessness. That is, they feel that either there are no rules or that following the rules tends to be dysfunctional. Sparks and Hammond (1981) reported that burned out professionals report that the rules of the organization are either unenforceable or uninterpretable.

SCHOOL REFORM AND TEACHER BURNOUT

School reform movements are based on the assumption that the public schools are failing to educate the nation's future labor force, thereby jeopardizing the economic future standing of the country. In their various manifestations, school reformers have frequently noted that teachers fail to do their jobs properly and competently. Many reform efforts make the assumption that teachers will not work hard unless their livelihoods are threatened. Job stress and fear of job loss are assumed to be necessary to motivate better teaching and learning. Even a benign form of school reform implies change, and change itself can be stressful. Since job stress precipitates job burnout, it is reasonable to assume that the implementation of school reforms will lead to heightened levels of burnout among public school teachers.

In fact, there is evidence that the morale of America's teachers has been negatively impacted by the various waves of school reform implemented at least since the Reagan administration's publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. Detailed analyses by Dworkin and his colleagues (Dworkin, 1997; Dworkin 2001; Dworkin,

Saha, & Hill, 2003, Dworkin & Townsend, 1994) have displayed the changing effects of school reform legislation on teacher burnout. School reform activities do not, however, impact all teachers equally. Differences in burnout level exist across teaching populations demarcated by race and ethnicity, gender, and years of teaching experience.

Waves of School Reform

A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) decried the poor academic performance of American students and predicted that unless there were monumental changes made in public education, the country would no longer be a leader in the global economy.¹ The year following the report the Secretary of Education observed that the nation had responded to the challenge and had produced sweeping changes in every state. The first wave of these reforms sought "... to introduce uniformity and conformity through standardized curricula, rigorous requirements for student performance, promotion and graduation, and teacher evaluation" (Smylie & Denny, 1990, p. 235). The 1980s reform attempted to guarantee that only competent teachers were in the classroom and that students who graduated from high school were proficient at the skills that would make them competent employees in American industry.

By the end of the 1980s it was apparent that student achievement had not risen to the levels promised by the legislated reforms following *A Nation at Risk*. If legislated, centralized reforms did not appear to work, state legislatures turned to mandating reforms that stressed decentralization. Localized, site-based decision making was proposed as the remedy to raise student achievement. The argument raised by state education agencies was that if decision making is focused at the site of instruction the quality of decisions will be better and students will more likely succeed academically.

At about the same time, the administration of President George H. W. Bush called for education to "break the mold" and establish new schools that promoted "world class standards" under the aegis of a program called *America*

2000. The standards movement, focusing on more testing, was rejuvenated and new, private sector models under the name "New American Schools Development Corporation" (NASDC) emerged. Many of the programs developed under the aegis of the NASDC failed to achieve "comprehensive, systemic change" through the creation of "break the mold schools." The products of the NASDC often shifted their goals from world class student achievement to feelings of satisfaction among participants. The *America 2000* reforms (and those that followed in the Clinton administration under the name *Goals 2000*) failed to achieve most of the academic results promised by their promoters. Likewise, the more locally developed site-based decision making plans more often resulted in "turf battles" among principals, teachers, and stakeholder groups, each contending that the control of the local schools was their own within their own mandate. Dworkin and Townsend (1994) noted that such feuds over control of the schools resulted in heightened levels of teacher burnout.

The Standards Movement (establishing statewide, uniform academic standards for children), launched following *A Nation at Risk* and exacerbated following *America 2000* and *Goals 2000*, culminated in high-stakes testing in the mid- and late-1990s. High-stakes testing (see Heubert & Hauser, 1999) involves the use of standardized achievement tests (norm-referenced or criterion-referenced) to evaluate student learning and to assess the performances of teachers, school administrators, schools, and school districts. Rewards are offered by state education agencies to school personnel and schools when test scores or passing rates are high, and punishments, including termination, school reorganization and re-staffing, and loss of accreditation, are threatened when scores or passing rates remain low.

Critics of high-stakes testing have contended that such practices: narrow the curriculum taught only to that which is tested; lead to cheating by teachers and other school staff; rely on single-indicators to assess outcomes (in violation of good test theory); and widen the gap between groups of students, while increasing the dropout rate in schools (Heubert & Hauser, 1999;

McNeil, 2000). However, analyses by Toenjes, Dworkin, Lorence, and Hill (2002) suggested that the high-stakes testing has forced Texas schools to take more seriously the education of their poor and minority students. Nevertheless, holding teachers responsible for a single test-score performance of their students has created additional stressors in the lives of school personnel. The consequence of the high-stakes testing reform has been a continued elevation of teacher burnout scores over those found prior to the era of no reform (Dworkin, 2001).

The most recent incarnation of the Standards Movement is found in the reauthorization of P.L. 8910, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, currently known as the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" (NCLB). The framework for NCLB was developed from the accountability system adopted in Texas. States wishing to continue to receive federal funds, including under the federal subsidized lunch program out of the Department of Agriculture, as well as other programs, had to submit to the Secretary of Education a plan by which 95 percent of the children in the state would be 100 percent proficient on the state-selected standardized test by the academic year 2013–14. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) has to be demonstrated by each school, and the schools that fail to meet the AYP standards can face draconian measures, including loss of some Title I monies, public school choice for their students to transfer to a school meeting its AYP goals, removal of school staff, and even closure of the campus and reorganization as a charter school. (See the "Perspectives on Critical Issues" essays in the April 2005 issue of *Sociology of Education*.)

The Effects of the Reforms on Teacher Burnout

Studies by Dworkin and his colleagues that were cited in the previous section have indicated that teacher morale and burnout tend to be adversely affected by the school reform policies over the past twenty years. These studies were based on data on Texas teachers drawn generally from the 54 school districts in the Houston

metropolitan area. However, there is every reason to believe that the results can be generalized to at least urban schools in the state and to most urban districts in the nation. . . .

Data are organized by cohorts of teachers based on their years of teaching experience. The different waves of data reflect the relationship between teacher burnout and years teaching in an era prior to the reforms (the pre-reform 1977 sample), during the reforms instituted in Texas in the mid-1980s following *A Nation at Risk* (the 1986 sample), during the reforms associated with site-based decision-making and the *America 2000* program (the 1991 sample), during the reforms involving high-stakes testing in Texas and greater teacher accountability (the 2000 sample), and finally for two samples drawn in the initial year of No Child Left Behind and two years later, after the state application was accepted by the U.S. Department of Education.

The measure of teacher burnout is derived from the "Dworkin Teacher Burnout Scale," originally presented in Dworkin, Chafetz, and Dworkin (1986) and fully discussed in Dworkin (1987). The scale consists of ten items that represent the sociological perspective on burnout as an extreme form of role-specific alienation (Dworkin, 1987, p. 28). Factor analysis was used to generate the scale and, as such, an individual teacher's burnout score is in Z-score format (the aggregate mean is zero and the standard deviation is one). In order to compare teachers across different waves of reform, their responses to the scale items have to be recombined and a new scale score constructed with Z-scores reflecting the relative ranking in terms of burnout of each cohort of teachers viz. all other cohorts. This permits interpretation as to whether burnout scores have risen or fallen, occasioned by different eras of school reforms.

Pre-Reform Burnout Patterns

The 1977 pre-reform cohort had the lowest level of burnout, with burnout scores lower for more senior teachers than for new teachers. The small "bump" in the burnout scores at three years reflects the fact that at that point a decision is made

to offer teachers a permanent contract (essentially, tenure), and such a time period tends to be stressful. However, when compared with all post-reform waves, even the newest teachers had relatively low levels of burnout. There were 3,165 teachers in this sample. Burnout was highest among teachers assigned to schools where the principal was not supportive and defined them as expendable. Burnout levels were also higher among inexperienced white teachers than among any other group.

A Nation at Risk Burnout Pattern

The 1986 data set consisted of 1,060 teachers who were experiencing Texas' House Bill 72, which imposed competency testing on teachers. The test was relatively easy and approximately 95 percent of the teachers passed it, although minority teachers passed the test at lower rates. Burnout levels during this era are the highest found. . . . The pattern indicates that change is stressful and particularly so when most teachers had no prior experience with school reforms that assessed the performances of teachers. The highest levels of burnout in this reform wave are for teachers with five, ten, and fifteen years experience. Burnout is three times higher for teachers with ten years of experience in this wave than similarly experienced teachers in the pre-reform wave. The legislation mandated competency tests and established a career ladder in which all teachers who passed the test were placed at the same level on the ladder. Thus, the state denied the teachers their seniority and doubted their claims to being master teachers. The denial of a teacher's claim to expertise demoralized the experienced teachers, while the competency testing resulted in higher burnout rates among minority teachers. The racial make-up of the burnout groups changed. In the pre-reform sample, burned out teachers were more likely to be inexperienced and white. In the 1986 sample, burnout was highest among minority teachers with ten to fifteen years of experience.

The Site-Based Decision Making Burnout Pattern

There were 261 teachers in the 1991 data set. Burnout levels for these teachers are lower than

for the previous groups of teachers, as the dire prophecies (such as mass firings) had not come true. Teachers were more accustomed to reform and so, while burnout levels were higher than in the pre-reform era, differences among cohorts with different years of teaching experience were not very different, except for those with 15 or more years experience. The lower levels of burnout among the more experienced teachers might reflect that they now had a greater share in the decision-making process (although they could still have "turf battles" with the principal).

High-Stakes Testing Burnout Pattern

Many of the 2,961 teachers in the 2000 data set had experienced high-stakes testing since the state had adopted the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, a criterion-referenced test in 1994. However, by 2000 all of the accountability mechanisms were in place, including the possibility that schools could be closed and teachers fired for continued low student performance. The state education agency maintained an "erasure report" on teachers, indicating whether their students were changing more answers on the machine scanned answer sheets than was expected. There had been cheating scandals in districts by 2000 and some school personnel had been fired. Burnout scores for teachers almost paralleled those found in 1986 during the first reform wave, with one exception. The highest burnout levels exist among the most experienced teachers. Experienced teachers, especially teachers in high poverty, inner-city schools have considerable difficulty raising test scores. Their students bring to school few educational resources from home and the teachers' expertise is in classroom management, not in teaching to a new standardized test (by law each year a new test was implemented). Texas has a retirement model termed the "Eighty System," whereby when one's age plus years teaching totals 80 one is eligible to retire at full benefits. Many of the teachers were just short of the threshold and were hoping to be able to maintain their jobs for just a few more years. The performance of their students on the standardized test became the determining factor.

No Child Left Behind Burnout

There are two No Child Left Behind waves. Data for the first wave were collected in the fall semester of 2002, during the first year of the federal act. This was the year immediately prior to the end to social promotion in Texas schools. While the social promotion law was passed in 1999, it was not to be enforced until 2003. Third-grade children failing the reading section of the newly created Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test, which replaced the TAAS as the high-stakes test, would be required to repeat third grade. Teachers had to cope with both a new test and the prospect of retaining students. There were 2,869 teachers in the 2002 data set.

The second wave of data from the No Child Left Behind era was collected in the fall semester of 2004 and consisted of 1,771 teachers. No Child Left Behind had been fully implemented in the schools. The teachers were aware that successive low performance by their students would result in their schools' failure to meet AYP goals and the possibility of the loss of some of their students to higher-performing schools, as well as the potential reorganization of their school, accompanied by job loss.

The two No Child Left Behind waves closely parallel one another. Burnout levels for teachers with up to 15 years experience resemble the pattern first found in the era of the implementation of high-stakes testing (in the 2000 data set). Many of the teachers in the earlier data set were drawn in the 2002 and 2004 samples. However, the implementation of NCLB resulted in a shifting upward of burnout levels for each experience cohort in 2002 and 2004 over the pattern for 2000. The small spike in the 2002 data set for teachers with 10 to 15 years experience may reflect the growing recognition that the high-stakes testing practices will have greater ramifications for schools, given that the federal government has implemented the Texas policy. Teachers with 10 to 15 years experience, like their counterparts during the *A Nation at Risk* era in the 1980s, consider themselves to be master teachers and may resent the state and now the federal government demanding that they prove it. Additionally, NCLB had begun to implement a

definition of "highly qualified teachers" based on certification and an academic degree in the specialty area in which one instructs students. However, the two NCLB waves differed from the high-stakes testing data set of 2000 in one respect. Rather than a spike upward among teachers with 20 to 30 years experience, the graph portrays a lower pattern of burnout among the most senior teachers. This pattern resembles the graph lines for all the other data sets, where the most experienced teachers tend to be the least burned out.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper began by distinguishing between teacher burnout as a psychological and a sociological construct. The former focuses on the inability of teachers to cope with stressors associated with the teaching role; the latter sees burnout as a role-specific alienation occasioned by organizational contradictions and pressures. The array of school reforms beginning with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 have introduced organizational pressures on teachers and exacerbated the level of burnout experienced by public school teachers. In some instances unique features of the legislated reforms have differentially raised the burnout levels of some teaching populations.

FOOTNOTES

1. It should be noted that similar predictions were made by the National Education Association at its 1874 and 1893 annual meetings, except then their prediction was that the U.S. would become a backwater republic soon after the emergence of the Twentieth Century.

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Schools as Organizations and the Roles of Teachers

To gain a better understanding of schools as organizations in the United States, think about what indicators you would use to describe schools. Now, using the Web pages in the Appendix, find a data set that allows you to compare schools in your area using at least two of these indicators. You may also

want to go to the Web page for your state and see what data is available on schools.

Using an academic data base, find the latest data on a topic relating to teaching that was described in the reading by Richard Ingersoll and David Perda on the status of teaching. Restrict your search to refereed journals.

Using an academic database, look for articles and information on "SCHOOL SIZE" and "ACHIEVEMENT." Again, use the "AND" function described in the Project for Part I, and this time do not restrict your search to refereed journals; this way you will get a broader range of information.

PART III

STUDENTS AND THE INFORMAL SYSTEM

Behind the formal rules, classroom and school structure, and goal statements is another layer to explore—the informal system, or what really happens in schools. Whenever you enter a classroom, especially for the first time, interact with peers or teachers, or determine what you really need to do for a class, you are dealing with the informal system. In Part III we look at this aspect of what goes on in school organizations and its importance for the overall understanding of educational systems.

Students learn both the formal system and the informal one, each quite important to understanding how schools work. In fact, Philip Jackson (1968) argues that success in school requires mastery of both systems, even though there are contradictions between them. Students who have problems in school are often the ones who have not learned to balance the two systems or to negotiate the contradictions. The Hidden Curriculum, as labeled by Snyder (1971) in his book by the same name, defines this system as “implicit demands (as opposed to the explicit obligations of the visible curriculum) that are found in every learning institution and which students have to find out and respond to in order to survive within it” (p. 6). These unwritten regulations and unintended consequences are an education in themselves and determine how we learn to cope with the unspoken expectations in life.

Sociologists who study education ask numerous questions about the role of the informal system in selection and allocation of students: how students and teachers learn to cope with the expectations of school; feelings about themselves and others that students bring to school and develop in school; the classroom and school climate, or culture; and power relationships in schools between teachers, students, and peers.

The main contribution of Part III to our understanding of educational systems is the focus on the unobvious aspects of schooling, the subtle messages and power relationships inherent in any system. These aspects of schooling cannot be studied by looking at lists of goals, school documents, descriptions of role responsibilities, or recorded test scores. In fact, most studies of the informal system are ethnographies, carefully documented observations of interactions, behaviors, and the atmosphere in schools that record the “school climate.”

School climate, or culture, which makes up one aspect of the informal system, refers to several parts of the experience of schools: the interactions that result from grouping students, the resistance of some students to schooling, and teachers’ expectations of students that affect achievement levels. Factors inside and outside the school influence school climate (Ballantine & Hammack, 2008; Brookover, Erickson, & McEvoy, 1996). Sociologists refer to the school-value climate, learning climate, and power dynamics, among other

types of climate. For instance, “effective schools” studies consider both the formal and informal systems in school, making recommendations on how to change school climate to make schools more conducive to learning for all children (Brookover, Erickson, & McEvoy, 1996). These studies measure school climate by considering teacher expectations, academic norms, students’ sense of futility (giving up on school), role definitions, grouping patterns, and instructional practices.

Most studies that focus on school climate also have theoretical underpinnings. Several of the best-known studies use ethnographic methods in which the researchers immerse themselves in the school settings to observe the more subtle workings of schools and messages students receive from schools. These studies have generally fallen into the categories of conflict theory or interaction or interpretive theory. Conflict theorists, as described in Part I, see in the hidden curriculum a social control function that reproduces the social class of students. Working-class students find that they are not fully integrated into the educational system; they learn to cope with boredom in school, which prepares them for the boredom of future jobs. Consider the following examples:

In a now classic ethnography, Paul Willis (1979) describes the activities of two groups of students, the “lads” and the “ear’oles.” The lads experience an informal hidden curriculum that reinforces their working-class status and prepares them for factory work. The ear’oles suck up the knowledge from teachers in preparation for further education and success in responsible jobs in the work world. The lads show resistance to school in their “counterschool culture,” and create a “shopfloor culture” of chauvinism, toughness, and machismo to cope with the unpleasant situations they face in the middle-class school culture and hidden curriculum.

In another ethnography, MacLeod (1996) provides a vivid description of two groups of kids from a poor Chicago housing project and their experiences negotiating the educational system. He talks about the differences in the groups, one of which has high aspirations and the other whose members have given up on the system, and how those differences are influenced by the messages and experiences they receive in the informal system of the school. In both the Willis and MacLeod studies, the lower-class students tend to end up in the same place whether their goals are to get ahead or resist schooling.

The readings in this part take us through the lives of children experiencing the informal system of education, starting with kindergarten. Students learn both the formal and informal rules of the classroom from their earliest experiences in schools. Harry Gracey describes a day in the life of a kindergarten class for the teacher and the students. He points out both the formal lesson plans and time schedule and the informal learning that takes place in lessons about punctuality, obedience, respect, and other rules that govern the informal aspects of the classroom. This illustrates the interaction between formal goals of schools and informal lessons learned by children from teachers and peers to prepare them to move to the next levels of schooling.

In the second reading in Part III, Mary Haywood Metz reports on findings from her observations of classrooms and interviews with teachers in eight diverse settings. Metz found a “common script” in schools. All the schools were recognizably similar in many respects, but she also found clear differences in the way the script was carried out based on the dominant social-class background of the students and the informal system this created in the schools.

Students’ experiences in schools vary greatly depending on the school climate and their roles in the school system. Some are leaders, some followers. Some are jocks, some brains.

Some succeed, some fail. The informal aspects of school have great influence on student experiences in school. Prudence Carter looks at African American and Latino youths and their peer groups to determine how peers affect performance in school. She argues that peers are affected by the groups they associate with in school, meaning there is not one result for students.

Probably the most difficult problem in schools, and one about which the public is most concerned, is violence, even though schools are one of the safest places for students to be (Addington, et al., 2002). Some of this violence is brought into schools from outside by gang members. Some violence comes from isolated or alienated students, a cause made apparent by recent school shootings. Whatever the source, violence is perceived by the public and school personnel alike as a severe problem for schools, and debates about how to deal with school violence are the subject matter of many conferences. Violence finds its roots in the climate of schools. In their reading, David Dupper and Nancy Meyer-Adams illustrate the importance of school climate in environments of intimidation and fear in which some students have intolerable experiences. They suggest possible ways to change these toxic school climates.

When the education system fails students or students fail in the education system, policy analysts ask why and what can be done to correct the problem. Research tells us many of the problems—high turnover in schools, problems with school resources, structure (including student-teacher ratios, quality of teachers, and school size), and student characteristics and composition—result in dropouts (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). In the last reading, Paul Barton discusses the situation of students for whom the educational system does not work. These “at risk” students and dropouts face reduced opportunities in life.

All of the readings in this section touch on some aspect of the very broad subject of the informal system, but, in fact, every reading in the book alludes to both the formal and the informal systems. Keep both the formal and informal systems in mind as you read other parts of this book and in your contacts with educational institutions.

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LEARNING THE STUDENT ROLE

Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp

HARRY L. GRACEY

The organizational structure of school cannot be studied in isolation from the roles of individuals holding positions within the system. In his complete article, Harry L. Gracey describes the socialization process into the role of "student" by documenting a day in the life of a kindergarten teacher and class. New initiates to formal schooling learn the expectations of school so that they will fit into the educational system and later into the world of work. In the excerpts from this classic article, some of the references may seem a bit old fashioned to you; however, it conveys a powerful message about the way students are socialized in school and for what purposes.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the role of kindergarten in preparing students for the next stages in life?
2. What lessons are being passed on through the informal system during a day in the life of a kindergarten student, and how?
3. Taking the message about learning the student role, how is this role perpetuated and expanded through other levels of schooling?
4. How might conflict theorists interpret the processes taking place in kindergarten?

Education must be considered one of the major institutions of social life today. Along with the family and organized religion, however, it is a "secondary institution," one in which people are prepared for life in society as it is presently organized. The main dimensions of modern life, that is, the nature of society as a whole, is determined principally by the "Primary institutions," which today are the economy, the political system, and the military establishment. Education has been defined by sociologists, classical and contemporary, as an institution which serves society by socializing people into it through a formalized, standardized procedure. At the beginning of this century, Emile Durkheim told student teachers at the University of Paris that education "consists of a methodical socialization of the younger generation." He went on to add:

It is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states that are demanded of him by the political society as a whole and by the special milieu for which he is specifically destined. . . . To the egotistic and asocial being that has just been born, [society] must as rapidly as possible add another capable of leading a moral and social life. Such is the work of education.¹

"The education process," Durkheim said, "is above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence."² The contemporary educational sociologist, Wilbur Brookover, offers a similar formulation in his recent textbook definition of education.

Actually, therefore, in the broadest sense education is synonymous with socialization. It includes any social behavior that assists in the induction of the child into membership in the society or any behavior by which the society perpetuates itself through the next generation.³

The educational institution is, then, one of the ways in which society is perpetuated through the

systematic socialization of the young, while the nature of the society which is being perpetuated—its organization and operation, its values, beliefs, and ways of living—are determined by the primary institutions. The educational system, like other secondary institutions, serves the society which is created by the operation of the economy, the political system, and the military establishment.

Schools, the social organizations of the educational institution, are today for the most part large bureaucracies run by specially trained and certified people. There are few places left in modern societies where formal teaching and learning is carried on in small, isolated groups, like the rural, one-room schoolhouses of the last century. Schools are large, formal organizations which tend to be parts of larger organizations, local community School Districts. These School Districts are bureaucratically organized and their operations are supervised by state and local governments. In this context, as Brookover says:

The term education is used . . . to refer to a system of schools, in which specifically designated persons are expected to teach children and youth certain types of acceptable behavior. The school system becomes a . . . unit in the total social structure and is recognized by the members of the society as a separate social institution. Within this structure a portion of the total socialization process occurs.⁴

Education is the part of the socialization process which takes place in the schools; and these are, more and more today, bureaucracies within bureaucracies.

Kindergarten is generally conceived by educators as a year of preparation for school. It is thought of as a year in which small children, five or six years old, are prepared socially and emotionally for the academic learning which will take place over the next twelve years. It is expected that a foundation of behavior and attitudes will be laid in kindergarten on which the children can acquire the skills and knowledge they will be taught in the grades. A booklet prepared for parents by the staff of a suburban New York school system says that the kindergarten experience will stimulate the

child's desire to learn and cultivate the skills he will need for learning in the rest of his school career. It claims that the child will find opportunities for physical growth, for satisfying his "need for self-expression," acquire some knowledge, and provide opportunities for creative activity. It concludes, "The most important benefit that your five-year old will receive from kindergarten is the opportunity to live and grow happily and purposefully with others in a small society." The kindergarten teachers in one of the elementary schools in this community, one we shall call the Wilbur Wright School, said their goals were to see that the children "grew" in all ways: physically, of course, emotionally, socially, and academically. They said they wanted children to like school as a result of their kindergarten experiences and that they wanted them to learn to get along with others.

None of these goals, however, is unique to kindergarten; each of them is held to some extent by teachers in the other six grades at Wright School. And growth would occur, but differently, even if the child did not attend school. The children already know how to get along with others, in their families and their play groups. The unique job of the kindergarten in the educational division of labor seems rather to be teaching children the student role. The student role is the repertoire of behavior and attitudes regarded by educators as appropriate to children in school. Observation in the kindergartens of the Wilbur Wright School revealed a great variety of activities through which children are shown and then drilled in the behavior and attitudes defined as appropriate for school and thereby induced to learn the role of student. Observations of the kindergartens and interviews with the teachers both pointed to the teaching and learning of classroom routines as the main element of the student role. The teachers expended most of their efforts, for the first half of the year at least, in training the children to follow the routines which teachers created. The children were, in a very real sense, drilled in tasks and activities created by the teachers for their own purposes and beginning and ending quite arbitrarily (from the child's point of view) at the command of the teacher. One teacher remarked that she hated September,

because during the first month "everything has to be done rigidly, and repeatedly, until they know exactly what they're supposed to do." However, "by January," she said, "they know exactly what to do [during the day] and I don't have to be after them all the time." Classroom routines were introduced gradually from the beginning of the year in all the kindergartens, and the children were drilled in them as long as was necessary to achieve regular compliance. By the end of the school year, the successful kindergarten teacher has a well-organized group of children. They follow classroom routines automatically, having learned all the command signals and the expected responses to them. They have, in our terms, learned the student role.

TRAINING FOR LEARNING AND FOR LIFE

The children [at the Wright School] learned to go through routines and to follow orders with unquestioning obedience, even when these make no sense to them. They have been disciplined to do as they are told by an authoritative person without significant protest. Edith [the teacher] has developed this discipline in the children by creating and enforcing a rigid social structure in the classroom through which she effectively controls the behavior of most of the children for most of the school day. The "living with others in a small society" which the school pamphlet tells parents is the most important thing the children will learn in kindergarten can be seen now in its operational meaning, which is learning to live by the routines imposed by the school. This learning appears to be the principal content of the student role.

Children who submit to school-imposed discipline and come to identify with it, so that being a "good student" comes to be an important part of their developing identities, become the good students by the school's definitions. Those who submit to the routines of the school but do not come to identify with them will be adequate students who find the more important part of their identities elsewhere, such as in the play group outside school. Children who refuse to

submit to the school routines are rebels, who become known as “bad students” and often “problem children” in the school, for they do not learn the academic curriculum, and their behavior is often disruptive in the classroom. Today schools engage clinical psychologists in part to help teachers deal with such children.

[It is interesting to look at Edith Kerr’s] kindergarten at Wright School [and] to ask how the children learn this role of student—come to accept school-imposed routines—and what, exactly, it involves in terms of behavior and attitudes. The most prominent features of the classroom are its physical and social structures. The room is carefully furnished and arranged in ways adults feel will interest children. The play store and play kitchen in the back of the room, for example, imply that children are interested in mimicking these activities of the adult world. The only space left for the children to create something of their own is the empty center of the room, and the materials at their disposal are the blocks, whose use causes anxiety on the part of the teacher. The room, being carefully organized physically by the adults, leaves little room for the creation of physical organization on the part of the children.

The social structure created by Edith is a far more powerful and subtle force for fitting the children to the student role. This structure is established by the very rigid and tightly controlled set of rituals and routines through which the children are put during the day. There is first the rigid “locating procedure” in which the children are asked to find themselves in terms of the month, date, day of the week, and the number of the class who are present and absent. This puts them solidly in the real world as defined by adults. The day is then divided into six periods whose activities are for the most part determined by the teacher. In Edith’s kindergarten the children went through Serious Time, which opens the school day, Sharing Time, Play Time (which in clear weather would be spent outside), Work Time, Clean-up Time, after which they have their milk, and Rest Time after which they go home. The teacher has programmed activities for each of these Times.

Occasionally the class is allowed limited discretion to choose between proffered activities, such as stories or records, but original ideas for activities are never solicited from them. Opportunity for free individual action is open only once in the day, during the part of Work Time left after the general class assignment has been completed (on the day reported, the class assignment was drawing animal pictures for the absent Mark). Spontaneous interests or observations from the children are never developed by the teacher. It seems that her schedule just does not allow room for developing such unplanned events. During Sharing Time, for example, the child who brought a bird’s nest told Edith, in reply to her question of what kind of bird made it, “My friend says it’s a rain bird.” Edith does not think to ask about this bird, probably because the answer is “childish,” that is, not given in accepted adult categories of birds. The children then express great interest in an object in the nest, but the teacher ignores this interest, probably because the object is uninteresting to her. The soldiers from “Babes in Toyland” strike a responsive note in the children, but this is not used for a discussion of any kind. The soldiers are treated in the same way as objects which bring little interest from the children. Finally, at the end of Sharing Time the child-world of perception literally erupts in the class with the recollection of “the spooky house” at the zoo. Apparently this made more of an impression on the children than did any of the animals, but Edith is unable to make any sense of it for herself. The tightly imposed order of the class begins to break down as the children discover a universe of discourse of their own and begin talking excitedly with one another. The teacher is effectively excluded from this child’s world of perception and for a moment she fails to dominate the classroom situation. She reasserts control, however, by taking the children to the next activity she has planned for the day. It seems never to have occurred to Edith that there might be a meaningful learning experience for the children in re-creating the “spooky house” in the

classroom. It seems fair to say that this would have offered an exercise in spontaneous self-expression and an opportunity for real creativity on the part of the children. Instead, they are taken through a canned animal imitation procedure, an activity which they apparently enjoy, but which is also imposed upon them rather than created by them.

While children's perceptions of the world and opportunities for genuine spontaneity and creativity are being systematically eliminated from the kindergarten, unquestioned obedience to authority and role learning of meaningless material are being encouraged. When the children are called to line up in the center of the room they ask "Why?" and "What for?" as they are in the very process of complying. They have learned to go smoothly through a programmed day, regardless of whether parts of the program make any sense to them or not. Here the student role involves what might be called "doing what you're told and never mind why." Activities which might "make sense" to the children are effectively ruled out, and they are forced or induced to participate in activities which may be "senseless," such as calisthenics.

At the same time the children are being taught by rote meaningless sounds in the ritual oaths and songs, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Pledge to the Flag, and "America." As they go through the grades children learn more and more of the sounds of these ritual oaths, but the fact that they have often learned meaningless sounds rather than meaningful statements is shown when they are asked to write these out in the sixth grade; they write them as groups of sounds rather than as a series of words, according to the sixth grade teachers at Wright School. Probably much learning in the elementary grades is of this character, that is, having no intrinsic meaning to the children, but rather being tasks inexplicably required of them by authoritative adults. Listening to sixth grade children read social studies reports, for example, in which they have copied material from encyclopedias about a particular country, an observer often gets the feeling that he is watching an activity which has no intrinsic meaning for the child. The child who reads, "Switzerland grows

wheat and cows and grass and makes a lot of cheese" knows the dictionary meaning of each of these words but may very well have no conception at all of this "thing" called Switzerland. He is simply carrying out a task assigned by the teacher because it is assigned, and this may be its only "meaning" for him.

Another type of learning which takes place in kindergarten is seen in children who take advantage of the "holes" in the adult social structure to create activities of their own, during Work Time or out-of-doors during Play Time. Here the children are learning to carve out a small world of their own within the world created by adults. They very quickly learn that if they keep within permissible limits of noise and action they can play much as they please. Small groups of children formed during the year in Edith's kindergarten who played together at these times, developing semi-independent little groups in which they created their own worlds in the interstices of the adult-imposed physical and social world. These groups remind the sociological observer very much of the so-called "informal groups" which adults develop in factories and offices of large bureaucracies.⁵ Here, too, within authoritatively imposed social organizations people find "holes" to create little subworlds which support informal, friendly, unofficial behavior. Forming and participating in such groups seems to be as much part of the student role as it is of the role of bureaucrat.

The kindergarten has been conceived of here as the year in which children are prepared for their schooling by learning the role of student. In the classrooms of the rest of the school grades, the children will be asked to submit to systems and routines imposed by the teachers and the curriculum. The days will be much like those of kindergarten, except that academic subjects will be substituted for the activities of the kindergarten. Once out of the school system, young adults will more than likely find themselves working in large-scale bureaucratic organizations, perhaps on the assembly line in the factory, perhaps in the paper routines of the

white collar occupations, where they will be required to submit to rigid routines imposed by "the company" which may make little sense to them. Those who can operate well in this situation will be successful bureaucratic functionaries. Kindergarten, therefore, can be seen as preparing children not only for participation in the bureaucratic organization of large modern school systems, but also for the large-scale occupational bureaucracies of modern society.

NOTES

1. Durkheim, E. (1956). *Sociology and education* (pp. 71-72). New York: The Free Press.
2. Ibid., p. 123.
3. Brookover, W. (1957). *The sociology of education* (p. 4). New York: American Book Company.
4. Ibid., p. 6.
5. See, for example, Blau, P. M. (1956). *Bureaucracy in modern society* (Chapter 3). New York: Random House.

15

REAL SCHOOL

The Universal Drama Amid Disparate Experience

MARY HAYWOOD METZ

In this reading, Mary Heywood Metz discusses the similarities and differences in American high schools and contrasts them based on the social-class differences of the students they serve. Looking at a range of public and Catholic high schools, Metz studied teachers' work by observing their classrooms, interviewing them, and reviewing documents about each school. What Metz found was a "common script." The roles and plots were similar, but the settings and actor lines were recognizable but different. The importance of this reading for the informal system of schools lies in the way the common script is carried out across schools. Although the setting and goals and even some of the rituals may be similar across schools, each school differs in the way the common script is actualized, based on social-class differences of students and expectations for their futures.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What were some differences in the "common script" found by Metz in the eight schools she studied?
2. How would you explain the process by which schools with common scripts can be so different?
3. How do schools play a role in reproducing social class?
4. Why is there a need for "real schools"?

Variations on the phrase "The American High School" adorn the titles of popular recent reports on reform (Boyer, 1983; Cusick, 1983; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, 1986;Sizer, 1984), expressing a common belief that they address a single institution.

American high schools are indeed alike, strikingly so in many important respects. But they are also very different in other important respects. Reformers have paid little attention to their differences; some ignore them, while others mention them almost reluctantly, hurrying on to describe what is common among schools. Still, the differences among schools are crucial to their daily practice and to their effects upon students, and so to reform. This article addresses the interplay of similarity and difference in American high schools, regarding their similarity, rather than their difference, as problematic and in need of explanation.

THE DATA

The chapter arises out of a study of teachers' working lives undertaken at the National Center of Effective Secondary Schools. In that study we took a close look at a set of teachers in "ordinary" or typical high schools spread across the social class spectrum. We chose eight schools in mid-western metropolitan areas. Six were public schools and two were Catholic. Of the six public schools, two were in high, two in middle, and two in low SES areas. One of the Catholic schools served a predominantly middle class clientele and the other a predominantly working class one. We chose schools varying in social class as sites to study teachers' work because previous research in sociology and anthropology suggests that differences in the social class of communities and student bodies have serious implications for the life of schools (e.g., Anyon, 1981; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Connell et al., 1982; Heath, 1983; Lubeck, 1985; Weis, 1985; Willis, 1977).

We visited each school in teams, spending more than two weeks, and a total of twenty or more person days in each school. At each school, we followed diverse students through a school day, spent a whole school day with each of eight teachers, and interviewed those eight teachers in depth, as well as ten others more briefly. We also perused and collected a number of documents and statistics about each school. While our

fieldwork in each school was too brief to be genuinely ethnographic, the strength of the design lay in its comparative potential. We attended classes and interviewed teachers in situations that were formally parallel across the eight diverse schools. We could see their differences in clear relief.

THE COMMON SCRIPT

We chose the sample of schools we did because we expected to find some important differences among them. Our visits to the first schools quickly gave us dramatic evidence that our expectations were correct; participation in the varied schools provided us radically different experiences. The buildings varied from resembling a college campus, at suburban Maple Heights, to resembling a fortress, at low income, urban Charles Drew. The use of time varied from intent and taut to relatively relaxed. Maple Heights allowed students to go home for lunch or to roam its spacious lawns in small groups after eating, while the two low income urban schools, Grant and Drew, kept all but the main door locked and security guards at Drew checked students' picture identifications both at the door to the school and at the entrance to the lunch room. More important, the content and tone of classroom discourse varied widely, as did the style of interactions between students and teachers.

While this variation riveted our attention as we moved from school to school, the discourse of the reform movement—which the Center hoped to address—assumes commonality, even sameness, among schools. As we puzzled over the discrepancy between our diverse experiences and the reformers' assumption that schools are standard, we came to see that we were looking at different aspects of schools' lives. The reform movement emphasizes formal structure and technical procedures in schools. In these respects, the schools we saw were indeed very alike. The meaning of that structure and technology, the cultural assumptions of participants about their

activities, and the place of the school in relation to the society and to children's life trajectories differed significantly among the schools we saw.

As we watched the schools in daily action, and talked with the actors who gave them life, it seemed that the schools were following a common script. The stages were roughly similar, though the scenery varied significantly. The roles were similarly defined and the outline of the plot was supposed to be the same. But the actors took great liberties with the play. They interpreted the motivations and purposes of the characters whose roles they took with striking variation. They changed their entrances and exits. Sometimes, they left before the last act. The outlines of the plot took on changing significance with the actors' varied interpretation of their roles. Directors had limited control over their actors; only a few were able to get the actors to perform as an ensemble that would enact the director's conception of the play. Directors often had to make the best of the qualities the actors brought to their roles and to interpret the play consistently with the players' abilities and intentions.

Just the same the script was there, and the play was in some sense recognizable as the same play in all the schools. More important, the script was extremely important to some of the actors and some of the audiences. In fact, it was where the production was hardest to coordinate and perhaps least easily recognizable as the same play that was being produced at schools where action meshed more smoothly, that the school staffs were the most insistent that their production followed the script for "The American High School," varying from others only in details.

We found similarities in our schools that paralleled those recently noted by several writers (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, 1984). There was little variation in school schedule and all schools had long hallways with nearly identical classrooms lined up along them. Class size and teachers' normal assignment to meet five groups of students for instruction five times a week

varied little. The scope and sequence of the curriculum differed only in detail from school to school, though the number of sections available in subjects like advanced foreign language or vocational education varied significantly. Students were expected to attend all their classes promptly every day. There were extracurricular activities after school, or occasionally during the last hour of the day.

Textbooks were ubiquitous. We saw the same textbooks in use where students' scores on standardized tests were far below average and where they were concentrated well above the median. Instruction was conducted primarily through lecture, recitation, discussion, and seatwork, with occasional use of student reports, filmstrips, movies, and videotapes.

Teachers had undifferentiated roles. Department chairs held a slight measure of authority and engaged in some co-ordinating activities. A few teachers were temporarily released from some portion of their teaching for a variety of special responsibilities, but these variations in routine were not permanent and conferred no formal special status, though they often brought informal prestige.

Despite these very strong similarities among the schools, there was variation in the appearance and style of the buildings, the strictness of enforcement of routines, and the relationships built among flesh and blood individuals on the staff and in the student body. The curriculum actually in use varied also. The content of classroom interactions, the questions asked on tests, students' written work, and the deportment of students in class varied widely from school to school even when classes used the same books.

COMMUNITY AND STUDENT PRESSURES FOR DIFFERENCES

Among Schools

Differences among the schools arose in large part from differences in the communities

surrounding them. The communities we studied varied markedly in the financial resources they gave schools and in the relationship between school and community. They also varied in the resources parents brought both to their relations with the school and to the task of assisting their children with education. These communities had developed differing visions of how the high schools should be run—within the parameters set by the common script—and of the place of a high school education in their children's life trajectories. The communities affected the schools most intimately as they shaped the students who entered their doors. Students' skills, their understanding of a high school education, and their vision of its place in their overall lives differed markedly between communities. The effects of the ties between the communities and schools in our project are discussed in detail in other papers (Hemmings & Metz, 1990; Metz, 1990).

Despite different resources and quite different ideas about the nature and uses of high school education, there was no evidence that any of the communities wanted or expected schools to depart from the basic common script for "The American High School." This support for the common script may seem "natural," but in fact it requires explanation. Why should people with such different backgrounds and experiences and such different ambitions for their children all expect and demand "the same" high school education for them? Why do they do so even as they also exert pressures for interpretations of that "standard" education that produce important differences in students' actual educational experiences?

The persistence of the common script seems most problematic when one looks inside the school at teachers and students engaged in the common work demanded by the script. Except at the three schools with the most skilled, best prepared students, large proportions of the students did poorly academically, including failing courses. At Drew, the school in the poorest neighborhood, the dropout rate was apparently over 50%; it approached 50% at Grant, the other school in a poor setting. Even at the two schools that had

students from steadily employed blue collar and lower white collar families, the dropout rate was a worry to school officials and the failure rate substantial, though both were much lower than at the schools with students in poverty.

Furthermore, at all the schools where no more than half of the students were headed for college, students expressed alienation from the curriculum and from class and school procedures in various subtle or blatant ways. The favored forms for expressing alienation from the schools' academic endeavors, and their severity and frequency, varied from school to school. Especially at the schools in the poor neighborhoods, students cut classes or cut school; at these schools there were chronic problems with severe tardiness. Once in class at these schools, students often carried on social conversations or read or wrote on unrelated projects, or sat limply staring, or put their heads down and slept. At the predominantly working class schools, where most students wanted to graduate but did not expect to go to college, some objected to assignments or quibbled with teachers over small issues; a few engaged in expressive interactions with peers designed for maximum disruption. In a few classes some students carried on a running guerrilla warfare, teasing and badgering teachers in various ways. Especially at one of these schools, students in the majority of classes had successfully negotiated with teachers for time in class to do "homework" that became an open social hour. Students in tracked classes whose achievement was much higher or lower than average for their school tended to differ from their school in the direction of students in schools where their level of achievement was average.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO DIFFICULTIES WITH THE COMMON SCRIPT

Teachers' work consists of transforming the minds and perhaps the characters of their students. To succeed in their work they must, at

a bare minimum, win the passive acquiescence of their students. Students' active co-operation will make the task far easier and the teachers' work more effective.

Consequently, students' expressions of distance and distaste for the academic undertaking created serious distress and frustration for their teachers. A few determined and skilled individuals were able to reduce or mitigate these patterns through imagination and force of character within the parameters of the common script. Some, equally dedicated, tried hard but were unable to do so. Some teachers simply blamed the difficulty of teaching on students; they considered those they worked with intellectually or morally deficient. They wished they had students "like the old days" or they wished they taught in their idealized conception of a "better" school: a magnet school, a suburban school, or a school in a different kind of suburb where families cared more about education. Many teachers seemed to use such blame to protect their own imperiled sense of craft. Even among teachers who did not reject students as unworthy, the overwhelming majority did not expect to tailor the institution or the learning to the students, but assumed that they must tailor the students to the institution.

Even where there was incontrovertible evidence that students were not learning well, both students and teachers were frustrated or alienated, and there was an evident lack of connection between students and standard structures and curricula, teachers did not respond by suggesting alternative strategies that would significantly change the common script. A few teachers did speculate about one or another possible change, but they did not seem fully to appreciate the systemic alterations their suggestions might imply.

Teachers did make informal, *de facto* adjustments in the script, however. Much of the difference between the schools in daily curriculum-in-use, in the sense of time, and in relationships resulted from adjustments in the common script that students and teachers created together through informal processes.

Sometimes these were conscious adjustments on teachers' part. For example, teachers at one predominantly blue collar school said repeatedly that they had "to be realistic." They made the subject matter simpler and more practical, without departing altogether from the formal curriculum embodied in the common script.

Sometimes adjustments were gradual and formally unrecognized. For example, at some schools, teachers (and administrators) felt forced to put up with tardiness and truancy, as long as these stayed within reasonable limits, because they were too rampant to control. Some teachers simply sought strategies that would win students' attention to the lesson for at least part of the class hour.

In short, teachers were forced to adjust to their students, to change school practices to accommodate students' unwillingness to meet certain demands (e.g., for significant homework) or abide by certain procedures (e.g., consistent prompt appearance in class). They did in fact change the system to meet the students. But they did not, for the most part, do it in formal ways and they did not attempt to challenge the common script. For example, they did not argue for alternative pedagogical approaches, but simply "watered down" the common curriculum or made it "more practical" or just "did the best I can to cover the material." They did not alter expectations for prompt class attendance; they just started getting the major business of the class going more and more slowly.

If one looks at students' learning simply as a technical problem, it is quite remarkable to see situations where a technical process (or the social structure which frames it) is clearly not effective on a massive scale, but no one in the organization calls for developing alternative technical or structural approaches. Should a company that produced inanimate objects have such difficulties in accomplishing its desired results—if, for example, bicycle wheels produced in a factory were not straight and strong—the company would soon be out of business unless it changed its procedures.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE COMMON SCRIPT AS A REFLECTION OF SOCIETAL THOUGHT AND VALUES

While it is easy to blame teachers and administrators for being myopic in the production of this state of affairs, it is a grave mistake to do so. On the contrary, school staffs stand squarely in the mainstream of American educational thought in their reluctance to consider alternatives to the common script.

The schools we saw were typical of schools described throughout the literature, in their adherence to the common script, in students' alienation and distance from it in all but schools for the able and ambitious, and in teachers' informal adjustments that accommodated students without altering the script or supporting learning (Boyer, 1983; Cusick, 1983; McNeil, 1986; Powell et al., 1985; Sedlak et al., 1986; Sizer, 1984).

There are reasons for students' resistance to school that, in part, lie beyond the schools' control. There is by now a large literature on the ways that mainstream schools require minority children to learn through cultural patterns that are initially unfamiliar and often distasteful. Insistence on these patterns not only creates cognitive problems—that many can and do overcome—but problems of identity, of choice between home and school worlds. This choice leads many minority students intentionally to distance themselves from the school (Erickson, 1987; Fordham, 1988).

At the high school level minorities experience a second set of problems. John Ogbu (1978, 1987) has argued that minorities do not learn well because the economic experience of the adults they see around them has taught them that credentials do not yield the rewards for minorities that they do for majority students. They perceive a "job ceiling" that limits the rewards that can be gained from cooperation with the schools. Recently, he has noted that minority students who have just immigrated to this country often do not perceive these limitations, while for others even low end American jobs constitute improvements

over their experience in their home countries. These immigrant students (Ogbu, 1987) do better in school than do native minority students.

Native minority students may often resist the common script of high school because embracing it signifies betrayal of the peer group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) and of ethnic identity, on the one hand, and promises little tangible reward, on the other. It is difficult for teachers, especially individual teachers, to break through such patterns of resistance.

Similar problems exist in the apparently increasing resistance of blue collar white students to the schools and the common script. A number of external social processes have undercut the claims to authority of the schools and their individual staff members over the last twenty years (Hurn, 1985). Probably more important, as Sedlak and his colleagues (1986) argue, a high school diploma has decreasing value for young people hoping to use it as their major ticket to a place in the labor market. Children of blue collar and even lower white collar families have been watching the economic prospects of adults and older siblings in their communities contract during the last ten years. For these students, the most minimal cooperation with the school needed to obtain a diploma often seems a fair bargain for the minimal benefits bestowed by its receipt.

In short, students' alienation from schooling has significant roots outside the schools that teachers and administrators can do little about. Nonetheless, in all of our schools there were some students making a visible effort to cooperate and do well. In all there were some teachers who were quite successful in drawing large parts of their classes into the academic enterprise, at least during class time. And some schools succeeded better than others at this task, despite roughly equivalent student bodies.

Students' resistance to school, then, must be understood as the result of a mixture of influences. A very important part of that mixture lies in economic and social processes beyond the schools' control—though not beyond the reach

of intentional social change. Still, school practice and the practice of individual teachers, as well as the perspectives of individual students, also have important effects.

Given the erosion of extrinsic rewards for schooling that increasing numbers of blue collar white students, as well as minority students, are experiencing, it would seem logical to try to increase the intrinsic rewards of schooling. Since teachers are most aware of the students' resistance to the common script, why are teachers not pushing for education that will use their students' interests, experiences, and intellectual strengths to draw them into the enterprise? Why do they not press for a more flexible, adaptable, and less monotonous rhythm of activity?

One important reason is that teachers work within larger organizations that mandate much of the common script in non-negotiable terms. In most of our schools teachers had curriculum guides that outlined their formal curriculum, though they might be able to make a fairly broad range of choices within a given framework. The schedule of the school day was decided by the central district administration. State laws and Carnegie units for college admissions froze the larger outlines of the formal curriculum even beyond the district level. Architecture and union contracts shaped class size. In most cases district policy determined homogeneous or heterogeneous ability grouping. In other words, teachers were hemmed in by state laws, district directives, union contracts, and college admissions pressures—as well as societal expectations—all of which presumed or required that they follow the common script.

We have, then, to look beyond individual schools or the occupations of teaching and school administration to find the most important sources for the common script. It has deep historical roots. Several historical works (e.g., Callahan, 1962; Katz, 1971; Tyack, 1974) have traced the development of the forms we take as “natural” today. They stress the dominance of the factory model of organization at the time that

compulsory schooling was being taken seriously, so that schools were increasing in number and public saliency, and being given what was to become their common form. Managers and bosses expected to have almost total control over subordinates. Schools were a mechanism for quick Americanization of diverse immigrants and efficient training of a labor force, most of whom were headed for menial jobs where bosses and managers intended to be the brains while they were simply hands. Such a system was not designed to be responsive to individual or cultural diversity. If it failed to develop sophisticated literacy and numeracy in poorer children or those who were culturally different, then they simply would be channeled into work where sophisticated skills were not required or even desired. The common script is, in some ways, a historical residue.

David Cohen (1987) has recently argued that the roots of the common script are historically deeper yet; they go far into European history. He focuses on schools' attachment to teaching through a corpus of revered written works and through telling. Western society learned to revere the few surviving written works of earlier great civilizations through the years of the middle ages when a few precious copies of these works were carefully preserved and laboriously copied. Protestant attachment to the Bible furthered this attitude. At the same time, he says, folk patterns of informal teaching in everyday life consist in telling, in instruction through didactic means. When the schools resist innovations that would make children more active learners or adjust the curriculum to the child, they are only following deeply engrained cultural patterns of revering great books and of instruction by lecture.

While history may have shaped the form of the common script, it is important to seek the reasons that it is so widely embraced by contemporary actors. If the common script has not been able to produce good results with large proportions of students in recent years, it would seem reasonable to try altering the script. It requires

explanation that neither teachers, nor other education professionals, nor policymakers, nor parent groups often consider such a possibility. Why, then, is the common script so persistent?

REAL SCHOOL AS A SYMBOL OF EQUITY

The symbols and rituals of Real School are important not only for the immediate school communities, but also for a regional, state, and national audience. These audiences want to be able to assume that all schools follow a common template and can be said to be offering the same, commonly understood and commonly valued, high school education. In the current rhetoric of the national reform movement and in the rhetoric of many local and regional commissions, it is axiomatic that high schools should be the same across communities. The reasons for this are so much taken for granted as to be little discussed, but preparation of a capable labor force and equity are the main reasons given where any become explicit.

In the United States we say we do not believe in passing privilege from parent to child; rather we [claim that we] expect individuals to earn favoured slots in society through talent and hard work. Equality of opportunity, mostly through education, is a central tenet of our social and economic system. The schools have been given the task of judging new citizens' talent and diligence. Consequently, it is important to our national sense of a social system that is fairly ordered that all children have an equal opportunity through education. If we are to say that success in education is a fair and just criterion by which to award each child a slot in an adult occupational hierarchy based upon individual merit, then the poorest child must have access to as good an education as the richest.

How, then, to guarantee an equal education? By guaranteeing the same education. State legislatures and large school districts standardize in the name of equity. The reform reports, with their bland references to "The American High School,"

reflect a strong public consensus on the importance of offering a standard high school experience to all American children. The common script and its enactment with symbols and rituals of Real School in all high schools gives a skeletal reality to the claim of equity through sameness.

But societal perceptions here bear some scrutiny. Just as the rituals of Real School create more social reassurance than technical substance in the daily life of some schools, so do they in the regional and national life of the society. Although the schools we studied served communities that differed widely in privilege and power, since all followed the common script they were similar in most formal respects: in social structure, in the use of time and space, in grouping of students and even in the formal curriculum. But they were very different in one formal respect. They had very different distributions of measures of student achievement. Grades, nationally standardized test scores, dropout rates, and rates of college attendance all varied significantly between schools and all were correlated with the socioeconomic status of the community.

Schools not only teach the young the content of the curriculum and some of the social graces required to be a member in good standing of a school community, they also sort young people into groups labeled as barely employable, possessing moderate skill, capable of much further development, or showing extreme promise. The public schools rank the students who emerge from their doors after thirteen years in ways which are fateful for those young people's work, their economic fortunes, and their status among other members of society.

Imagine what would happen if . . . the goal that educators and reformers officially seek were actually accomplished. All students would become top performers. All of them would make perfect scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, not to mention having perfect A records throughout their schooling. Chaos would ensue. Colleges would not have room for all, but would have little ground on which to accept

some and reject others. Employers looking for secretaries, retail salespersons, waiters, bus drivers, and factory workers would have jobs unfilled as every student considered such work beneath his or her accomplishments.

As long as education is used to rank young people and sort them into occupational futures that differ substantially in the money, status, power, and intrinsic rewards they can yield, good education, or students' success at education, must remain a scarce commodity. Those who do succeed have less competition for access to attractive occupations, if large numbers of others do not.

Families with the resources to affect the quality of their children's education have strong motivation both to provide a superior education to their children and to keep access to such a superior education limited, so that their children will face less challenge from others.

Consequently, an unspoken principle that opposes equality of opportunity through standardization of education is also at work. The public perceives schools to be in practice very unequal. Middle class parents will make considerable sacrifices to locate their children in schools they perceive to be better than others. Communities of parents with the economic and political means to do so will construct schools with special resources for their own children and will keep access to them exclusive. The social class and race of peers is often used by parents as a rough indicator of school quality.

Separate suburban school districts facilitate residents' ability to create superior schools based on selected peers, generous material resources, and teaching positions that attract many applicants from which to choose. Ordinances requiring certain sizes for lots, or only single occupancy housing, can keep out lower income families. Fair Housing groups across the country document the continued practice of racial steering by real estate agents; it can be used to keep many suburban communities all or mostly white. These districts can take advantage of their higher tax base to add the amenities of higher salaries

for teachers, smaller class sizes, and richer stores of materials to their "standard" schools.

The six public schools we studied, although chosen to be ordinary and not including any really elite schools, provide eloquent testimony to the differences in public education that economic and racial housing segregation create in this country. In the communities they served, students received very different amounts of economic and educational resources from their parents and enjoyed very different levels of community safety and support. Students from different communities arrived at high school with visibly different skills, attitudes, and future plans. Different levels of funding available from local tax bases were visible in the schools' architecture, the nonteaching duties expected of their faculties, their extracurricular activities, and their supplies. Not only parents and students but school staff entertained very different visions of students' futures; these visions shaped the relationships of staff and students and the curricula-in-use (Hemmings & Metz, 1990; Metz, 1990). The differences among these schools remind us that more is hidden than revealed when one speaks in a single phrase of "The American High School."

Political scientist Murray Edelman (1977) argued that our political life is shot through with contradictory ideas that the public entertains simultaneously, but in alternation, so that no sense of inconsistency troubles our individual or collective consciousness. We perceive each side of the contradiction as it suits the context, or our social purposes and self-interests. In this way, Americans seem to live with a contradiction between officially equal education based on the common script for the drama of Real School, on the one hand, and tremendous variety in the quality and content of education resulting from schools' ties to socially and racially segregated communities, on the other. Middle class parents make sacrifices to buy houses where schools are supposed to be "better" and communities strongly resist moves for school consolidation with neighboring

communities, let alone proposals to desegregate schools or to introduce low income housing into suburbs. Despite continuous strenuous efforts to place children in superior schools and to preserve their exclusiveness, we rarely see, let alone openly acknowledge, the contradiction between these practices and equality of opportunity through the standardization of educational patterns.

Society's blindness to this contradiction serves the interests of the well-educated middle class. Children in schools with better prepared peers, which are attractive to better prepared teachers, have a considerable advantage in competition with the other products of America's supposedly standard and equal public schools. But middle class leaders feel no inconsistency in claiming that the young of the society are rewarded according to merit, even while they take care to place their own individual children in contexts that foster merit much more actively than those to which other children find themselves consigned.

The formal regulations and informal expectations that create the common script for high schools, and that lead school staffs to use that script to create some form of a Real School, reinforce the apparent equity of American education. The common script for a Real School thus becomes a guarantor of equity across schools. It has important symbolic value in this way to an outside audience of citizens and educational policymakers, as well as to participants. Thus not only do the staffs and parents of Drew and of Grant want to be reassured that these are Real Schools; so also do district administrators, state legislators, and leading citizens with an interest in educational equity—apparent or real.

CONCLUSION

The common script for high school practice with its standard social structure, technical routines, and curricular scope and sequence has taken on a deep cultural value in this country. Its enactment

assures both participants and outsiders of the equity of public schooling in the nation as a whole, while it certifies teachers and students who follow it as legitimate and worthy participants in the academic and social life of the broader society. To follow the script is to accomplish these ends more clearly and surely than it is to effect students' mastery of geometry, chemistry, grammar, and clear written expression. The script serves as a symbol of unity and equity in American education. Participation in the drama it sketches out is participation in a ritual that affirms membership in mainstream American life.

The symbolic and ritual aspects of the play called "The American High School" are most visible where its routines are least technically effective in teaching geometry, chemistry and English. We reached our insights into the symbolic and ritual aspects of the common script as we puzzled over its persistence in schools where it was manifestly not technically effective. Our conviction of the importance of symbol and ritual in maintaining Real School grew as we considered the outpouring of writing already cited which indicates that in recent years, not only in our schools for the poor and the working class, but in most American public high schools for students not headed for selective colleges, the script is no more than minimally effective while student alienation and even student failure are endemic.

This is not to say that the common script that we have developed for high school structure and instruction is irrelevant to its technical ends. It works with reasonable technical effectiveness in schools where certain unstated preconditions are met. In our study, it worked where students came to high school with strong literacy, numeracy, and writing skills and a rudimentary knowledge of history and science. Its effective operation also seemed to depend on students' having realistic hopes of at least modestly successful economic futures to give them extrinsic motivation to compete with each other and to accept the staff's agenda as worthwhile. These conditions apply to the majority of students in a decreasing number

of schools, in only two of the six public schools we visited, and only three of the total eight. In our study, they applied where the majority of students expected to attend colleges with admissions standards that would eliminate some high school graduates.

Persons who are in a position to influence district, state, and national agendas for education are usually persons who were reasonably successful in learning through the patterns of Real School themselves. Most will expect it to work well for their own children, and for most it will indeed do so. These children will come to school from home prepared with relevant skills and a cultural style matched to school discourse. They will be able to expect later rewards for effort and good performance. They will be in schools with peers with similar advantages who will allow teachers to proceed with planned agendas and will stimulate one another to competition.

Many persons in policy-making positions have little direct experience from which to reflect on schooling processes and student reactions other than their own schooling and that of their children. Many have had little or no firsthand experience with schools for blue collar, let alone really poor or minority children, and little or no firsthand experience with the families or the life experience of students in such schools. If their images of what happens inside these schools are not clear and their diagnosis for the students and the schools not well-suited to the realities of their lives, no one should be surprised. Lacking this knowledge, they can easily believe that poor and minority and even blue collar children do not learn well in school because of defects in their characters that can be remedied with stronger demands and coercive pressures, with a sterner imposition of Real School. They can see differences between schools for poor children and the schools their own children attend in terms of talent and its lack, or effort and sloth, not in terms of advantages in their children's school experience. The system seems to them to offer equality of opportunity through the common script, while dramatic differences in

patterns of student accomplishment between schools can be attributed to merit and fault in the individuals who attend them.

The lack of search for alternatives to the common script is a striking feature of current high school life—though some individual teachers do have successful alternative practices in place. But the many experiments that were tried in the 1960s and '70s, producing at least some anecdotal evidence of success, were rarely visible in the schools we studied. Some were still remembered. For example ethnic studies classes, like Afro-American history at Drew, had been discontinued within recent memory at some schools. This lack of alternatives feeds on itself, as schools that offer unconventional courses or teachers who follow unconventional practices, become increasingly exceptional.

The pressures of the reform movement on the schools we studied strengthened the grip of Real School. Rising graduation requirements, increased standardized testing, and increased monitoring of drop-out rates and grading practices pushed teachers not only to use the script, but to follow it more slavishly and improvise less than they otherwise might have.

Once in place, the common script and the practice of Real School are reinforced by an interacting set of influences that overdetermine a conformist outcome. Broad societal support for these standardized patterns is frozen into bricks and mortar and into legal language. Thus school buildings, union contracts, and curriculum guides at the district level all support its patterns and are difficult to alter. Nationally distributed textbooks, college entrance requirements, state policies and laws, and nationally visible tests such as the ACT and college board achievement tests also play their parts.

These structural conditions and the less explicit expectations for curriculum and pedagogy that accompany them constrain teachers' practice directly but also set invisible boundaries around the content and style that teachers can easily claim to be legitimate. They significantly limit the range of teachers' ways of working. By legitimating,

even certifying as required, a particular, apparently effective technical approach, they make teachers responsible both to use this approach and to make it successful. If teachers' practice is not then effective, the explanation seems evidently to lie in the actors within the school, in defects either in teachers' own performance of the script or in students' application of themselves to their parts. Teachers must blame themselves or blame the students—as will outsiders.

The institutionalization of Real School is embraced not only by powerful, well educated families for whom it usually works well, but by powerless and minimally educated families and their children as well. Even where students are not learning well, parents can be very insistent on the importance of traditional, Real, patterns of schooling (Joffe, 1977; Lubeck, 1985; Ogbu, 1974). Even the students who skip classes or refuse to do the written work when they come, may accept only the most traditional activities of Real School as authentic. James Herndon's (1969) description of his experience of teaching poor black children in junior high school in the late 1950s gives vivid evidence of this attitude. He describes how the children celebrated when a substitute teacher gave them grade level books, which they embraced, but never worked in. They wanted the books; so they could "not-do" them, as Herndon says. In our terms, the books gave them symbolic status as Real Students, but were not something they wanted to involve themselves in learning.

Nonetheless, there is some technical wisdom in the reluctance of school administrators and parents alike to open the flood gates of experimentation in poor areas. Standard curricular materials cut down the amount of work that teachers must do to present students a lesson that has at least minimal substance. Experimentation with genuinely alternative educational processes in an attempt to elicit students' intrinsic interest requires much more work from teachers. Many, perhaps most teachers, are likely to find the rewards unequal to the efforts such teaching requires. A good deal of skill and imagination is

probably also required to succeed in such efforts, and not all teachers possess these requisites. Curriculum guides and texts support the efforts of the less than gifted. Poor and minority parents, who have been exposed to the low end of American schooling, are well aware of the effects of despair or malfeasance among teachers; they have experienced some of them in action despite the protections of the common script. They are probably not wrong in seeing some guarantee and insurance of education for their children in the patterns and rituals of Real School.

Alternatives to Real School exist; they have a history that extends well back into the nineteenth century (Cremin, 1964). Many have met with great success in particular situations. A few, like the Montessori method for young children, have become well-codified and have gained considerable social recognition. Especially at the elementary level, but also at the high school level, similar ideas keep being reinvented by teachers or founders of schools. They fade away, only to reappear again in a new guise a few years later in another place. But few have become fully institutionalized and widely recognized. Hence, when the obvious policy question "What method is better than Real School?" is raised, there is no systematic loyal opposition waiting to take over control, no alternative "one best system" (Tyack, 1974) standing in the wings.

A reason for the lack of [a] codified substitute plan for schooling system[s] lies in the emphasis of many alternative patterns upon responsiveness to students' prior experience and current interests. Such educational approaches must be relatively unstructured; they will take variable forms in varied settings. They also do not lend themselves to mass production with textbooks, standardized tests, and comparable credentials—all features that mass schooling and mass credentialing of students demand.

A concatenation of influences thus support the dominance of Real School and make its patterns extremely difficult to dislodge, even when their technical effectiveness falters and is clearly vulnerable to criticism. However ironic it may

be, many dispossessed parents and students, together with their teachers, see in Real School a chance to maintain their pride and their sense of membership in the mainstream of American education, and so in American society. At the same time, precisely because Real School is not very effective in improving learning for more than small numbers of children from poor, minority, or even established blue collar families, the relatively privileged educational decision makers who determine its content can support offering it to all students, and even intensifying its requirements for all, without fear that they will increase competition for the children of more educationally privileged parents like themselves. Offering the same education to all appears to be the essence of fairness—unless one has a sense of the interactive processes that transform the same structures and formal procedures into the diverse daily lives of schools in differing communities.

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16

STRADDLING BOUNDARIES

Identity, Culture, and School

PRUDENCE L. CARTER

For teens, the peer group “rules.” Their attitudes toward school, activities and behaviors, friends, dress, and music choices are influenced by the peer culture, which in turn affects the informal climate of schools. Prudence Carter’s research provides insights into the world of teens and how they negotiate the boundaries between school and peer group. Carter argues that peer cultures of minority students are heterogeneous, meaning there are different influences and resulting choices depending on the peer groups. She presents findings on three groups, each representing different attitudes and behaviors toward school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do Carter’s findings relate to the “acting white” thesis of Ogbu and others, discussed in this reading?
2. How do low-income African American and Latino youths negotiate the boundaries between school and peer group contexts?
3. What are differences between the three groups identified by Carter, and how does each group negotiate school expectations?

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Race, ethnicity, culture, and identity: We can almost guarantee that these four social factors play a role in the academic well-being of all students—complexly so. Yet verifiable explanations for why and how they matter continue to elude social science researchers and educators. For most, if not all of us, our socialization as racial and ethnic beings begins early in life, and much of this socialization occurs during the compulsory years of schooling, from preschool to high school, and even further during the collegiate years and beyond. Racial and ethnic identities emerge in the contexts of macrostructural, cultural, and individual-level forces; they are neither static nor one dimensional; and their meanings, as expressed in schools, neighborhoods, peer groups, and families, vary across time, space, and region (Dolby, 2001; McCarthy, 1993; Yon, 2000). But perhaps, more critically, what is relevant in the field of educational research is *how* ethnic and racial identity and the concomitant cultural behaviors matter to educational outcomes. This question has been most pressing when researchers have examined the significantly lower levels of educational achievement of racial and ethnic minority students, such as African Americans and various ethnic groups that are categorized under the panethnic label “Latino” (Kao & Thompson, 2003).

From academic texts to newspaper articles, scholars and writers have contended with identity-based and cultural explanations for the observed achievement gap among African American, Latino, and white students (Datnow & Cooper, 1997; Ford & Harris, 1992; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Lewin, 2000). One of the most popular cultural explanations that has been offered is the resistance-to-acting-white thesis. With the 1986 publication of their often-cited and well-received article, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) defined the contours of a continuous debate. Specifically, they discussed how African American students residing in an impoverished neighborhood in Washington, DC, came to define achievement-oriented behaviors and attitudes as acting white and were therefore resistant to studying hard

and getting good grades. Fordham and Ogbu concluded that many African American students have come to perceive high academic achievement as the territory of white students, since whites are believed to be the primary beneficiaries of opportunity in U.S. society. Hence African American students, they argued, perceive academic excellence as a form of whiteness.

The acting-white thesis exemplifies a certain component of Ogbu’s cultural-ecological theory, one of the most dominant theoretical frameworks in the race, culture, and achievement literature explaining why “involuntary” or native minority students perform less well in school than do “voluntary” or immigrant minority students. Briefly, Ogbu (1978, 1988, 1991; see also Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu & Simons, 1998) posited that the descendants of persons who were *involuntarily* brought to the United States via slavery, conquest, or colonization react negatively to continual experiences with subjugation, racism, and discrimination. And as a form of collective resistance, these descendants reject behaviors that are considered to be the province of the dominant white middle class. Consequently, they develop a cultural identity that departs from that of middle-class whites, which these students view as threatening to their minority identity and group solidarity (Ogbu, 1991, p. 16; 2004, p. 5).

The prevalent narratives about native minorities’ school achievement generally tend to differ from those of some immigrant minority youths, who are more often characterized as assimilative and willing to subscribe to the cultural codes of academic success (Gibson, 1988; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Waters, 1999; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Some researchers, however, have been careful to explode the “model minority” myth and to note the diversity in educational experiences and ethnic orientations within immigrant minority groups (Lee, 1996). For example, segmented assimilation theorists have argued that depending on contextual and social factors, immigrant minority youths can pursue a mobility trajectory by emulating middle-class white society (acculturation), availing themselves of resources in a

productive ethnic enclave, or undermining their attainment by adopting the adversarial stance of a downwardly mobile native minority culture (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Nonetheless, the spectrum of cultural orientation and identity, as it pertains to school achievement, is seemingly much wider and more diverse for immigrant students than for native minority students.

When researchers apply binary markers to ethnic and racial minority students—for example, native minority versus immigrant minority, oppositional minority versus model minority, acting black versus acting white—their explanations frequently obscure the *heterogeneous* cultural and educational experiences of students within various ethnoracial groups. While psychologists have conceptualized and observed multiple dimensions in the identities of African Americans (Phinney & DeVich-Navarro, 1997; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), many sociological studies have tended to mask the diversity in academic experiences and cultural approaches, especially when they did not analyze the behavioral variations *within* these groups.

This article reports on an investigation of the following questions: (1) How do low-income African American and Latino youths negotiate the boundaries between school and peer group contexts? (2) Do variable forms of negotiation exist? (3) If so, what are they, and how do they manifest? In addressing these questions, I also posit two arguments that directly challenge the acting-white thesis: First, black and Latino students' academic, cultural, psychological, and social experiences are *heterogeneous*. That is, multiple frames of ethnoracial identity and cultural orientation exist among African American and Latino students that supplant either purely assimilative or assimilative versus oppositional stances in society. Relying on a multidimensional perspective of racial identity, I show how three groups of black and Latino students in a similar economic position differ in their interpretations of how race and culture affect their day-to-day academic and personal lives. These students differ in their racial and ethnic ideology and in their cultural orientations. Here, ideology

concerns the individuals' beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about how they feel group members should act, which would include students' perspectives about what it means to act white or act black or "act Spanish"—the phrase invoked by Latino students in this study (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997).

Some students may filter most of their interactions with whites and others outside their group through the lens of their racial and ethnic identities, while others may be less apt to invoke race and ethnicity and to view experiences through other social identities (O'Connor, 1999). In an article published after his death, Ogbu (2004, p. 28) conceded a similar point when he discussed five conceptual categories of black Americans and claimed that "only one of the five categories . . . among both adults and students is explicitly opposed to adopting white attitudes, behaviors and speech"; he referred to this group as the resisters. This article, in comparison, presents actual empirical evidence of the coexistence of students who share the same social-class backgrounds but who maintain different racial and ethnic ideologies and school behaviors.

Second, this article returns to the sociological signification of phenomena, such as (resistance to) acting white, and highlights how student agents respond to the social boundaries that collective identities engender and that status hierarchies in schools produce. Generally, studies using qualitative methods have focused more on either confirming or disconfirming that acting white pertains to academic achievement or on providing a list that enumerates the concept's various meanings (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Neal-Barnett, 2001; O'Connor, 1997; Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005). As a result, black and Latino students' practices have been detached from their structural, political, and cultural significances or, rather, the interracial and intraracial group dynamics that are played out for students inside the school and within peer groups. The analyses presented here interrogate the sociological meaning behind four specific dimensions of (resistance to) acting white: (1) language and speech codes; (2) racial and ethnic

in-group/out-group signifiers centered on cultural style via dress, music, interaction, and tastes; (3) the meanings of group solidarity symbolized by the racial composition of students' friendship and social networks at school; and (4) interracial dynamics about the superiority of whites and the subordination of racial and ethnic minority groups. The findings highlight the complexity of the (resistance to) acting-white phenomenon and shift the focus away from an overly simplistic equivalence of this phenomenon with the rejection of academic excellence.

Finally, the findings indicate that the students who strike the best academic and social balance are those whom I refer to as "cultural straddlers." Straddlers understand the functions of both dominant and nondominant cultural capital (Carter, 2003) and value and embrace skills to participate in multiple cultural environments, including mainstream society, their school environments, and their respective ethnoracial communities. While straddlers share cultural practices and expressions with other members of their social groups, they traverse the boundaries across groups and environments more successfully. The straddler concept illuminates another place on the spectrum of identity and cultural presentations for African American and other ethnic minority youths that splinters the acculturative/oppositional binary divide.

Although I found that all the youths maintained self-concepts in which their racial or ethnic identity was a central component, three types of ideological profiles emerged. I refer to these types as the cultural mainstreamers, the noncompliant believers, and the cultural straddlers. The descriptions of these ideal types capture the differences in the sociocultural and ideological approaches discussed by others who have considered the phenomena of assimilation, opposition and resistance, and some form of accommodation without assimilation (Darder, 1991; Dawson, 2001; Gibson, 1988; Mehan, Hubbard, & Villanueva, 1994). Each group differs in how its members approach and handle "white" cultural, economic, and political dominance.

Cultural mainstreamers emphasize both the similarities between racial and ethnic minority

groups and whites and the incorporation of the former into the opportunity structure. The students in my study were characterized as cultural mainstreamers if they generally expected group members to act according to traditional assimilationist values, which call for minority groups to accommodate to and ultimately be absorbed into American schools, workplaces, and communities (Gordon, 1964). Cultural mainstreamers accept the ideology that members of a nondominant group should be culturally, socially, economically, and politically assimilated, yet they can be racially and ethnically aware.

In contrast, *noncompliant believers* subscribe to a dominant achievement ideology and are even aware of the cultural norms prescribed for academic, social, and economic success. However, they favor their own cultural presentations (for example, "black" or "Puerto Rican") and exert little effort to adapt to the cultural prescriptions of the school and white society. In short, while they believe in the worth of education, they are not necessarily high achievers. Generally, their school performances range from average to low. Ideologically, the noncompliant believers are critical of the systemic inequalities that they perceive the school to uphold; yet, the term *noncompliant* does not necessarily signify either an antischool mentality or distaste for high achievement, which most oppositional culture frameworks suggest. Culturally, the noncompliant believers choose to embrace their own class and ethnospecific styles, tastes, and codes and opt not to conform to the mainstream (marked as "white") and middle-class ways of being.

The *cultural straddlers* bridge the gap between the cultural mainstreamers and the noncompliant believers. They are obviously strategic navigators, ranging from students who "play the game" and embrace the cultural codes of both school and home community to those who vocally criticize the schools' ideology while still achieving well academically. The straddler concept corresponds, to a degree, with the bicultural perspective that social psychologists in the United States have described (LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997)—that is, viewing one-self as

both an ethnic or racial minority and an American. In fact, Phinney and Devich-Navarro presented a multidimensional (versus linear) view of biculturalism and found evidence that African and Mexican American students vary in the extent to which they identify with their ethnic and national heritages. Some are “blended biculturals” and identify with a combination of both cultures, others are “alternating biculturals” and move back and forth between their two cultural worlds, and still others are “separate” in their identity and are embedded primarily within their ethnoracial culture.

The focus on the straddlers in this article is less on the psychological (i.e., identity) and more on the *behavioral* differences among the three groups that I discuss, however. The results presented here are more about how they negotiate their specific ethnic peer cultures, school environments inscribed with white middle-class cultural codes, and mainstream U.S. society that is tacitly understood to be controlled by middle-class whites. I describe them as straddlers instead of bicultural because they, like most of us, participate in myriad cultural environments—family, peer groups, ethnic community, neighborhoods, school, interracial settings, the workplace, and even ideological domains—that require different types of cultural competencies and currencies.

Adolescent cultural straddlers simultaneously sustain a strong racial or ethnic identity and achieve academically by effectively managing their academic success among their peers (cf. Horvat & Lewis, 2003). Some cultural straddlers may resemble Gibson’s (1988) Punjabi Indian students, who viewed the acquisition of skills in the majority-group language and culture as “additive” and thus avoided rejecting their own identity and culture, instead embracing a form of biculturalism that led to their successful participation in both cultures. Although the cultural straddlers I interviewed sought successful participation in multiple cultural environments, unlike Gibson’s students, they did not avoid equating certain behaviors with acting white. Other cultural straddlers resemble the participants in Akom’s (2003) study who were high achievers and critical of systemic inequalities in schools and society,

although the youths in my study did not necessarily maintain racial and ethnic ideologies that were linked to a specific political, cultural, and religious organization like the Nation of Islam.

In what follows, I present an analysis of these three types of students who vary in their racial and ethnic ideologies, school performances, and aspirations and show how they express and deal differently with the acting-white phenomenon. First, I present results that examine the students’ educational attitudes and self-reported school performances. These results confirm prior findings that, overall, African American and Latino students embrace dominant or mainstream beliefs about the value of education. Using Mickelson’s (1990) attitude-achievement paradox scale, it also shows that the divergence in black and Latino students’ “abstract” (or normative) and “concrete” (or cognitive) educational beliefs is further associated with whether a student is a cultural mainstreamer, a cultural straddler, or a noncompliant believer. Second, I show how these three groups differentially discuss and treat the avoidance-of-acting-white phenomenon and reveal that this social dynamic has little to do with the students’ equating academic excellence with whiteness and more to do with the students’ views about group dynamics and social boundaries among the races at school.

METHODS

This study’s findings draw extensively on a mixed-methods approach, both survey and interview data collected from a sample of 68 low-income, native-born African American and Latino male and female youths, ranging in age from 13 to 20. The 26 Latinos (38 percent of the 68 participants) were primarily first- and second-generation Puerto Rican and Dominican youths, while the ancestral roots of the 42 African Americans (62 percent of the participants) stretched mainly from the South to New York. Slightly more than half the participants (56%) were female, and 69% were younger than age 18. The participants, along with other members of their families, were participants in a larger

quasi-experimental longitudinal and separately funded study of 317 low-income African American and Latino families from different neighborhoods in Yonkers, New York. I contacted and sampled all the youths who had participated in the larger study and who lived in one of two large low-income housing complexes that were located in two different areas of the city—one, a high-minority and high-poverty area, and the other, a predominantly white and middle-income area. All the participants' families were poor and qualified for government-subsidized housing. At least 90 percent of them were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children from 1994 to 1998. Over half lived in homes with an annual household income of less than \$10,000, and 71 percent lived in single female-headed households.

The Sociology of (Resistance to) Acting White

In the analyses, I counted 51 explicit references to the phenomenon of (resistance to) acting white across 37 interviews. Either these references arose spontaneously, or the students explained in detail when I probed after their implicit references to it. Generally, all three groups agreed on what acting white meant, but they differed in how they responded to or embraced these behaviors. Four main dimensions of acting white emerged: (1) collective and individual signifiers in language and speech codes; (2) racial and ethnic in-group/out-group signifiers centered on cultural style via dress, music, interaction, and tastes; (3) the meanings of group solidarity symbolized by the racial composition of students' friendship and social networks at school; and (4) interracial power dynamics of superiority and subordination.

The most frequent reference to acting white pertained to language and speech styles. Peers teased co-ethnic or same-race peers for how they spoke if they perceived the latter as emulating whites, rather than speaking black slang, a commonly shared communication style among these urban minority youths (Labov, 1972; Morgan,

2002), both black and Latino. Fourteen-year-old Samurai, a noncompliant believer, demonstrated for me just what talking white meant:

Samurai: Yeah. Like I might be talking on the phone, and he might be like, "Oh you see the new Jordans out. Oh they is butters, they is phat." A white person ain't gonna say that. "Fine. [He mimics what he perceives as "white talk."] Did you see the new Charles Barkley's? They're nice; I really like them. My mother says that she's gonna buy them for me on Wednesday." It's like that. It's not the proper English that they use; it's just . . . they're not hip to everything. It goes all back to the rap and the neighborhood that you in. It's like that. So [they're] not used to being all around, "Oh that's phat." Like different words come out like every year that person, every week different words come out.

Prudence: Does acting white and acting black go beyond language? Is there anything else that makes a person act black or white other than how they speak?

Samurai: No.

Prudence: So it's not about any other kind of behavior. What you want to do in life?

Samurai: No, definitely not what you want to do in life.

Samurai, a noncompliant believer who did not link whiteness to achievement and aspirations, chose to speak what he dubbed as "black talk." From my interactions with him, it was clear, however, that he was aware of the distinctions between how he spoke and the principles of Standard English, as was evident by the sudden change of subject-verb agreement in his elaboration of these differences. When either a same-race or co-ethnic peer avoided using an established local lexicon, which, according to Samurai, could include a compilation of easily made-up and variable words and phrases that defied the grammatical structures of Standard

English, and spoke only in Standard English in a certain style that the students associated with either whites or white youth culture, they were acting white.

Dress styles and tastes, another site of adolescent “coolness” (Danesi, 1994) and ethno-racial and cultural boundary making, characterize the second most frequent reference to acting white (mentioned 31 percent of the time). Having forged a distinction among their white peers, other racial and ethnic groups, and themselves, these students dressed in a variety of clothing fashions or listened to different genres of music, in addition to creating their own speech codes, to preserve their sense of cultural uniqueness. Again, I found that if a student crossed the racial or ethnic peer group’s dress boundary, then he or she, like Rosaria, an 18-year-old Dominican American cultural mainstreamer, was teased for acting white:

Rosaria: Like I like to dress preppy, with the khakis, the crisp shirt, and a scarf around my neck. The kids in my class are all like: “You dress so preppy. Why are you so preppy?”

Prudence: How do they want you to dress?

Rosaria: I guess like they do.

Prudence: What’s that, the hip hop style?

Rosaria: Yeah, with the baggy pants and stuff.

Prudence: How do they want you to talk?

Rosaria: That’s another thing. Like they say you talk . . . you talk . . . cause I speak intelligently, they want to say that I talk white. I speak intelligently. It’s not Spanish, it’s not black, it’s not white. No one has claim on who can talk intelligently. My friend is always saying that to me.

Prudence: Well, who are the kids who tend to have tastes in clothes and music more like you?

Rosaria: That’s a hard question that I don’t want to answer. It makes me uncomfortable.

Prudence: Why? Because it makes you . . .

Rosaria: . . . seem like I really am white. Because it would fit right in with what my friend wants to say. I just like these things, and I don’t think that my friend is right.

Students like Rosaria, who held an ascribed minority identity but who did not conform to their co-ethnic peers’ cultural styles, threatened the already-tenuous reins that their Dominican and black peers held over this youthful domain of status and identity. Consequently, Rosaria risked being charged that she acted white.

Yet Rosaria wanted to avoid being perceived as less ethnic than her peers. Thus, she challenged the racial and ethnic dress code.

In this section, I have described the two most common references to acting white or to acting black or Spanish that the participants used. These findings confirm what other researchers have documented (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Neal-Barnett, 2001), namely, that students explicitly discuss the idea of (resistance to) acting white in terms of linguistic and dress styles. The findings also show that the application of this idea transcends a student’s achievement level—that is, whether the student is a high achiever or a low achiever. In addition, the findings highlight the social significance of the processes of (resistance to) acting white, how students create in-group/out-group stylistic boundaries to maintain ethnospecific identities. Students’ respect for the value of education is not at stake, however. Rather, what is at stake is how students use the symbols and meanings they attach to different racial, ethnic, and cultural identities as measures of inclusion and exclusion. In the next section, extrapolating from the students’ comments, I discuss how the institutional practice of tracking fueled the dynamics of inclusion, exclusion, and boundary making as the students evaluated the racial and ethnic makeup of their peers’ social networks at school. Consequently, students in high tracks who had primarily white friends were viewed as acting white.

Peer Ties and the Implications of Tracking

Another set of findings reveal how the students used acting white to describe co-ethnics whose primary social interaction at school was with whites. Twelve percent of the references to acting white referred to primary social interactions with whites. Moreover, strong, primary peer ties with white students in school are likely to allow more exposure to cultural attributes described as acting white and thus suggest reasons why minority high achievers could be more likely described as acting white.

Smart Status and “Looking Down”

The last set of findings appear to articulate further Maxwell’s beliefs about racial loyalty and affiliation and reveal how students linked other aspects of blacks’ and Latinos’ comparatively lower status than whites in a racially polarized society with meanings of acting white. Approximately 1 in 10 of the students’ evocations of the acting-white label dealt with their beliefs and perceptions of when the boundaries of ethnic solidarity were being transgressed, specifically when they felt that co-ethnics acted in ways that either disrespected or denigrated other members of their ethnic or racial group. Some students believed that when co-ethnic or same-race peers touted their smartness at the expense of another or put on “airs,” then those students believed that they were better than other students. In these moments, putting on airs or acting in a superior manner reeked of the same dynamics of racial dominance that these students encountered, and, consequently, they were likely to describe students who behaved this way as acting white. I found that the noncompliant believers were the most sensitive to these dynamics. As Monique, a 13-year-old noncompliant believer, said: “People don’t really care [if you are smart].” For Monique, being smart was valued. If students teased smart students in school, however, according to 16-year-old Raul Juarez, another noncompliant believer, they did so because they felt that

the smart students “were conceited, that they didn’t want to do nothing for nobody.”

Some students also expressed disapproval when they perceived that peers transgressed the boundaries of ethnic solidarity, specifically when co-ethnics acted in a way that denigrated other members of the group. They referred to such actions as “white” and verbally sanctioned others who behaved this way.

Within marginalized communities, distancing oneself from the racial group has historically played itself out along class lines. Middle-class African Americans—a group that has burgeoned since the advent of the civil rights era—have been chided for distancing themselves from their lower-income co-ethnics (Benjamin, 1991; Landry, 1987). Some writers have suggested that in poor urban schools and neighborhoods, this social and economic mobility has come to be defined as inconsistent with an “authentic” black identity (Fordham, 1988). However, as the analyses of the findings of this *within-class* study have shown, the issue of distancing is not just a class phenomenon. “Groupness” for these students who had inherited a legacy of subordinate social and economic statuses also engendered strands of “fictive kinship” (see Fordham, 1988). Peers who dared to desecrate these fictive kinship lines by looking down on co-ethnic peers who did not embrace or have the dominant cultural markers of academic success, competence, and strong aptitude were equated with the racial group in U.S. society that has historically appeared to wield power in inequitable ways. In other words, they were acting white.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The dimensions of acting white discussed in this article have some connection to how this select group of low-income black and Latino students approached school and one another. The findings presented here offer four key insights. The first insight is that black and Latino students who share similar socioeconomic backgrounds vary in their approaches to the (resistance to) acting

white phenomenon. The results suggest that defining the avoidance of acting white as an anti-school stance and as a central feature of specific minority cultures masks the diversity of ideological and cultural perspectives within these groups. . . .

The second insight is that students who are labeled as acting white vary in achievement levels, ranging from low achievers to high achievers. Of the four participants who declared they had been labeled as acting white, two were either average- or lower-achieving students, and the other two were high achievers. Overall, the black and Latino participants subscribed to the dominant achievement ideology, which supports the findings of other studies that black youths have more optimistic attitudes than do white students (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Portes & Wilson, 1976; Solorzano, 1992). Contrary to the view that black and Latino students perceive high achievement as acting white and thus reject schooling, the findings suggest that resistance to acting white is mainly about the assertion of particularistic cultural styles that are not perceived to be incongruous with achievement and mobility.

The third insight is that students' contention with acting white has broader sociological meanings than the ones that are generally ascribed to it in the literature on the sociology of education. For those in this study, resistance to acting white connotes more than anything else their refusal to adhere to the cultural default setting in U.S. society that is seen as normative or "natural"—white American middle-class tastes for speech and interaction codes, dress and physical appearance, music, and other art forms. Moreover, the label "acting white" also signifies group members' proclivity to associate mainly with students from outside their ascribed racial or ethnic group. Some of these behaviors included these members' exclusive association with whites. The participants also challenged co-racial or ethnic members who behaved in ways that suggested they were "looking down upon" another member or thinking that they were better. That is, acting white signified a

refusal to adhere to social actions that purportedly derogate these students' own racial and ethnic groups.

The final insight is related to the question of what connection these descriptive meanings have to schooling and inequality. The data indicate that high-achieving minority students may be more likely to be exposed to styles that are deemed white. They suggest that if a correlation between high achievement and accusations of acting white exists, it may be mediated by students' placements in school and these placements' influences on the racial and ethnic composition of students' friendship networks (Moody, 2002). For instance, Tyson et al. (2005) found that when black students are disproportionately underrepresented in high-track classes, peers outside these classes are more likely to accuse their co-ethnic peers of acting white, but when black students are proportionately represented across the tracks in schools, evidence of accusations of acting white to high-achieving students is not found. Using the Adolescent Health data, economists have shown that the popularity of black students with GPAs of 3.5 or higher (out of 4.0) in all black high schools does not decrease among co-ethnic peers, as it does among the same achievers in predominantly white schools (Fryer & Torelli, 2005). These studies have also confirmed that resistance to acting white is not really a core ethno-racial feature but, rather, an indication of something about race and group dynamics among black, Latino, and white students in different school contexts. Racially integrated schools may structure peer associations in the classroom through ability grouping or tracking that places high-achieving African American and Latino students mainly in contact with white students. This type of grouping likely facilitates the idea that some students of color disassociate themselves from others, since they may maintain peer ties with other racial or ethnic groups and thus tastes and preferences that are different from those that are used to mark in-group membership. In short, peers may perceive their classmates who are situated in white-dominant settings where different cultural styles and tastes prevail as acting white. . . .

Invariably, it is a matter of individual choice whether to listen to soft rock, dress in hip-hop style, speak Standard English, or maintain certain peer associations. We know that different students' abilities to deploy and use certain cultural styles can determine how they become classified when social boundaries exist among groups—that is, an “us” versus “them” phenomenon. Yet, when privileged and socially powerful groups define and circumscribe what is appropriate for success and achievement, the choices that some students in this study made, especially the noncompliant believers, will have unintended consequences. For socially marginalized students, success in and attachment to school have “never been simply a matter of learning and competently performing technical skills; rather, and more fundamentally, [they have] been a matter of learning how to decode the system” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 13). The system encompasses the school's cultural environment, which engenders an allocation of resources, including prestige, social standing, and evaluations that are based on the degree to which students possess dominant cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shuan, 1990; Lareau, 2003; Lewis, 2003). Rather than take an either-or approach, cultural straddlers, compared to noncompliant believers and cultural mainstreamers, broker the boundaries among multiple cultural environments, instead of choosing one set of cultural codes over another. One implication is that schools that implement practices that promote interculturalism may yield better academic and social results among their minority students than those that do not. The challenge will be to create school societies in which educators, parents, and students value and work to incorporate effective methods for developing cultural expansion among all the principal stakeholders.

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17

LOW-LEVEL VIOLENCE

A Neglected Aspect of School Culture

DAVID R. DUPPER AND NANCY MEYER-ADAMS

School shootings and other violent crimes in schools make the headlines, as well they should. In reality, however, schools are among the safest places for young people to gather (Addington, et al., 2002). What doesn't make the headlines are the millions of "little" acts of violence that leave some children afraid to go to school, tormented by peers and teachers, and lacking in self-esteem. These informal aspects of the school system affect students' ability to concentrate and achieve, and can result in anger, alienation, and hostile school environments. David Dupper and Nancy Meyer-Adams address several common forms of "low-level violence." The authors suggest ways to create more positive school culture and climate.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why is "low-level violence" often neglected by news media and the public?
2. How can the "low-level violence" discussed affect student performance in school?
3. How does the "low-level violence" discussed affect student performance in school?
4. What can be done to change the culture of schools?

April, Age 13

Her mother said her daughter was being bullied and the ringleader was a popular girl who

had targeted her for some unknown reason. Some kids called her fat, while others threw things at her and pushed her around, they even ridiculed her with rumors that she stuffed tissue in her bra. April took it all to heart. Faced with the prospect of juvenile detention as a truant or returning to a school to face taunting classmates, April decided against both. On Valentine's Day, she went into her bedroom, shut the door and hanged herself with a belt ("Faced with 'go to jail' or 'go to school,'" 2000).

School shootings over the past several years, especially the carnage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, have propelled the issues of school violence prevention and school safety to the forefront in communities across the United States. Although high-level school violence (e.g., murder, rape, possession of weapons) is a serious problem that grabs the headlines and the public's attention, it is relatively rare (Astor, Vargas, Pitner, & Meyer, 1999; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Kachur et al., 1996). In fact "there was a 40% decline in school-associated violent deaths between school years 1997-98 and 1998-99" (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 2000, p. 3). Unfortunately, relatively little attention has been paid to low-level or underlying forms of violence that occur in most secondary schools every day. The heartbreaking story of April illustrates the need to focus much more attention on low-level school violence such as bullying, peer sexual harassment, victimization based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation, and the psychological maltreatment of students by teachers. Research over the past decade has shown that these forms of school violence, although not as overtly serious as weapons offenses, occur with greater frequency than most believe and have a profound impact on students' mental health and school performance (Elliott, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998).

BULLYING

Bullying refers to unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one or a

group of students over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Hoover, Oliver, & Thomson, 1993; Olweus, 1991). It comprises direct behaviors (e.g., teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing) and indirect behaviors (e.g., causing a student to be socially isolated by spreading rumors) (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Bullying victimization is estimated to affect 15% to 20% of the U.S. student population, with verbal teasing and intimidation being its most common form and boys reported to be victims at a higher rate than girls (Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995). A study found that 88% of secondary school students reported having observed bullying and 76.8% stated that they had been a victim of bullying at school (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992). Bullying appears to peak in the middle school and junior high years (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Students are bullied at school for a variety of reasons. These include girls being viewed by their peers as physically unattractive or not dressing stylishly, girls being physically well developed or not "fitting in" in some other way, boys not fitting a stereotypic macho male image, students having a different religion, students wearing unique or unusual clothes, students having physical weaknesses and/or being different in appearance (Furlong et al., 1995; Shakeshift et al., 1995).

The act of bullying has long-term implications for both victims and perpetrators. Negative impacts of chronic victimization include increased rates of truancy and dropping out as well as difficult psychosocial and psychosexual relationships (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1991). Hazler (1994) found that the impact of bullying on its victims includes a loss of self-esteem and feelings of isolation which, according to new research, can last into adulthood. He stated that

their grades may suffer because their attention is being drawn away from learning. Being repeatedly victimized may push even "good kids" to extremes, such as starting fights or bringing weapons to school to exact vengeance on their tormentors . . . even students and adults who are witnesses are affected [in that] they must deal with the

lowered self-esteem and loss of control that accompanies feeling unsafe and unable to take action. The result is children and adults who do all they can to avoid recognizing when someone else is being hurt. (p. 39)

It is harmful to those who witness peer harassment if this harassment is tacitly approved of and not acted upon by school personnel. For example, youth who are not direct victims of violence at school "may be victimized by the chronic presence of violence" (American Psychological Association, 1993, p. 42). "Students who must think about avoiding harm at school are diverting energy that should be expended on learning" (Chandler, Nolin, & Davies, 1995, p. 5). Bullies whose behavior is allowed to continue are 5 times more likely than their classmates to wind up in juvenile court, to be convicted of crimes, and, when they become adults, to have children with aggression problems (Hazler, 1994). A recent report that examined the profiles of school shooters concluded that in 66% of the cases, "the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured by others prior to the incident" and that a number of attackers had experienced longstanding and severe bullying and that "the experience of bullying appeared to play a major role in motivating the attack at school" (Vossekuil, Reddy, Fein, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2000, p. 7). Olweus (1993) found that 60% of students characterized as bullies in Grades 6 to 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.

PEER SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The problem of peer sexual harassment appears to be pervasive in U.S. schools. A survey of 1,600 White, African American, and Hispanic students in Grades 8 through 11 sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (1993) found that 85% of girls and 76% of boys reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment in school. Of that total, 25% reported being targeted "often." The types of peer sexual harassment in the AAUW study ranged

from nonphysical forms (e.g., making sexual comments, spreading sexual rumors, flashing) to physical forms (e.g., touching, grabbing, pinching). The most common form of harassment, reported by 65% of girls and 42% of boys, was being the target of sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks. The second most common form of harassment was being touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way. The AAUW study found that a child's first experience of sexual harassment is most likely to occur in middle or junior high school and that girls suffer more negative effects as a result of peer sexual harassment than boys. For example, girls reported "not wanting to go to school" (33%), "not wanting to talk as much in class" (32%), and "finding it hard to pay attention in school" (28%) as outcomes of being sexually harassed at school. Additionally, 64% of girls reported experiencing "embarrassment," 52% reported feeling "self-conscious," and 43% of girls reported feeling less sure or less confident of themselves as a result of sexual harassment. Perhaps the most disturbing finding in the AAUW study was the response of students who engaged in sexually harassing behaviors at school. The majority of these perpetrators responded, "It's just part of school life," "A lot of people do it," "It's no big deal" (AAUW, 1993). Moreover, this indifference appears to extend to school personnel, because teachers and other school staff rarely, if ever, intervene to stop peer sexual harassment in schools (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Hoover et al., 1992; Shakeshift et al., 1995; Stein, 1995). For example, in a study conducted by Shakeshift et al. (1995), a female respondent stated, "In science class, the boys snap our bras. The [male] teacher doesn't really care. He doesn't say anything . . . the boys just laugh" (p. 42).

Victimization Based on Known or Presumed Gay or Lesbian Sexual Orientation

Victimization based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation is the most common form of bias-related violence in the United States (Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995).

Being called gay or lesbian was the most disturbing form of unwanted behavior for boys (86%), and "being called gay would be more upsetting to boys than actual physical abuse" (AAUW, 1993, p. 23). In 1999, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducted a survey of 496 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth from 32 states. The authors of this survey found that over 91.4% of LGBT youth reported that they sometimes or frequently hear homophobic remarks (e.g., "faggot," "dyke," "queer") in their school. Homophobic remarks seem to be pervasive in schools. For example, the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth (1993) found that 97% of students in public high schools reported hearing homophobic remarks from their peers on a regular basis. This harassment often extends beyond verbal abuse. Pilkington and D'Augelli (1995) found that 22% of the males and 29% of the females reported having been physically hurt by another student because of their sexual orientation.

As is the case in peer sexual harassment, school personnel rarely intervene when students are victimized based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation. For example, almost half the youth in the GLSEN (1999) study reported that someone intervened only some of the time, and one third reported that no one ever intervened in these circumstances. Compounding this problem is a finding by Sears (1992) that two thirds of guidance counselors harbored negative feelings toward gay and lesbian persons, less than 20% have received any training on serving gay and lesbian students, and only 25% consider themselves "highly competent" in serving gay and lesbian youth. Beyond their indifference and lack of training is the fact that school personnel are often perpetrators themselves. For example, almost 37% of respondents in the GLSEN (1999) study and over 53% of students in the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth study (1993) reported that they hear homophobic remarks from faculty or school staff. Given these findings, it is not surprising that gay and lesbian students keep their

sexual orientation hidden from teachers and school counselors.

Victimization based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation has a detrimental impact on the mental health and school performance of victims. Nearly half of the youth in the GLSEN (1999) study reported that they did not feel safe in their school because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Furthermore, Krivascka, Savin-Williams, and Slater (as cited in Elia, 1993) reported that 80% of gays and lesbians had declining school performance, almost 40% had problems with truancy, and 30% had dropped out of school. Gays and lesbians also attempt suicide 2 to 7 times more frequently than heterosexual comparison groups (Saunders & Valente, 1987). In their survey of 194 lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth between the ages of 15 and 21, Pilkington and D'Augelli (1995) found that "approximately one-third of the males (30%) and females (35%) reported that being harassed or verbally abused in school currently limits their openness about their sexual orientation" (p. 44).

PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT OF STUDENTS BY TEACHERS

Although emotional maltreatment of students by teachers "receives little pedagogical, psychological, or legal attention. . . data based on case studies, anecdotal reports, and some beginning research suggest that [the] psychological maltreatment [of students by teachers] may occur in schools more often than many think" (Hyman & Perone, 1998, p. 21). Psychological maltreatment of students by teachers and other adults in authority consists of discipline and control techniques that are based on fear and intimidation (Brassard, Hart, & Germaine, 1987). Too many teachers use screaming, sarcasm, threats, and ridicule to control students in their classroom (Hyman, 1997). Sakowski (1993) found that students who are psychologically maltreated exhibited behavior problems and poor interpersonal competencies. According to Hyman (1997), "Although psychological maltreatment is

believed to occur more often than other forms of abuse [in schools], it is difficult to determine rate of occurrence in specific regions or schools, because schools are not anxious to investigate their own malfeasance" (p. 331).

BUILDING A MORE POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

According to Davila and Willower (1996), in each individual school there is a culture that is owned by that school that embodies its values, norms, and beliefs. Additionally, each school has distinct yet overlapping climates that exist for the students, the faculty, and the staff. These climates play a critical role in the everyday performance and attitudes of these individuals and how these individuals can work together as a team to build a strong, positive culture in their school's environment. A school's culture and climate are important because we know that they significantly affect and influence students' behavior and learning (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997). Hamilton and Richardson (1995) defined a school's culture as "the beliefs and expectations apparent in a school's daily routine, including how colleagues interact with each other . . . culture is the socially shared and transmitted knowledge of what is and what ought to be symbolized in act and artifact" (p. 369). Freiberg and Stein (1999) stated that

school climate is the heart and soul of a school. It is about that essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day. . . . The climate of a school can foster resilience or become a risk factor in the lives of people who work and learn in a place called school. (p. 11)

Culture affects students through the norms that drive behavior in a school environment, and climate reflects the perceptions that students have of the impact of that environment on their own well-being (Brown & Leigh, 1996; Glisson, 2000).

Stolp (1995) contends that

students work harder, attend school more often, and have stronger academic skills in schools with strong communities and student violence decreases in communal organizations. . . . teachers work harder and enjoy their work more in an environment that puts social bonds above individual success . . . school community positively affects school culture. (p. 14)

Not only does a culture of low-level violence place students at risk, but it also deprives them of the opportunity to benefit from the educational opportunities a school provides.

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO CHANGE THE CULTURE AND CLIMATE OF SCHOOLS

Based on our review, it is evident that bullying, peer sexual harassment, victimization based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation, and the psychological maltreatment of students by teachers are problems that must be addressed in any comprehensive school violence prevention program. One way of reducing low-level, underlying violence in schools is to build a more positive school culture and climate. Interventions must be designed to change or modify the culture and climate of a school so that schools become safe havens and sanctuaries for all children and youth; places where teachers, students, administrators, parents, support staff, all feel invited to participate and welcome and share a psychological sense of community. The culture of a school must reflect a place where children and youth want to be, places they will respect. A recent publication by the National Association of Attorneys General (1999) concludes that research indicates that a supportive school climate is the most important step in ensuring that schools provide a safe and welcome environment for all students. Hansen and Childs (1998) stated that working toward a positive school climate involves "dedicated individuals [who] are making conscious efforts to

enhance and enrich the culture and conditions in the school so that teachers can teach better and students can learn more" (p. 14).

Several programs have focused on building a more positive school culture and climate. These include the Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1991, 1993), the School Development Program (Comer, 1988), and the Positive Action Through Holistic Education (PATHE) (Gottfredson, 1986). Of these, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has recognized the Bullying Prevention Program as one of its 10 Blueprint Programs that has been shown to be effective in preventing violence. Based on a large-scale study conducted in Norway in the early 1980s, the Bullying Prevention Program was shown to result in a substantial reduction in boys' and girls' reports of bullying and victimization; a significant reduction in students' reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy; and significant improvements in the "social climate" of the class, as reflected in students' reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and a more positive attitude toward schoolwork and school (Olweus & Limber, 1999). More information about the School Development Program and PATHE Program may be found in the OJJDP publication "School and Community Interventions to Prevent Serious and Violent Offending."

Recently, two schools in California have been highlighted as a result of their efforts to reduce school violence by changing the culture and climate of the school. Epstein (1998) described Oakland's Emiliano Zapata Street Academy as "a public high school where there are no fights, no security guards, no metal detectors, no guns, and the police department visits to ticket meter violations rather than arrest students. It is like a 'private academy for poor kids'" (p. 1). Epstein goes on to describe four core components of this school: (a) This is a school of "tight relationships," where every staff member is a "consulting teacher" for 15 to 20 students. The teacher meets with his or her students twice a day to check on academic performance and behavior and responds immediately to

problems by calling a parent or conferring with another student if there are conflicts—problems are not allowed to fester and grow! Even verbal altercations are taken seriously, and students are not sent back to class until they have worked out a solution. (b) This is a school that espouses multiculturalism—the staff's ethnic composition mirrors that of students and many staff live in the community. Racism is explicitly discussed and there is a stern response to cross-racial disrespect among students. (c) This is a small school with a closed campus. It treats its students as whole human beings; students tell teachers what is actually happening in their lives. (d) This is a school that is self-renewing, creating teachers who get better every year instead of burning out. According to Epstein, "teachers have enormous latitude in creating new teaching methods and procedures, but the school's leader is demanding of everyone, including herself, when it comes to meeting student needs" (p. 1).

Ruenzel (1997) described another school in California that is focusing on changing its culture and climate to reduce school violence. Ginger Hovenic, the principal of Clear View Elementary School, believes that a vital school culture is the "foundation for all learning that takes place in the classroom" (p. 1). In this school, 595 students speak 26 native languages, and 200 are from low-income families (Ruenzel, 1997). Hovenic and her teachers attempted to create a school environment where all children felt welcome and no child would fall between the cracks. In the end, she and her teachers came up with a variation of homerooms, something they call "families," and it has become the central feature of the school culture. According to Ruenzel, each family consists of two dozen students randomly drawn from every grade in her K–6 school. Students remain in the same family and with the same teacher until they go on to middle school. The families meet for an hour each week. They celebrate birthdays and holidays together, they go on outings, and keep hefty family scrapbooks. They take part in a number of social projects such as collecting food and clothing for families and helping out needier children in the

school. The Peace Patrol involves student volunteers trained in the art of negotiation, wearing blue jackets and carrying clipboards, patrolling school grounds and mediating disputes before they spiral out of control. Part of the school culture is that kids get sent to the principal only for having done something positive. Parents are involved by attending a town meeting at the beginning of each year, where they are encouraged to pose questions and voice concerns; the principal also hosts regular coffees with parents throughout the school year to keep them up to date on the full range of school matters; routine parent conferences are not led by teachers but by students, who present their work to their parents. Teachers are encouraged to dream and scheme together about new things they can try—this type of collaboration takes time, so every Thursday afternoon, 2 hours are set aside for teachers to discuss everything from books they have read to workshops they are thinking of attending. They also discuss students who need academic help—with the aid of computer-generated spreadsheets that provide a statistical picture of each student's academic performance. Teacher evaluation is also a collaborative effort. Although neither of these programs has been formally evaluated, they each offer some promising ideas and directions for school personnel interested in reducing low-level violence in the schools they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent or reduce low-level, underlying violence in schools, we recommend that school personnel focus on changing a school's culture and climate by implementing interventions based on the following assumptions:

- Every individual should have the right to be spared oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation in school as well as in society at large. Schools must send a strong message to students and staff that all forms of low-level violence are inappropriate and that adults will actively intervene in all instances of low-level

violence and that those who fail to recognize and stop low-level forms of violence as they occur actually promote violence.

- Because many school personnel do not acknowledge that low-level violence is a serious problem, it is essential that a needs assessment be conducted and all school personnel be informed about the extent of bullying, peer sexual harassment, victimization based on known or presumed gay or lesbian sexual orientation in their school, and the psychological maltreatment of students by teachers and other school staff. If ignored, low-level violence in schools can jeopardize students' academic achievement, undermine their physical and emotional well-being, and may provoke retaliatory violence.

- The best way to reduce low-level forms of school violence is to create a school culture and climate characterized by warmth, tolerance, positive responses to diversity, sensitivity to others' views, cooperative interactions among students, teachers, and school staff, and an environment that expects and reinforces appropriate behavior. In cases of violations of limits and rules, non-hostile, nonphysical sanctions should be consistently applied.

- Homophobia makes schools unsafe for all students, not only for those who are gay and lesbian. Antigay prejudice and homophobia can make any student who defies the narrowly defined gender roles a target for violence and harassment. A concerted effort is required to address homophobic attitudes among school personnel.

- Rather than focusing on the perpetrators or victims alone, effective interventions must happen at multiple levels, concurrently. These multiple levels include school-level interventions (e.g., conflict resolution and diversity training workshops for teachers and school staff), classroom-level interventions (e.g., regularly scheduled classroom meetings during which students and teachers engage in discussion, role-playing, and creative activities related to preventing all forms of low-level violence), and individual-level

interventions (e.g., formation of discussion groups for victims of low-level violence).

The middle and junior high grades (6 through 8) are a critical time for intervention and should receive highest priority.

CONCLUSIONS

The pervasiveness of low-level school violence in the forms of bullying, peer sexual harassment, victimization based on sexual orientation, and the psychological maltreatment of students by teachers must be acknowledged and addressed in a more preventive and proactive manner. School personnel must assume a leadership role in conceiving and implementing interventions designed to change the culture and climate of schools to reduce low-level violence.

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18

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM

Losing Ground

PAUL E. BARTON

The readings in Part III provide a picture of how children, beginning at an early age, learn through the informal system how to fit into school, and what competing influences they face from peer groups, family problems, and other factors that can dominate the child's world. The ultimate failure for both schools and young people is when students drop out. Barton points out some factors in the informal system that influence students to leave school; these include getting low grades, being absent frequently, and high turnover or changing schools, which disrupts the learning process. Many of his suggestions for improving retention and school climate focus on aspects of the informal system: small learning communities in schools, helping teachers recognize and deal with problems early, and intervention with students having problems.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How serious is the dropout problem in the United States?
2. What are the causes of students dropping out?
3. What can we learn from the Dupper/Meyer-Adams reading on "low-level violence" and school climate that might affect the dropout rate?
4. What do you think could be done to reduce the dropout rate?

A recent upsurge of interest in the student dropout problem seems to have come as a surprise to U.S. school officials and policy-makers. During the last two decades, complacency had set in as reports from the U.S. Census Bureau's

"The Drop-Out Problem: Losing Ground" by Paul E. Barton. From the February 2006 issue of *Educational Leadership* 63(5), p. 14–18. Used with Permission. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more, visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.

household survey suggested that high school completion among young adults was approaching 90 percent, the goal set by the first National Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989. The long-dormant concern about dropouts revived several years ago, however, when half a dozen independent researchers in universities and think tanks began publishing estimates of high school completion rates that contradicted the official rates. As a result, the issue of high school dropouts has returned to the front burner.

MANY ESTIMATES, SIMILAR RESULTS

The recent independent estimates of high school completion rates are almost always lower than the official estimates—including those that states have reported to the U.S. Department of Education under the requirements of No Child Left Behind and the state estimates from the National Center for Education Statistics. These independent estimates—derived through different methods and not always pertaining to the same year—vary somewhat, but they are all in the same ballpark. Jay Greene at the Manhattan Institute estimated a high school completion rate of 71 percent for 1998; Christopher Swanson and Duncan Chaplin at the Urban Institute estimated 66.6 percent for 2000; Thomas Mortenson of *Post-secondary Education Opportunity* estimated 66.1 percent for 2000; Andrew Sum and colleagues at Northeastern University estimated 68.7 percent for 1998; and Walter Haney and colleagues at Boston College estimated 74.4 percent for 2001. (I describe these studies and their methodologies in detail in *Unfinished Business: More Measured Approaches in Standards-Based Reform*) (Barton, 2005a).

The well-publicized contradictions of official estimates led to a minor political explosion, particularly after the Education Trust (2003) attacked the accuracy of the states' reports to the Department of Education. Then-Secretary of Education Rod Paige appointed a task force to look into the matter. Later, the National Governors Association convened a Task Force on State High School Graduation Data to

propose a plan for how states could develop a high-quality, comparable high school graduation measure. All of this is being weighed in Washington and in state capitals.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STATISTICS

My own analysis (Barton, 2005a) confirmed the estimates of other researchers. I relied on two numbers I knew to be actual counts. One was the census count of the population cohort that would be of graduation age (17 or 18) in spring 2000; the other was the number of regular public and private high school diplomas awarded that year as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics. My final analysis estimated that 69.6 percent of youth who were of graduating age had received diplomas in 2000.

To measure change over time, I made estimates for 1990 using the same approach and found a completion rate of 72 percent for that year. For both 1990 and 2000, I also estimated individual state completion rates, which varied broadly. For 1990, the spread was from 90.6 percent in Iowa down to 61.7 percent in Florida (and 59.9 percent in Washington, D.C.). In 2000, the percentage ranged from 88.2 percent in Vermont down to 55 percent in Arizona (and 48 percent in Washington, D.C.). Only seven states showed an increase in high school completion rates during the decade; rates in the remaining states declined (Barton, 2005b).

Other researchers have found that minorities have lower completion rates than white students. For example, Elaine Allensworth (2005) carried out an excellent study of Chicago schools, which had individual student records available to track students. Among boys, only 39 percent of black students graduated by age 19, compared with 51 percent of Latino students and 58 percent of white students. Girls fared better: Comparable rates were 57 percent for black students, 65 percent for Latino students, and 71 percent for white students.

Research on the path that students travel through the grades may also shed light on the dropout problem. For example, one study identified an important trend that has developed over

the last decade: the “9th grade bulge.” Compared with past years, an increasing number of 9th graders are failing to be promoted to the 10th grade. Haney and colleagues (2004) found that in 2001, 440,000 more students were enrolled in grade 9 than in grade 8 the previous year. By 2001 seven states had at least 20 percent more students enrolled in the 9th grade than had been enrolled in that grade in the prior year, and one-half had at least 10 percent more. We know that there is an association between failing a grade and dropping out. And we know that more students are dropping out at younger ages.

The research conducted in the last couple of years raises many questions. One issue is why the U.S. Census Bureau household survey estimates differ from the lower completion rates found by independent researchers. We can explain this difference in part by the fact that the census lumped regular diplomas and GEDs together. The GED is a well-respected substitute, but it is not a regular diploma earned after completing four years of high school. Numerous research studies show that GED recipients tend to fare better than dropouts, but not as well as graduates with diplomas (Boesel, Alsalam, & Smith, 1998). Although the number of GEDs has become a growing proportion of total graduates, inclusion of GED recipients does not entirely account for the gaps among the estimates. Further analysis is needed to reconcile the remaining discrepancies.

Another question raised by the research is why completion rates, in terms of regular diplomas, fell during the last decade in so many states. Some of the likely suspects include the decrease in two-parent families, the previously mentioned 9th grade bulge, and higher standards for graduation. However, my analysis did not produce evidence conclusively linking high school completion rates to any these factors.

A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC POSITION

At the same time that high school completion rates have fallen, labor market prospects for

dropouts are becoming increasingly dire. In 2003, 1.1 million 16- to 19-year-olds did not have a high school diploma and were not enrolled in school. In the landscape of the economy, these dropouts are often lost travelers without a map. Only 4 in 10 of the 16- to 19-year-olds are employed, as are fewer than 6 in 10 of 20- to 24-year-old dropouts. Black and Latino youth are doing considerably less well than others (T. Morisi, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, personal communication, July 14, 2004).

What about the earning power of those dropouts who do have jobs? Do they make enough money to support a household? For 25- to 34-year-old dropouts who manage to work full-time, the average annual salary of males dropped from \$35,087 (in 2002 constant dollars) in 1971, to \$22,903 in 2002, a decline of 35 percent. The comparable annual earnings for females without a diploma were \$19,888 in 1971, declining to \$17,114 in 2002. Even when they work full-time, the average earnings of this age group of dropouts are not far above the poverty line for a family with children—and most dropouts do not even reach this level of earnings. The earnings of high school graduates also have declined since 1971, but not as steeply as those of dropouts (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2004, Tables 14–1, 14–2, and 14–3).

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE DROPOUT RATE

Which student conditions and life experiences are correlated with failure to complete high school? A 2002 report from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO)¹ summarized the research. Factors that correlated with low completion rates included coming from low-income or single-parent families, getting low grades in school, being absent frequently, and changing schools. These factors vary considerably by state, as do high school completion rates.

1. Effective July 7, 2004, the GAO's legal name became the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

These predictive factors do not determine completion rates, but they do show the conditions that schools need to overcome in their effort to maximize completions. Some schools rise above expectations, some schools meet them, and some schools do less well than expected.

To find out how the individual states performed in 2000 compared with what we might expect on the basis of conditions in each state, I computed the correlation of completion rates with expectations based on three factors: state average socioeconomic characteristics (family income, education, and occupation); the percentage of two-parent families; and the rate at which students change schools. I found that these factors accounted for almost 60 percent of the variation in state completion rates.

This comparison of the *expected* completion rates with the *actual* completion rates disclosed that the actual rate fell within 4 percentage points of the expected rate in 24 states. Except for Rhode Island and Hawaii, actual rates in the remaining states were within 10 points of the expected rates. The states doing the best in exceeding their expected completion rates were Hawaii, Maryland, Vermont, Connecticut, and West Virginia. The states doing the worst were Rhode Island, Indiana, South Carolina, and Arizona (Barton, 2005a). To learn more about increasing school completion rates, we should study both those states that greatly exceed the expected high school completion rate and those that fall far below it for clues about what these states are doing differently.

INCREASING SCHOOL RETENTION

The factors identified in the GAO report—that low-income students and high-mobility students are high-risks, that low achievement and grade retention are precursors to leaving school—provide a guide for what we need to do to improve high school completion rates. In my research, the factor *most* predictive was coming from a single-parent family (even after controlling for

socioeconomic status). The extra effort that schools make to support students in all these circumstances will likely determine whether schools achieve higher or lower high school completion rates than expected.

Evaluations have established the effectiveness of a number of programs and models designed to increase school retention. The following models, described in more detail in *One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities* (Barton, 2005b), merit a close look by any state, district, or school wishing to embark on efforts to retain students in school.

- The Talent Development High School was developed by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRES-PAR), a collaboration between Johns Hopkins University and Howard University. This model emphasizes small learning communities, curriculum reforms, professional development, interdisciplinary teams of teachers, longer class periods, and employer advisory boards. There are now 33 such high schools in 12 states.

- Communities in Schools is designed specifically to keep students in school. Schools and community agencies form partnerships to deliver services and provide resources to students, such as individual case management, counseling, volunteers and mentors, remedial education, tutoring, classes teaching life skills and employment-related topics, and a variety of after-school programs.

- Maryland Tomorrow is a large-scale statewide dropout prevention effort operating in 75 high schools and is directed at students considered at risk of dropping out. Among other components, the program includes counseling, intensive academic instruction during the summer and the school year, career guidance and exploration, a variety of summer activities, and adult mentors.

- The Quantum Opportunities Program was launched in 1989 with funding from the Ford

Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor. Although the funding ended in 1999, the program's features offer a roadmap for providing supplemental services to students in schools that have large proportions of low-income and minority families. The program targeted randomly selected at-risk 9th graders entering inner-city high schools with high dropout rates. Using a comprehensive case management approach, the program provided year-round services to the participants throughout their four years of high school. Components included tutoring and homework assistance, computer-assisted instruction, life and family skills training, supplemental after-school education, developmental activities, mentoring, community service activities, and financial planning.

The documented results of these programs, together with the growing research on public alternative schools (Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002), provide a knowledge base about comprehensive approaches to increasing both academic achievement and high school completion rates—which generally go hand in hand.

When it comes to working with individual students to avert a decision to drop out, however, there is a serious impediment. Guidance counselors, working with teachers, are the logical people to identify, track, and help students who show the well-known predropout behaviors: frequent absenteeism, course failure, and negative attitudes. But these professionals can hardly perform such work given the current ratio of 1 counselor to almost 300 high school students—a ratio that is even worse in high minority schools (NCES, 2004, Table 27–1). In addition, almost all of a counselor's time goes to scheduling courses, helping students with college choice and admissions, performing hall and lunchroom duty, and, increasingly, dealing with test administration (NCES, 2001).

Somehow, schools must recruit individuals who have the time to interact with students

one-on-one: more counselors, more volunteers, and more paid and unpaid mentors and tutors. How schools achieve this aim will vary, but any viable approach will require additional effort and resources at the school, school district, or state level (or all three).

Schools attempting to tackle the dropout problem face strikingly different circumstances. At one end of the spectrum are the schools in suburban neighborhoods where most students graduate and go on to college. Here, the relatively few students who appear dropout-prone can be identified, and resources are likely to be available to help them. At the other end are the schools in poor inner-city neighborhoods where families may have less time to supervise after-school activities or interact with the schools to address student absenteeism, misbehavior, or concerns about homework. Here, efforts to increase high school completion will require considerable additional resources, including the help of the larger community. All sorts of school situations lie in between, and no handy formula will apply across the board. But policymakers, administrators, and legislators have a base of knowledge to draw on, as well as information about good practices that work at the school and classroom levels.

A BATTLE ON TWO FRONTS

The growing demands for high school reform have emphasized the need for higher achievement levels for students who graduate from high school so that they are prepared to either succeed in college or go directly into academically demanding jobs. Although such efforts are important, any reform initiatives that do not also make inroads on the dropout situation can hardly be considered successful. We face a hard battle on two fronts—one to make high school more rigorous, and the other to keep more students in high school through graduation.

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Students and the Informal System

Observe students on the playground. Describe informal aspects of the setting such as peer groups that influence the experience of the students.

Replicate the study by Harry Gracey on how children learn roles in school, beginning in kindergarten. Keep notes on your observations and write a summary that describes the lessons taught by the activities and interactions in the classroom.

Using an academic data base, pick one variable reflecting informal relationships among students that might influence students' achievements and performance in school.

Look up that variable in an advanced search with both "SCHOOL" and "ACHIEVEMENT" and find studies that explain the influence on student achievement. Some examples of variables you might consider are substance abuse, school violence, student employment, gang membership, absenteeism, participation in sports, and cliques.

PART IV

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is the base of all education. Without knowledge to impart to students there would be no justification for schools, even though education fills many other functions in a society. In Part IV, we examine the social construction of knowledge and how it comes to be taught in schools. What knowledge is appropriate and what knowledge is included in the curriculum are determined by a number of both input and output factors modeled in the open systems perspective. The study of knowledge provides another way of thinking about how conflicting forces shape what is taught in our schools.

Researchers often consider the social context of educational institutions and people's educational trajectories. Rarely, however, do they consider what is meant by knowledge or how it comes to be taught. When we consider knowledge, we assume that there are truths and that our educational systems are teaching those truths. The readings in this part suggest otherwise. Indeed, these readings suggest that the social construction of knowledge is very much a part of the process of education in society and that knowledge is what is created by those, particularly those in power, in society.

In our first reading on the sociology of knowledge, Ann Swidler and Jorge Ardití explore different approaches, both past and present, that theorists use to study knowledge. This reading describes new ways of examining knowledge and reviews different theoretical perspectives that attempt to understand knowledge. One way to view knowledge is to investigate it as a characteristic of persons—such as viewing someone as knowledgeable or smart—or, once incorporated into individuals, as an output in the open systems perspective, which is used to teach others or to maintain or improve the structures of daily life.

As noted in the reading by Durkheim in Part I, schools are expected to output individuals with the capabilities, attitudes, and orientations necessary to function in society. Both perspectives see knowledge as a component of our everyday world—something that frames people's expectations for themselves and others. All of these approaches to knowledge affect schools; each perspective views knowledge as something that individuals use to interpret their worlds, something that shapes their orientations to others and their place in institutions in society such as schools and work.

Swidler and Ardití also explore theories relating to larger societal inputs that produce knowledge. They argue that the role of authority and power in knowledge production is part of a stratification process that maintains and reproduces inequality. In many ways, knowledge is sold to schools, and textbooks are the final product in the production of knowledge.

However, the process by which knowledge is sold to schools is very complex, as described in the reading by Joan DelFattore in this part. She examines one pattern that shapes the curriculum students receive in schools. The production of knowledge is a highly political process because views of what is appropriate knowledge vary considerably. Ideally, we should all be able to agree on one common core of knowledge; however, in reality, that rarely happens. It is important to think about the way societies construct knowledge and for what purposes. The reading by Stuart Foster and Jason Nicholls examines how textbooks in four industrialized countries describe the United States' role in World War II, illustrating how national interests and images vary depending on which country is presenting the "knowledge." Yet, Elizabeth McEneaney and John Meyer argue in Part IX, that there is a great deal of similarity in the curriculum given to children around the world. Their argument looks to larger global pressures in shaping a common curriculum across cultures in order to have a basis for a larger global social order.

Another approach to studying knowledge focuses on the authority to define it and examines the organizational practices that shape knowledge as well as the structure and relations of power. The focus on authority within this framework can be at the level of the social organization of knowledge or the power of the individuals within that organization. At the more macro level of social organization, the production of knowledge within this framework is embedded in how society is organized to define legitimate authority. In our society, we define knowledge within the context of formal institutions, as opposed to apprenticeships or applied learning. Therefore, college professors in civil engineering have more authority in defining how bridges are to be built than the contractors who put up the bridges.

If we switch to an analysis of the gatekeepers who work within the organizational structure to generate knowledge, it is not surprising to find that many of the major scientific advances in history were discovered years before they were acknowledged as "discoveries." Thomas S. Kuhn, in a classic book on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), developed the idea of shared paradigms within the scientific community. That is, prestigious scholars and scholars at prestigious universities, often the same people, have the authority to define what is known within their disciplines. They share paradigms of what is known and are generally unwilling to have their paradigms challenged. Kuhn argued that "normal science" seeks confirmation, not disconfirmation of its theories. Because scientists are more concerned about maintaining their forms of knowledge than with discovering new forms of knowledge, a significant number of disconfirming findings must occur before gatekeepers allow new forms of knowledge to be recognized.

Pierre Bourdieu takes a different approach, examining how power creates knowledge or, as noted by Swidler and Ardit, how those in power can manipulate knowledge. In this explanation, those who hold power in society also shape knowledge. Individuals with "cultural capital" fitting the expectations of those in power in schools have more power themselves. This is because they both understand and have access to the social and cultural artifacts and knowledge that are most valued in society.

In fact, individuals get to define knowledge and can create ideologies or belief systems that support and maintain their positions of power. Interestingly, those groups that DelFattore discusses in her reading are not always persons with the most highly valued cultural capital, but rather individuals who have a very strong sense of what is appropriate knowledge that they mobilize using collective power to make sure their version of knowledge would be taught in schools. The persons DelFattore calls textbook censors have carefully used the system to impose their views on what is presented in textbooks. She shows

how these individuals amassed power in an attempt to control the content of textbooks. Indeed, many individuals take very seriously what they consider to be their responsibility to safeguard students from receiving the wrong kind of knowledge.

DeFattore argues that such undue influence on textbook publishing leads to the “dumbing of America” because publishers are pressured to present “knowledge” that is acceptable to many diverse audiences. In her book, she describes the centralized nature of textbook decision making. In two states, California and Texas, textbooks are purchased at the state level for all students. The decision of what textbook to purchase is highly profitable for the publisher whose textbook is selected. Although we might argue that such a process helps to make knowledge more consistent for all students, DeFattore finds that this process results in washed-out, “dumbed-down” texts that would be acceptable to everyone involved in the selection process in those two states. Decision making is consolidated as administrators in these two states either set down standards for textbook publishers or refuse to adopt textbooks unless they have the option of rewriting sections of the books they do not approve of (DeFattore, 1992). As a result, the selection process in California and Texas shapes textbooks for the other 48 states. Knowledge, therefore, is oftentimes embedded in politics rather than education.

A growing body of literature on pedagogy, or the process of teaching, addresses these concerns at all levels of education. Initially the focus of this literature was on introducing knowledge of women and other cultures into classrooms. Advocates of multiculturalism and feminism focus not simply on inclusion of women and nonmajority groups into the curriculum but also on the ways in which these groups are presented. In fact, it was these advocates for modernizing the curriculum who generated the backlash of textbook censors.

The latest concerns in the social construction of knowledge include the effect of new technologies or the mode of delivery of knowledge. Technology has been growing at a pace far faster than ever before in history, as you will learn in the reading by David Tyack and Larry Cuban in Part X. Swidler and Arditì discuss the impact of moveable type and the printed book on the social construction of knowledge. There is less theoretical speculation about the changes that current technologies may have on the way we formulate knowledge. Cyberspace is a large frontier that enters the classroom both formally and informally as more and more students from preschool through college own and use computers. Wenglinsky argued that the computer-to-student ratio went from 1 to 20 in 1990 to 1 in 5 at the end of that decade, creating a revolution in how knowledge was delivered to students in the classroom. He used national data to assess the impact of the use of technology on student achievement and found that students did better when computers were used for higher-order thinking such as to write papers and generate ideas rather than for drill and practice exercises (Wenglinsky, 2005/2006). Therefore, the technology itself is not as important as how it is used in the classroom. Whether technology transforms the way we think and use knowledge is still open to question. Tyack and Cuban feel that technology and computers may be the innovations that may change education in the future. However, many questions remain. Swidler and Arditì agree with this conclusion. We will just have to wait to see if knowledge becomes more anonymous when it comes to us through a computer and whether teaching and learning will respond to technology’s speeding up the process of generating knowledge.

Technology is not the only potential controversy in terms of how knowledge is constructed in classrooms. Another reading by Harold Wenglinsky in this part discusses the impact of testing for accountability on the way knowledge is taught (do we teach basic facts

or critical thinking?) and the effects of teaching methods on learning. While the subjects taught may be the same, standardized tests can shape the way materials are presented to students and ultimately affect the depth of understanding of what we learn in school.

As you leave this part of the book, we hope you are more aware of the complexity in the process of constructing and presenting knowledge and the impact of those processes on how we define the reality of children. An important part of the social organization of knowledge is that knowledge is perceived to be legitimate and provides a shared understanding of a common world. Although this seems to be a simple and straightforward matter, the readings in this part point to many problems and difficulties in defining what knowledge is legitimate.

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19

THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

ANN SWIDLER AND JORGE ARDITI

The following reading elaborates on the introduction to this part of the book and provides an important review of the various ways sociologists study knowledge. The essay explores the way knowledge is both constructed and conveyed within a social context. Take a little time to think about the theories proposed in this piece. You may want to review the readings in Part I, because some of the theories discussed there are revisited here, including Emile Durkheim, Erving Goffman, and Pierre Bourdieu. Also note how this reading overlaps with other pieces you have read and will be reading. This selection helps us understand that knowledge shapes and guides our everyday lives and is shaped by institutions, particularly schools, in ways that are not always obvious.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How does the earlier approach of Karl Mannheim, discussed in this reading, contrast with later theories of knowledge?

2. What is the difference between knowledge as shaped by authority relations and knowledge as shaped by power relations?
3. How does informal knowledge affect schools?
4. Think about ways in which control over the production of knowledge can reinforce and create inequality in society.

Early in the twentieth century, Mannheim (1928/1952) developed a sociology of knowledge that focused on how the social location of individuals and groups shaped their knowledge of the world. Elements of this tradition became institutionalized in sociology and political science as attitude and opinion research. Although this framework continues to inspire current scholarship, the tradition has come under criticism (Swidler & Ardit, 1994). Recently sociologists interested in culture, religion, science, and ideology, along with scholars in social history, philosophy, anthropology, and the

history of science, have begun to revitalize the field. The expansion of cultural studies throughout the social sciences has also greatly enriched the materials a sociologist of knowledge has to work with. While there is as yet no unified field, many diverse strands of theory and research have begun to crystallize around common themes.

Changes in the phenomena encompassed by the term "knowledge" are symptomatic of changes in the field. The traditional sociology of knowledge developed by Mannheim focused on formal systems of ideas, concentrating especially on such matters as the worldviews and politics of intellectuals. Newer work in sociology and cultural studies suggests that formal systems of ideas are linked to broader cultural patterns—what we might think of as social consciousness. The new sociology of knowledge examines how kinds of social organization make whole orderings of knowledge possible, rather than focusing on the differing social locations and interests of individuals or groups. This perspective examines political and religious ideologies as well as science and everyday life, cultural and organizational discourses along with formal and informal types of knowledge. It also expands the field of study from an examination of the contents of knowledge to the investigation of forms and practices of knowing.

Little of the work reviewed here explicitly locates itself in the sociology of knowledge. Despite diverse disciplines, perspectives, and substantive foci, however, these literatures allow at least some preliminary conclusions. First, shifts in the media through which knowledge is transmitted, especially the transition to print, have dramatic effects on the entire organization of knowledge systems. Second, to explain why new knowledge emerges and to account for the social effects of ideas, scholars need to pay careful attention to factors that directly affect the institutions and actors that produce and distribute knowledge. Third, social authority shapes the authoritativeness of knowledge, affecting both the authority [that] knowledge can effectively claim and the forms that knowledge claims take (see Asad, 1993). Fourth, distinctions, social and intellectual, are made along lines of social

differentiation, particularly hierarchical ones. Fifth, analysis of how the social location of actors affects their knowledge must account for the constitution of actors themselves. Sixth, knowledge and power are intimately related because power allows people to enact realities that make their knowledge plausible.

MEDIA AND THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps the most dramatic example of how social factors affect the basic structure of knowledge is what Goody and Watt (1963) called "The Consequences of Literacy." Historians, anthropologists, and psychologists have examined how the introduction of new media for the recording, transmission, and accumulation of knowledge changes knowledge itself. Walter Ong (1971, 1977, 1982) contrasted the organization of different literate oral cultures, arguing that the media in which words are transmitted have repeatedly transformed consciousness. For example, Eisenstein (1969, 1979) argued that print, which multiplied and thus preserved identical copies of books, decisively transformed the shape of scholarly knowledge. Books could be assembled and replicated easily. Texts could be permanent rather than transmitted verbally from one person to another. Authorship of texts could be established. Texts and authors could be placed in a firm historical sequence, and knowledge could be redefined as cumulative progress, rather than as inevitable decay from a pristine past. This is in contrast to Marc Bloch's (1940/1961) vivid descriptions of feudal elites who, often dependent on oral transmission of knowledge, jumbled chronologies and unwittingly assimilated new practices into an apparently unchanging tradition.

Marshall McLuhan (1962, 1964) speculated that television would again alter human consciousness as print had done, creating instantaneous, immediate, globally shared communication. But the effects of new media on knowledge remain unclear despite decades of mass communications research, perhaps because formal knowledge

remains bound by print and reading even while popular knowledge is increasingly visual, multi-channeled, and interactive. We do not yet know whether and how the computer revolution will alter formal knowledge; perhaps eventually we will find that the computer is supplanting the book and undoing the "fixity" Eisenstein attributed to print.

AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZATION

The foundation of a powerful, general approach to the sociology of knowledge focuses on problems of authority in contexts that directly affect the production of ideology. It is reasonable to assume that the authoritativeness of knowledge is grounded in patterns of social authority. Authoritative knowledge requires an institution, group, or individual who can settle disputes and establish truth. New models of how social organization influences ideas are at the heart of the new sociology of knowledge. For example, David Zaret (1985) argued that theological change in English Puritanism derived from organizational "pressures" and intellectual "precedents." Challenges to the authority of Puritan clerics led them to develop "covenant theology" which refocused ministers' authority on helping laypersons monitor their inner lives rather than on seeking radical reforms which would put Puritan clerics in open conflict with the Anglican church. Covenant theology made salvation a predictable outcome of a covenant between God and man. It drew on intellectual precedents, such as widespread knowledge of the mutual obligations commercial contracts entailed, to make its ideas plausible to lay listeners.

Zaret (1989, 1991, 1992) extends these ideas, arguing that liberal-democratic ideology that emerged in seventeenth-century England was a societal response contesting the existing authority structure of covenant theology (1989, p. 165). Sectarian conflict and the "covenant theology" inspired radicalism following the triumph of Puritanism in the English Civil War provided the context within which the new system of authority

emerged. Liberal ideology substituted religious toleration for efforts to build a "Godly Commonwealth" and natural religion for sectarian doctrinal commitments. Zaret shows also that the English proponents of liberal-democratic theory and of natural religion were loosely linked by "networks of friendship, patronage, and formal organizations" and that they shared "access to the intellectual precedents for the new ideology" (p. 65).

Just as religion, an authoritative institution, shapes knowledge, new research has begun to link features of scientific knowledge to the organization of scientific work (c.f., Swidler & Ardit, 1994). These theories suggest that systems of knowledge derive many of their features from the way knowledge-producing communities are organized. Thus the manufacture of scientific "truths" may well be a product of such central activities as departments deciding whom to hire, fellowship committees assessing research proposals, and young scientists seeking grounds for selecting problems. As a result, a hierarchy of ideas, in which some are more valuable than others, is built into the structures that allocate academic rewards.

Theoretical focus on authority relations is just one example of a broader movement in the sociology of knowledge toward attention to the specific organizational contexts in which those who produce knowledge work. An intriguing question is what institutional supports make plausible the authoritative, universal rationality characteristic of modern thought. Both Weber ([1904-1905]/1958) and Durkheim (1912/1965) explored this question. Weber argued that Calvinism leads to rationalization in all spheres of life, including modern science (Cohen, 1990, Merton, 1929/1970). Durkheim argued that the development of an increasingly universal world society made it possible for ideas to take universal form, to claim a universalized truth. Scattered evidence suggests that those who must regularly deal with an impersonal, distant cultural world organized by abstract principles such as individualism or rationality construct knowledge differently than do those located socially and intellectually in more parochial

settings. In contrast, Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer, and Wong (1991) [see also McEneaney and Meyer in Part IX] deemphasize local or regional variations; instead they stress increasing global standardization. They point out that modern nation states, despite differing internal needs and different histories, have tended to adopt similar educational systems and school curricula.

There are many intellectual consequences of the globalization of culture. For example, Robertson (1992) sketches the concrete historical turning points in the formation of a global culture, such as the creation of global competitions (Nobel prizes, the Olympics), agreement on world time, and the near-universal adoption of the Gregorian calendar. These international intellectual agreements in effect institutionalize and make real the universal authority of the rational to which Durkheim referred. If we take for granted the fact that a minute is really a minute, or a meter a meter, or that we really know what time it is in Tokyo or Addis Ababa, then we accept the fact that apparent objectivity of the world we inhabit rests on an institutionalized global culture—a global culture in which knowledge is generated by various authoritative institutions.

POWER AND PRACTICES

The contemporary sociology of knowledge has been deeply concerned with power (Lamont & Wuthnow, 1990; Ortner, 1984), especially the work of Michel Foucault. Despite difficulties in interpreting Foucault's work, his fundamental insights may be put simply: First, historical eras differ not only in what people think, but in what is thinkable. Foucault (1973) has written of changes in "epistemes"—not simply systems of classification, but the logic in terms of which these classifications are constructed. Different epistemes are characterized by discrete rules of separation and association among things. For example, epistemes in the classical age were based on similarity through resemblance whereas cause and effect was the basis of the age of reason. Second, for Foucault (1965, 1977, 1980),

power is embodied in practices or techniques which have their own histories (Mann, 1986). Foucault's "genealogical" method traces historical transformations in techniques of power, rather than seeking causal links between forms of power and other social formations.

Third, for Foucault (1977, 1978, 1980), techniques of power are also, simultaneously, forms of knowledge. So, for example, the monastic practice of confession made real corresponding forms of knowledge, such as the varieties of sin or techniques for recognizing and recounting these, just as the ability of asylums to confine and segregate the mentally ill enact psychiatric knowledge of diagnosis and cure. Studies of such institutions as prisons, mental hospitals, or clinics show how institutional practices make categories of knowledge real. "Dividing practices" such as those of modern psychiatry define the characteristics by which the normal may be recognized and separated from the "deviant." Practices of "objectification," such as the academic disciplines, turn aspects of human life into objects of analysis (i.e., criminal justice, sociology, psychology); and other practices, such as psychotherapy or self-labeling, create "subjects" who define and categorize themselves (Foucault, 1983).

New forms of knowledge also have the ability to create new sites where power can be applied (and where resistance can form). Only, for example, when individuals are seen as endowed with complex, interiorized psyches can a battle ensue over whether to liberate or repress unconscious drives.

Variation in the authoritativeness and centrality of knowledge across societies raises broad theoretical issues in the sociology of knowledge. Particularly fascinating is the contrast between France, on the one hand, and England and the United States, on the other. First, one can note that Bourdieu and Foucault, the contemporary theorists who have drawn the strongest links between knowledge and power, are both French. Their work seems to resonate with that of their French forebearer Durkheim, in stressing the overwhelming power of society vis à vis its

members. Second, as Michele Lamont (1987) has pointed out in examining the career of Jacques Derrida, French intellectuals have a more central cultural role and play to a broader public than do academic intellectuals in the United States. In a fascinating study, Priscilla Clark (1987) points to the distinctiveness of French literary culture, the central role intellectuals play in French life, and some of the infrastructure, such as government patronage, that supports French writers (see Clark & Clark, 1977).

A focus on institutional authority can account for both the intellectual predilections and the relative centrality of French versus Anglo-American intellectual cultures. One can begin by noting the very different histories of the core institutions that supported knowledge production in France versus those in England. The Académie Française, founded in 1635 was the first of several academies established by the French state to enhance French science and culture.

The Royal Society of London, chartered by the British Crown in 1662, received no royal financial support and thus became a prestigious gathering of leisured gentlemen who conducted experiments and shared the results of their scientific work. Thus intellectual authority in England was based on shared observation and mutual exchange of ideas among a cultivated elite, while in France knowledge was grounded in a hierarchical system of intellectual authority.

It is instructive to contrast the histories of the first great national dictionaries produced in France versus those in England. The French Academy's forty members immediately set about producing an authoritative dictionary of the French language, beginning the work in 1639 and completing it in 1694. A major English dictionary waited a hundred years until Samuel Johnson [a writer], between 1746 and 1755, sponsored by a group of commercial publishers who sold subscriptions to finance the venture, single-handedly wrote his *Dictionary of the English Language* aided only by a few helpers paid from his own pocket and by friends who loaned the many books from which he extracted illustrative quotations (Bate, 1975, p. 240–260).

Thus even in its conception of language, French practice created an authoritative codification of “pure” French, while Johnson's English dictionary offered an individual rendition of the best (elite) English usage.

Progress in the new sociology of knowledge has come especially from what we might call the “middle” level of analysis, focusing neither on large-scale forces like class or the capitalist economy, nor on influences such as the intellectual milieu or interests of individual actors. Instead, recent theoretical and empirical work has explored how authority, power, and practices within institutions shape knowledge.

IDENTITY, BOUNDARIES, AND DIFFERENCE

The concern with power has taken a second form in the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his collaborators. Bourdieu (1988) has turned his powerful anthropologist's eye on the practices that define prestige and maintain power within his own academic milieu as well as on the cultural strategies of Algerians (1977) and of the French (1984). Reminiscent of Weber's (1922/1968) analysis of status group competition (Collins, 1975 [see Collins in Part II]), Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) has examined how status groups benefit from having the knowledge they possess defined as valued or legitimate knowledge.

Bourdieu's work extends the sociology of knowledge in several respects. First, through his concept of the “habitus,” Bourdieu (1977, 1984) treats formal, academic knowledge as similar to other kinds of social knowledge with less focus on knowledge of the world and more emphasis on the knowledge of how to operate within it. He extends social knowledge more deeply into the person, examining learned habits of using and inhabiting space, the body, and time. By focusing on “practice” (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), he treats knowledge, including the valued knowledge of academia or of the cultural elite, as an embodied set of skills and habits that people use with more or less dexterity to achieve strategic advantage. But that same

knowledge reproduces the larger system of social distinctions and social hierarchies within whose terms people actively maneuver.

At the same time, Bourdieu (1969; see Ringer, 1990) has argued that all knowledge is located within larger "intellectual fields" so that the meaning of knowledge depends on its relation to the field as a whole. Thus "orthodox" and "heterodox" positions exist in relation to a field of intellectual power relations. Then, intellectual fields are, in turn, embedded in larger "cultural fields"; both orthodox and heterodox positions share taken-for-granted "doxa," or expression of praise to a higher power.

In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu examines the internalized "taste" people from different social milieus use to meet social and cultural distinctions. Like Meyer (1977), Bourdieu emphasizes the larger lessons conveyed by a hierarchical, stratified system of education, rather than simply the relatively advantaged or disadvantaged position of particular social groups within it. Class or status group advantage, captured by Bourdieu's (1984) term "cultural capital," is not simply accumulated cultural expertise. Rather, like economic capital, cultural capital includes the taste, confidence, and familiarity that allows the culturally advantaged to reap a higher return on cultural investments than do those who begin with less.

A big gap nonetheless remains between cognitive and social accounts of the ways people form and maintain boundaries. Goffman's (1974, 1983) later work moved toward a formal analysis of the ways cognitive frames create boundaries and organize social interactions. But sociologists have thus far made less use than they might of work by social psychologists on how people make and use social categories.

Boundaries formed around race, nationality, and religion are of special interest because they appear as naturalized, primordial categories even when they are clearly socially constructed (Barth, 1969; Calhoun, 1993). Fredrickson (1981) has described how different systems of racial categories developed in the United States and South Africa. Anthropologists like Abner

Cohen (1969, 1974) have shown how groups sharpen ethnic and religious boundaries as they move into new economic niches.

One of the most ambitious attempts to think about boundaries in fresh ways is Abbott (1988). Abbott conceptualizes professions as actors in a system, competing to define and establish exclusive control over jurisdictions. An academic knowledge system allows a profession to defend its jurisdiction, in part by more clearly defining its borders (p. 56). Established issues of power, knowledge, and boundaries are brought together in new ways in two recent literatures, those of "postmodernism" and "feminist epistemology." While the topic of postmodernism is much too large to be addressed here (see Arditi, 1993), in essence postmodernists argue that a new "order of things" has emerged in which the traditional categories that separated kinds of knowledge—or that separated truth from fiction, high from popular culture, and the sacred from the profane—no longer hold.

Feminist theorists adapted Foucault's concept of the constituted subject. In some ways these developments can be seen as a return to earlier concerns of the sociology of knowledge, in particular Mannheim's (1936) efforts to find a correlation between ideas and their location within the social structure. For feminist theorists, however, differences in ideas are not consequences of the different "interests" of social groups, but of the differential effects of power in the constitution of subjects. Feminists (Haraway, 1991) have criticized Foucault for his failure to recognize differences in the ways power penetrates people belonging to different social categories (gender, race, sexual preference), thereby constituting subjects differently, including the generation of gendered, or racialized, "knowledges." For them, the constitution of "difference" has to be made a fundamental element of analysis, along with the always partial and situated nature of knowledge. The search for a feminist epistemology has taken several forms, which provide an interesting illustration of the varied ways knowledge may be socially shaped or determined.

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20

ROMEO AND JULIET WERE JUST GOOD FRIENDS

JOAN DELFATTORE

Joan DelFattore discusses textbook censorship in the following excerpt taken from her book *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America* (1992). What is not always apparent to us as consumers of textbooks is the political struggles over what will be portrayed as knowledge in these books. As noted in the introduction to this part and referred to in this reading, the selection of elementary and secondary school textbooks is big business and highly centralized. DelFattore's discussion of textbook censorship investigates six federal court cases. Her discussion of this process illustrates the social construction of knowledge in textbooks, including issues of decision making and power that go well beyond the simple publication of a book.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How does the process of textbook censorship that DelFattore describes fit the theoretical approaches to the sociology of knowledge described by Ann Swidler and Jorge Ardití in the previous reading?
2. What choices do parents have in selecting textbooks for their children?
3. What does the selection of textbooks have to do with the social construction of knowledge?

A few years ago, I taught a summer course in literary classics for high school English teachers. When the class began talking about *Romeo and Juliet*, two of the teachers had

From DelFattore, J. "Romeo and Juliet were Just Good Friends," in *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America*, pp. 1–12. Reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

trouble following what the others were saying. Those two teachers were using high school literature anthologies; the rest of the class had read paperback versions of *Romeo and Juliet*. We compared the high school anthologies with the paperbacks and found more than three hundred lines missing from the play in each anthology. Neither textbook mentioned that its presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* was definitely not Shakespeare's.

In the anthologies, lines containing sexual material—even such mild words as *bosom* and *maidenhood*—were missing. Removing most of the love story shortened *Romeo and Juliet* considerably, but the publishers did not stop there; they also took out material that had nothing to do with sex. Both anthologies, for example, omitted *Romeo's* lines,

When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
And these who, often drown'd, could never die,
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars! (1, 2)

I later found that this speech is routinely removed from high school anthologies because it associates religion with falsehood and violence, thus offending people who demand that religion must always be presented favorably.

The realization that publishers can simply drop three hundred lines from a Shakespeare play was startling, and I set out to discover what other material is being deleted from textbooks, why, and by whom. I found excellent books and articles discussing various aspects of textbook censorship from the 1950s through the early 1980s.

Along with books and articles, I was also reading newspapers. Throughout the 1980s, one censorship lawsuit after another made front-page headlines. [The lawsuit of] *Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools* was filed [by a group of] Tennessee parents who maintained that an entire elementary school reading series, including "Cinderella," "Goldilocks," and *The Wizard of Oz*, violated their fundamentalist religious beliefs. More than half a century after the Scopes "monkey trial," *McLean v. Arkansas Board of*

Education and *Aguillard v. Edwards* evaluated attempts to promote the teaching of creationism in public schools. In *Smith v. Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County*, a federal district court ordered the removal of forty-four history, social studies, and home economics textbooks from public school classrooms on the grounds that the books violate the First Amendment by promoting the religion of secular humanism. *Farrell v. Hall* and *Virgil v. Columbia County School Board* pitted parents and teachers against school boards that had banned literary classics, such as *Lysistrata*, *Macbeth*, and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*.

Behind each court case was a red-hot local controversy fanned by national organizations that eventually funded the lawsuits they had helped to bring about. The dynamics leading up to legal action, the educational agendas of national lobbying groups, and the rulings in the lawsuits all have powerful implications for the future of education in this country.

All six of the federal court cases discussed in [What Johnny Shouldn't Read] involve attempts by religious fundamentalists to influence the content of public education. *The American College Dictionary* defines fundamentalism as "a movement in American Protestantism which stresses the inerrancy of the Bible not only in matters of faith and morals but also as literal historical record and prophecy." Trying to decide how to use the word *fundamentalist* in a discussion of textbook censorship is, however, more problematic than the dictionary definition suggests. Over the past five years, I have given more than a hundred talks on this subject at public gatherings as well as at professional conferences. That experience has made it clear that the term *fundamentalist* does not, in practice, describe a monolithic belief system. Time after time, audience members have stood up and said something to this effect: "I am a fundamentalist, but I do not agree with what the textbook protesters are doing. I am embarrassed when extremists use the name *fundamentalist* because it makes people think we are all like that." Conversely, others proclaim that they do not consider themselves

fundamentalists but do oppose evolution or non-traditional female roles.

A similar dilemma arises with regard to the word conservative. Textbook protesters often describe themselves as conservatives, but when George Will and James Kilpatrick write scathing columns condemning a textbook challenge, it is difficult to believe that that challenge represents mainstream conservative thought. Problems also arise when it comes to identifying the locations in which textbook controversies take place. While visiting southern states where court cases and controversial textbook adoption activities had occurred, I often met people who opposed the textbook activists and were irritated that the names of their states were associated with them. The same thing happened in California with regard to textbook protesters who call themselves liberals but represent viewpoints that mainstream liberals consider extreme and that many Californians do not endorse.

The reason for focusing on recent federal textbook lawsuits that involve fundamentalist ideology is simple: there is none that does not. In some cases, parents and teachers who describe themselves as fundamentalists initiate lawsuits against a school district for using books that violate their religious beliefs; in others, a school board bans books because of fundamentalist lobbying, whereupon other parents and teachers file suit.

Apart from lawsuits, there are hundreds of incidents every year in which parents or teachers try to convince school boards to include or exclude certain materials. Such controversies are reflected on a wider scale in the textbook adoption process in large states. Challenges initiated by people who identify themselves as fundamentalists not only outnumber the protests of all other groups combined but also involve far more topics. The National Organization for Women (NOW), for example, advocates the depiction of women in nontraditional roles, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) lobbies for more favorable presentations of African Americans. One may agree or disagree with the stands taken by NOW and the NAACP, but neither group is likely to

comment on such issues as the age of the earth, the development of language, or the probable domestication of dinosaurs. Fundamentalist textbook activists, on the other hand, lobby for geology and history books that conform to their interpretation of Genesis by teaching that the earth is about five thousand years old and that dinosaurs once coexisted with humans Flintstones-style. Their interpretation of the Bible also rejects biological evolution and, by extension, gradual development of any kind, such as the evolution of language over time.

The fundamentalist textbook activists . . . are determined to color the education of all students with their entire world view. Their protests therefore target a wide range of subjects, including personal decision making, imagination, conservation, world unity, tolerance for cultural diversity, religious tolerance, negative portrayals of religion, unflattering depictions of the military or the police, empathy toward animals, antipollution laws, pacifism, socialism, gun control, non-traditional roles for women, minority issues, and evolution.

Because the word fundamentalist means different things to different people, it is impossible to tell exactly how many fundamentalists there are in the United States. Estimates generally range from 3 percent to 20 percent of the total population, with a few enthusiasts claiming that more than half of all American citizens are fundamentalists. But even if no more than three Americans out of a hundred are fundamentalists, and some of them do not support all of the textbook protesters' views, they are effective out of all proportion to their numbers because of their intense dedication to what they see as the salvation of American children from political, social, economic, and spiritual ruin. In most local elections, a very small proportion of qualified voters shows up at the polls, and few of them have paid close attention to the candidates for school board seats. Under those conditions, how many determined voters does it take to elect a sympathetic candidate to the school board? It is also important to remember the cardinal rule of any political dynamic: the number of people needed to

make a difference is inversely proportionate to their level of expertise at working the system. Saying that a relatively small number of intense activists cannot have much effect on textbooks is like looking at the shape of a bumblebee and saying, "That thing can't possibly get off the ground." Maybe it can't, but it does. Far Right national organizations have become very adept at supporting grassroots legal challenges and at influencing the state-level textbook adoption process, thus affecting the content of textbooks purchased by school districts and private schools throughout the country.

Textbook protests are nothing new to the United States. As Kenneth Donelson explains in "Obscenity and the Chill Factor" (1979), activists of one kind or another have influenced the selection of classroom materials since colonial times. Nevertheless, according to the American Library Association, challenges to reading materials, including textbooks have increased dramatically since 1980 . . . [and] is probably related to the overall upswing in ultra-conservative activism surrounding the Reagan victory. Moreover, the changing content of textbooks themselves has motivated protesters to proclaim loudly—and accurately—that education is not what it was in the old days. From presenting traditional family, religious, and patriotic themes, textbooks have moved to endorsing multiculturalism, environmentalism, and globalism while discouraging militarism, stereotyping, and unbridled capitalism. The gradual change in textbooks began in the 1960s, but it was not until the 1970s and early 1980s that nationally organized campaigns were mounted against the new books.

In the Dick and Jane readers some of us remember from our childhoods, a family consisted of a married couple, two or three well-behaved children, and a dog and a cat. Father wore suits and went out to work; mother wore aprons and baked cupcakes. Little girls sat demurely watching little boys climb trees. Home meant a single-family house in a middle-class suburban neighborhood. Color the lawn green. Color the people white. Family life in the textbook world was idyllic: parents did not quarrel,

children did not disobey, and babies did not throw up on the dog.

With the advent of civil rights and feminism, and with the rise of pollution, overpopulation, drug use, and the threat of nuclear war, the key word in textbooks became relevance. People who were not white or middle-class and did not live in traditional nuclear families began to demand representation in textbooks. Textbooks also began to talk about the importance of international understanding and independent thinking in today's complex and troubled world.

The new books are deeply disturbing to people who do not want education to describe a changing social order or promote independent decision making. At its extreme, fundamentalist textbook activism is based on the premise that the act of creative thinking is evil in itself, regardless of content, because it might lead to thoughts that are displeasing to God. Pictures of little girls engaging in activities traditionally associated with boys, such as playing with toy cars or petting worms, threaten American family life because girls might grow up craving male roles. Pollution is a humanist myth promoting international cooperation, which could lead to world unity and thus to the reign of the Antichrist, which will signal the end of the world. Conservation is an act of human pride and an offense against God. Humans have no business worrying about the extinction of whales; if God wants whales to exist, they will exist. If not, then preserving them is an act of rebellion against God.

Textbook activism often begins at the grassroots level, but successful drives to ban or change books require the support of powerful national groups. The Far Right organizations that are most vocal about textbook content are the American Family Association, based in Mississippi and headed by Donald Wildmon; Citizens for Excellence in Education (California, Robert L. Simonds); Concerned Women for America (Washington, D.C., Beverly LaHaye); the Eagle Forum (Illinois, Phyllis Schlafly); Focus on the Family (California, James Dobson); and the National Legal Foundation (Virginia, Pat Robertson). These well-funded, politically sophisticated national organizations

supply legal representation for local textbook protesters and support efforts to lobby school boards and state legislatures.

It would be misleading to suggest that all textbook activism—conservative or liberal—is censorship, since decisions about what to teach and what not to teach are a necessary part of every educational system. Some material may be too advanced, academically or socially, for students of a particular age. Besides, human knowledge is cumulative: as scientific discoveries are made, as poems and novels are written, as historic events occur, information previously taught is pushed aside to make room for newer material. The school day has just so many minutes, and the school year has just so many days. For every fact that is put into a textbook, something else is left out. Given that some degree of selectivity is essential to education, advocacy groups will, naturally, try to influence textbook content in directions they consider appropriate. A certain amount of activism is part of the normal functioning of an educational system in a nontotalitarian state; the challenge is to determine the point at which attempts to influence textbook content shade into attempts to censor education.

The verb “to censor” operates according to its own peculiar grammatical rules. It is used almost exclusively in the second or third person: “You are censoring” or “they are censoring.” It is almost never used in the first person: “We are censoring.” A much more common self-perception is “We are participating in the commonsense selection of material suitable for children and adolescents.” In order to make the point that even by the most rigorous definition censorship is occurring in American schools, neither conservatives nor liberals are called censors in [*What Johnny Shouldn't Read*] unless their goal is to obliterate from the store of human knowledge all trace of ideas with which they disagree. By that stringent definition, relatively little of today's textbook activism is actually censorship, but the incidents that do fall under that heading are very serious indeed. Only two major groups thereby qualify as textbook censors: fundamentalists and politically correct extremists.

The changing image of textbooks has aroused liberal advocates who are as dedicated to intensifying the new trend as their opponents are to reversing it. Some liberal protesters call for an increase in the representation of women, minorities, and non-Western cultures in textbooks without specifically targeting anything for removal. It would be naive to suggest that such inclusion does not involve exclusion; given the constraints of textbook space and classroom time, something that used to be covered has to be eliminated to make room for the new material.

“Inclusionary” liberal textbook activists also tend to encourage the selection of facts that place previously underrepresented groups in the best possible light. By the definition of censorship given above, however, such lobbyists are not censors. Their efforts certainly contribute to the fragmentation of textbooks, but they do not tend toward the systematic elimination of any particular idea or fact.

Somewhere along the continuum of liberal textbook activism, however, “inclusionary” advocates give way to liberal censors. *Battle of the Books*, Lee Burrell's (1989) study of literary censorship in the schools, describes organizations whose attempts to eliminate racism and sexism from textbooks have become so extreme that they are themselves censoring part of the truth. Since Burrell's book was written before the term politically correct came into vogue, it is clear that the movement preceded its current label. Regardless of what liberal censors are called, the exact point at which they take over from “inclusionary” liberal activists is difficult to identify because the difference is in degree, not in kind. The noncensor leans toward additional, and favorable, representation of minorities and women. The politically correct censor is determined to eliminate all depictions of women in traditional roles, or every statement that could possibly be construed as disparaging a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group. The accuracy of a statement and the context in which it occurs are dismissed as irrelevant. Politically correct extremists, like their fundamentalist counterparts, operate on the assumption that education

has two functions: to describe what should be rather than what is, and to reverse the injustices of yesterday's society by shaping the attitudes of tomorrow's. Balanced portrayals of reality—some women are full-time homemakers, while others do have careers—get lost in the shuffle.

Taken to its extreme, the term political correctness denotes a form of intellectual terrorism in which people who express ideas that are offensive to any group other than white males of western European heritage may be punished, regardless of the accuracy or relevance of what they say. Racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice are abhorrent and cannot be tolerated by any culture that claims to be civilized. Nevertheless, if we were trying to perpetuate mutual hostility and suspicion, we could not find a better way to do it than by suppressing honest questions because somebody might not like the answers, or by selecting and altering facts solely to shape opinion. Politically correct censors, like fundamentalist censors, also ignore the broader implications of their activities. By what logic can people defend their own freedom of expression while denying the rights of others to state facts and express beliefs? Once a culture decides that the truth can be suppressed because it is offensive to some, all that remains is a trial of strength to determine whose sensibilities take precedence. In this regard, the only difference between fundamentalist and politically correct extremists lies in the specific truths they wish to promote or suppress; the principles on which they operate are the same.

What Johnny Shouldn't Read discusses only elementary and secondary school textbooks, not because college texts are immune from outside pressures, but because the same forces do not apply to them. College attendance is voluntary and most college students are legally adults, which makes college instruction less vulnerable to lawsuits than public education is. Moreover, the selection procedure for college textbooks is different from the method of adopting books for public school classes. Students in multisection college courses may use a common textbook selected by a faculty committee, but most college texts are

chosen by the individual professor teaching a particular course. College professors in their right mind (admittedly not 100 percent of us) would simply refuse to use a version of *Romeo and Juliet* with three hundred lines missing. The book would not make a profit because it would not sell, and that would be that. At the pre-college level, however, textbook selection is handled in a more centralized way. A small proportion of elementary and secondary school teachers may serve on textbook selection committees, but on the whole, teachers at the pre-college level are assigned textbooks that have been developed and selected by a highly politicized process. Regardless of anyone's opinion about what the teaching profession should look like, the truth is that individual college professors generally have more autonomy and more power than individual elementary or secondary school teachers. As a result, college textbooks tend to be produced to the specifications of professors, whereas elementary and secondary school books are more likely to reflect the wishes of school boards, administrators, and other nonclassroom personnel.

College professors' relative freedom to select and shape course material does not mean that textbook censorship does not affect college education. When students have spent twelve years reading books based more on market forces than on scholarly excellence, they may not come to college prepared to do college-level work. The increasing use of short sentences and simple words—often called “dumbing down”—in elementary and secondary school textbooks has generated a great deal of print since the mid-1970s, but the watering down of ideas is at least equally dangerous. In response to this problem, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP; 1986) recently published a report prepared by its Commission on Academic Freedom and Pre-College Education. The report, entitled “Liberty and Learning in the Schools: Higher Education's Concerns,” points out that students whose pre-college education was based primarily on “official” textbooks are not likely to understand how to deal with shades of meaning or with controversial topics.

Religious private schools that want to promote a fundamentalist viewpoint can purchase textbooks from small presses specializing in religiously oriented instructional materials.

Secular private schools, and religious private schools that do not use specifically religious textbooks, have no choice but to buy their books from the same publishers that supply public school districts. Private schools have far fewer students and operate in a less centralized way than public schools, which means that they do not have the economic clout to tell publishers what to include in textbooks or to induce publishers to produce special editions just for them. As a result, parents who think that they are side-stepping public school politics by sending their children to private schools are only partially correct. The same is true of parents who live in school districts that do not advocate censorship.

Overall, the textbook development process in America has less to do with educating a nation than with selling a product. In the world of publishing, the consumers who matter most are not the students and teachers who use the textbooks but the school boards that buy them. Some school boards choose to accept the recommendations of teachers almost automatically, but recent federal court decisions have shown that school boards can, if they wish, simply order teachers to use certain textbooks. Since school boards are either elected themselves or appointed by elected officials, they are vulnerable to lobbying by pressure groups. . . . What school children throughout America learn is heavily influenced by states like Texas and California in which large populations are combined with strong state-level textbook activism. . . .

Not surprisingly, national organizations representing educators and librarians play an important role in responding to censorship issues.

Professional associations are not the only groups active against censorship. In each of the legal cases discussed in [*What Johnny Shouldn't Read*], the anticensorship side was underwritten by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or People for the American Way (PAW). The ACLU, PAW, and the National Coalition Against Censorship also mount mailing campaigns informing the public of challenges to reading materials and soliciting contributions for the fight against censorship. Dedicated as these national groups are, however, the real power lies with the people—conservatives, moderates, and liberals alike—who oppose the extremes to which the textbook censors go.

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21

AMERICA IN WORLD WAR II

An Analysis of History Textbooks From England, Japan, Sweden, and the United States

STUART FOSTER AND JASON NICHOLLS

Stuart Foster and Jason Nicholls reviewed two textbooks from four different countries to examine how America's role in World War II was described. Their findings are both surprising and not so surprising, given what you have already read relating to the social construction of knowledge and the role of knowledge in socializing members of society. This reading makes clear the influence of culture in producing knowledge. Their findings also suggest hesitation as we consider whether what we read is "true," even when what we read is from textbooks in school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do the findings in this reading relate to the arguments made by Swidler and Arditi?
2. What possible impacts would these differences in portrayal of national histories have on a global society?
3. What advantages result from textbooks in different countries putting their own "interpretations" on world events?

"America in World War II: An Analysis of History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the United States" by Stuart Foster and Jason Nicholls. From the Spring, 2005 issue of *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 20(3), p. 214–221, 226–233. Used with Permission. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more, visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.

History is one of the few curriculum subjects typically mandated in schools throughout the world. Furthermore, the use of history textbooks to support student learning is also almost universally accepted practice. Of course, we should not assume that what is in the history textbook is what is taught; furthermore, we should not assume it has been learned. Nevertheless, as many researchers consistently have indicated, textbooks not only enjoy routine usage in history classrooms, but all nations, to some degree, appear to be guilty of using history textbooks as a means to promote a particular view of the past, to enhance the collective memories of a nation, and, more often than not, to appease social and political agendas in the present. Textbooks never appear as neutral sources. As a consequence, analysis of how textbooks in different nations portray common historical events such as World War II enables the development of broader cross-cultural and international understandings of approaches to teaching about the past and implications for the present day. In addition, textbook studies not only offer a window into the perspectives of others, but also provide invaluable opportunities to reflect critically on practices in one's own educational system.

Specific attention to the role of the United States during the Second World War is particularly intriguing. At the beginning of the 21st century, the United States has emerged as the world's sole superpower, and its global influence and economic dominance remain unquestioned. Arguably, the unique position of the United States in the contemporary world can be traced back to victories in North Africa, in Europe, and in the Pacific during World War II. By war's end the imperial powers of France and Britain were exhausted, Japan and Germany were defeated, and, with more than 20 million dead and its resources and infrastructure seriously depleted, the U.S.S.R. confronted overwhelming problems. In economic and military terms, the United States emerged from World War II without rival.

Accordingly, the inclusion of the significant role of the United States in World War II is

guaranteed in school history textbooks used across the world. This study, therefore, offers a detailed analysis of the role of the United States during World War II as portrayed in the history textbooks of four selected nations: England, Japan, Sweden, and the United States. Its purpose is to appreciate, compare, and contrast the particular historical content included in each nation's history textbooks and to illuminate national and international differences in the portrayal of the actions of the United States during the war.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY

Textbooks as Sources

Textbooks in these four countries were selected for analysis because potentially they offered different perspectives on events. Apart from appreciating how U.S. textbooks portrayed America's role, a central line of inquiry sought to understand how textbooks in Sweden (a neutral nation), England (a close ally), and Japan (a wartime enemy) portrayed the United States' role in World War II more than 50 years after the war. Two textbooks were selected from each country, each with a publication date of within the past eight years (see Appendix A). All textbooks were designed for use in upper-secondary school. These textbooks were among the most popular used in each of the respective countries.

Although the study analyzed the textbook treatment of America's role during World War II in four different nations, it cannot claim to compare similar data sources because textbooks are fashioned and employed for different reasons and different purposes in each nation. Furthermore, coverage issues and the place and status of history in different countries ensure that like-for-like comparisons are not possible. The situation is further complicated by awareness of the complex relationship between the production, selection, and deployment of history textbooks and the relative influence of government agencies, national curricula, standardized testing,

and the practices of individual schools and teachers in the different countries. Despite these different contexts, however, examination of textbook content offers intriguing and illuminating points of contrast that help critics better understand how history is used and portrayed in different national settings.

THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II

U.S. Textbooks

Although U.S. history textbooks mention the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, their extended treatment of the war begins with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Strikingly apparent in both U.S. textbooks is the dramatic impact that the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor had on the American nation. These textbooks unequivocally hold that Japan's attack both "shocked and united" an American nation previously divided on isolationist and interventionist issues. According to the textbooks, after Pearl Harbor the nation pulled together under President Roosevelt's leadership and united for the war effort. Thus, although both U.S. textbooks detail the rise of Benito Mussolini and Adolph Hitler in Europe and note that "democracy everywhere was threatened by the dictators" (US1, p. 500), they tacitly imply that the Second World War did not become America's war until December 1941.

The U.S. textbooks ascribe responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific to the aggressive policies of Germany, Italy, and Japan (the Axis nations) and their partnership "as three of the world's major fascist powers" (US1, p. 503). Reasons for Japan's recourse to war in the Pacific receive limited attention. Where mentioned, however, Japan's actions typically are explained in terms of that nation's being "ever hungry for more resources, materials, and markets" (US1, p. 503). As one textbook notes, "Japan was determined to do whatever was necessary to attain its militaristic aims" (US1, p. 504).

A salient feature of the U.S. textbooks is their common assessment of the state of global affairs on the eve of U.S. entry into World War II. As one textbook asserts, "The Allies were in deep trouble by the time the U.S. entered the war... They found themselves on the defensive on every front" (US1, p. 506). The textbooks note that by December 1941, the Allies' situation was desperate. One text provocatively asks, "Only an exhausted Britain stood between the Nazis and their dream of dominating the European continent. The U.S. finally cast its lot with the British—but was it already too late?" (US1, p. 499)

This type of dramatic and emotive language is not uncommon in the U.S. textbooks. By portraying the United States as a nation battling against overwhelming odds, the textbooks emphasize the heroic struggles and sacrifices of the American people to dramatic effect. Accordingly, in describing the state of affairs following the declaration of war on the United States, *America: Pathways to the Present* (US1) proudly comments, "The American people were now committed to this war. Their contributions would make the difference between victory and defeat for the Allies" (US1, p. 505).

In a similar vein, U.S. textbooks are eager to relate to U.S. students that the war was fought to ensure a free and democratic postwar world as encapsulated in Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" speech and in the Atlantic Charter. This quest for a more ideal world is neatly characterized by the following textbook extract:

As soldiers huddled in filthy foxholes overseas, they dreamed of home and a cherished way of life. War correspondent John Hersey once asked a young marine on the Pacific front what he was fighting for. After reflecting for a moment, the soldier just sighed. "What I'd give for a piece of blueberry pie." (US1, p. 506)

The U.S. textbooks manifest the overriding impression that, despite the obstacles involved, the Axis powers represented an evil threat to the world that the United States had a duty and a responsibility to eradicate.

Japanese Textbooks

In contrast to U.S. textbooks, Japanese history textbooks portray Pearl Harbor as one event in a chain of historical occurrences that begins with the 1931 “Manchurian incident.” Of note, one text, published by Jikkyo Shuppan, entitles the section dealing with events in the 1930s and 1940s “The Fifteen Years War and Japan,” thereby embedding the Second World War into the flow of Japanese history and events in the Pacific region (J2, p. 315). As a result, by concentrating attention to affairs in the Pacific from 1930 to 1941, Japanese textbooks provide a rich context to the events that led to the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Significantly, whereas the textbook published by Yamakawa Shuppan devotes 22 lines of text to the war itself, it provides 8 pages of coverage on the Japanese build-up to war (J1).

Central to the perspective offered by the Japanese textbooks is a sharp presentation of reasons for Japan’s suspicion of British, Dutch, and, most important, U.S. intentions during the prewar years. Crucially, the textbooks inform students that Japan’s leaders were deeply troubled by the menacing shadow of the anti-Japanese “ABCD encirclement” (Americans—A, British—B, Chinese—C, and the Dutch—D). Contrary to the presentation of events in U.S. textbooks, Japanese textbooks note that the unreasonable U.S. demands on Japan, including “the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China . . . Manchuria, and French Indo-China, the rejection of the Tripartite Pact, and the dissolution of the Wang government,” proved that “the U.S., too, had resolved on war against Japan,” which, according to one textbook, the “U.S. had come to see as inevitable” (J1, p. 330).

The outbreak of hostilities in 1941, therefore, is portrayed in Japanese textbooks as the culmination of a chain of events for which several nations on both sides (Axis and Allies) shared responsibility. Unlike typical presentations in U.S. and English textbooks, Japanese textbooks portray the steady drift to war with the United States as understandable and, perhaps, inevitable. Of further significance, even Japan’s

failure to warn the United States of the attack on Pearl Harbor—often depicted as a “surprise attack” in Western texts—is portrayed in one Japanese textbook as an error perpetrated by senior Japanese naval officials who had been instructed to issue an ultimatum to the United States before the attack, but had failed to translate the coded message in a timely manner.

Overall, therefore, Japanese textbooks’ portrayal of the war in the Pacific differs significantly from that of the U.S. textbooks. In American textbooks, the United States is portrayed as the victim of an aggressive and shocking surprise attack; the Japanese textbooks assert that U.S. attitudes and actions before Pearl Harbor in large part were responsible for the recourse to war.

English Textbooks

Although they recognize the global scale of World War II, English textbooks typically portray the war from a European perspective. In particular, in depicting the situation once war breaks out in Europe in September 1939, English textbooks devote significant attention to the period from June 1940 to December 1941, when Britain and its Commonwealth forces stood alone against the Nazi juggernaut. However, under the section heading “The USA’s Concerns Grow,” one book points out Americans’ growing fear that their country would have to fight in another European war (E1, p. 276). Also portrayed is Roosevelt’s recognition of this reality and the shift of opinion in the United States during 1941 toward the prospect of intervention.

English textbooks acknowledge the close relationship between Britain’s Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt. One quotes Churchill’s telegram to FDR expressing his joy at his re-election in 1940: “I prayed for your success and I am truly thankful for it” (E1, p. 276). The book also remarks on the “vital supplies” that the United States and Canada gave to Britain before U.S. entry into the war, and one textbook claims that without the support of Canada and

the United States and the Atlantic “lifeline, Britain could not have carried out the war” (E1, p. 284). Still, significantly, although U.S. entry is portrayed as a major event, it is never considered within the context of British gratitude or relief for the support of its most powerful ally. Indeed, rather than acknowledging the significance of U.S. support of the British war efforts, this involvement is simply portrayed as just another, but important, episode during the course of the war. Certainly the English textbooks do not specifically acknowledge the impact of U.S. entry into the war, as do U.S. textbooks.

In the British textbooks we analyzed, the outbreak of the war occupies an intriguing middle ground between the accounts in U.S. and Japanese textbooks. On the one hand, one of the English textbooks points out that Japanese military actions were part of that nation’s aggressive desire “for dominance of the Pacific” (E1, p. 275). On the other hand, some events are interpreted from the Japanese perspective. Textbooks point out, for example, how the United States and the Western European powers had made life difficult for the Japanese by their repeated impositions of economic sanctions and tariffs during the prewar period. In this respect, although these books hold that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was an act of aggression, they recognize Japanese actions as having been logical given the situation in which Japan found itself.

Swedish Textbooks

To an even greater extent than the English books, Swedish texts focus on the war from a European perspective. As such, the role of the Soviets and the British, on the whole, are accorded both more space and attention than is the role of the United States in the war. The Swedish textbooks follow the war chronologically. In this treatment, these books deal in some detail with German Chancellor Hitler’s expansion through Europe, the situation in Scandinavia, and the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Only later do these texts offer increased attention to the U.S. role at the start of

the war in Europe. Indeed, apart from reference to Roosevelt’s lend-lease program and the plight of U.S. cargo vessels crossing the Atlantic, they provide very little mention of the United States.

The two Swedish books give substantial attention to Chancellor Hitler’s 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa and to the rapid advance of German forces across Belarus and the Ukraine. Like the English texts, these books give little attention to the war in the Pacific. For example, one Swedish textbook includes a section on the entrance of the United States under the heading “The War Becomes a World War,” although it fails to mention the important Battle of Midway anywhere in the textual narrative. Both Swedish textbooks place the war in the Pacific within the context of Japan’s expansionist policies in East Asia that began in the 1930s. In this way, the attack on Pearl Harbor tends to be portrayed as another part of the unfolding story of Japanese imperialism in the region and as a result of the growing tensions between the United States and Japan (S1, p. 308). In the same textbook, the close and developing relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill is described along with the observation that, after Pearl Harbor, Britain now had “a powerful ally” (S1, p. 308). On the whole, although the importance of having the United States as a powerful ally is recognized, the Swedish textbooks accord greater coverage to the British and Soviet roles at the start of the war than to the actions of the United States . . .

THE END OF THE WAR

U.S. Textbooks

Both U.S. textbooks include sections entitled “Victory in Europe.” However, their principal focus is on the war in the Pacific and in Western Europe, and they refer to the role of the Soviets in the last stages of the war only briefly (US2, p. 760). Thus the end of the war in Europe is presented in terms of the changing fortunes of the Western Allies in the battle for the Atlantic, the

air raids on German cities, the Normandy landings, and the push through the Benelux countries. No mention is made of Germany's two-year retreat from Stalingrad to Berlin due to the efforts of the Soviet Red Army. However, the collaborative nature of the final offensive by the Allies on Germany is recognized to a minor degree in *The American Nation*, including the Soviet occupation of Berlin (US2, p. 762). *Pathways to the Present* (US1), on the other hand, presents a quite different version. It acknowledges the Soviet advance into Germany but makes no subsequent mention of the Soviets' impact on the *Wehrmacht*, their occupation of Berlin, or that British and Canadian forces were significantly involved in the last push of the Allies into Germany from the west.

The final stages of the war in the Pacific receive strong coverage in both of the U.S. textbooks. However, even though the "Allies" are described as taking "the offensive" in the Pacific after the Battle of Midway, the actions of U.S. forces are most prominently described. For example, in *Pathways to the Present* (US1), although the battle for Guadalcanal is described as an Allied offensive, only the landing of U.S. troops is detailed. Furthermore, it is U.S. marines, and not combined Allied forces, who are depicted as winning the battle for that island (US1, pp. 509–510). A similar situation prevails in *The American Nation* (US2), in which the wrapping up of the Pacific war is described as an American affair.

The American use of the atomic bomb is described as a "tough decision" for President Truman against a Japan that "still had a well-trained army and strong inner defenses" (US2, pp. 764–765). Ultimately, *The American Nation* attributes Japan's surrender to the use of the atomic bombs and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, which is only briefly mentioned. However, the end of the chapter includes a commentary section on "Using the Atomic Bomb" in which different perspectives are offered. In particular, the use of the bomb "to strengthen the hand of the United States in its postwar dealings with the Soviet Union" is suggested (US2, p. 769). One book includes a

six-page section about the decision to drop the atomic bomb and its effects. The alternatives available to Truman are described, as well as the ease with which he claimed to have arrived at the final decision to use this weapon. *Pathways to the Present* (US1) expresses some sympathy for the Japanese people; for example:

The Japanese were dazed by the blasts. They were already considering surrender when the Soviet Union entered the war on the Chinese front two days after Hiroshima. Following the Nagasaki explosion, they sought to end the conflict any way they could. (US1, p. 521)

Both U.S. textbooks assert that the atomic bombs forced a quick Japanese surrender and the end of the war. Both draw close attention not only to the direct ethical and humanitarian controversy surrounding the use of the bombs, but also to the possibility that the United States dropped the bombs in order to strengthen its role in the postwar world.

Japanese Textbooks

The Japanese textbooks tend to focus almost completely on the Pacific theater of the war, giving only minor attention to wartime actions in Europe and North Africa. Thus key events toward the end of the war such as D-Day, the liberation of Paris, the Soviet advance into Berlin, and the liberation of Nazi concentration camps are markedly absent. In the Pacific, the tendency is to portray the United States defeating Japan single-handedly, with no reference to other Allied nations.

Further, the Japanese books note the decrease in the import of raw materials from Southeast Asia to Japan during the war and the ensuing fall in production levels, which are entirely attributed to the increased control of the sea and the air by U.S. naval and air forces. In one book, Japanese forces are described as literally overwhelmed by the United States' material superiority between the Battle of Midway and the end of the war (J2). With the fall of the islands of Saipan and later the Philippines, the launch of

the U.S. bombing offensive on Japanese cities is described in both textbooks. The kamikaze suicide attacks are mentioned, however, in only one textbook (J2) as evidence of Japan's desperate military situation late in the war. With the fall of the island of Okinawa to U.S. forces in the spring of 1945, "Japan's defeat" is described as "imminent" (J1, p. 233).

By April 1945, Japan is thus portrayed as a nation on the verge of collapse and in search of some kind of peace. However, because of the Soviet decision not to mediate as well as the fact that Japan did not respond to the Potsdam Declaration, Japan's fate is sealed with the U.S. decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Of interest, Japan's response to the Potsdam Declaration is portrayed differently in the two Japanese textbooks. One suggests that Japan's failure to reply to the Potsdam Declaration prompted the United States to drop the atom bomb (J2, p. 409), whereas the other book (J1) portrays Japan as much more a victim of U.S. aggression. This latter book observes, "The Japanese government was still anguishing over its response [to the Potsdam Declaration] when the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6 and another on Nagasaki on August 9" (J1, p. 237). Accordingly, this book portrays the United States as the aggressor, with no suggestion that the bombs were necessary to end the war quickly and to avoid a bloody assault on the Japanese homeland.

Overall, Japanese textbooks provide only cursory detail of the end of the Second World War. They focus attention on the war in the Pacific, where the defeat of the Japanese army is attributed solely to the material superiority of the United States.

English Textbooks

On the whole, the English textbooks offer a diverse picture of the end of World War II. Ben Walsh's *Modern World History* (E1, p. 279) recognizes the war as "a truly world war with fighting on four continents." As such, although the importance of the U.S. role is acknowledged,

similar roles of other Allies across all the military arenas are noted. Victory at the end of World War II is portrayed very much as a collaborative Allied effort against a broken and defeated Axis, with the European war receiving primary focus.

As background to the events leading to Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, both textbooks also note the significance of increasing U.S. military casualties. Lancaster and People's *The Modern World*, for example, remarks that on Okinawa "over 7,000 American soldiers were killed," and this was "without doubt one reason why the atom bomb was dropped" (E2, p. 155). However, in contrast to the U.S. textbooks, which depict the invasion of Okinawa as only a U.S. affair, English students read that "in March 1945, British and U.S. forces took the island of Okinawa" (E1, p. 296). Walsh's *Modern World History* additionally points out that "some 120,000 Africans also fought for the Allies in the Burma campaign" and that "India provided over 2.5 million men and women for the armed forces and spent a staggering 80% of its wealth in 1943–44 on the war effort" (E1, p. 295).

The justification for the United States' dropping of the atomic bomb is portrayed as problematic in the English textbooks. Both textbooks offer a range of views and a variety of sources to portray conflicting viewpoints about Truman's decision. Students are then invited to use the information to reach a reasoned conclusion about this event. Despite this apparently evenhanded approach, however, both textbooks suggest that the dropping of the bombs, although bringing a speedy end to the war, may not have been necessary to win the war.

Swedish Textbooks

Having portrayed the events at Stalingrad and, to a lesser extent, North Africa as the important turning points of the war, Swedish textbooks describe the final offensive in Europe as a joint Allied affair. In *Living History*, under the heading "The Year 1944: The Invasion of Normandy," the U.S. role is portrayed as part of

an essentially combined effort by the Western Allies in the final defeat of Germany (S1, pp. 312–313). The role of Stalin and the Soviet Red Army offensive in the east is given equal if not greater attention than are the actions of the Western Allies. Thus the Normandy landings are placed in the context of Stalin's insistence that the United States and Britain open a second front in the west. Moreover, although the magnitude of D-Day is fully recognized as "the largest invasion of its type in military history," students read that the "Red Army increased in strength and condition" and that "1944 saw 10 million men in an attack towards the west" (S1, pp. 312–313). Significantly, the only visual image to accompany the narrative account that depicts the fall of Berlin is the famous photograph of the Red Army soldier waving the Soviet flag from the roof of the German parliament buildings in May 1945 (S1, p. 314). Thus Swedish books portray the end of the war in Europe as an essentially collaborative effort between all the Allies, although they accord special attention to the importance of the Soviet role.

Both books describe the final stages of the war in the Pacific. Interestingly, *Living History* (S1) portrays the United States as the sole Allied power fighting against the Japanese in the Pacific and makes no mention of the actions of other nations. In contrast, *History: Life and Change* (S2) notes the importance of British contributions. Japan is presented as a "lesser threat" than Germany, soon on the defensive against a United States that quickly rearmed itself after Pearl Harbor. In addition, although the brutality of the island-hopping campaign and, in particular, the ferocity of Japanese resistance is described, many key battles and events are not acknowledged. The use of atomic weapons, for example, is described without mentioning the brutal battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa or the kamikaze suicide attacks by Japanese pilots, all decisive events that may have influenced President Truman's decision. However, in the narrative, reasons given for using the "new weapon," the textbook alleges, were "to demonstrate the U.S.A.'s strength and to spare the lives

of American soldiers" as well as to force an unconditional Japanese surrender and to bring the war to a speedy close (S1, p. 314).

Overall, the Swedish textbooks cover in some detail Allied military victories in the Western European, Eastern European, and Pacific theaters of war. The war effort also is seen as a collaborative affair in which the actions of the British, Soviet, and U.S. forces appear salient. Most apparent, however, is that Soviet successes on the eastern front are viewed as more significant than are the military successes of the British and Americans in the west. Furthermore, the Pacific War is portrayed as secondary to the more vital and momentous military campaigns fought in Europe.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Around the globe, history textbooks are employed to serve different purposes. Typically they perform multiple functions simultaneously. For example, they are used to "cover" mandated historical topics, to conform to curriculum needs, and to address the demands of standardized tests. As often, they are used as a support mechanism and as the primary source of information for teachers, students, and parents. Occasionally they are used critically as an example of one representation among many of a particular historical perspective. However, no matter what they are used for, they inescapably represent a powerful means to render a particular version of a nation's past in the history classroom. Textbooks consciously attempt to shape and inform students' understanding of their national history and the relationship between their country and other nations.

Analysis of the central story lines and messages about World War II in textbooks regularly used by students in Japan, Sweden, England, and the United States reveal that in many respects, these textbooks examine the Second World War from each nation's own cultural, historic, and geopolitical perspective. Accordingly, U.S. textbooks emphasize the significant role that the United States played in crushing the Axis forces

in Europe and the Pacific. Unequivocally the U.S. textbooks portray American entry into the war as decisive. They emphasize U.S. military commanders, battles in which the United States was a chief protagonist, and the ideals for which U.S. soldiers allegedly fought. They mention the involvement of other nations, but the contributions of those nations appear altogether secondary to those of the United States.

In contrast, although acknowledging the significant role of the United States during World War II, English textbooks do not portray the U.S. contributions as more significant than those of the British Empire or the U.S.S.R. Indeed, concentrated focus is given to the British war effort before U.S. entry and to the defeat of Hitler's German armies by the Soviet Red Army on the eastern front. Moreover, after the U.S. entry into the war, according to the implicit message presented by English textbooks, the Allied effort was a joint venture involving equal partners, and not one dominated by the United States.

Japanese textbooks offer a very different perspective on events. In the Japanese textbooks, the war in Europe is a secondary issue and receives substantially limited attention. Instead, these books' coverage of the war centers on events in the Pacific. Here, Japanese textbooks focus much detail on the context leading to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In contrast to the portrayal in U.S. textbooks, the United States does not appear to be an innocent victim of a "surprise attack." Rather, Japanese textbooks carefully explain how U.S.-Japanese antagonism before events in December 1941 all but rendered war inevitable. The defeat of the Japanese armies principally is attributed to actions of the United States, but details are limited and lack context. Significantly, according to Japanese textbooks, the eventual military success of U.S. military forces resulted from America's overwhelming material, not military, superiority.

Finally, the Swedish textbooks focus on the war in Europe and North Africa. As a result, the United States is portrayed as playing a supportive rather than a leading role in events. The

Swedish textbooks place much emphasis on the war before U.S. entry, particularly on military action on the eastern front. Moreover, the German defeats at Stalingrad and, to a lesser extent, El-Alamein, are portrayed as not only the beginning of the end for Germany but also the cause of irreparable cracks in the Axis states. The United States is depicted as the unquestionable leader in the Pacific war against Japan. However, this arena of the war is portrayed as a secondary affair in the Swedish textbooks.

This study of history textbooks from four nations abundantly illustrates that historical information and interpretation conveyed to students in different parts of the world vary considerably. Moreover, it illuminates how textbook representations appear to be influenced by particular nationalistic bias, differing cultural and geopolitical perspectives, and the sociopolitical agendas of the nation in which the books are used in schools. Many individuals and organizations hold that the purpose of textbook studies is to construct more tolerant and more accurate versions of our shared past. For example, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany, value textbook research as a means to promote increased international understandings. Such objectives are important and worthwhile. However, the function of this study was not to call for more balanced and consensual history, but rather to explore how and why different nations treat historical events in different ways.

The nature of historical study is such that events inevitably will be interpreted differently in different cultures. The overall aim, therefore, is to recognize, understand, and appreciate national differences; to examine how and why they occur; and to offer the prospect that the information presented will lead educators and officials to critically examine existing practice and the nature and function of history in their society. In this respect, the study offers insights into issues associated with the teaching and learning of history in national settings.

APPENDIX A: TEXTBOOKS USED IN THE STUDY

US1—A. Cayton, E. I. Perry, and A. Winkler. (1998). *America: Pathways to the Present*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

US2—P. Boyer. (1995). *The American Nation*. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

E1—B. Walsh. (2001). *GCSE Modern World History*. London: John Murray Publishers.

E2—T. Lancaster and D. Peaple. (1996). *GCSE History: The Modern World*. Ormskirk, Lancashire: Causeway Press.

S1—L. Hildingson and K. Hildingson. (1997). *Levande Historia 7–9 (Living History 7–9)*. Orebro, Sweden: Natur och Kultur.

S2—K. Sjöbeck and B. Melen. (1995). *Historia: Liv i Föreläring (History: Life in Transition)*. Malmö, Sweden: Interskol.

J1—I. Susumu, K. Kazuo, K. Kota, S. Haruo, et al. (1994). *Shosetsu Nihon shi (Comprehensive Japanese History B)*. Tokyo: Yama kawa Shuppan.

J2—N. Kojiro, et al. (1994). *Nihon shi (Japanese History B)*. Tokyo: Jikkō Shuppan.

FACTS OR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS?

What the NAEP Results Say

HAROLD WENGLINSKY

This reading by Harold Wenglsinsky examines the role of teaching practices on what knowledge is presented. The debate between teaching basic skills versus critical thinking is not new, but it has become more heated with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation's emphasis on accountability. Although the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been around since 1969, NCLB uses other methods of evaluation that emphasize basic skills rather than critical thinking.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What national and local factors influence how knowledge is presented in schools?
2. What difference does it make if students learn basic skills rather than critical thinking?

3. Will NCLB's focus on changing testing to assess basic skills influence the type of knowledge presented in schools or only the presentation of the knowledge?

In the past 30 years, policymakers and educators have debated whether schooling should emphasize facts or critical thinking skills. Proponents of the first view argue that students need to know when the Civil War happened before they can accurately interpret its causes. Proponents of the second view counter that students will soon forget the exact dates of the Battle of Chancellorsville, but they will probably remember the insights that they gain from studying the battle's causes, leadership, military reasoning, and human costs.

State policymakers have responded to the shifting debate. Thus, the California legislature

"Facts or Critical Skills: What NAEP Results Say" by Harold Wenglsinsky. From the September, 2004 issue of *Educational Leadership* 61(1), p. 32-35. Used with permission. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more, visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.

has gone back and forth between emphasizing phonics and whole language approaches in its reading curriculum. Maryland emphasizes critical thinking skills in its state standards and tests; just across the Potomac River, Virginia emphasizes basic facts.

For the most part, however, this debate has not been informed by actual empirical data. Fortunately, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) offers relevant information. Administered every year or two since 1969 in various subjects—including mathematics, science, reading, and civics—the NAEP assessments are taken by representative samples of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Because each student takes only a small subset of the examination, the full examination can cover a substantial breadth and depth of material. Test items include both multiple-choice responses and more complex written responses so that they assess both basic skills and critical thinking skills. In addition to the test, students and their teachers and school administrators also fill out questionnaires that furnish information about student and teacher backgrounds and the instructional practices used in the classroom.

By measuring the relationships between specific instructional practices and student performance, we can use NAEP data to compare the effectiveness of teaching for meaning with that of teaching basic skills. Using advanced statistical techniques, we can even take into account the potential influence of student achievement, thus isolating the effects of instruction oriented to teaching for meaning.

When we examine various analyses, some published and some unpublished (Wenglinsky, 2000, 2002, 2003), a clear pattern emerges from the data: Across subjects, teaching for meaning is associated with higher NAEP test scores. Although students must learn basic skills and facts at some point, these results suggest that instruction emphasizing advanced reasoning skills promotes high student performance.

MATH AND SCIENCE:

EARLY TEACHING FOR MEANING

In mathematics, some educators advocate teaching students basic skills, such as the times tables, and reinforcing those skills through drill and practice. Others advocate teaching students mathematical reasoning, such as the principles behind algorithms for multiplication and division, and emphasizing such complex topics as data analysis and probability early in the curriculum. The NAEP data supports the latter approach. Among U.S. 4th and 8th graders, teaching that emphasizes higher-order thinking skills, project-based learning, opportunities to solve problems that have multiple solutions, such hands-on techniques as using manipulatives were all associated with higher performance on the mathematics NAEP. Such methods reflect the idea that learning mathematics is an iterative process, rather than a linear process in which students progress from simple facts to more complicated ones (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides further evidence. Stigler and Hiebert (1999), analyzing videotapes of classes in the United States, Germany, and Japan, found that the Japanese 8th grade teachers were more likely to emphasize critical thinking by having students fashion their own solutions to problems and by introducing advanced material (for example, algebra) at a relatively early stage. And overall, Japanese students outperformed their U.S. and German counterparts in mathematics.

In science, the curricular debate has been between those who advocate teaching students the facts of science and those who emphasize hands-on activities that allow students to explore theory. Basic skills advocates do not necessarily object to the use of hands-on activities, but they assign them a different role, in which the teacher defines laboratory procedures and students carry them out to demonstrate, for example, what happens when heat is placed under a balloon.

The NAEP data again suggest the benefits of teaching for meaning. Students tended to score

higher on the 4th grade and 8th grade NAEP science tests when they had experienced science instruction centered on projects in which they took a high degree of initiative. Traditional activities, such as completing worksheets and reading primarily from textbooks, seemed to have no positive effect.

READING AND CIVICS: A MORE LINEAR PICTURE

In contrast to the NAEP results for math and science, the results in the humanities demonstrate the benefits of a more linear approach to teaching.

In reading, one debate has centered on how students should learn to identify words and develop fluency, and a second debate has centered on how students should develop reading comprehension. The first debate has played itself out in the reading wars between phonics and whole language advocates. The phonics approach emphasizes teaching students to sound out words, whereas whole language emphasizes identifying unfamiliar words from their context. Because the NAEP does not test students until grade 4, its results shed little light on this first debate. Reports by the National Reading Panel (2000) and the National Research Council (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) have supposedly resolved the issue in favor of a balanced approach that focuses on phonics but leaves some room for a contextual approaches (although some reading researchers question the reports' findings).

The second debate—regarding reading comprehension—has not been fully engaged. Some scholars have simply staked out positions on reading comprehension analogous to their position on word identification and fluency. Yet here, NAEP scores do offer some guidance—and they strongly suggest that when it comes to comprehension, basic skills approaches are inappropriate.

In both 4th and 8th grades, NAEP scores in comprehension favor teaching for meaning. Students tended to perform better on NAEP comprehension questions when they had experienced instruction in metacognitive skills (drawing

meaning from text by asking questions, summarizing the work, identifying key themes, and thinking critically about the author's purpose and whether that purpose was achieved). In addition, students' comprehension was higher when they had been exposed to "real" texts—books and stories rather than short passages in basal readers. Finally, students improved their comprehension skills by reading literature and then writing about that literature, which gave them the opportunity to apply their metacognitive skills.

Thus, it appears that learning to read follows a linear trajectory. Previous studies suggest that students first need to learn the basic skills from phonics to sound out words and develop fluency. Once they have done that, however, the NAEP scores indicate that students should move on to develop reasoning skills and critical thinking skills in order to comprehend texts.

In civics, the story is also linear. The debate in civics centers on whether students should learn facts about the government through textbooks and homework or through more hands-on civics activities, such as community service. The NAEP data indicate that the 4th graders, on the other hand, benefit both from reading textbooks and such hands-on activities as service learning. Thus, in the case of civics, students will likely do best with a developmental model in which they begin by learning the content and then go on to make sense of it through civic practice.

BASIC SKILLS AND TEACHING FOR MEANING IN PARTNERSHIP

These analyses of NAEP results suggest that although basic skills have their place in pedagogy, critical thinking skills are essential. In mathematics and science at both the 4th and 8th grade levels, practices that emphasize critical thinking skills are associated with higher student achievement, whereas practices that emphasize basic skills are not. Apparently, students more effectively learn simple content, such as the times tables, if they understand the conceptual framework that lies behind that content. Educators do

not need to choose between basic and advanced skills in math and science, but we should introduce advanced skills early to motivate students to learn the basic algorithms—which, let's face it, are not very interesting in and of themselves.

In the humanities, on the other hand, the data suggest the value of a more linear process. Students should not begin their school lives as readers developing their own rules for spelling or creating their own vernacular language. But once they know how to take language from the page, students need opportunities to construct sense out of text by interpreting it, writing about it, and reflecting on what they have written. Similarly, civics students need to know what the branches of government do, what freedoms the Bill of Rights protects, and how to influence their elected officials. Once students have learned these facts, however, they need to put their knowledge into practice by performing community service activities, going on field trips, and communicating with elected officials on matters important to them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS AND EDUCATORS

These empirical findings about the importance of teaching for meaning suggest certain actions that public officials and education administrators need to take.

At the school level, principals need to encourage their teachers to spend more time teaching for meaning across subject areas—especially in math and science in the early grades. In the humanities, students may need to learn basic skills in reading and civics in elementary school. But by the time students reach middle school, teaching for meaning becomes crucial.

Unfortunately, school principals and superintendents may have difficulty moving in this direction because federal policy now intervenes in state and local curriculum choices in favor of basic skills an against teaching for meaning. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) constitutes an unprecedented level of federal involvement in education.

NCLB's goals are highly laudable. Despite the complaints of many educators, creating a national infrastructure that holds schools accountable for the performance of their students and sanctions schools for a pattern of repeated failure is an appropriate role for the federal government. When the states demonstrated their inability during the Great Depression to provide social insurance and welfare benefits to their unemployed and elderly, and when states were unwilling during the civil rights era to educate black and white students together, federal intervention became necessary. These days, where the states have demonstrated their inability to educate our children well—particularly minority children and those living in poverty—the federal government is again obligated to act. Only the federal government can create a common yardstick for measuring performance and take actions against states that do not make the fiscal effort to provide good schools for all students. My own state of New York provides a case in point: Education in New York City and other urban systems is woefully underfunded, and as a result, school and teacher quality is manifestly lacking. In the sense of holding states accountable, then, NCLB could do some good.

But NCLB has overextended itself. It has moved beyond accountability for student achievement results by providing professional development funds that exclusively support a basic skills approach. To qualify for the funds, such cities as New York—which desperately need money—must teach a basic skills curriculum across the board. In addition, the federal government is rewriting the NAEP so that the tests will reflect a greater emphasis on basic skills instead of their current balance between basic and higher-order skills. By squeezing out critical thinking skills, these actions put the cognitive development of our students at risk.

Many education leaders oppose NCLB on the wrong grounds. They should embrace the notion of being held accountable for the achievement of their students but demand autonomy in how to improve that achievement. And as the NAEP data suggest, the best way for school leaders to

raise student achievement is by placing more emphasis on teaching for meaning.

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Social Construction of Knowledge

Using an academic data base, look up the topic of “TEXT” or “BOOK” and “CENSORSHIP” or “BANNED” and “SCHOOL” to see what additional research has been done in this area.

Try to find out how textbooks are selected in your school district using the Web, informal contacts with friends, or calls to your local schools/school district office.

Using the Web, see if you can find out more about the publication of textbooks. That is, check out a major publisher to see how many textbooks are sold (i.e., a fourth-grade reading series) and how that publisher markets the textbooks.

PART V

SCHOOLING IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

Educational Environments

No education system exists in a vacuum. In Part V we consider the external environmental influences on school systems, the parts of the Open Systems Model that influence schools from outside school walls. Changing values in society and the community, political and economic constraints, home environments of students and school personnel, business and technology, special-interest groups, and other external influences affect what happens within school walls.

To focus only on what happens behind the closed doors of the school or classroom is to miss a large part of the total picture—the educational environment. The social context, also referred to as the school environment, helps to define the purpose and meaning of education and school functions and their limitations. What happens inside educational systems was the focus of the first four parts: the interactions in, functions of, and conflicts in schools were discussed in Part I; the organization of schools in Part II; the informal system and school climate in Part III; and the knowledge that is taught in schools in Part IV. The influences and pressures on the school are the focus of Part V.

From the environment come the “raw products” that are processed in the school system. For instance, students enter school to learn skills and knowledge that they can use in the world outside school. Teachers enter to perform a job, bringing with them training to effectively carry out that job. Each of the participants in the school brings values, beliefs, attitudes, abilities, and behaviors from outside the schools that affect the internal workings of schools.

Schools cannot ignore many important aspects of their environments, especially those that are necessary for support of the school or that conflict with the schools’ goals. Parents have agendas for their children’s education and can be quite vocal about those agendas. Taxpayers also feel they have a stake in what happens in schools and how their money is being spent. Textbook companies and sellers pressure schools to buy their products, sometimes by offering “deals” to schools that purchase their books. State legislators and federal mandates in the No Child Left Behind legislation lay out expectations that schoolchildren will pass proficiency tests; failure to do so places a red mark on the school district. Consider the influence of public attitudes on school policies, curriculum, and funding. Parents send their children to school, community members pay taxes to support schools, and many interest

groups express their feelings about school policies. Each year the Gallup Poll on “The Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools” surveys a sample of over 1,000 U.S. adults on questions related to school issues. Responses to the survey indicate areas of most concern to the public, areas that they may try to influence. Of most concern in 2006 were lack of financial support, overcrowding of schools, and lack of discipline (Rose & Gallup, 2006).

Population changes, technological advances, fads in society for a particular curriculum idea, and social movements all influence the schools. And the list of influences on schools continues. How schools cope with the pressures and uncertainties coming from the environment takes up much of the work time of school personnel. For instance, a day in the life of a school principal consists of working on budgets for the state and federal government, meeting with parents and representatives of interest groups, working to pass school levies, and dealing with children who bring serious problems to school.

The importance of any particular part of the environment changes over time. For example, when the school needs to pass a levy to obtain operating funds, the voters become a highly salient community. When school administrators face pressure from teachers’ unions at contract time, their negotiations take on high salience. At other times voters or unions take a secondary position in importance compared to other pressing issues in the environment at the time.

Because all institutions in society are interrelated, influence and pressure on schools often comes from other institutions. For instance, children bring their home environments to school with them; if there are problems in the home, they affect the children’s achievement. If parents are involved in their children’s education by volunteering in school, attending parent–teacher conferences, or helping the children with their homework, the children are likely to have higher achievement in school (Epstein, 1987, 1988). However, the amount and type of involvement of parents differs by social class.

An example of an environmental issue that causes conflict for schools is school prayer and religious teachings. Separation of church and state has been a guiding principle supporting freedom of religious practice since the founding of the United States. Yet where to draw the line has been a bone of contention in many communities. The line is challenged in discussions of what constitutes school prayer; whether to allow released-time for religious classes in public schools; what support from taxpayer monies can legally be spent on parochial school students for transportation, free meals, counseling, and other services; what standards private parochial schools should meet; and what curriculum and textbooks to use, especially when the topics are related to religious beliefs such as creationism.

Another example of the influence from school environments is the relationship between business enterprises and schools. To what extent should schools be influenced by pressures from the business community? Shouldn’t businesses have a say in what schools teach? After all, they are the main source of jobs for students on completion of schooling. Many argue no, that education should remain independent of external influences, especially those with profit motives. One concern related to business interests and schools has been the advertising that crept into the hallways and classrooms. From soft drink companies providing incentives to schools to have their products be the only choice on school campuses to labels of popular consumer items found in textbooks, on book covers, and on clothing worn to school, business ventures have subtly inserted themselves into our schools. Many schools are now eliminating soda and candy machines due to concerns from parents and governmental agencies about the health and obesity of children.

Each of the readings in this section focuses on an aspect of the educational system’s environment. The first reading considers political involvement in educational systems.

John Meyer and Brian Rowan discuss the institution of education in the social world as it operates in the larger political context. In most countries, control of schools is in the hands of the national political system, with the dominant goal of governments to incorporate students into society by meeting the educational and skill needs of the society. To find schools that are entities independent or separate from the state is rare. Meyer and Rowan discuss the United States, a country that allows a degree of local control, “decoupling” schools from some external federal political and environmental pressures.

Families most directly impact students’ attitudes toward schooling; experiences in the family set the stage for school achievement. Shannon Cavanagh, Kathryn Schiller, and Catherine Riegle Crumb analyze how family structure—single parent, divorce, step-parent and siblings—affect student achievement.

Extracurricular activities from sports to clubs impact students’ use of time and academic achievement, according to Andrew Guest and Barbara Schneider. The authors show relationships between participation in both sports and non-sports extracurricular activities and achievement in different types of schools.

Federal, state, and local governments play a major role in the educational environment and policy, in part because the money they provide to schools is essential to operations. The latest federal mandate is the “No Child Left Behind” act. This act and the history of other federal mandates is discussed in the reading by Kathryn Borman and Bridget Cotner.

Finally, Dennis Condron and Vincent Roscigno discuss financing of education, a major environmental constraint on schools. They analyze the disparities in spending within a district and how that spending is related to class and racial educational inequalities.

The readings in this chapter present five examples of environmental influences and constraints on what happens in schools and classrooms and how the environment effects educational achievement. The bottom line is whether schools are preparing the young for life in society, a question of much debate among experts, researchers, and the various public constituencies of schools.

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THE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

JOHN W. MEYER AND BRIAN ROWAN

To begin our exploration of educational systems and their environments, John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan present a macro-level interpretation of the school in modern society. Schools serve societal needs more than individual or family needs, and in many societies they are controlled by centralized political authorities, important elements in the environments of schools. Education serves to prepare and credential individuals for participation in society, especially corporate society. By meeting the expectations of these external organizations, schools gain legitimacy and resources to carry out their missions and to be innovative. Whereas educational systems and authority in most societies are centralized, the U.S. system is decentralized, with controls at the local and state levels. This means that educators are less secure in their positions because they are beholden to sometimes-conflicting local interests. The authors use the term *decoupling* to describe the discrepancy between

what schools do and how they evaluate the outcomes. Decoupling also serves the purpose of protecting local schools from too much external scrutiny, resulting in more autonomy at the local level and little evidence of ineffectiveness, conflict, or inconsistency. Furthermore, decoupling occurs with the tacit agreement of all players, from the community to school personnel.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What do the authors mean by "decoupled" education systems?
2. What are the results of "decoupled" systems (especially for American education systems)?
3. How do schools serve the needs of the political and corporate sectors of society?
4. What theoretical approach or approaches relate most closely to the ideas in this reading?
5. How does credentialing link schools to other institutions in society, such as family and the economy?

THE ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLING: ANOTHER INTERPRETATION

The explanation developed here begins with the context in which educational organizations are presently found. Modern education today takes place in large-scale, public bureaucracies. The rise of this kind of educational system is closely related to the worldwide trend of national development. The first step in our argument, therefore, is to relate national development to the organization of education.

The Growth of Corporate Schooling

[W]e know that bureaucratic schooling has not arisen from a need to coordinate and standardize instruction, for this is precisely what modern American educational organizations do not do. Nor do these bureaucratic organizations merely fund and administer an exchange between educational professionals and families needing educational services. Educational bureaucracies present themselves not as units servicing education but as organizations that embody educational purposes in their collective structure. A theory of their emergence and dominance should explain why these bureaucracies assume jurisdiction over educational instruction.

The most plausible explanation is that modern schools produce education for society, not for individuals or families. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, national societies everywhere took over the function of defining and managing the socialization of their citizen personnel (Coombs, 1968; Meyer & Robinson, 1975; Ramirez, 1974). In national societies, education is both a right and duty of citizenship (Bendix, 1964). It also becomes an important way of gaining status and respect (for example, see Blau & Duncan, 1967). For reasons that do not require elaborate discussion here, education becomes the central agency defining personnel—both citizen and elite—for the modern state and economy.

Since World War II, the trend toward corporate control of education has intensified. As

nation-states have consolidated their control over a growing number of elements of social life, they have established educational systems to incorporate citizens into the political, economic, and status order of society. This incorporation is managed by a large public bureaucracy that uniformly extends its standardization and authority through all localities. Thus, educational organizations have come to be increasingly structured by centers of political authority (Meyer & Robinson, 1975). Bailyn (1960), Field (1972), Katz (1968), and Tyack (1974) describe the steps of this process in pre-twentieth-century American history. First local, and later national, elites became concerned with the social control of peripheral citizen groups—who need control precisely because they are citizens. At first, the rural New Englanders who escaped from the control of clergy and town community (Bailyn, 1960), then the Irish immigrants (Field, 1972; Katz, 1968), and finally the great waves of nineteenth century immigration (Tyack, 1974) created the pressures to control, standardize, and coordinate the educational system. As these steps progressed, the impetus to organize schooling on a large scale—to certify and classify pupils, to certify teachers, to accredit schools, and to control formal curriculum—gained force.

The growth of corporate control of education has major implications for educational organizations. As citizen personnel are increasingly sorted and allocated to positions in the social structure on the basis of classified or certified educational properties, the ritual classifications of education—type of student, topic, teacher, or school—come to have substantial value in what might be called the societal identity “market.” A workable identity market presupposes a standardized, trustworthy currency of social typifications that is free from local anomalies. Uniform categories of instruction are therefore developed, and there is a detailed elaboration of the standardized and certified properties comprising an educational identity.

The result of this social expansion of education is a basic change in social structure. Education comes to consist, not of a series of private arrangements between teachers and students, but rather of a set of standardized public credentials used to

incorporate citizen personnel into society. Society and its stratification system come to be composed of a series of typifications having educational meaning—ordinary citizens are presumed to have basic literacy. Strata above ordinary citizens are composed of high school and college graduates. The upper levels contain credentialed professionals, such as doctors and lawyers.

Thus, as societies and nation-states use education to define their basic categories of personnel, a large-scale educational bureaucracy emerges to standardize and manage the production of these categories. The credentials that give individuals status and membership in the wider collectivity must come under collective control. Such collective control would not be necessary if instruction were conceived of as a merely private matter between individuals and teachers. But, as educational organizations emerge as the credentialing agency of modern society and as modern citizens see their educational and corporate identities linked—that is, as education becomes the theory of personnel in modern society—it is consequently standardized and controlled.

Society thus becomes “schooled” (Illich, 1971). Education comes to be understood by corporate actors according to the schooling rule: Education is a certified teacher teaching a standardized curricular topic to a registered student in an accredited school. The nature of schooling is thus socially defined by reference to a set of standardized categories the legitimacy of which is publicly shared. As the categories and credentials of schooling gain importance in allocation and membership processes, the public comes to expect that they will be controlled and standardized. The large-scale public bureaucracy created to achieve this standardization is now normatively constrained by the expectations of the schooling rule. To a large degree, then, education is coordinated by shared social understandings that define the roles, topics, and contents of educational organizations.

The Organizational Management of Standardized Classifications

The political consolidation of society and the importance of education for the allocation of

people to positions in the economic and stratification system explain the rise of large-scale educational bureaucracies. These processes also explain why educational organizations focus so tightly on the ritual classifications of education. Educational organizations are created to produce schooling for corporate society. They create standard types of graduates from standard categories of pupils using standard types of teachers and topics. As their purposes and structures are defined and institutionalized in the rules, norms, and ideologies of the wider society, the legitimacy of schools and their ability to mobilize resources depend on maintaining congruence between their structure and these socially shared categorical understandings of education (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Parsons, 1956).

Consider this matter from the viewpoint of any rational college president or school superintendent. The whole school will dissolve in conflict and illegitimacy if the internal and external understanding of its accredited status is in doubt: If it has too few Ph.D.'s or properly credentialed teachers on its faculty, it may face reputational, accreditation, or even legal problems. If it has one too many “economics” courses and one too few “history” courses (leave aside their actual content), similar disasters may occur as the school falls short of externally imposed accrediting standards. No matter what they have learned, graduates may have difficulty finding jobs. No matter what the school teaches, it may not be capable of recruiting funds or teachers. Thus, the creation of institutionalized rules defining and standardizing education creates a system in which schools come to be somewhat at the mercy of the ritual classifications. Failure to incorporate certified personnel or to organize instruction around the topics outlined in accreditation rules can bring conflict and illegitimacy.

At the same time, the creation of institutionalized rules provides educational organizations with enormous resources. First, the credentials, classifications, and categories of schooling constitute a language that facilitates exchange between school and society. Social agencies often

provide local schools with “categorical funding” to support the instruction of culturally disadvantaged or educationally handicapped students or to support programs in bilingual or vocational education. Second, schools can exploit the system of credentials and classifications in order to gain prestige. They can carefully attend to the social evaluations of worth given to particular ritual classifications and can maximize their honorific worth by hiring prestigious faculty, by incorporating programs that are publicly defined as “innovative,” or by upgrading their status from junior college to four-year college. Finally, the school relies on the ritual classifications to provide order. Social actors derive their identities from the socially defined categories of education and become committed to upholding these identities within the context of their school activities. To the degree that actors take on the obligation to be “alive to the system, to be properly oriented and aligned in it” (Goffman, 1967), the whole educational system retains its plausibility.

In modern society, then, educational organizations have good reason to tightly control properties defined by the wider social order. By incorporating externally defined types of instruction, teachers, and students into their formal structure, schools avoid illegitimacy and discreditation. At the same time, they gain important benefits. In schools using socially agreed-on classifications, participants become committed to the organization. This is especially true when these classifications have high prestige (McCall & Simmons, 1966). And, by labeling students or instructional programs so that they conform to institutionally supported programs, schools obtain financial resources. In short, the rewards for attending to external understandings are an increased ability to mobilize societal resources for organizational purposes.

The Avoidance of Evaluation and Inspection

We have explained why schools attend to ritual classifications, but we have not explained why they do not attend (as organizations) to instruction. There are two [primary] ways that

instructional activities can be controlled in modern education bureaucracies. First, many of the properties of educational identities may be certified in terms of examinations. Second, many of the ritual classifications involve a reorganization of educational activity, and some school systems organize an inspection system to make sure these implications are carried through. Thus, two basic kinds of instructional controls are available to educational organizations—the certification of status by testing, and/or the inspection of instructional activity to ensure conformity to rules.

Our explanation of the loose control of instruction in U.S. school systems must in part focus on specific features of U.S. society, since most other societies have educational bureaucracies that assignment to a classification such as student, graduate, or teacher is determined by various tests, most often controlled by national ministries of education. Also, national inspectors are often employed to attempt to make sure that teachers and schools conform to national standards of practice, regardless of the educational outcome. Thus, in most societies the state, through a ministry of education, controls systems of inspection or examination that manage the ritual categories of education by controlling either output or instructional procedure (Ramirez, 1974; Rubinson, 1974).

In American society, tests are used in profusion. However, most of these tests are neither national nor organizational but, rather, are devices of the individual teacher. The results seldom leave the classroom and are rarely used to measure instructional output. In the United States, the most common national tests that attempt to standardize local output differences—the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)—are creatures of private organization. Further, only the New York State Board of Regents examination approximates (and at that in a pale way) an attempt to standardize curriculum throughout a political unit by using an examination system.

The apparent explanation for this lack of central control of instruction in American education is the decentralization of the system. Schools are

in large part locally controlled and locally funded. While higher levels of authority in state and federal bureaucracies have made many attempts to impose evaluative standards on the educational system, the pressures of continued localism defeat them; category systems that delegate certification or evaluation rights to the schools themselves are retained. The reason for this is clear. A national evaluation system would define almost all the children in some communities as successes and almost all those in others as failures. This could work in a nationally controlled system, but it is much too dangerous in a system that depends on legitimating itself in and obtaining resources from local populations. Why, for instance, should the state of Mississippi join in a national credentialing system that might define a great proportion of its schools and graduates as failures? It is safer to adapt the substantive standards of what constitutes, say, a high school graduate to local circumstances and to specify in state laws only categories at some remove from substantive competence.

There is yet another way in which the institutional pattern of localism reduces organizational controls over instruction. In the United States, the legitimacy of local control in some measure deprofessionalizes school administrators at all levels (in contrast to European models). They do not carry with them the authority of the central, national, professional, and bureaucratic structures and the elaborate ideological backing such authority brings with it. American administrators must compromise and must further lose purely professional authority by acknowledging their compromised role. They do not have tenure, and their survival is dependent on laypersons in the community, not professionals. Their educational authority of office is, therefore, lower than that of their European counterparts, especially in areas dealing with central educational matters such as instruction and curriculum. This situation is precisely analogous to the “red” versus “expert” conflict found in many organizations in communist societies, where organizational managers must often act contrary to their expert opinion in order to follow the party line. The profusion of

local pressures in American society turns school administrators into “reds” as it were.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE: DECOUPLING AND THE LOGIC OF CONFIDENCE

Decoupling

American educational organizations are in business to maintain a “schooling rule” institutionalized in society. This rule specifies a series of ritual categories—teachers, students, topics and schools—that define education. Elaborate organizational controls ensure that these categories have been incorporated into the organization. But the ritual categories themselves and the system of inspection and control are formulated to avoid inspecting the actual instructional activities and outcomes of schooling. That is, a school’s formal structure (its ritual classifications) is “decoupled” from technical activities and outcomes.

External features of American education, especially the local and pluralistic basis of control, help to account for this pattern. But there are more elaborate internal processes involved as well. From the viewpoint of an administrator, maintaining the credibility of his or her school and the validity of its ritual classifications is crucial to the school’s success. With the confidence of the state bureaucracy, the federal government, the community, the profession, the pupils and their families, and the teachers themselves, the legitimacy of the school as a social reality can be maintained. However, if these groups decide that a school’s ritual classifications are a “fraud,” everything comes apart.

There are several ways in which the decoupling of structures from activities and outcomes maintains the legitimacy of educational organizations. Consider some reasons why an American administrator would avoid closely inspecting the internal processes of the school.

First, the avoidance of close inspection, especially when accompanied by elaborate displays of confidence and trust, can increase the

commitments of internal participants. The agreement of teachers to participate actively in the organized social reality of the ritual classifications of education is crucial, and an administrator can trade off the matter of conformity to the details of instruction and achievement in order to obtain teachers' complicity and satisfaction. By agreeing that teachers have instructional competence and by visibly not inspecting instructional activities, an administrator shifts maximal social responsibility for upholding the rituals of instruction to the teachers. The myth of teacher professionalism and the autonomy associated with it, for example, function to increase the commitments of teachers.

A second reason for avoiding close inspection and evaluation arises from the fact that a good deal of the value of education has little to do with the efficiency of instructional activities. If education is viewed as a ceremonial enactment of the rituals of schooling, the quality of schooling can be seen to lie in its costs: spectacular buildings, expensive teachers in excessive number (a low student-teacher ratio), and elaborate and expensive topics (French for first-graders, or nuclear physics). To the state, the accrediting agencies, the community, and the participants themselves, costs of these kinds index the quality and meaning of a school. It therefore makes little sense to view a school as if it were producing instructional outcomes in an economic marketplace, since an economizing perspective would treat many of the critical features of a school as costly waste, as liabilities rather than assets. It is enormously damaging for a school to view the categories that validate it, as well as the cost of their upkeep and prestige, as liabilities. The ritual of schooling is evaluated according to a logic in which quality and costs are equivocal. Expenditures per student or the number of books in the library are among common indices of educational quality, even though maximizing these indices may require a studied inattention to an economizing logic. The wise administrator will call attention to the elaborate and expensive structure of ritual classifications his school has, not to the amount of learning achieved per dollar.

Third, decoupling protects the ritual classification scheme from uncertainties arising in the technical core. In education, it is quite common that rules of practice institutionalized at state and federal levels create technical uncertainty at the local level. State-mandated curricula may be too advanced for the students at hand. And innovative state and federal programs often need to be adapted to the specific circumstances unique to the local school. Measuring what pupils actually learn in these programs or what teachers are actually teaching introduces unnecessary uncertainty, increases coordinative costs and creates doubts about the effectiveness of the status structure of the school and the categorical rules that define appropriate education.

Fourth, decoupling allows schools to adapt to inconsistent and conflicting institutionalized rules. Schools, of necessity, are plural organizations adapted to plural environments (Udy, 1971). This is especially true of American schools, with their welter of external pressure. One way to manage the uncertainty, conflict, and inconsistency created by this pluralistic situation is to buffer units from each other. Udy, in fact, sees this as a major explanation for the differentiation of modern organizations into specialized components. When differentiation is accompanied by isolation and autonomy of subunits rather than by interdependence and coordination, jurisdictional disputes among categories of professionals or incompatibilities among inconsistent programs are avoided. For example, in schools, the work of a large number of specialists—vocational educators, speech therapists, reading specialists—is organized separately and buffered from the usual classroom work.

Our point is this: By decoupling formal structures from activities, uncertainty about the effectiveness of the ritual categories is reduced.

When the behavior of teachers and students is uninspected or located in isolated classrooms, the state, the community, and administrators are presented with little evidence of ineffectiveness, conflict, or inconsistency. And the teacher and student are free to work out the practicalities of their own unique relationship little disturbed by

the larger social interpretation of which activity is appropriate to a given category. Further, in a pluralistic setting the number of ritual classifications institutionalized in the environment is large, and there are frequent additions and subtractions. By decoupling ritual subunits from one another, the school is able to incorporate potentially inconsistent ritual elements and to recruit support from a larger and more diverse set of constituencies.

By minimizing the resources devoted to coordination and control, the school furthers its ability to increase the ceremonial worth of its ritual categories. This strategy also cuts down the costs involved in implementing new categories and maximizes their chance of success. New programs or specialists need not be integrated into the structure; they merely need to be segmentally added to the organization. Further, new categories need not even imply a substantial reorganization of activity, as the activities of particular ritual actors and programs remain uninspected. The decoupling of the internal structure of education is therefore a successful strategy for maintaining support in a pluralistic environment.

The Logic of Confidence

The classifications of education, however, are not rules to be cynically manipulated. They are the sacred rituals that give meaning to the whole enterprise, both internally and externally. These categories are understood everywhere to index education. They are not understood to be education, but they are also not understood simply to be alienating bureaucratic constraints. So the decoupling that is characteristic of school systems must be carried out by all participants in the utmost good faith.

Interaction in school systems, therefore, is characterized both by the assumption of good faith and the actualities of decoupling. This is the logic of confidence: Parties bring to each other the taken-for-granted, good-faith assumption that the other is, in fact, carrying out his or her defined activity. The community and the board have confidence in the superintendent, who has

confidence in the principal, who has confidence in the teachers. None of these people can say what the other does or produces . . . , but the plausibility of their activity requires that they have confidence in each other.

The logic of confidence is what Goffman (1967) calls “face work”—the process of maintaining the other’s face or identity and thus of maintaining the plausibility and legitimacy of the organization itself. Face work avoids embarrassing incidents and preserves the organization from the disruption of an implausible performance by any actor. Goffman (1967, pp. 12–18) discusses three dimensions of this face-saving procedure: avoidance, discretion, and overlooking. Decoupling promotes each of these dimensions. Avoidance is maximized when the various clusters of identities are buffered from each other, when the organization is segmentalized, and when interaction across units is minimized (as by the self-contained classroom). Discretion is maximized when inspection and control are minimized or when participants are cloaked with “professional” authority. Finally, participants often resort to overlooking embarrassing incidents or to labeling them as deviant, as characteristic of particular individuals, and therefore as nonthreatening to the integrity of the ritual classification scheme.

It must be stressed that face work and the logic of confidence are not merely personal orientations but are also institutional in character. For instance, a state creates a rule that something called “history” must be taught in high schools. This demand is not inspected or examined by organizational procedures but is controlled through confidence in teachers. Each teacher of history has been credentialed. There is an incredible sequence of confidences here, with faces being maintained up and down the line: The state has confidence in the district, the district in the school, and the school in the teacher. The teacher is deserving of confidence because an accrediting agency accredited the teacher’s college. The accrediting agency did not, of course, inspect the instruction at the college but relied on the certification of its teachers, having confidence in the

universities which the teachers attended. The accrediting agency also has confidence in the organization of the college—its administrators and departments. These people, in turn, had confidence in their teachers, which enabled them to label certain courses as history without inspecting them. The chain goes on and on. Nowhere (except in the concealed relation between teacher and pupil) is there any inspection. Each link is a matter of multiple exchanges of confidence.

The most visible aspect of the logic of confidence in the educational system is the myth of teacher professionalism. Even in higher education—where teachers typically have no professional training for teaching—the myth is maintained. It serves to legitimate the confidence the system places in its teachers and to provide an explanation of why this confidence is justified. This explains one of the most puzzling features of educational professionalism—why the professional status of teachers rises dramatically with the creation of an educational bureaucracy. It is conventional to assume that professionalism and bureaucracy are at odds, although the evidence rarely supports this view (Corwin, 1970). In fact, even though the ideology supporting the creation of large American educational bureaucracies argued for close control, evaluation, and inspection of teachers, it seems clear that these bureaucracies greatly lowered the amount of such control (Tyack, 1974). Prebureaucratic teachers were often under direct inspection and control of the community that hired them. The bureaucracy, justified on the grounds that it would assume responsibility for inspection and control of instruction, however, almost immediately began to inspect and control only the superficial and categorical aspects of teachers. To account for this lack of specific inspection and control of instruction, the myth of professionalism arose very early, despite the original intentions of the founders. Our argument—that professionalism serves the requirements of confidence and good faith—explains this growth: The myth of teacher professionalism helps to justify the confidence placed in teachers and to

legitimate the buffering of uncertainty in the performance of pupils and teachers in educational organizations.

OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

With the growth of corporate society, especially the growth of nation-states, education comes into exchange with society. Schooling—the bureaucratic standardization of ritual classifications—emerges and becomes the dominant form of educational organization. Schools become organized in relation to these ritual categories in order to gain support and legitimacy. In America, the local and pluralistic control of schools causes these classifications to have little impact on the actual instructional activities of local schools. Thus the official classifications of education, although enforced in public respects, are decoupled from actual activity and can contain a good deal of internal inconsistency without harm. As a result, American schools in practice contain multiple realities, each organized with respect to different internal or exogenous pressures. These multiple realities conflict so little because they are buffered from each other by the logic of confidence that runs through the system.

In this fashion, educational organizations have enjoyed enormous success and have managed to satisfy an extraordinary range of external and internal constituents. The standardized categories of American society and its stratification system are maintained, while the practical desires of local community constituents and the wishes of teachers, who are highly satisfied with their jobs, are also catered to. As new constituents rise up and make new demands, these pressures can be accommodated within certain parts of the system with minimal impact on other parts. A great deal of adaptation and change can occur without disrupting actual activity. And, conversely, the activities of teachers and pupils can change a good deal, even though the abstract categories have remained constant.

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24

MARITAL TRANSITIONS, PARENTING, AND SCHOOLING

Exploring the Link Between Family-Structure History and Adolescents' Academic Status

SHANNON E. CAVANAGH, KATHRYN S. SCHILLER, AND CATHERINE RIEGLE-CRUMB

Families provide our early socialization experiences and set the stage for our schooling experiences through their choices and decisions. Because of family influences on students, they are a major part of the school's environment. An often overlooked aspect of families is how the structure—single parent, divorce during childhood, step families—affects young people. The authors consider the effect of family structure and changes in that structure on adolescents' academic status. In particular they look at academic math status related to family structure.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are relationships between math status and family structure at different points in students' school careers?
2. Knowing what you do from this reading, how might family structure affect other aspects of schooling and academic status?
3. How does family influence joined with other environmental factors such as peer group, extracurricular activities, school financing, and technology influence student learning and achievement?

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The life-course paradigm views human development as an interplay between individuals' developmental trajectories and the trajectories of their significant others (Elder, 1998). One of the most intuitive examples of this linked-lives principle is the parent-child relationship. Parents, through the choices and decisions they make for themselves and their children, influence how their children grow and develop over time (Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999).

This view of the linked lives of parents and children offers unique insights into a hotly contested issue in contemporary American society: the implications of changes in family structure for adolescents' well-being, including adolescents' academic experiences. A large, multidisciplinary literature has examined the association between family structure and adolescents' academic outcomes, documenting that young people who live in "alternative" families (i.e., reside with a single parent or a stepparent) have more problems in school than do those who live in two-biological-parent families (Astone & McLanahan, 1991, 1994; Coleman, 1988; DeLeire & Kalil, 2002; Hill, Yeung, & Duncan, 2001; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Schiller, Khmelkov, & Wang, 2002; Wojtkiewicz, 1993). The image that emerges from these snapshots of the effects of family structure suggests something more dynamic about family life and its role in education. Specifically, one of the most significant trajectories of parents' lives, their marital histories, is closely connected to one of the most significant trajectories of their children's lives, their academic careers.

Working from a life-course perspective, the general goal of the study presented here was to examine whether this dynamic aspect of linked lives exists and, if so, to explore the reasons why it does. We addressed this goal through four objectives. First, we constructed measures of family-structure history that reflect the number of family transitions that children experienced from birth through early adolescence, as well as the family structure at birth. Second, we identified key transition points in adolescents'

educational careers that reflect adolescents' placement in math courses. Third, we investigated the dynamic association between family-structure history and adolescents' educational careers. Finally, we explored various mechanisms underlying this longitudinal association. Thus, we view the often-studied connection between family structure and adolescents' educational careers as one that unfolds over time.

The study drew on a new data source for educational research: the Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement Study (AHAA), which adds detailed educational data from high school transcripts to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Matching a life-course perspective with this valuable new data set allowed us to address an enduring challenge of the American educational system: how to identify students who are less prepared for the increasingly credential-based labor force in a time of continued family instability and change.

THE FAMILY AS A DYNAMIC INSTITUTION

The structure of families is a crucial dimension of the family context, one that continues to be a visible aspect of public debate as the demography of American families evolves. Rising rates of divorce and nonmarital fertility, along with declining rates of marriage and remarriage, have created diversity in the structure of American families (Casper & Bianchi, 2001). Such diversity has played a role in the political and cultural discourse on the government's role in strengthening marriage, welfare reform, and even gay marriage.

This diversity has also been implicated in the educational disparities among American youths. Although the magnitude and long-term implications of changes in family structure continue to be debated (e.g., Cherlin, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000), scholars have generally agreed that those in alternative families are more likely to drop out of high school, complete fewer years of formal schooling, score lower on standardized tests, and

report lower grades than others (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; DeLeire & Kalil, 2002; Hill et al., 2001; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver, & Call, 1998; Wojtkiewicz, 1993). These differences in academic achievement during high school often presage limited occupational opportunities and socioeconomic inequality during the transition to adulthood and beyond (Wilson, 1990).

This body of work has typically taken a static view of family structure, capturing it at a specific point in parents' marital trajectories (i.e., the family situation at a given age or at the time of a survey). Family structure, however, often represents a dynamic set of parental relationships, including spells of marriage, cohabitation, singleness, divorce, or some combination of these statuses (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006; Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998; Hill et al., 2001; Wu, 1996; Wu & Martinson, 1993). In other words, the level of stability in the home environment is also important to adolescents' academic careers. Consequently, family structure measured as a dynamic trajectory provides added value to our understanding of different family forms and their role in the well-being of children and adolescents.

Family instability can be operationalized in a number of ways—a count of changes in a resident parent's (or parents') marital status that a child experiences, a tally of the different family arrangements in which a child has resided, and the duration of time spent in different family-structure statuses. Each gets at the level of instability in the home. In our study, we focused on the first, a count of the changes in a resident parent's marital trajectory. This indicator reflects the *cumulative* effect of the loss or addition of a parental figure in the home, a change that is repeatable and that may disrupt a child's sense of security; create ambiguity in household rules, family relationships, and parental expectations about behavior; and have negative implications for children's performance in school (Hill et al., 2001; Teachman, 2003; Wu & Martinson, 1993).

We also considered family structure at birth, a strong correlate of family instability (Bumpass &

Lu, 2000). Young people who were born to single mothers, for instance, experience more subsequent family change than do those who were born to married couples. Moreover, family structure at birth serves as a proxy for the different socialization and economic contexts into which a child is born, as well as unmeasured selection factors (e.g., the mother's and father's personal characteristics) that contribute to the likelihood of being born into a particular family-structure status (Hao & Xie, 2002). To the extent that these factors are related to parental resources and support, they may also affect adolescents' academic status in high school (Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

Thus, the first objective of our study was to map out children's family-structure histories. By combining information from past and present statuses, we could better capture the lived experience of young people, a necessary first step in investigating the potential academic consequences of family structure.

EDUCATION AS A CAREER

Students' academic experiences in a given year are one part of a larger trajectory that makes up their educational careers (Kerckhoff, 1993; Pallas, 2003). This trajectory is the clearest in subjects like math, in which courses are arranged in a hierarchical sequence, ranging from less advanced (e.g., Remedial Mathematics) to more advanced courses (e.g., Calculus), and where access to more advanced courses is contingent on the successful completion of earlier ones (Adelman, 1999; Schneider, Swanson, & Riegle-Crumb, 1998; Stevenson, Schiller, & Schneider, 1994).

Yet even in this hierarchically structured subject, there is variation in individual progression. Students who begin high school in higher-level math can lose this advantage (Pallas, 2003; Schiller, 1999). In particular, by their junior year in high school, students often have completed much of their required courses and have the opportunity to take more elective courses and explore their interests. A consequence of this increased autonomy and agency is that some

students may find it easier to get offtrack and opt out of advanced courses in core subjects, such as math, as the course work becomes more challenging and nonacademic domains of success become more important (Csikzentmihalyi & Schneider, 2001; Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1997; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). A second objective of this study, therefore, was to identify students' academic status in math at the start and end points of high school as key markers of their academic careers.

The transition to high school is a key marker in students' educational careers (Roderick, 1993; Schiller, 1999). During the initial year of high school, the courses that students take, the grades that they receive, and their scores on standardized tests set the stage for later success in taking advanced courses, mastering difficult curricula, and scoring well on examinations (Stevenson et al., 1994). Just as those who begin by taking more advanced courses and earning higher grades have greater opportunities to excel academically across the high school years, those who begin high school earning low grades and taking lower-level courses have few opportunities to recover and excel over time (Alexander, Entwistle, & Horsey, 1997; Roderick, 1993). Thus, getting ontrack early is particularly important for a subject like math, in which students who begin high school taking a core course like Algebra I have less difficulty reaching key college preparatory courses, such as Algebra II, by the end of high school.

Students' achievement by the end of high school is another key point in their academic careers. At this point, students could have dropped out of high school, graduated without having completed college preparatory work, or graduated having completed college preparatory work. Math course taking, in particular, is one of the strongest predictors of college matriculation (Schneider et al., 1998; Stevenson, Kochanek, & Schneider, 1998). Specifically, Algebra II is generally considered a key preparation for college entrance examinations, such as the SAT (Schiller & Hunt, 2003; Wells & Oakes, 1996), and students who take this course are significantly

more likely than are those who do not to attend four-year colleges (Adelman, 1999; Schneider et al., 1998). Thus, students' academic status in math at the end of high school represents far more than students' interest and ability in a specific subject; rather, it captures a more general picture of students' cumulative academic careers in high school, with some students leaving high school prepared to continue their studies in a four-year college or university, others prepared only to attend a two-year college, and others failing to obtain even the most basic educational credential of a high school diploma.

FAMILY INSTABILITY AND EDUCATIONAL CAREERS

Up to this point, we have focused on how the life-course perspective provides a lens for understanding family structure and academic status as individual trajectories for both parents and adolescents. Now, we turn to another aspect of the life-course perspective—linked lives, or how the trajectories of parents and adolescents are related to each other. Exploring this linkage was the third objective of this study.

Starting with *family instability*, we expect that students who reside in less stable families will be less likely to complete Algebra I in the ninth grade than will all other students. Given the cumulative nature of schooling, we expect that this difference in academic status in math will become more pronounced by the end of high school as students who were born into less stable families are more likely to take advantage of the more loosely organized structure of high schools and to disengage from academic pursuits during these years at a greater rate (Crosnoe, 2002; Lee et al., 1997). Turning to *family structure at birth*, we expect that students who were born into single-parent families will be less likely to complete Algebra I in the ninth grade and to complete Algebra II by the end of high school than will those who were born into families with two biological parents.

Why may this linkage between parents' marital histories and adolescents' educational careers

exist? In our study, we posited two possible explanations for this association: parenting behaviors and adolescents' adjustment and aspirations. Testing these potential explanations for the link between family instability and adolescents' academic status at the end of high school was the fourth objective of this study.

Beginning with parenting behaviors, changes in family structure can disrupt relationships between parents and adolescents (Amato, 2000; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Because of constraints, lack of help, new obligations, and the possible strain introduced to the parent-child relationship by divorce or the start of a parent's new romantic relationships, single parents and those who are married to or are cohabiting with new partners may experience less closeness with their adolescents, and despite their best efforts, may be less involved in their adolescents' educational careers (Amato, 2000; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Hetherington, 1989; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Schneider & Coleman, 1993). If children do not feel close to their parents or if parents are not able to supervise their children's lives, parents' influence on adolescents' school achievement and course-taking decisions may be undermined (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Kelly, 2004; Useem, 1991). Therefore, differences in parenting practices may explain why adolescents in less stable families fail to advance in the math course sequence.

With regard to the characteristics of adolescents, sample evidence suggests that young people in alternative families have lower socio-emotional adjustment and academic aspirations (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994; Hetherington, 1989). Conflict, instability, and ambiguity in family relationships, rules, and responsibilities may trigger emotional distress, an effect that can be exacerbated with each change in the family (Amato, 2000; Wu & Martinson, 1993). Family disruptions may also cause adolescents to be less optimistic about their future, including their prospects of attending college (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Thus, the increased depression and lower aspirations that may co-occur in

families that are marked by multiple transitions may be academic risk factors, leading adolescents to drop out of math or out of school all together before they have accrued advantages from these experiences (Kelly, 2004; McLeod & Kaiser, 2004).

RESULTS

Family-Structure Histories in Adolescence

We begin by exploring family-structure history in depth. Using family structure in the first year of life as a starting point, we found that most children were born into married couple families (82 percent) and that the balance were born into single-parent families (16 percent). Furthermore, most children, experienced *no* change in family structure from birth through Wave II, but 38 percent of the sample did experience the exit or entrance of a parent or a parent's romantic partner at least once, with about 18 percent experiencing one family transition, 14 percent experiencing two transitions, 5 percent experiencing three transitions, and 2 percent experiencing four or more transitions from birth through early adolescence.

Across the period during which family structure was recorded, more than a third of the sample (39 percent) spent time living in an alternative family (i.e., not with two biological parents). The most common type of alternative family was a single-mother family (about 30 percent of the children spent some time in this type of family). About 18 percent spent some time living in a stepparent family, another 4 percent spent some time living with their single father only, and about 2 percent spent time living with a surrogate parent or no biological parent.

Associations between aspects of children's living arrangements across childhood and early adolescence [were studied]. Family instability was related to family structure at birth, with adolescents who were born into single-parent families experiencing about three times as many

transitions as those who were born into married-couple families. More than two-thirds of those who were born into single-parent families experienced some family instability, compared to less than a third of those who were born into married-couple families. Adolescents who were born into single-parent families spent some time residing with two parents—either both biological parents (22 percent) or a biological parent and his or her partner (48 percent). Among those who were born into married-couple families, the most common form of alternative family that they experienced was a mother-only family (18 percent), followed by a stepparent family (12 percent). Recall that these percentages are not mutually exclusive and hence do not sum to 100, but instead reflect experiences in different family-structure statuses across childhood and early adolescence.

Next, we examined mean differences in the adolescents' academic status at the start and end of high school across levels of family instability, net of family structure at birth. . . . In the ninth grade, young people in unstable families were significantly less likely to complete Algebra I. Family instability was also linked with academic status at the end of high school. Those who experienced more family instability had a lower likelihood of being Algebra II-plus graduates by the end of high school than being non-Algebra II graduates or high school dropouts.

Finally, we explored the associations between family instability and parent and adolescent factors. Beginning with parenting behaviors, parent-adolescent closeness and parental supervision were negatively associated with family instability, net of family structure at birth, but no association between parental involvement in school and family instability was detected. This finding suggests that greater family instability undermined young people's relationships with their parents and the ways in which the parents supervised their children. Next, we considered indicators of adolescents' adjustment and aspirations. Recall that the psychological distress scale was based on standardized items, meaning that values less than zero indicate lower-than-average

levels and those higher than zero indicate higher-than-average levels of depression. The bivariate association between family instability and adolescents' psychological distress was curvilinear, but when family structure at birth was taken into account, the association between these two factors was linear and positive. Thus, more instability was associated with higher levels of psychological distress. Adolescents' aspirations for college, however, were not related to family instability, net of family structure at birth.

Overall, these findings highlight the complexity of adolescents' living arrangements across childhood and early adolescence. Moreover, they suggest that family instability was associated with students' academic status at the start and end of high school. Family instability was also associated with the two sets of factors that were hypothesized to explain the focal relationships between family instability and the academic statuses of adolescents. The next set of analyses explored these associations in a multivariate framework.

Family Instability and Adolescents' Academic Status

The primary goal of this study was to explore the linked lives of parents and adolescents, focusing on how parents' marital histories affect the educational careers of their school-going adolescents. The first set of multivariate analyses pursued this goal by exploring the association between family-structure history of academic status at key points in time. . . . The results of the logistic regression, the technique used to model academic status in the ninth grade, are presented as the odds of completing Algebra I or a higher course. The results of the multinomial logistic regression, the technique used to model academic status at the end of high school, are presented as relative risk ratios.

In the baseline model for ninth-grade math status (Model 1), adolescents in less stable families were somewhat less likely to complete Algebra I in the ninth grade than were others, but this association was not significant at conventional levels. Family structure at birth, however, was associated

with this outcome, with adolescents born into single-parent families experiencing a 25 percent decrease in the odds of completing Algebra I in the ninth grade compared to those who were born into families with two biological parents (odds ratio = .75). As for the control variables, older adolescents and boys were less likely to complete Algebra I in the ninth grade, whereas adolescents whose parents had at least some college education were more likely to complete Algebra I, net of other factors. Students who attended private schools were also more likely to complete Algebra I in the ninth grade than were those in public schools.

The second set of models . . . examined whether instability predicted students' academic status by the end of high school. Overall, these results suggest that family instability is a meaningful factor in understanding this outcome. Beginning with Model 1, more family instability was related to a lower likelihood of being an Algebra II-plus graduate than being either a non-Algebra II graduate or a high school dropout. Specifically, a one-unit increase in family instability was associated with a 16 percent decrease in the odds of being an Algebra II-plus graduate compared to a non-Algebra II graduate, and a 23 percent decrease in the odds of being an Algebra-II plus graduate compared to a high school dropout. Family structure at birth also distinguished academic status at the end of high school. This effect, however, was the strongest in distinguishing those who dropped out of high school from those who were Algebra II-plus graduates. Among the control variables, age, gender, and parents' educational attainment continued to distinguish the academic careers of students at the end of high school in expected ways.

Model 2 controlled for academic status in the ninth grade to test the degree to which adolescents' end point in math was a function of where they started or, instead, was an enduring effect of family-structure history. As expected, completing Algebra I in the ninth grade strongly distinguished students' academic status by the end of high school. Moreover, this factor attenuated the effect of family structure at birth on the likelihood of

being an Algebra II-plus graduate by the end of high school compared to being a dropout. The level of family instability continued to distinguish the math attainment of these young people. That family instability, net of family structure at birth and academic status in the ninth grade, continued to matter to students' academic status at the end of high school suggests that the educational consequences associated with unstable families are manifest and cumulate across high school.

Family Instability and Educational Careers

The results just described provide evidence of a link between instability in parents' marital histories and adolescents' educational status at the end of high school. Our final objective was to explore the mechanisms behind this link. The next set of models . . . addressed this objective by adding measures of parenting behaviors and adolescents' adjustment and aspirations, first separately and then together, to the final model.

Model 1 tested the mediating role of parenting behaviors. Beginning with parent-adolescent closeness, adolescents who reported closer relationships with their parents at Wave I had a greater likelihood of being Algebra-II plus graduates by the end of high school than did all the others. Parental supervision did not distinguish students' academic status at end of high school. Students who reported higher levels of parental involvement in school, however, had a greater likelihood of being non-Algebra II graduates than being either Algebra II-plus graduates or high school dropouts. This finding suggests that parents' involvement in schooling in early adolescence plays an important role in keeping children engaged in school and ontrack to graduate but has little added benefit in determining whether children complete the prerequisites necessary to attend college. In fact, a high level of involvement early on is associated with a lower likelihood of completing higher math than of just graduating high school, net of a host of individual and family control variables (predicted probabilities available on request). Parental

involvement in school and its contribution to students' performance, then, is conditional on how students are doing in school (Crosnoe, 2001). These parenting behaviors, however, did little to mediate the association between family instability and adolescents' educational careers.

Indicators of adolescents' adjustment and aspirations were exploded in Model 2. Adolescents who reported higher levels of psychological distress and lower college aspirations displayed lower likelihoods of being Algebra II-plus graduates by the end of high school compared to being non-Algebra II graduates or high school dropouts. Lower college aspirations also distinguished those who dropped out of high school from those who were non-Algebra II graduates. Although these measures were related to academic status at the end of high school, they did not attenuate the observed association between family instability and academic status.

Model 3 examined the joint role of these mediators in the focal relationship. Aside from the attenuation of the effect of parent-adolescent closeness, all potential mechanisms remained largely unchanged when they were estimated simultaneously. Individually or in a group, these factors are important correlates of students' academic status in math and continued to distinguish those who completed higher-level math from other students, but they did not explain the link between family instability and academic status at the end of high school.

CONCLUSION

Family structure has long been of interest to social and behavioral scientists, and this interest has only increased in recent years. This study sought to contribute to this evolving literature by integrating a life-course perspective with a new, important data source that combines educational data from high school transcripts with the detailed data on family history, family process, and adolescents' well-being from a national study of school-going adolescents. We used these data to capture, more dynamically, how

families change over time and how young people navigate the educational system from year to year. We were interested in how these trajectories, the parents' and the adolescents', were connected over time. Four key themes, which map onto the four objectives that guided this study, emerged from this research.

The first theme relates to the measurement of family-structure history. Capturing the dynamic nature of children's living arrangements offers a valuable lens through which to view the role of the family in adolescents' education. The Add Health study allows for the construction of retrospective family-structure histories across adolescents' early life course. Although these histories likely underreport changes in family structure—adolescents may not know their family context during their earliest years or know enough about their mother's or father's partner to decide whether they were cohabiting or not (Raley & Wildsmith, 2004), along with other data limitations discussed earlier—these measures highlight how change and instability define the family experience of a growing proportion of American youths (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Teachman, 2003). About a third of the sample experienced a family transition by the ninth grade, with those who experienced at least one change reporting an average of nearly two family-structure transitions. Consequently, many adolescents spent time residing in and adjusting to different households with different family compositions and different rules and expectations about behaviors, including those that are linked with course-taking patterns and academic achievement.

Future research will advance our understanding of the association between family structure and adolescents' educational careers by investigating other aspects of family-structure history or by using more precise measures of it. For instance, using Add Health or other retrospectively reported data on family structure, one could examine whether the timing of the disruption—in early, middle, or late childhood, the duration in a particular family structure, or the amount of time adolescents have lived apart from a biological

parent adds to our understanding of the linked lives of parents and their children. Another direction is to use longitudinal, prospective reports of family structure, collected in a similar way from both parents and children. Such an approach captures family change as it is happening and reduces problems that are associated with recall. These approaches will also improve our operationalizations of family-structure history and better illuminate the ways in which family structure and stability, together and in isolation, affect adolescents' academic outcomes.

The second theme is related to students' academic careers across the high school years. Focusing on students' location in the math course sequence at the beginning of high school offers an indication of their future academic prospects in high school. Our multivariate analyses revealed that students who take at least Algebra I as freshmen are much more likely than are others to graduate from high school having completed at least Algebra II, a key course for college matriculation. This finding highlights the importance of viewing adolescents' academic success not as a static measure, but as a trajectory that cumulates over time.

The beginning of high school is a key transition point, but students' academic careers begin long before then. Although Add Health includes middle students, limited academic information is available on them until they begin high school. To capture more fully the complexity and diversity of students' academic careers, future studies should follow students across their academic careers, from primary through postsecondary school.

The third theme focuses on the interplay between changes in family structure and academic status during high school. We hypothesized that family instability was linked with academic status at both the start and end of high school and that the association would grow stronger over time as students in less stable homes had more *freedom* to get off track in the more loosely organized structure of American high schools. Our findings supported the general spirit of this hypothesis—family instability was associated with adolescents' academic status at the end of

high school, and this link was stronger than the one observed at the start of high school. In fact, there was only a modest link between family instability and adolescents' academic status in the ninth grade. That family instability so clearly distinguished adolescents who were prepared to go to college from all others but, at the same time, had little effect on academic status in the early part of high school suggests that context, in this case the more loosely organized curricular structure of high schools, matters for how and when the effects of family instability are expressed. Thus, academic interventions that target young people in less stable families throughout high school should be instituted, keeping these students in school and engaged in more advanced curricula at a time when students' choice becomes more pronounced.

Family structure at birth, the other aspect of family-structure history that we considered, was related to adolescents' academic status at the start of high school. This finding suggests that socialization practices and economic factors that are experienced in early childhood, combined with unmeasured factors that both select young people into alternative families and are correlated with these family structures (e.g., neighborhood and school characteristics), are more salient to initial math status in high school. Given that academic status in the ninth grade was the strongest predictor of academic status at the end of high school, this finding illustrates how family-structure history has a longer-term cascading impact on academic careers.

Together, these findings highlight how family instability contributes to stratification in the United States. Our outcome at the end of high school captures not only students' academic status, but how young people are positioned for the transition to adulthood and beyond. Family instability across childhood and adolescence increases the likelihood that young people will either drop out of high school or graduate without completing course requirements that are generally needed to attend a four-year college. In our credential-based economy, graduating from a four-year college, not to mention high school, is a necessary,

though not sufficient, ticket to better jobs, financial security, and better health and relationships. Again, identifying students in less stable families and ensuring that they remain engaged in school can help ensure that all students have a better chance of attaining these goals.

The fourth theme to emerge from this study is related to factors that link parents' marital trajectories to students' educational careers by the end of high school. Two mechanisms were considered here—adolescents' adjustment and aspirations and parenting behaviors. Each played a role in the academic status of young people, but neither offered leverage in explaining how family instability was related to students' academic status at the end of high school. These mechanisms, unlike our indicators of family instability, were measured at one point in time. It is possible that more dynamic measures of adolescents' stress and strain and their relationship with their parents may better mediate this relationship. Similarly, factors like income loss or instability, residential mobility, school transitions, or disrupted friendships, all changes set in motion by family change that were not investigated in this study, may better explain this link. Future research should continue to focus on this issue in an effort to gain a better understanding of why family instability negatively affects children's and adolescents' well-being.

This study attempted to look at an old problem—the effects of family structure on academic outcomes—in a fresh way by drawing on the dynamic, contextualized spirit of the life-course perspective. As the structure of American families continues to evolve, the way we study families must also change to offer the best lens through which to understand the role of the family in children's educational careers.

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ADOLESCENTS' EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION IN CONTEXT

The Mediating Effects of Schools, Communities, and Identity

ANDREW GUEST AND BARBARA SCHNEIDER

What students do with their time *out* of school affects what happens *in* school, especially school achievement. In addition to being related to higher levels of achievement, extracurricular activities help to shape students' identity and place in peer hierarchies. However, this relationship is very complex and varies by social class of the school and community. While non-sports activities are more likely to be related to higher academic achievement regardless of social class of the school or community, extracurricular sports activities predict academic achievement for participants in poor communities.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why are extracurricular activities an important aspect of the school environment?
2. Why does the relationship between sports and achievement differ by school and social contexts?
3. Why are non-sports extracurricular activities often associated with higher academic achievement?
4. What are some other influences on student achievement about which you have read?

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Adolescents' participation in extracurricular activities is often associated with positive behavioral outcomes, implying that such activities directly shape adolescents' development. For example, researchers have found positive associations between extracurricular participation and academic achievement (see, e.g., Broh, 2002; Lamborn, Brown, Mounts, & Steinberg, 1992; Winne & Walsh, 1980), social adjustment (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), and high school completion (Mahoney, 2000; McNeal, 1995). In addition, longitudinal studies have documented how these positive effects of participation influence adult outcomes, such as occupational status, income, educational attainment (see, e.g., Otto & Alwin, 1977), and later psychosocial development (see, e.g., Borman, Mayfield-Brown, Haag, & Puccia, 1999).

The assumption underlying these studies is that participation in extracurricular activities has uniform positive effects regardless of the meaning it holds for individual participants within distinct social contexts. This assumption has been called into question, however, by research on relationships among values, identity, and extracurricular participation. In his comprehensive study of adolescent society, Coleman (1961) examined the different values placed on academics and athletics in 10 different high school contexts. Linking the values that shape an athlete's identity to the values given to athletics in particular schools, Coleman showed the importance of considering community context when evaluating the meaning of participation. Beyond community context, Eccles and Barber (1999) found that adolescents' identity is often associated with the specific types of extracurricular participation—such as sports, band, student council, and volunteer service—that adolescents are engaged in. They suggested that these different activity contexts are associated with different values. In the Eccles and Barber model, the developmental implications of participation in sports are mediated by whether an individual assumes an identity as a sports participant.

Bringing together the findings of Coleman (1961) and Eccles and Barber (1999), we suspect that the effects of participation in particular types of extracurricular activities vary among distinct social contexts. We also suggest that activity-based identities, which are given meaning by school and community value systems, mediate the relationships between extracurricular participation and its effects. Therefore, in the study presented here, we examined how relationships among extracurricular participation, achievement, ambition, and identity differ within and among 13 high schools. Differences in school contexts may help explain why young people are differentially affected by participation in extracurricular activities.

Our consideration of social context as an essential component of research on development (Bruner, 1990; Elder, 1998; Shweder et al., 1998) focuses on how the meaning and effects of participation in sports in contemporary American schools vary among communities. For example, in lower-class communities, sports are often understood as equal opportunity venues for achievement and upward mobility. In contrast, in upper-class communities, sports are not generally understood as viable long-term achievement venues but may be valued for other reasons. Because of the prominence of sports activities in schools, in adolescent society, and in research on adolescence, we used data from the Alfred P. Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development to compare participation in sports and athletic identity with participation in other types of extracurricular activities.

EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION AND IDENTITY

The process of identity formation has long been considered a central issue for adolescents. Although research on identity has typically been associated with "stage" theorists, such as Erikson (1968), Steele (1997) demonstrated the shifting and powerful influence of identity on

individual behavior in schools. He suggested that "to sustain school success one must be identified with school achievement in the sense of its being a part of one's self-definition, a personal identity to which one is self-evaluatively accountable. This accountability—that good self-feelings depend in some part on good achievement—translates into sustained achievement motivation" (Steele, 1997, p. 613). Steele and his colleagues (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995) demonstrated this process by showing how some salient racial or gender identities, such as being African American or being female, have strong negative influences on students' performance on standardized tests. This paradigm has also been used to demonstrate that athletic performance is related to racial stereotypes (Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999), suggesting that sports are associated with meaningful role identities.

The association between participation in sports and meaningful role identities is further supported by ethnographic studies. Eckert's (1989) ethnography of life in a suburban high school, for example, showed how adolescent identity is influenced by peer groups and participation in specific activities. Eckert suggested that a dichotomy between "jocks" and "burnouts" is created in certain high schools. Jocks, instead of being exclusively athletes, are defined as achievers who are likely to excel in the conventional high school social order. In contrast, burnouts are students who reject the conventional structure of high school achievement and associate with peers who are identified as nonachievers. Eckert showed how participation in activities, such as sports, places students in the achievement category, whereas activities like smoking in the parking lot place students in the nonachievement category.

Eckert suggested that these identities emerge in high school because social categories become elaborated and segmented during this developmental period. Fine (1987), however, found that participating in activities contributes to identity development throughout childhood. In his ethnographic study of Little League baseball, Fine

argued that sports provide a crucial site for the development of social norms and understandings in preadolescent culture. Furthermore, baseball facilitates this development by providing a rich context for the transmission of cultural values and for the interpersonal interactions that shape identity development. Thus, for Fine, sports are influential social spaces that are given meaning by particular cultural values and interactions.

If participation in an activity creates a social space defined by cultural values and interpersonal interactions, then activity-based identities can be either positive or negative. Snyder and Spreitzer's (1992) research on involvement in activities, self-esteem, and locus of control supported this suggestion. In a survey of high school students with different types of activity-based role identities, Snyder and Spreitzer found that specific identities are associated with different psychological outcomes. Individuals whom they identified as either "student-athletes" or "pure scholars" were found to have higher self-esteem and higher feelings of control than did "pure athletes" and "nonscholars-nonathletes."

Eccles and Barber (1999) pursued a similar line of research by identifying how involvement in certain types of team sports and prosocial activities is related to achievement and behavior. Asking students to choose among five identity types described in the popular media (i.e., the princess, the jock, the brain, the basket case, and the criminal), Eccles and Barber linked each identity type with different patterns of adolescent development. Identifying as a jock in the 10th grade was associated with such longitudinal outcomes as positive academic performance, continued participation in extracurricular activities like sports, and a lesser chance of engaging in risk behaviors, such as alcohol consumption. Eccles and Barber argued that activity-based identity is an important facet of extracurricular participation that has received limited attention in the literature.

If, as was suggested in the previous section, participation in different types of extracurricular activities is associated with different values in distinct social contexts and if identities that are

shaped by these values modify the effects of extracurricular participation, then it follows that both social context and identity may mediate the relationship between participation and developmental outcomes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

First, is there reason to believe that associations among participation in different types of extracurricular activities, achievement (as measured by grade point average, GPA), and ambition (as measured by educational expectations) vary in predictable ways at the school level? We are particularly interested in whether these associations vary among schools in relation to the immediate school environment (which we represent on the basis of the college expectations at a high school) and in relation to the broader community environment (which we represent on the basis of the social class of a school's community).

Second, if these associations do vary in predictable ways at the school level, what is the effect of extracurricular participation on individual students' ambition and achievement when differences among school communities are considered? Addressing this question requires multi-level models that take into account both individual- and school-level variables (we used hierarchical linear modeling, HLM, techniques).

Third, does identity, when considered in addition to traditional demographic variables, differentially influence the associations among extracurricular participation, achievement, and ambition in distinct school communities? In this study, we specifically investigated the varying role of an athletic identity.

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

The data for this research came from the Alfred P. Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development, a five-year longitudinal study of middle school

and high school students undertaken at the University of Chicago. This large-scale project, involving a combination of survey, interview, and experience sampling data, is described in detail in *Becoming Adult* (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). Data were collected for students in Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 in four waves (1992–93, 1993–94, 1994–95, and 1996–97).

DISCUSSION

This study suggests that the importance of participation in extracurricular activities as a site for adolescent development is subject to context. At the school level, our results indicate that participants in sports are more likely to be seen as good students at schools with low academic expectations and at schools in poor communities. In contrast, participants in non-sports extracurricular activities are more likely to be seen as good students at schools with higher academic expectations and at schools in wealthy communities.

With regard to individuals nested in schools, our results suggest that associations among participation in non-sports extracurricular activities, achievement, and ambition are consistently positive. Thus, a higher level of participation in activities like student government, drama, and journalism is associated with achieving higher grades and aspiring to higher levels of education. The story about sports participation is more complicated. The simple fact of participating in sports has a generally positive association with achieving higher grades and aspiring to higher educational levels. Achieving higher grades, however, is not consistently predicted across schools by individuals' participation in sports unless students' levels of athletic identity are considered. Athletic identity, in contrast, varies significantly across schools in how it relates to both achievement and ambition. The meaning of an athletic identity seems more subject to context than does the actual act of participation.

Only in lower- and middle-class schools where less than half the students go on to four-year colleges is identifying as athletic associated

with achieving higher grades and with aspiring to higher educational levels. In fact, having an athletic identity is most strongly associated with positive outcomes in middle-class schools. We suggest that such schools may provide an environment in which sports are both part of a good student's portfolio and are seen as a viable route to social mobility. In contrast, in upper-class schools and in schools where almost everyone goes on to four-year colleges, our findings suggest that an athletic identity may actually be detrimental to the portfolio of a good student. In these schools, being seen as athletic may be associated with a lack of seriousness.

Since our findings are associations and do not prove causality, the alternative explanation for our results is that certain types of adolescents in each community are differentially selected into particular types of activities. Although we acknowledge that activities do attract certain types of participants, our data give us several reasons to think that this is not a complete explanation for our findings. First, in our HLM analyses, we included demographic, family, and behavioral variables specifically to account for selection effects. While those variables almost always had significant associations with ambition and achievement, they did not eliminate the associations with participation discussed throughout this article. Second, we based several of our analyses on whether students assume an athletic identity, assuming that the types of personal characteristics that may cause one to identify as an athlete (e.g., values, peer relations, social status) are not absolutely identical with the characteristics that allow one to participate (e.g., grades, motivation, engagement in school, discipline). Because of rules about eligibility that are likely to be similar across schools, selection may influence actual levels of participation, but we consider it unlikely that selection would similarly influence athletic identity.

We expect, however, that some selection is occurring, and we recognize that participation in extracurricular activities is not equally open to all students. Nevertheless, our finding of variation among schools ultimately means that selection

effects may also be particular to different social contexts. Specifically, explaining our findings on the basis of selection effects would require the assumption that in lower-class communities, high achievers are predisposed to participate in sports and to have an athletic identity, while in upper-class communities, low achievers are predisposed to participate in sports and to have an athletic identity. This assumption further suggests that the outcomes associated with participation and the reasons for participating are reciprocally influenced and partially dependent on context. That is, social context still shapes the effect of participation as it relates to identity, achievement, and ambition in ways that reflect school and community values. Thus, even after we acknowledge selection effects, our findings question the tendency for researchers to treat participation in extracurricular activities as if it had uniform meaning for participants across contexts (see, for example, Broh, 2002; Gore, Farrell, & Gordon, 2001; Mahoney, 2000).

Understanding the relationship between context and participation in extracurricular activities, of course, is more complicated than just statistically analyzing a sample in ways that account for school and community type. We delineate context as including what, where, and when extracurricular participation takes place. In this study, the "what" consists of two broad categories of extracurricular participation, the "where" includes both the immediate school environment (the college expectations at a high school) and the broader community environment (the socioeconomic class of a school's community), and the "when" is represented through our theoretical suggestion of historical changes in the role of high school as a step to further training for adulthood.

Ultimately, however, we consider our study only one way of investigating extracurricular participation in context. We therefore hope that our effort to establish quantitatively the existence of potentially meaningful differences in a comparative sample serves as a complement to focused research that collects more nuanced measures of context. In turn, we expect that qualitative

interpretations of local contexts can complement our results. At this point, however, our findings allow us some limited speculation about how context matters.

When high school was the final step in preparing most young people to enter the world of work, participation in sports was understood to impart status and popularity that translated directly to career achievement. In today's climate of increasing demands for educational credentials, high school is often only the first step in preparing young adults to enter the world of work. In communities where this phenomenon is pronounced, sports are more likely to be understood as an aesthetic activity than as an instrumental route to a better future. Thus, we see a general trend in upper-class communities to emphasize participation in activities that can balance a heavily academic portfolio.

The identity process helps to explain how this general trend influences an individual in the social world. Building on Steele's (1997) demonstration of important relationships between role identity and academic performance, we suggest that being seen as athletic creates a salient role identity in relation to academic achievement and, to a lesser extent, in relation to ambition. This suggestion adds context to the valuable work of researchers, such as Eccles and Barber (1999) and Snyder and Spreitzer (1992), who have shown that assuming an activity-based identity often means taking on the values associated with that activity.

Furthermore, adding to Eckert's (1989) finding that social categories, such as jock and burnout, create identity hierarchies in high school life, we suggest that social categories are defined by the values of a particular context. Our study thus implies that anyone who is interested in the value of extracurricular activities should consider what it means to be an athlete or a nonathlete in particular communities and schools at distinct points in time. The meaning of identifying as a jock or of building a successful portfolio for the future will vary across contexts.

As we noted earlier, such identification may be temporal. This suggestion is based on results

showing that the effects of participation and of identifying as an athlete are more strongly associated with achievement than with ambition. Activity-based identity may influence high school performance in the classroom, but it does not easily shift a person's core sense of his or her place in the world. One's longer-term ambitions are more likely to be shaped by enduring forces like family background and community norms.

Nevertheless, we suggest that development through participation in extracurricular activities is an intangible process of assuming an identity that takes on particular values in relation to the social context. Thus, what it means to be a student athlete or a student journalist or a student council president is not entirely defined by the skills required to execute that role. For example, the structural role of being a basketball player does not vary from school to school; the object is always to put the ball in the basket. But the subjective identity of being a basketball player varies greatly. The structural role is given meaning by the activity, while the subjective identity is given meaning by the context. Role and identity are too often conflated.

This study ultimately raises questions about the assumption that extracurricular participation is structured in particular ways that determine effects on participants. This assumption is exemplified by the cliché that sports build character. Such an assumption is easy to make because participation in extracurricular activities does require individuals to acquire tangible skills. Though these skills are sometimes understood as negative distractions, in policy lexicon they can equally translate into positive intangible "values" like discipline, teamwork, and dedication. In contrast, our findings suggest that the value of extracurricular participation is dependent on the social context.

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26

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

The Federal Government Gets Serious About Accountability

KATHRYN M. BORMAN AND BRIDGET A. COTNER

In this reading, Kathryn Borman and Bridget Cotner present an overview of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. They provide a brief historical overview of educational reforms that preceded the proposal of NCLB. Since states are critical in implementing NCLB, they examine what states are doing in response to the legislation and problems that schools and states are experiencing as a result. They also present criticisms of NCLB and what sociologists are proposing as revisions to this legislation.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why was NCLB proposed and passed?
2. In what ways does NCLB build on prior educational reforms and legislation?
3. What are some of the main concerns states and schools have regarding NCLB?

On December 13, 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was proposed before the first session of the 107th Congress. This Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. As an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, three main areas were affected by NCLB: 1) changing the federal focus to all schools and students, not just disadvantaged students; 2) measuring academic performance versus providing additional resources to schools; and 3) enhancing the role of the federal government through federal spending and mandates at the state level (McGuinn, 2006). The changing focus and level of involvement of the federal government in education affected the national educational system in profound ways. In the next sections, we present an overview of NCLB after five years of implementation (2002–2007). We begin with a brief history of policies and critiques of educational reform policies and consider the current policy now in place under the rubric of NCLB.

BRIEF HISTORY LEADING UP TO NCLB

The federal government in the United States has been deeply interested in influencing local policy at the school and school district level for some time. However, the extent to which No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reaches into the schoolhouse and classrooms is remarkable in many respects. Before our discussion of the extent of the NCLB legislation and its consequences, it is important to consider the path education policy has taken in recent years as the federal government dramatically ratcheted up its involvement in accountability systems at the state and local levels. Some sociologists argue that as a nation we are headed toward a national system of education with a subsequent loss of local control over curriculum, teacher certification, and other critical policy dimensions. Others believe that increased federal control will lead to more equal outcomes for all students.

In considering the history of federal policy, most sociologists, especially those interested in educational policy, identify the publication of the federal mandate *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) as the first intrusion by the federal government into what was until that time jealously guarded local control of both schools and the schooling process. Prior to the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, academics such as Harvard University Professor of Chemistry (and later Harvard president 1933–1953) James Conant and others tried to rally school leaders and universities to take up the charge of reforming the national educational system. Conant, for example, was appalled by what he saw as deplorable conditions in teacher education. He saw teacher preparation programs as devoid of intellectual content and in need of radical change. Conant launched a debate on teacher preparation programs that has still not been resolved, with Colleges of Education still arguing with critics over whether teacher education should include strong training in the disciplines teachers are preparing to teach.

Although the critiques of academicians such as Conant had limited impact on the educational

system, the federal government through legislation is able to regulate and modify state and local educational policy in dramatic ways. A brief history of ESEA (1965) demonstrates the power of Congressional authority and also tells the story of legislation that served as a precursor to NCLB and was drafted to amend the ESEA.

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declaring separate educational facilities for children of different racial/ethnic backgrounds illegal had not accomplished the desegregation of educational facilities that the Supreme Court intended. Schools and school districts had been advised to proceed with “all deliberate speed” to desegregate the schools, but little desegregation occurred and poor and minority students were falling further behind in schools. President Johnson, himself a former teacher, was concerned about the role of education in preparing all children for successful careers and for citizenship roles. ESEA was drafted by the President and Congress in 1965 to perform a “redistributive” function and put in place a “floor under spending in the nation’s poorest communities” as well as to lend federal clout to the improvement of educational delivery systems and services (McGuinn, 2006, p. 31).

The centerpiece of ESEA was Title I, designed to assist those communities, schools and children most “educationally deprived.” These were likely to be communities located in rapidly deteriorating central cities across the country, although rural schools and communities were also likely to be similarly resource-poor. Title I of ESEA provided large sums of money for the purpose of improving and expanding educational programs—more than 1.06 billion dollars, an extraordinarily large sum at that time. Nonetheless, ultimately because of Congressional members’ interest in providing resources to their home constituents, a redistribution of funds resulted in the dilution of support overall to the neediest districts. The debates during this time involved sociologists and policy makers alike. Chief among these was New York State Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was also a sociologist and an advocate for policies that shored up what he saw

as the weak and poorly equipped African American family. Thus began a debate that still continues on the origins and causes of inequalities in financial and social capital among the most distressed urban and rural poor.

As noted earlier, the release of *A Nation at Risk* during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, by Secretary of Education Terrell Bell, dramatically changed the federal government's role in educational policy. The report caused a major sensation because of its eloquent appeal to business interests concerned with losing the trade wars to rising giants including Japan and Germany whose governments were far more invested in education than was the case in the U.S.

During the administration of George H. W. Bush in the early 1990s, federal policy emphasized the relationship between the local business community and local public schools. With leadership from the White House, Congress enacted the New American Schools reforms. In the 1990s additional federal versions of the standards-based movement emerged that influenced education policy. *America 2000* was issued in 1990 calling for "world class" education and "break the mold" schools ultimately under the control of the New American School Corporation. This reform movement was unique in several respects. First, the mandate called for a competition during which local businesses partnered with schools of education and a variety of groups including think tanks such as the Hudson Institute which spawned the Modern Red SchoolHouse design. In the end, a number of Comprehensive School Reform Models were funded and flourished for a number of years, but financial support for such programs virtually ended with the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Then-Governor Clinton of Arkansas was a strong supporter of these reforms. As President, Clinton continued to support standards-based reforms under the rubric of *Goals 2000*, in a reauthorization of ESEA.

Following on the heels of the Goals 2000 Act, which provided funds for the voluntary creation of state content and performance standards, Improving America's Schools Act (IASA),

passed in 1994, *required* such standards and aligned assessments for students served by the act. Thus for the first time, accountability in the form of measurable student achievement in core subjects was mandated. There is little question that under this reauthorization of ESEA the federal government sought to encourage standards-based reform, an approach that was largely successful.

ESEA has been reauthorized by Congress six times since 1965. Under the first four reauthorizations, ESEA primarily provided supplementary services to poor and low achieving children using funding under Title I/Chapter 1 of the law. Standards-based reforms through curricular change and teacher certification requirements were thus in place before the arrival of NCLB and had become an acceptable aspect of state education policy. NCLB incorporated many of the standards-based principles in the 1994 reauthorization, but propelled the law's reach further into the classroom by instituting a specified timeline for improvement and by ratcheting up accountability criteria and consequences. Under NCLB, not only do schools need to demonstrate progress in student achievement, but states, districts, and schools are required to ensure that *all* students in their charge are proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of the 2013–14 school year.

According to sociologist of education Gary Dworkin (in press), the standards-based school reform movement rests on an array of assumptions about public schools and human motivation:

The core premises of the movement have been that the public schools are broken and that only through *external* intervention can they be fixed. Further, the imposition of free market forces and competition, which advocates of the reforms suggest have worked for so well for American industry, will turn the schools into more efficient and effective systems for the delivery of educational services.

It is not surprising that No Child Left Behind was ushered onto the scene by the administration of George W. Bush in 2001, who was intent upon reestablishing the power of the executive branch in all areas of policy.

WHAT NCLB CALLS FOR

The NCLB Act continues the policies of the ESEA in Title I through Title X. The purpose of the Act is “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (Author, 2001). Each Title of the Act focuses on a different educational aspect, such as accountability, teacher preparation, and limited language students.

Title I continues the emphasis on improving the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. To fulfill its purpose, Title I emphasizes accountability systems and high-quality assessments. States must define Adequate Yearly Progress and a timeline for change.

Title II, provides grants to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships in order to:

- (1) increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools; and
- (2) hold local educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement.

Title III focuses on students who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth. The Title supports attainment of English proficiency and of high levels of academic achievement.

Title IV supports programs at the State, local educational agency and school levels that prevent violence in and around schools and prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs through the involvement of parents and communities.

Title V provides funding for local educational agencies and State education agencies to implement and/or support reform programs in order to meet the educational needs of all students.

Title VI provides funds to the states to pay the costs of developing State accountability assessments and standards and to administer those assessments.

Title VII supports local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions and other entities to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaskan and Hawaiian Native students.

Title VIII provides funds to local educational agencies in times of emergency and when modernization of a facility is needed due to overcrowding or other factors.

Title IX provides guidelines on how states and local educational agencies may receive NCLB funds. Other provisions are described for school prayer, equal access to public school facilities (also known as the Boy Scouts of America Act, where as a patriotic society, they and other groups of that kind are allowed to use public schools as a venue), etc.

Title X repeals or amends laws have been affected by NCLB.

Together, these ten Titles of NCLB create a new direction in education where states and local educational agencies are held accountable for the education of America's students, for high quality teachers and instructional practices, and producing high levels of achievement for all students. For those that succeed in meeting the requirements in the time frame outlined in these titles, incentives are issued; however, for those who do not meet the requirements, sanctions are also issued. Indeed, the NCLB Act of 2001 places greater control with the federal government as the “watch dog” of reform.

HOW STATES ARE COPING

Despite the severity of federal AYP requirements, states have taken it upon themselves to cope with AYP by “modifying” and developing their own approaches to AYP accountability, teacher certification and qualification requirements, as well as a host of other dimensions of NCLB reforms. In fact, many states have become quite innovative.

For example, a major strategy for resisting this federal mandate is demonstrated by the

tactic referred to as the “minimum n,” the number of students tested under the accountability program in each state. According to LeFloch (in press), “The range of subgroup sizes among states varies from 5 students in Maryland, to 50 students in Virginia and West Virginia.” States create plans aggregating data across subjects or years to achieve the “minimum n,” and thus avoid too close scrutiny.

Accountability at the state level extends to the manner in which states set their measurable objectives on a yearly basis. This requirement has resulted in the establishment of annual measurable objectives (AMOs) that according to LeFloch (in press) “chart progress from the ‘starting point’ in 2001–02 to the NCLB target of 100% proficiency by 2013–14.” States have varied in their responses with one group of 12 states following a linear path from a starting point to 100% proficiency. Another group of 13 states has organized their trajectory into a configuration more like a set of plateaus to be attained after a period of two or three years after which a leap in proficiency is projected. Again, according to LeFloch:

It is not surprising that states and local school districts are finding ways to circumvent the punishing and frequently contradictory policies of the NCLB legislation. However, no state or locale is likely to stretch requirements for compliance too far since they are highly dependent on federal dollars. These dollars have become an increasingly large portion of state and local district budgets over the years, although by comparison with other revenue sources, these dollars still remain the smallest percentage (approximately 6% of expenditures) of these jurisdictions’ revenue stream.

WHAT SOCIOLOGISTS ARE PROPOSING FOR REVISIONS OR CHANGES

With five years of NCLB implementation completed, 2007 is the year for the reauthorization of the law. At this writing, there is little question that it will be reauthorized. Current U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, has been rallying support for the reauthorization of NCLB citing the

impact it has had on education. Secretary Spellings (U.S. Department of Education, January 2007, p. 1) remarked, “No Child Left Behind helps kids by measuring their progress and holding schools accountable for results. It helps teachers by providing them with information and resources to better help their students. And it helps parents by giving them a more direct say in children’s education.” If reauthorized, the U.S. Department of Education issued a policy brief outlining three recommended changes to NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 4):

1. A stronger effort must be made to close the achievement gap through high state standards and accountability.
2. Middle and high schools must offer more rigorous coursework that better prepares students for postsecondary education or the workforce.
3. States must be given flexibilities and new tools to restructure chronically underperforming schools, and families must be given more options.

These changes to NCLB strive to target funds more readily to the neediest schools and students. Nonetheless, sociologists remain skeptical about how far reaching this legislation will be in addressing the very lowest achieving students and schools. Schools after all are embedded in communities and in the larger societies. Sociologists argue that an important corrective to current policy discussions must be interjected by the insistence that school level policies and reforms required by NCLB are only understood in their larger societal context and in relation to external social, economic and political factors. Forty years of sociological research on the causes of the achievement gap [demonstrate] that educational inequalities are a result of both school-based and non-school factors. To ignore societal factors in policies aimed at reducing the achievement gap will inevitably limit the effectiveness of educational policies aimed primarily at the school level, as NCLB is, to adequately reduce the achievement gap.

Having said this, sociological research provides important evidence that school-based

policies can improve schools and help reduce the achievement gap in the areas covered by the law under which NCLB operates. In addition, the sociological discipline provides research-based evidence for improving the implementation of NCLB and correcting some of the unintended consequences of the law. Sociologists of education should continue to engage in research aimed at analyzing the various components of NCLB and that research should be used in the larger policy debates about NCLB, especially with respect to its re-authorization (Sadovnik, Dworkin, Gamoran, Hallinan, & Scott, in press).

While sociologists continue to critique the policies that make up the NCLB Act, Congress is preparing to debate the Act's reauthorization. There is little doubt that we will see a continuation of the policies under NCLB both because educational policy is now a critical dimension of domestic policy under any president but also because societal needs demand that attention not be averted from equity concerns in educational access and opportunity. As long as the achievement gap between poor and rich as well as the gap between different racial and ethnic groups persists, there will continue to be a focus both among sociologists and among policy makers and the public on reducing these disparities. What may continue to be debated are the assumptions for why gaps persist and the strategies for reducing them.

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DISPARITIES WITHIN

Unequal Spending and Achievement in an Urban School District

DENNIS J. CONDRON AND VINCENT J. ROSCIGNO

An important component of the school environment is the amount of money spent on schooling. Some researchers argue that students' backgrounds are the primary determinants of their attainment in school and jobs. These "status-attainment" studies imply that schools are not the main determinant of success. "Effective schools" research supports a different view—that schools with certain characteristics are successful in gaining high levels of achievement and indeed in "making a difference." Dennis Condron and Vincent Roscigno look at within-district variations in spending to determine the effect on achievement. Disparities are linked to racial and class stratification, and concentration of student racial or class groups; these have consequences for achievement

in subject areas, especially as many districts resegregate schools. Thus, the spending environment and decisions about school spending influence the reproduction of class and racial divides. Economic resources of schools can accentuate differences between rich and poor socioeconomic status areas, depending on the area of spending. Reducing class size, for instance, is effective in raising students' achievement levels.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How can decisions about district school funding affect stratification?
2. What does this analysis add to our understanding of students' achievement?

3. What policy implications come from the research reported by Condrón and Roscigno?
4. What is the relationship between school spending, functional theory, and conflict theory?

Despite decades of research and public policy debates on the topic, it is still unclear whether educational spending influences students' achievement. Some studies have suggested that there are no apparent effects of spending, while others have found that educational dollars indeed make a difference (see Burtless, 1996). These debates and the research from which they have drawn have been limited for several reasons, not the least of which is the reliance on district-level data on spending (Farland, 1997; Picus, 1997).

In this article, we extend the literature on educational spending and achievement by presenting our study, which analyzed the extent of variation in spending, its potential causes, and its consequences for students' achievement across 89 elementary schools within one urban school district. These unique, within-district, school-level data allowed us to delineate (1) significant within district inequality in spending and its consequences for achievement; (2) the extent to which the disparities are associated with larger patterns of racial and class inequality and concentration; and (3) how spending matters, that is, the mechanisms that mediate the link between spending and achievement. We conclude this article by discussing the implications of our findings for understanding the dynamics of local stratification, school inequality, and depressed patterns of achievement that are evident in many urban areas of the United States.

BACKGROUND: SPENDING AND ACHIEVEMENT

The American system of public education is one in which the amount of wealth in a school district shapes the quality of its schools (Kozol,

1991; Slavin, 1999). Because American schools are funded primarily by local property taxes, the wealthiest districts spend as much as three times the per-pupil amount of the most economically disadvantaged districts. In recent years, courts have recognized this reality and have ruled that systems of funding public schools that rely heavily on local property taxes are unconstitutional (Burke, 1999; Goertz & Edwards, 1999; Slavin, 1999).

Although traditional funding schemes ensure that economically advantaged students attend schools that tend to be physically superior to those of poor students, it is less clear whether more spending leads to higher academic achievement. Studies by educational researchers, economists, and sociologists have come to conflicting conclusions on whether "money matters." Some studies have found that higher spending promotes achievement (Elliott, 1998; Hedges & Greenwald, 1996; Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1994; Wenglinsky, 1997, 1998), while others have suggested that money matters little, particularly once a number of other factors are taken into consideration (Hanushek, 1989, 1994, 1996). This body of literature, often referred to as "production-function" research, is connected mainly with whether inputs, such as spending, directly result in positive outputs, such as achievement.

A number of meta-analyses have been undertaken to attempt to clarify the association. Hanushek (1989, p. 47), for instance, conducted a meta-analysis of hundreds of production-function studies and concluded that "there is no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance" (see also Hanushek, 1994, 1996). In an exchange between Hedges et al. (1994) and Hanushek (1994) in the *Educational Researcher*, Hedges et al. presented contrasting results derived from their own meta-analysis of a similar body of production-function research. In contrast to Hanushek (1994, p. 8), who maintained that "throwing money at schools" would be a poor policy decision, they contended that "money *does* matter after all" (p. 13). Wenglinsky (1997, p. 223) summed up the results of production-function research and

meta-analyses, suggesting that “the results . . . have been mixed, fueling, rather than resolving, the debate on whether money matters to achievement.” More recent work, as a consequence, has shifted from the question of *whether* money matters to *how* money may promote achievement through the purchase of specific resources.

Wenglinsky (1997) identified several financially driven factors that improve a school’s “social” environment.” For example, instructional per-student expenditures appear to increase teacher-student ratios and boost teachers’ credentials. Expenditures on central administration also seem to shape teacher-student ratios, possibly indicating that “a well-supported central administration makes better decisions about the allocation of resources that lead to improved teacher-student ratios” (p. 225). Mosteller (1995) highlighted the importance of smaller classes, and Elliott (1998) found that spending promotes achievement through the hiring of highly educated teachers who have regular access to resources, such as computers and science equipment. Finally, Verstegen and King (1998) discussed several studies that found that the quality of teachers, class size, and spending are all important predictors of achievement. Thus, while past research failed to come to a definite conclusion as to whether financial resources are directly linked to achievement, more recent work has clearly suggested that specific attributes of schools may be important mediators between spending and achievement.

ADDRESSING LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Why is there still a debate over the impact of money on students’ achievement? We believe that the answer is partially analytic. The use of district-level data on spending, we suggest, limits the capacity of researchers to measure true variation in spending among schools, leaves the causes of unequal spending unexamined, and disallows the inclusion of key school-level measures that arguably mediate the spending-achievement relation.

Level of Analysis

Perhaps the most important limitation of prior work has been the reliance on district-level data on spending. When the effects of various attributes of students and schools on achievement are assessed, each student in a sample typically carries the per-student spending figure for his or her district. Although the use of these data may capture more aggregate spatial disparities, it is problematic, given the considerable variation in spending *among schools within a given district*. In our study, for instance, total per-student spending among elementary schools within the district ranged from \$3,045 to \$8,165. If students in these schools were included in a sample that used figures on district-level spending, the average per-student figures would be about \$5,000. In reality, however, in the vast majority of cases, the figures are far higher or lower.

District-level analyses, while certainly useful, overlook the fact that schools within districts are often allocated different amounts of financial and material resources via local school board decisions. Thus, the more proximate variation in spending for students may be masked in such studies. Even some more recent sociological analyses of spending and achievement have treated students as the unit of analysis, yet have been compromised by data on spending that were aggregated to the district level (see, e.g., Roscigno, 1998; Wenglinsky, 1997, 1998). It is plausible that estimates of the effects of spending, using district-level figures, are inaccurate and may be underestimated.

This limitation of prior work is undoubtedly a function of the availability of data. Researchers have recognized that district-level spending measures are not preferable, but have also noted that school-level data are difficult to find. Monk (1981, p. 223), for example, pointed out that the study of the distribution of resources among schools has been limited partly because of “the general lack of program and building level financial records.” Wenglinsky (1998, p. 273) used the Common Core of Data as a source of data on district-level spending because “such information

is not available at the school level.” Similarly, Unnever, Kerckhoff, and Robinson (2000, p. 248) noted that the state they studied “does not collect data that would allow [them] to replicate [their] analysis at the school or individual level.”

Recent efforts have been directed toward collecting and using *school-level* spending measures. In fact, the entire Winter 1997 issue of the *Journal of Education Finance* was dedicated to a discussion of the potential value of school-level data. Financially driven resources, such as class size, the quality of teachers, curriculum, and learning materials, can vary widely from one school and even one classroom to another. It is suggested that school-level data may allow for more effective analyses of the role of money and other resources in promoting achievement by moving the level of analysis to a more proximate level, where students actually learn (Berne, Stiefel, & Moser, 1997; Farland, 1997; Goertz, 1997; Picus, 1997).

The Roots of Variation in Spending

Disparities in spending may be related to broader patterns of social stratification and concentration, a possibility that has received little, if any, systematic attention in the recent literature. Indeed, a handful of studies, conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, found that several money-related school resources were lacking in poor and minority schools relative to white and higher-socioeconomic status (SES) schools in large urban districts. These missing resources included physically sound buildings (Owen, 1972; Sexton, 1961), teachers with more experience and better verbal ability (Owen, 1972, 1974; Sexton, 1961), smaller classes (Sexton, 1961), and financial support from local sources (Andrew & Goettel, 1972). Kozol's (1991) account of racial and class inequality in school funding illustrated these realities in the contemporary era, showing how being of a minority or poor social-class status is often synonymous with attending a school that is dilapidated, overcrowded, unsafe, and unhealthy. But how and why might inequality in spending, including that

which occurs within districts, be patterned by the racial and class composition of schools?

We believe that discrepancies in spending are at least partially driven by the fact that schools are dependent on federal, state, and local sources of revenue. While federal allocations (e.g., Title I) and related distributional dynamics rely on specific policy formulas, local school boards often exercise discretion in the allocation of local funds, with implications for within-district variation. And, there is good sociological reason to expect that such discretion at the local level may reflect and reinforce local stratification patterns—specifically class and racial inequality. We know, for instance, that local political processes (including school board membership and decision making) are vulnerable to local stratification arrangements and that education as a social institution is embedded within and shaped by these very dynamics (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997; Roscigno, 1995, 2000). Assuming the lack of significant mobilization aimed at challenging educational disparities in poor and minority communities, it is predicted that local political processes (and resource-allocation decisions) will fortify the status quo and thus tend to work in favor of more advantaged constituencies. Indeed, an earlier study (Andrew & Goettel, 1972) found that poor and minority schools lacked financial support from *local* sources relative to higher-SES schools.

There may be several mechanisms at work in how these processes unfold, and preliminary qualitative analyses we conducted suggest that these mechanisms are, by no means, mutually exclusive. First, since school board members in most locales are elected officials, their decision making is likely to be shaped with a voting constituency in mind. Since poor and minority communities are more likely to be alienated from the political process and less likely to participate in it (Piven & Cloward, 2000; Teixeira, 1987), school board decision making is arguably shaped more by concerns and issues that are of relevance to the more affluent, voting public. Such a bias in decision making may occur without direct pressure from voters and parents, although parent and parent-teacher organizations

from higher-SES, white schools tend to be more active and politically astute in pressing local school boards for resources (National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1975; Reed, 1982; Zeigler & Boss, 1974).

Second, school boards often implement specific application processes for discretionary funds to be followed by schools. In the case of the district we studied, for instance, principals can submit proposals to the district once a year for discretionary local allocations (Columbus Public Schools, 2000). There is, however, room for bias in decision making related to discretionary funds, despite the formality of such a process. Poorer schools are simply less organizationally and bureaucratically equipped to formulate—let alone submit—proposals for extra funds, particularly if they are overwhelmed with their day-to-day functioning and the more general maintenance of order. Furthermore, school boards may be more apt to reject proposals by poorer, minority schools, given that such schools are receiving extra allocations in the form of federal Title I funds. While our analyses do not model these processes directly, our findings on variation in spending by racial and class composition and the disentangling of federal versus local allocations speak clearly to these possibilities.

Why Spending May Matter

School-level analyses not only provide more accurate information on spending variation, but allow for the inclusion of specific school-level attributes that may mediate the spending-achievement relation. Educational dollars are spent on several different functions, and it is possible that money spent on one (e.g., instruction) may influence achievement more or less and through different mechanisms than may money spent on another (e.g., maintenance). Although some have acknowledged these possibilities separately (Elliott, 1998; Roscigno, 2000; Unnever et al., 2000; Wenglinsky, 1997, 1998), few have closely analyzed the potential mediation of specific types of expenditures by intuitively related school attributes.

We posit that the most important function of spending is instructional. Instructional funds are used for teachers' salaries, textbooks, and various other material supplies related to classroom instruction. The district we analyzed reported that nearly 60 percent of its overall budget is appropriated for instructional purposes, the largest proportion of which is for teachers' salaries (Columbus Public Schools, 2000; see also Burke, 1999). Furthermore, nearly all the elementary schools in the district spend more on instruction than on all other functions combined. For these reasons, we believe that instructional spending may be particularly influential in shaping achievement.

The primary mechanism through which we expect instructional spending to matter is the attraction of more highly qualified and trained teachers. . . . Our bivariate analyses of teachers' credentials in relation to schools' racial and class composition suggested that the most highly credentialed teachers are not randomly distributed within a district, but are concentrated in high-SES, white schools with, arguably, higher per-pupil expenditures.¹ Such schools may be more attractive to teachers because of real or perceived differences in quality or more tangible classroom resources that are tied to instructional expenditures (e.g., computers, books, and the availability of teacher's aides).

Spending on the maintenance of school buildings may also shape achievement through particular school-level mechanisms. Allocating more money to buildings should result in physical conditions that are more conducive to learning. Kozol (1991) emphasized the role of physical squalor in affecting a child's sense of worth, but the role of physical conditions in shaping achievement is unclear. We suspect that leaky roofs, crumbling walls, and unsanitary conditions are distractions from the learning process and that better physical conditions—shaped by spending—lead to higher achievement.

An additional possibility is that higher-spending schools are able to maintain a climate that is characterized by a greater degree of order and consistency among the student body (e.g., students' attendance rates), with clear implications for

students' capacity to learn through either of the previously noted spending functions. For instance, to the extent that instructional expenditures shape the climate of classrooms, curricula, and the quality of teachers, one may find a link between instructional spending and achievement that is mediated by order and consistency among the student body itself. In this case, schools with higher instructional allocations may have better student-attendance rates, which unquestionably affect teachers' capacity to instruct and guide students effectively, not to mention to shape teachers' ability to maintain order in the classroom. In contrast, lesser instructional investment in classrooms may be a source of students' detachment, disengagement, and absence.

Spending on building maintenance similarly may influence students' attendance and engagement by shaping the broader physical context of the school that students attend. One can envision a greater likelihood of students' disengagement when walls are cracking, roofs are leaking, heaters are not working, and the school is generally not a comfortable place in which to be—let alone learn. Qualitative accounts (e.g., Kozol, 1991) have noted such disengagement, particularly in inner-city areas of the United States, yet such analyses have seldom modeled these processes as a function of spending or in relation to achievement.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

The school-level data used in this analysis represent 89 public elementary schools in the Columbus (Ohio) Public School District. Columbus, with a population of over 700,000, is diverse in racial and class composition and thus provides a local research setting in which findings are relatively generalizable to other urban areas of the United States. Of the more than 65,000 students in the district, 57 percent are black and 39 percent are white, and only about 4 percent of the students are of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

We constructed our measures from four major sources. The first is the Ohio Department of

Education's "school building report cards," which are brief statistical summaries of each school in the state, including the results of achievement tests, that are published and sent to parents each year. The second is the Ohio Department of Education's Education Management Information System (EMIS) building/school profiles, a rich source of data on spending and certain school attributes. The third are data provided by the Columbus Public Schools Food Service Department on the social-class composition of the schools. Finally, we constructed a unique variable measuring the physical conditions of the schools from an analysis by an independent firm contracted by the district to evaluate each school (Planning Advocates, 1997). This report—and the data on physical conditions it offers—nicely complements the data on spending, school resources, and achievement. Achievement outcomes were measured for the 1998–99 school year, and the independent variables were measured for the 1996–97 school year.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, academic achievement, was measured as the percentage of fourth graders in the school who passed the state proficiency test in five subject areas: reading, writing, math, science, and citizenship. There is significant achievement variation among schools within the district, in that pass rates on the various tests range from a few percentage points to 100 percent.

Spending

Total per-pupil expenditure refers to the total annual amount per student spent on all functions combined, expressed in thousands of dollars.² The range of 3.05 to 8.16 shows that there is indeed wide variation in spending across schools within the district. *Instructional per-pupil expenditure* measures the amount of money per student spent on actual classroom instruction. Again, there is wide variation across schools, as the range of 1.33 to 4.92 indicates. Rather than rely on these commonly used measures, which reflect federal,

state, and local funds spent on all functions, we also used alternative measures that reflect local spending patterns for different functions.

Adjusted instructional per-pupil expenditure is our indicator of instructional funds derived from local sources. Federal allocations for Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to each school were obtained from the Columbus Public School District's published budget.³ The raw numbers were divided by the number of students in the school to produce a per-pupil Title I figure, which was then subtracted from the instructional per-pupil spending figure to yield "adjusted" instructional spending. Adjusted instructional per-pupil expenditure ranges from 1.05 to 4.81, indicating that the expenditure of local funds varies considerably by school.⁴ *Operations and maintenance per pupil expenditure* refers to the amount spent on operating and maintaining the school building. The range of .47 to 1.45 shows that schools vary considerably by how much is spent per pupil on this function as well.

Class and Racial Composition

The Columbus Public Schools Food Service Department provided data on the *percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches*. We used this measure, reflecting the class composition of the student body, as a proxy for school SES. Its range of 26 percent to 99 percent and mean of 66.47 indicate that, overall, the schools in the district have relatively high percentages of poor students, although there is considerable social-class variation. The range of *percentage nonwhite* (8.8 percent to 99.7 percent, reported by EMIS) indicates notable racial segregation within the district.

Potential School-level Mediators

We also included several variables that may mediate the spending effects, noted previously, in the analyses. *Physical condition* of the school was constructed from the district report, which included ratings of each school on a number of

dimensions, ranging from 0 to 100. In creating a scale indicator from these ratings, we focused on the attributes and environmental factors that are most immediate to the everyday experiences of staff and students (see Table 27.1): adequacy, safety, healthfulness, and appearance (combined and divided by 4). Along with an alpha of .89, the correlations reported in Table 27.1 speak to the reliability of this scale. Given the range of 38.75 to 82.25, it is clear that there is considerable variation in school conditions within the district.⁵

Order/consistency was measured by the student attendance rate, with higher rates representing a higher degree of order and consistency in the school; these rates range from 87.8 to 96.7 with a mean of 93.39. *Teachers' education* refers to the percentage of teachers in the school with at least a master's degree. Again, there is considerable variation, with a range of 6.3 percent to 83.3 percent of teachers holding at least a master's degree.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY AND RESULTS

The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, we disentangle local and federal spending patterns and examine their associations with school racial and class composition.

In the second part of the analysis, we focus on the link between spending variation and achievement within the district, relying on ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression.

Variation in Spending and Racial and Class Composition

Is variation in spending within the district linked to patterns of racial and class stratification? In short, the answer is yes.

Figures 27.1 and 27.2 illustrate these patterns graphically. Average spending figures were calculated for schools with low, medium, and high proportions of poor and minority students.⁶ The gray bars in the figures show the variations by class composition; note that the bars consistently become shorter from left to right. Schools with the lowest proportions of poor students spend

Table 27.1 Descriptions of and Correlations Between Components of the Physical Condition Scale

<i>Component</i>	<i>Description^a</i>	<i>Descriptives</i>			<i>Correlations</i>		
		<i>Metric</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Adequacy</i>	<i>Safety</i>	<i>Healthfulness</i>
Adequacy	Measures the degree to which the size of the site, the school building itself, and the available equipment are satisfactory, given the number of students.	28 to 88	53.43	10.11	—	—	—
Safety	"A function of those features of the school plant which make the building structurally sound and protect the occupants from hazards of traffic, fire, and accidents."	38 to 78	59.64	7.89	.582***	—	—
Healthfulness	Indicates how well the building is able to "promote the good health of the building occupants" through such things as "lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, and sanitation."	43 to 88	62.63	8.71	.747***	.691***	—
Appearance	"How the school looks and whether it is pleasing to the eye. Attention is directed to landscaping, color harmony, appropriateness of furnishings, and use of decoration."	35 to 87	60.52	11.57	.701***	.704***	.726***

^aQuotations from Planning Advocates (1997).

***p < .001 (two-tailed test).

\$790 more of local instructional funds per pupil than do schools with high proportions of poor students. Although a gap of \$790 per student may not seem large, consider that the average high-poverty school in this district has 383 students and thus that, somehow, the district is

investing \$302,570 less per year in instruction at the average high-poverty school than at a low-poverty school of the same size. We therefore consider this gap to be educationally meaningful, given what an extra \$300,000 could buy for a school. The class disparity in operations and

Figure 27.1 Adjusted Instructional Per-Pupil Expenditure (PPE) by Degree of Poverty and Minority Concentration

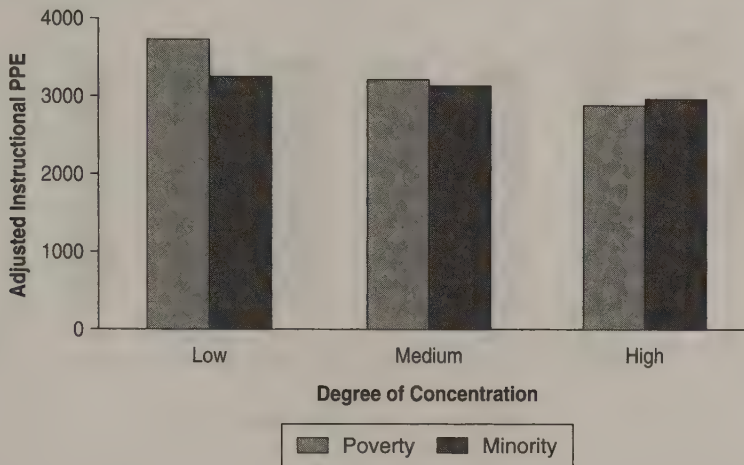
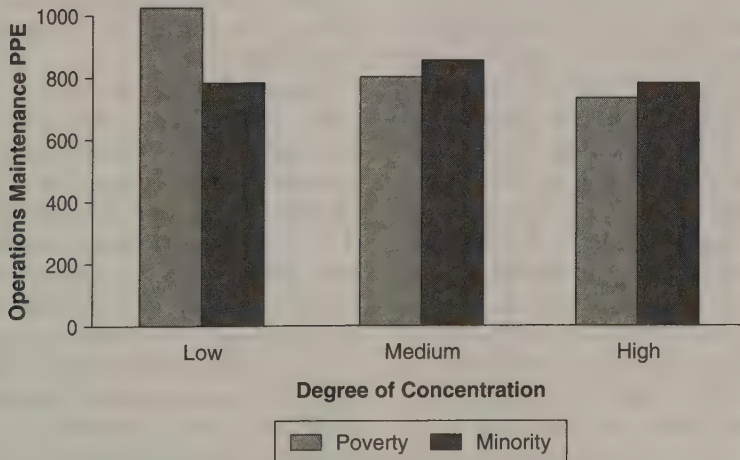


Figure 27.2 Operations/Maintenance Per-Pupil Expenditure (PPE) by Degree of Poverty and Minority Concentration



maintenance spending is \$290 per student. The bars in Figures 27.1 and 27.2 show the variations by racial composition, which are not as pronounced as are the class disparities. Nonetheless, \$277 more per pupil of local instructional dollars are spent in schools with

low proportions of minority students than in those with the highest proportions.⁷ These findings provide evidence of a local dynamic through which fewer local financial resources are allocated to schools with higher proportions of poor and minority students.

Figure 27.3 State/Local and Federal Title I Funds as a Percentage of Total Per-Pupil Expenditure (PPE) by Degree of Poverty and Minority Concentration

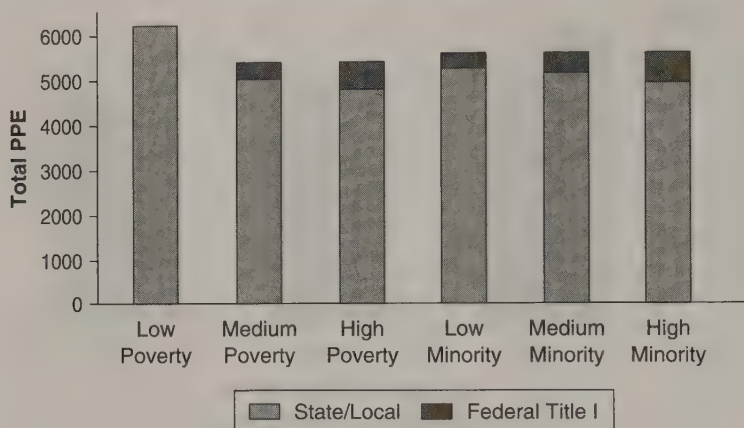


Figure 27.3 further illustrates this point by breaking down the total per-pupil expenditure into two components: adjusted instructional per-pupil expenditure and Title I money per pupil. It shows that the percentage of total spending coming from local sources declines as both poverty and minority concentration increase, as the lighter portions of the bars become shorter from left to right. If the lighter portions of the bars lined up, it would suggest an equal distribution of resources locally, allowing the Title I money to boost disadvantaged schools to higher levels of total per-student spending. Given the unequal distribution of *local* resources, however, the federal funds are not able to bring the disadvantaged schools up to the level of *total* per-student spending found in disproportionately white and higher-SES schools. Title I money, in other words, does not make up for existing local inequality in the allocation of resources.

What are the consequences of unequal spending for achievement? Table 27.2 models the five achievement outcomes as a function of spending and school-level mediators. Equation 1 tests for the overall effects of the two spending variables. Equation 2 adds the potential school-level mediators, testing for reductions in spending effects

that will help us address how and why spending matters. We control for prior achievement and the degree of crowdedness in all models, thus temporally isolating spending effects and controlling for possible background and compositional disparities.

These analyses reveal two clear patterns. First, schools that spend more exhibit higher levels of academic achievement. Both spending measures have a positive effect on achievement in Equations 1 and 2 across all outcomes. A \$1,000 increase in local instructional spending per student leads to from about 6 percent to about 10 percent more students passing the proficiency tests. (The exception is writing achievement, for which the spending effect fails to reach statistical significance in Equation 2.) To illustrate the magnitude of these effects, consider that the range of local instructional spending is nearly \$4,000 per student. Thus, if the lowest-spending schools were locally funded at the level of the highest-spending school, the percentage of students passing the tests could increase 24 percent to 40 percent, depending on the test.

In Table 27.2 the effects of both spending variables are partially or completely mediated with the inclusion of school-level mediators in Equation 2.

Table 27.2 Unstandardized OLS Regression Estimates of Achievement Measures on Spending and School-Level Mediators

	Reading		Writing		Math		Science		Citizenship	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Adjusted instructional per-pupil expenditure	8.229*	6.273*	6.216*	3.723	9.613**	8.606**	9.225**	7.222*	11.222**	9.591**
Operations/maintenance per-pupil expenditure	21.120*	1.998	17.049*	-6.603	13.612*	1.902	19.861*	2.362	16.495*	-2.466
Physical condition		.616**		.602**		.365*		.384*		.520*
Order/consistency		3.165**		3.036**		1.764*		2.922**		3.513**
Teachers education		.094		.128		-.000		.082		-.033
Prior achievement	.531***	.171	.567***	.315*	.725***	.573***	.524***	.317*	.529***	.283*
Square feet per student	-.052	.086	-.094	.045	-.074	-.001	-.089	.030	-.152*	-.030
Constant	-12.287	-331.884	9.844	-294.237	-22.896	-200.840	-15.764	-302.859	-2.280	-345.141
Adjusted R ²	.344***	.445***	.290***	.411***	.492***	.515***	.357***	.432***	.407***	.486***

*p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (one-tailed tests).

Declines in the effects of spending when physical condition, order/consistency, and teachers' education are included suggest that spending matters partially through these mechanisms.

With regard to the mediators, better physical conditions and a higher degree of order/consistency both promote achievement in all measured subject areas. Although the effect of physical condition is moderate—a 10-point increase on the scale would lead to about 6 percent more students passing the reading test, for example—the range of the physical condition scale (38.75 to 82.25) indicates that every school is *at least* almost 20 points away from a perfect rating of adequacy, safety, healthfulness, and appearance. In other words, there is plenty of room for improving the conditions of the school buildings, which Firestone et al. (1994) and Adams (1994) found to be a high priority for low-SES districts that received increased funding because of school finance reform in New Jersey and Kentucky. Our findings suggest that such improvements promote higher achievement. A higher degree of order/consistency in the learning environment also promotes achievement, since a 1 percent increase in the student attendance rate results in about 3 percent more students passing the proficiency tests.

CONCLUSION

This study has addressed the disparities in spending within a large, urban school district, their associations with racial and class composition, and the consequences of such patterns for school attributes and achievement. This focus is unique, since most analyses of spending have tended to rely on and be constrained by district-level data. Our analyses of 89 elementary schools highlight the importance of local dynamics. Specifically, inequality in spending appears to correspond to the racial and class composition of schools. Schools with the highest proportions of poor students are particularly disadvantaged, while race is somewhat less salient. This inequality appears to be a result of an allocation dynamic

through which fewer *local* dollars land in high-poverty schools, weakening the intended compensatory effect of federal Title I funds. Furthermore, we found that higher spending promotes achievement through particular school resources. Instructional spending from local sources and operations/maintenance spending both promote achievement through the school's physical condition and the degree of order/consistency in the learning environment.⁸

Evidence of inequality in within-district spending reveals a problem that goes beyond the notion that the reliance on local property taxes to fund schools generates unequal spending. The disparities in spending reported here are substantial and educationally meaningful. Although unequal spending within districts has received comparatively little attention in legal cases, and the sociology and education literatures, such disparities clearly warrant more attention. Future research should thus continue this line of inquiry and press the fundamental and sociological question of *why*.

For research on within-district inequality to mature, school-level data must become more widely available and more easily accessible. Picus (1997, p. 319) reported that there is a "tremendous diversity in reporting systems across districts within and across states." The collection of uniform school-level expenditures and other measures by districts and/or states will allow for further exploration of within-district allocation dynamics, such as those found in this study. We also suspect that local historical and qualitative analyses will be especially informative, given their ability to tap into and delineate micropolitical dynamics pertaining to school boards' decisions; teachers' migration patterns; and, ultimately, how spending affects students on a concrete, day-to-day level. Together, such strategies will allow researchers to test our suspicion that the patterns we uncovered are more the rule than the exception.

The analysis of the link between spending and achievement at the school level is in its infancy, although such studies will undoubtedly become more common as more data become available.

It is our hope, for example, that future national surveys will be able to record school-level measures of expenditures and other attributes to complement their formidable measurement of student-level characteristics. The inclusion of school level spending measures in nationally representative surveys, such as the National Education Longitudinal Study and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Cohort, for example, would significantly improve researchers' ability to explore the mechanisms through which spending promotes achievement.

Beyond informing future research, our analyses and findings also speak to more general stratification and political accounts of inequality, group disparity, and opportunity. Indeed, the allocation of local resources by school boards is a political process, typically driven by elected and appointed officials. Relevant action may be formal and procedural or more informal. The published information for this district indicates that schools submit budget requests that must be approved at several levels as part of the budgetary process. It is possible that the potential discretion in funding these requests may advantage higher-SES schools because of (1) conscious decisions by local leaders that are race- and class discriminatory; (2) the likelihood that higher-SES parents have more influence on local political entities, such as the school board; and (3) the likelihood that higher-SES schools are more bureaucratically and politically coordinated when it comes to writing and submitting such proposals.

The racial and class composition of schools, which is associated with educational resources, is also shaped by political decision making to some degree. The Columbus Public School District, for instance, systematically ended its policy of busing to achieve racial integration after the 1995–96 school year. Local newspaper accounts discussed the “return to the concept of neighborhood schools” and how this process has contributed to the emergence of a “new segregation” (Bush 2000b). Although this situation is certainly relevant to racial and class stratification and the distribution of resources in Columbus

specifically, it is a larger, national pattern—a “quiet reversal of *Brown v. Board of Education*” (Orfield et al., 1996) that has implications for disparities in spending and achievement between and within many urban districts throughout the United States.

NOTES

1. In the district we analyze here, for instance, the correlation between the percentage of teachers with master's degrees and the percentage of students who receive free or reduced-price lunches is $r = -.379$ ($p < .001$). The correlation with percentage non-white is $r = -.252$ ($p < .05$). This finding suggests to us that to the extent that there is within-district migration of teachers, particularly those with seniority and higher credentials, it will be toward more affluent schools.

2. All spending variables used in the analyses are measured in thousands of dollars.

3. Title I of the ESEA extended federal financial support of education to the elementary level, with the specific goal of enhancing the educational opportunities of economically disadvantaged students. For a summary of Title I, see Spraggins (1968).

4. We subtracted Title I money from instructional per-pupil expenditure because such federal funds specifically target programs that are consistent with instruction, as opposed to other spending functions. Others have used a similar measure of instructional spending (see Owens & Maiden, 1999; Unnever et al., 2000). The flow of Title I funds to instruction suggests that operations and maintenance per-pupil expenditure is a measure of spending from more local sources.

5. This variation is likely to be a function of the age of the buildings. The oldest schools were constructed in 1874, 10 schools were built before 1900, and one-fourth of them were built before 1925.

6. The low, medium, and high categories were created such that low refers to schools with 33 percent or less of their students receiving free or reduced-price lunches, medium represents schools with 34 percent to 66 percent of their students on free or reduced price lunches, and high represents schools with 67 percent or more of their students on free or reduced-price lunches. For minority concentration, the categories represent the same percentage groupings of students who are nonwhite.

7. In Figures 27.1 and 27.2, comparisons of means for low-poverty schools to medium and high-poverty schools are statistically significant at the .05 level. In Figure 27.1, comparisons of means for schools with low and high minority concentrations are significant at .05. In Figure 27.2, comparisons of means for racial composition are not significant.

8. Our analyses of the effects of spending are, arguably, a conservative test, given that privately contributed money (e.g., fund-raisers, PTA) are typically not calculated or reported in budgetary or per-pupil spending figures. Indeed, a local newspaper account reported that one school spent almost \$70,000 in privately contributed money in 1999, while another raised only \$200 to \$500 per year (Bush, 2000a). In addition, the district does not track private donations of material goods, such as computers and books (Lane & Bush, 2000).

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Schooling in a Social Context: Educational Environments

Using an academic data base, look up “STUDENT” and “ACHIEVEMENT” and relate this to family influences and extracurricular activities.

Go to your state education Web page to find information about teacher qualifications, class size, and school expenditures. Add these data to what you have already collected on local schools in your area. Do you see any patterns between these schools that might be related to the environment of the surrounding community?

Interview a superintendent, principal, and/or several teachers in a school district in your area to learn how environmental (social context) factors influence the decision-making process in the district. Indicate what these are and how and what decisions they affect. If you interviewed individuals in different school roles, how did their answers differ regarding what influence school decisions?

PART VI

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND SCHOOLS

Ranking people in categories within a hierarchy is a process that pervades all institutions, including education systems. Social stratification has been a central concern for sociologists of education for some time. In Part VI we explore the role that education plays in stratifying individuals and groups in society. Readings discuss inequalities relating to race, class, and gender, focusing on the ways we stratify and discriminate between individuals within the educational system. These issues of stratification are discussed throughout this book, particularly in Part VII. Part VI discusses some of the issues of importance, and readings in Part VII describe attempts to alleviate inequality in schools. Unfortunately, space does not permit us to explore all inequalities, including the prejudice and discrimination in schools for students who choose alternative sexual identities. As you read the readings here and in Part VII, we encourage you examine parallels between the ways different groups are treated in schools and to consider how and why inequality exists in education. In doing so, you will develop a deeper understanding of the role schools play in maintaining inequality.

Let's stop to take a look at America's schools by examining class, race, and gender compositions. First, while it would seem that the proportion of males and females in schools should be the same, as the proportion of males in the 2005 U. S. Census (49 percent males to 51 percent female), this is not the case. The relatively even sex ratio changes as students move through the school system, with more boys likely to drop out of high school (11.6% vs. 9% for girls; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Furthermore, while more women are likely to attend (57.2% female) and graduate college with a four-year degree (57.4%), women are less likely to graduate with higher degrees such as first-professional (49.2% females) and doctoral degrees (47.6% females [National Center for Education Statistics, 2005]). Roslyn Mickelson discusses some of the reasons for these discrepancies in her reading in this part and Leslie Miller-Bernal also considers reasons as she reviews the history of women's colleges in Part VIII.

There are also concerns about educational outcomes related to racial/ethnic and social class differences. The Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005) reports that in 2004, 17.3 percent of households with related children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level. The percentage of households with school-age or younger children varies by race (14.4% white; 32.9% black; 28.6% Hispanic; and 9.5% Asian). It is not surprising that the percentage graduating from high school or attending college also varies by race. The Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005)

reports that in 2005, the percentages of individuals 25 years and older completing high school was 90.1 percent for whites (non-Hispanic); 81.5 percent for blacks; and 58.5 percent for Hispanics. The rates for college completion for individuals 25 years or older are also distressing: 30.5 percent for whites; 17.7 percent for blacks and 12.2 percent for Hispanics. Clearly these figures suggest a great deal of inequality in American education.

Sociologists focus on inequality within and between schools. This inequality in schools comes in a variety of forms, as you will soon see; however, the end result is always to give advantage to one group over another or put some children at a distinct disadvantage in what might be an equal playing field. Caroline Hodges Persell in the first reading in this part provides an overview of race in American education. The readings by Annette Lareau and Erin Horvat, and Edward Morris, illustrate the interaction of race, class, and gender in determining school experiences. Persell discusses various explanations for racial inequality in school. The explanations Persell considers are complemented by the reading by Alan Ruby in Part VIII. Clearly, improving academic achievement for a racial group is very complex.

Stratification in schools has been studied either at the school level or by examining the effects on individuals. At the school level, researchers study stratification within schools or between schools. Stratification between schools refers to the different educational experiences offered in different schools. Stratification within schools includes the placement of students within certain courses or curriculum tracks as well as structures that exclude or discourage groups of students from programs or curricula. In this section, we look at both levels of stratification.

The reading by Joan Spade, Lynne Columba and Beth Vanfossen helps us to understand how social class shapes schooling experiences from the perspective of social structure and the organization of schools. The authors examine between-school discrimination by social class, showing how schools are segregated by social class. Their research looks at differences in resources between schools, more specifically the types of courses offered to students and the processes by which students are placed in courses. The authors find that the distribution of classes is linked to the social class of the community in which the school is located. Although we would like to think all students have equal chances of succeeding in school, this research points out how the inputs in the form of social class of students and the community can affect the organization of schools by shaping the resources that different schools offer to students. Between-school stratification comes in other forms as well. Some families chose to send their children to private schools in the United States. Educational opportunities are often better in private schools, but this privilege of better education often comes with a price tag, which families living in poverty cannot afford.

The other readings in Part VI focus on aspects of within-school stratification, looking at the informal aspects that shape children's schooling and life experiences. When members of minority groups and individuals of lower-social class backgrounds are kept out of more demanding curricula, within-school stratification occurs. The readings by Annette Lareau and Erin Horvat, Edwin Morris, and Caroline Persell describe the interpersonal interactions that create inequalities within schools. Persell reviews various explanations for racial differences in achievement outcomes, while Lareau and Horvat describe settings in which race and social class influence interactions in school, thus defining children's learning experiences. Lareau and Horvat look at how social class and race interact in shaping parents' relationships with their children's teachers and school. Families can have a significant impact on the direction of their children's schooling; however, teachers' response to parents of racial and social class backgrounds different from their own can frustrate

parents and teachers alike, as Lareau and Horvat describe. From his observations within schools, Morris shows how race, class, and gender interact to influence how teachers and school officials discipline children. The reading by Mickelson examines gender differences within schools as well as the unequal payoffs of education for females and males. These processes are subtle, yet they have a substantial impact on the ultimate success of women and minority students.

One of the primary methods of within-school stratification affecting students across race and social class is the process of curriculum tracking described in the Spade, Columba, and Vanfossen reading. Missing from this section are readings from the large number of quantitative studies that define and/or examine the effects of tracking on students. Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade (1987) categorize the early research on the effects of tracking on status maintenance into three categories. One category of research looked at the effects of tracking in maintaining social-class status from generation to generation. The second category assumed that tracking was based on ability; therefore, differential treatment in tracks is unrelated to social mobility. The third category of research concluded that the relationship between tracking and status maintenance is “irrelevant, because tracking in high school does not have a significant impact upon achievement, values, and educational outcomes” (p. 105).

Most of the more recent literature in this area attempts to understand the effects of tracking on students’ academic achievements and orientations toward school. Grouping students by ability or tracking begins in elementary school, disadvantaging children from lower-income families long before they enter the middle school. Children from lower-income families not only do not “catch up” to their wealthier peers in elementary school, but they fall further behind. Doris R. Entwistle and Karl L. Alexander (1992) followed students over a period of time and found that lower-income children experience a “summer setback” in achievement, whereas their peers from higher-income families actually show gains on achievement tests over the summertime when they are away from school.

When children enter middle school, they are placed in ability groups based on achievement test scores; however, such placement is not based on academic factors alone (Dauber, Alexander, & Entwistle, 1996). This trajectory of ability grouping is reinforced as children enter high school. The correlation between social class and track placement is too strong to be explained away by chance. Although some lower-class students end up in more challenging tracks, many others do not. Assignment to a lower track typically exposes a student to less-rigorous instructional methods along with a less-challenging curriculum (Gamoran, Nystrand, Berends, & LePore, 1995). Tracking students into lower-level curriculum is also related to attachment to school, self-esteem, and more limited views of future opportunities (Vanfossen, Jones, & Spade, 1987).

Some of the more recent research on tracking focuses on defining tracking itself. Indeed, the procedure is more complicated than simply assigning students to academic or vocational programs of study, as envisioned at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of differential courses of study was introduced at that time as one of many efforts to tailor schools to the needs of a society dealing with nascent industrialization and an influx of immigrants (Oakes, 1985). By 1970, the organization of tracking became less rigid as schools allowed students to select their own courses. A. G. Powell, E. Farrar, and D. K. Cohen (1985) called this array of choices the “shopping mall high school.” Samuel Lucas (1999) describes the variations in patterns of course-taking across subjects that exist today.

The following readings are meant to provide you with a better understanding of the mechanisms that segregate students both between and within schools in terms of curriculum and learning experiences. This differential treatment results in unequal educational opportunities for students across social class, race and ethnicity, and gender.

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SCHOOLS

The Great Equalizer and the Key to the American Dream

HEATHER BETH JOHNSON

Heather Beth Johnson presents the results of interviews with 206 individuals in five major metropolitan areas across the United States. She explores the ways in which wealth and education are linked in maintaining strata of inequality across race and social class. In these interviews with parents, she describes their view of education as the “great equalizer,” their understanding of what a “good” school is, and their interpretations of meritocracy as it relates to educational and personal achievement.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What interpretations do parents give to meritocracy and education as they relate to achieving “The American Dream”?
2. Are parents across social class backgrounds similar or different in their interpretations of the power of education in achieving success in life?

3. What makes a “good” school in parents’ minds? How are these views related to readings by Metz in Part III, and Meyer and Rowan in Part V?

In the United States today, approximately 20 percent of children under the age of six are living below the official poverty line (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003). Many of these children’s parents are desperately impoverished and unemployed, and the plight of these families—often single mothers and their children—is harrowing (Berrick, 1995; Edin & Lein, 1997; Ellwood, 1988; Kozol, 1988). Perhaps even more troubling, because of the irony, is how many poor children live in homes with at least one working parent; 40 percent of impoverished adults hold at least one job (Ehrenreich, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Levitan & Shapiro, 1987; Newman, 1999; Rank, 2004; Shipler, 2004). Many of these families have worked hard, they have played by the rules,

and they are still coming up short. The working poor challenge our thinking about inequality in America: if people wind up where they do based on how hard they work, and if 40 percent of the poor are working hard, then why is it that those families are struggling so to even stay afloat? Such questions have been asked often and social scientists have revealed some of the structural arrangements contributing to the predicaments of the working poor (Marx, 1867/1967); only recently, however, have we begun to seriously consider ways that the structure of *wealth* ties into the dynamics of intergenerational inequality in the contemporary United States.

This . . . examines the extent to which parents—black and white, wealthy, middle-class, and poor—believe in the ideology of meritocracy, while at the same time understanding and acknowledging the advantages that private wealth can confer to children and families. On one hand, the families interviewed recognize and acknowledge how significant structured wealth inequality is in shaping family trajectories and children's educational opportunities. On the other hand, they claim their social positions have been earned and deserved through hard work and individual achievement, or lack thereof. Wealthy families are particularly provocative to examine because their stories so clearly contradict the notion of meritocracy. The more privileged parents interviewed acknowledge the advantages they have received through family wealth, and acknowledge the advantageous educational opportunities they are now able to pass along to their children because of them. What is really intriguing, however, is that at the same time, these same families hold close to their hearts the idea that they have earned and deserved what they have, and they argue vehemently that their privileged positions have resulted from their individual hard work, efforts, and achievements.

Since family wealth is such a private matter, and normally so unspoken of, it is often largely invisible. Thus, families with wealth often take its privileges for granted as a "normal" part of life, and families without it are not always cognizant of what they are up against when they try

to compare themselves to others. While families with wealth acknowledge their privilege and claim their positions are self-earned, the reverse is true as well: families who could not possibly compete with peers who are reaping the benefits of wealth legacies nonetheless blame themselves for coming up short. The families with which we spoke both believe in the ideology and acknowledge structured inequality at the same time. They uphold the contradiction between the American Dream and the power of wealth.

PARENTS' BELIEFS IN THE AMERICAN DREAM

Interviewer: When you hear the phrase *the American Dream*, what do you think of?

Suzanne: My initial reaction is, just know that we live in a country that's democratic and that anybody—given hard work—regardless of their economic background, has an opportunity. It's not dictated for them. And they can make it if they just have the right values and they have the drive, that they can do it.

Drew: I guess it depends on what class you're from. You might have a different goal or dream. And from the group that we grew up with, probably the most common dream was having a house, family, and all that. It's all yours—but you *earn* it.

Suzanne: That's right, it's whatever you are, everybody is gonna have a different goal. But I think again it has a lot to do with knowing you have opportunities where a lot of other countries don't offer you that.

Interviewer: Okay. In your own opinion, how realistic is the American Dream in today's society?

Suzanne: I think it's realistic. Totally realistic. I think that kids—like, in the projects—it's not really clear to them that they are capable of doing that. With just a little

bit of hard work and some aspiration you *can* pull yourself out of this. You don't *have* to continue the cycle. You *can* break it! . . . They're *totally* capable. And they *totally* have the opportunities. . . . They have opportunity here. They're not in Iraq where they're sheltered and they have no opportunities and it's not democratic!

Sitting on a plush leather couch in their living room, sipping ice water, Suzanne and Drew talked about the American Dream. A white, professional couple in their early thirties, the Wrights were each very accomplished and came from affluent family backgrounds. At the time of the interview, Suzanne was working for a small high-tech company of which she was part owner with her father. Drew was a very successful high-tech recruiter. Their condominium in an exclusive development in the metropolitan New York City area was beautifully appointed; they dressed meticulously, traveled frequently, and their lifestyle appeared to be more than comfortable. In their elevated status and social class positioning, the Wrights were somewhat exceptional in our sample, but in their perspectives on the American Dream, they were not.

The Wrights and other families repeatedly articulated a similar view: that the American Dream is a realistic explanation for how our social system operates and that it provides a sound justification for where an individual stands in the hierarchy of social class positioning. While they did not use the word *meritocracy* to describe it, meritocracy was, in effect, what was discussed most often. Families were consistent in their explanations that in the United States social class positions are earned, deserved, and merited based on individual achievement or lack thereof. Broaching the topics of wealth and inequality inevitably generated discussions of individualism and equal opportunity. In these discussions, people's perspectives were clear. Essentially, they believed that with hard work and aspirations, people's chances are equal regardless of their backgrounds. As we will see in later chapters, these same families contradicted these sentiments

by also claiming that some individuals are advantaged and disadvantaged by their access to family wealth. However, their first claim—and truly, a seemingly genuine one on their parts—was always that meritocracy is real. This was not just a rhetorical stance; families from across the race and class spectrum used notions of meritocracy to explain that their own social positions and the positions of others were legitimately the result of their own doing. Just as Suzanne and Drew articulated a strong meritocratic stance, Anjillette, a black single mother from Los Angeles area who was working as a vocational nurse, was explicit about the same themes.

Anjillette: You know, I just say it's a matter of time, and just really buckling down and getting done.

Interviewer: You mentioned, Anjillette, that you know people who have two or three jobs, and they are just not making it. What do you think causes that? Or why do you think that's happening?

Anjillette: You know, I really won't say. Because I think those are people that *choose* to do that.

Parents evoked, as Anjillette did, the American Dream's core credo of meritocracy to explain why people rise and fall. The underlying—or, in Anjillette's case, overt—presumption was that people independently *choose* their relative class circumstances. Regardless of their own social class positioning, and despite their vastly differing life experiences, the parents interviewed asserted that individual hard work is the main determinant of upward and downward social mobility. Lodged within this logic was a profound optimism about an individual's life chances. As one father from a wealthy white family in the New York City area insisted, "Hard work can go a long way toward overcoming most any obstacle!" But this adamant meritocratic belief had a flip side too: just as "success" was perceived as one's personal achievement, "failure," too, was seen as the direct result of

one's own doing. In an interview with the Gordons, a well-off white couple from the Washington, D.C. area, James, a public relations director for a major D.C. media firm, was asked "What is 'the American Dream,' in your own opinion?" He responded, "The American Dream for me is equal opportunity. Second, no discrimination. Third, you have the right to be what you want to be. And the only other thing—which I feel—is you could do it if you want."

THE GREAT EQUALIZER AND THE KEY TO THE DREAM

If the American Dream of meritocracy is our country's promise, public education is what ensures that promise to all children. Education—more than any other institution—is the system's way of making certain that achievement is independently earned, not tied to one's background. Parents emphasize that it was because of this that they saw their hopes for their children as not just a dream, but truly possible. Joyce and Elliston Meador, a black couple, both social workers, who lived in inner-city St. Louis, exemplified this emphasis in their interview. Elliston explained, "One of the things that helps a person move from poverty to financial independence, or at least having a decent income . . . you can live off of, is education. I mean that's the level that everybody can ascend to regardless of race, creed, or color. If you're poor, I don't care if you're white, black, red, yellow—doesn't make any difference. If you don't have an education, you are not going to be upwardly mobile. So everybody has an opportunity to move up from poverty."

The American Dream does not guarantee that everyone will make it in America, but it presumes that despite inequalities in their circumstances each individual will have a fair chance, an equal opportunity, and no one will be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. Given that we are born into different families with very different backgrounds, the system must provide some way to balance our opportunities. A major role of the institution of education is to do just that; it is

supposed to level out what is an initially uneven playing field. The parents interviewed clung to this idea. . . .

While . . . parents also did question its legitimacy, they repeatedly asserted the notion that education is the Great Equalizer. The idea of the Great Equalizer is that no matter who you are, no matter what financial or social background you come from, no matter what your family situation is, the school system diminishes inequalities of circumstance and provides opportunities to get ahead. In this way, the Great Equalizer is central to the proper functioning of the whole system: the institution of education is supposed to be where meritocracy is operationalized, actualized, and realized. It is supposed to ensure that regardless of background—regardless of whatever contexts of advantage or disadvantage we might be born into—our own positions in society are ultimately earned, deserved, and achieved by us and us alone. The families—including the Mitchels, an affluent white family with handsome homes in downtown Washington, D.C. and in rural Virginia—were consistent on this point. When asked how essential they thought education is to one's success in this country, Jacob responded right away: "I think that education is the Great Leveler. That's what sets me and my family apart is our education, advanced education. And everyone in my family has at least a master's or a double master's. And I think everyone has done well because of their education. We didn't start out with much. My father didn't have much. But I think the children, through education, ended up doing very well."

Education was viewed as the Great Equalizer making the American Dream real, and also as *the* key to the dream. Education provides, at least in theory, a clear route to follow: if you work hard enough in school, then you can be anything, do anything, rise up to any level you choose. In the minds of the parents, however, this was more than just theory—as Jacob's quote above illustrates, parents saw it as real. Whether it had been so in their own experience or not, parents seemed to genuinely believe in education as the key to their children's future success. As such, it held

paramount importance in the raising of their children; they understood their role as parents to include—as an important part—navigating the education system for their kids. Kimberly Harmon, a black single mother who was working as receptionist in a downtown Boston office, explained her perspective regarding her son:

Kimberly: Hopefully he can get a good education, cause that's the most important thing.

Interviewer: Why is it so important? Why do you think a good education is so important?

Kimberly: A good education is good because without education what are you going to be? You need your education. Everybody should know that!

For the parents with whom we spoke, education was of the utmost importance. When asked, “Why do you think education is so important?” parents responded quickly and matter-of-factly. Their tones implied that—as Kimberly Harmon had said outright—“Everybody should know that!” Education was so important because, as Melissa Desmond, a white, unemployed mother from Boston explained, it was perceived as determining life chances for a child.

Interviewer: Why do you think education is so important?

Melissa: Because if you don't know anything, you won't go nowhere. You won't. And I want my son to do something with his life. I don't want him to—I mean, I know, it's his choice which road he chooses, but if I can try and like show him, you know what I mean? That there's, you know, that he can *make* it by going the right way.

Previous studies of families from across race and class spectra confirm that since education is seen by people as the “principal means to economic advancement” in our current system, it thus becomes the focus of much parental energy (Kluegel & Smith, 1986, p. 42; see also Brantlinger, 2003; Lareau, 2000, 2003). Parents,

such as the Wards, a black, working-class family from Boston, spoke passionately about their views regarding the role of education in the shaping of their children's future life trajectories. Eleanor, a homemaker, and Anthony, a carpenter, were interviewed at their small home in a black working-class neighborhood of Boston. Eleanor did most of the talking and was passionate about her children's education. While Anthony had a more quiet personality, he agreed with his wife on the importance of their children's education.

Eleanor: We all know those are minimum wage jobs—McDonald's, Burger King, all those places. But, if you feel you don't want to work those places, go to school! Go to school! Get an education! In a field that will interest you, whether it's day care, kitchen work, whatever. Go to school! Don't just sit on your behind just because you can't find a job that you want to pay you more. You're not going to get paid no more than what your experience will cover. So don't go out there thinking you're going to get a twelve-dollar-an-hour job knowing you don't have a high school diploma. . . . You should never go through life doing nothing, or depending on other people. . . . Without education you're not going to be anywhere. This is what you're going to have to do: you have to go to school whether you like it or not! And let it go at that!

Eleanor's and other parents' intense focus on the importance of their children's schooling is understandable when one considers how much they perceived was riding on it. In their views, their children's success was in large part hinging on education. Schooling was not just seen as an opportunity, but as the primary pathway to success in the social system. And, for many parents who were hoping for their children to surpass their own social class position (many poor and working-class parents, both black and white), education was seen as the avenue to that upward mobility.

For these parents, as *the* key to the American Dream, much was riding on education. As one

parent, Elaine, explained, "We're all constantly thinking about schools, and constantly thinking about your kid's education all the time, and what you can do about it. . . . I believe it's *sooo* important, it's the most important thing for any kid. Because at least then you've got a choice. . . . If you've never had a decent education, you're stuck, you're trapped." And so much was at stake; as another parent, Lisa, explained, "Knowledge is power. Without education you'd have nothing. With education, you can do and say whatever you want, but you need to understand this society out here. That's the bottom line. Have knowledge. . . . definitely, definitely. Without that education, that's the struggle. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to go to college and increase my knowledge, but I do the best I can for my children. I count my blessings. For them I want better."

Parents of all race and class backgrounds heavily valued education and expressed intense commitment to their children's schooling. However, working-class and poor parents, who were disproportionately black, conveyed a particular depth and urgency to their commitment. This was rooted in their hopes for their children to do better than themselves and in their beliefs that schooling was, really, the only answer. Karen and Bill Jones, a black, working-class couple from Los Angeles, were adamant in their view. As Karen explained, "Education is—it's the only way the kids are going to make it. That's it. Without that they will end up with the same exact life that my mother and I had. We can't have that! Anything to prevent my children from walking down that path. That's why an education is so important."

Not only did they want their children to be happy in their futures—as all parents did—but these parents consistently articulated that they "wanted better" for their children, that they "wanted them to go above" where they themselves had gone, that they did not want them to follow in their footsteps, or end up in situations like their own.

Ana: Right now I'm just trying to provide as a mother, as a parent. . . . It is important to have an education. So that's

priority. That's my focus right now. I'm in working-class poor. There is no doubt about it. So I'm always—I'm always going to be the working-class poor. I'm never going to be above and I'm never going to be below, and that's why I'm focusing a lot of my money on my children's education. Because I want them to go above. Not that stuck in the middle where I am.

Interviewer: Do you think education is going to provide them with that?

Ana: Yeah, because I don't have as much education as they will have. . . . Yeah, it's going to make a big difference. I'm going to make sure of it. It's a priority.

Reflecting on their own experiences, parents who were struggling repeatedly blamed their situations on themselves, and specifically on their own lack of educational achievement. They understood their roles to be, at least in part, to foster their children's upward mobility. They wanted their kids to be better educated than themselves, and they wanted them to value education more than they had while growing up. As one parent, Kim, noted, "I know now that an education is the most valuable thing that you can have. And in order to survive in this world, you have to have an education. And the reason I say that is because I've had such a struggle to survive because I don't have the education. So that would be my primary goal. . . . You know, 'cause one of my most—the biggest thing in my mind is to get my children an education."

Although this was most evident in interviews with relatively less affluent and disproportionately black families, even very wealthy and/or accomplished parents—the most upper-class and the most educationally, occupationally, and financially high-achieving that we interviewed—expressed hope for their children to do even better than they themselves had. So, while they had different life experiences, and while they were speaking from very different vantage points, parents shared their focus on their children's education. As one white father, a surgeon from the

Washington D.C. area, said, “I think everybody in the world wants a better life for their children.” And as another parent, a black mother and a customer service representative from the Los Angeles area, said, “I see a lot of different types of families at her school. All of them, I think, are dedicated to their children’s education.”

“IT’S NOT NECESSARILY FAIR,
AND IT’S NOT NECESSARILY RIGHT”

Since education is so crucial to the American Dream, this is—at least in part—why Americans care so deeply about their schools (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). The families interviewed were intent on making sure their own children got the best education possible but were concerned about the state of America’s education system. Despite their faith in the American Dream and their claims that education was the Great Equalizer, they were also up-front about their perspectives that different schools provided vastly different opportunities for kids; for, as much as the families interviewed believed in the egalitarian principles of meritocracy, they were also faced with the reality of drastically disparate school systems. As Sarah Otis, a white freelance journalist from Boston, reflected on this reality, “I mean, it’s just obvious to me that there’s a severe problem in the United States with education right now. And it makes me so sad, though, that, you know, all kids—I mean, I just look at my daughter’s class, you know? They’re all bright, wonderful little kids, you know? They should all have an opportunity to receive a decent education. And, you know, it’s just so profoundly unfair.”

Of the 260 parents interviewed, not one of them claimed that schools in America are actually equal. One middle-class black father summed up their collective view when he said, “The more money you have, the better the neighborhood you live in. The better neighborhood, the more taxes, the better the school. Your kid goes where you live.” Parents regularly brought

up how they thought it unfair that some children had to attend poor-quality schools while others could attend excellent ones. They emphasized this inequality and criticized it. They were concerned about their own children and voiced concern for all children.

Vivian articulated precisely the sentiments that parent after parent had stressed: that, given their emphasis on education, they “would do whatever they could to make sure their children get a good education.” This meant they had to get their children into a good school. First and foremost, however, parents had to figure out which schools were the “good” schools.

A “GOOD” SCHOOL

What was considered to be a “good” school? Parents said that good schools had updated facilities and equipment, stimulating atmospheres, and high-quality educational programs. They said that they were safe, had teachers who were dedicated, small class sizes, computers, healthy environments, and successful graduates who went on to excel academically and occupationally. However, as much as parents described in detail the types of educational resources characteristic of “good” schools, rarely had they actually explored the availability of these traits when considering schools for their kids. Similarly, parents often emphasized the importance of a school’s rankings or standardized test scores and were quick to point them out if they knew them—but they rarely did. A divergence between what these families said was important in considering schools and what actually had been determining factors in their decisions was transparent in the interviews.¹ What they overwhelmingly *had* relied upon in determining whether or not a school was “good” was one thing: simply, if it was located in a “good” neighborhood. For example, in an interview with the Smiths, a middle-class black family from Los Angeles, Leslie Smith, a realtor, kept referring to certain schools as “good schools.” When asked directly, “What is a ‘good’ school?” she replied,

It depends on the school, and where the school is *located*. I think the Fairburne School is a very good school. Comparing it to private schools, I would say it ranks just as high as some of the private schools. If I sent [my son] to our neighborhood school, which is South Street Elementary, I would say private schools are a lot better. So, just, I think it depends on where you are in the city. How much money gets filtered into the school. And, for me, what I've seen—I have friends that are teachers. They're good teachers, but they're in bad situations, down in South Central L.A., where they have forty kids in their class. . . . And I don't think those kids get a good education.

"Good" schools and "bad" schools were defined—first and foremost—by their location. Molisa Parks, a working-class, black single mother from St. Louis, put it bluntly: "I mean, we all know that kids in the country get a better education than kids in the city—as far as the atmosphere, the equipment they have to work with, the change of attitude of the kids. It's just class sizes, anything and everything, computer equipment!"

Even when parents mentioned specifics such as safety, class size, or equipment, they usually spoke of them in the context of location. Rarely did parents use any information other than its location to substantively inform their judgment of a school.

That parents judged schools by their location was not surprising since previous research has identified a strong link between school reputation and location (Holme, 2002). What was remarkable was that parents' perspectives on what makes a school's location a good one were so incredibly consistent. They all seemed to dictate the same basic formula: a good school is in a good neighborhood, and a good neighborhood is a wealthier and whiter neighborhood.

Race and class framed parents' thinking regarding the schools they wanted for their children to attend. This was true for white parents—who were often quite explicit about their desires to avoid schools with racially diverse populations. It was also true for black parents—who despite a desire for racial diversity in their children's schools, wanted the best quality

schooling, which they generally presumed to be whiter and less diverse. And, for all of the parents, the more wealthy and affluent the area in which a school was located, the better the school was considered to be.

Elsewhere, Thomas Shapiro and I have argued that for the parents we interviewed, race was a defining factor, if not *the* factor, in determining a "good" school. In our interviews, parents tied a school's reputation directly to the race and class composition of its students. While claiming to be concerned about such things as safety and class size, the families we spoke with were ultimately seeking whiter—and, in their view, inextricably wealthier—school districts for their children, regardless of any other of the school's characteristics. Because we have focused on it previously, this social construction of school reputation and the race and class dynamics of school decisions are not major focal points here (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro & Johnson, 2005). I would be remiss, however, to not at least mention the enormous extent to which families' perspectives were explicitly framed by race and class, and by racism and classism.

Race played a significant role in parents' logic where schools for their children were concerned. Their views, decisions, actions, and experiences were informed and structured by race and racism, and, presumably, race and racism help to contribute to their maintenance (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro & Johnson, 2005). Indeed, the interviews provide evidence that, as sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues, the contemporary United States is "a racialized social system" (1997, 2001, 2003). The families we studied were operating within a racial structure, where, as Bonilla-Silva (1997) discusses, racially motivated—or even racist—behavior such as choosing whiter schools is rational. Race and racism, however, were often conflated with class and classism in complex ways.

Class rigidly structured school reputation, as parents consistently asserted that the "good" schools were located in wealthier, more affluent areas. While I suspect that the frequently used phrase "more money" was often code for

“whiter,” parents clearly believed that better-funded schools were simply better schools. Class dynamics—as separate from, and as entwined with, race dynamics—helped to frame families’ views, decisions, actions, and experiences.

Since schools are funded in large part by local property taxes, the schools that were located in more affluent areas were presumed by parents to have better funding and thus be better schools. This was true regardless of whether or not a parent had gathered actual information about a school or visited it.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Since American education has historically been structured around neighborhood schools, and since schools have traditionally been funded largely by local property taxes, schools and communities are inextricably linked. Just as parents considered schools to be “good” if they were in “good” neighborhoods, they considered neighborhoods to be “good” if they had “good” schools.

As Suzanne Wright noted, “We could have lived in Basking Ridge for \$300,000 for a *townhouse*, or there’s Battle Brook—or Frank Lloyd Township for that matter [*turning to her husband*], which would have been right around the corner from your office—and gotten a *huge* house for \$300,000. But we didn’t. Because why? Because of the schools. . . . Why do people typically want to move into a town? Because of the schools. I mean it’s sad, but that’s true, right?”

With financial support from their families, Suzanne and Drew Wright were able to buy their first home soon after they got married. Although they could have bought a “huge house” for the same price in another area, they opted for a small townhouse because it was all they could afford in the specific town where they wanted to live in the New York City metropolitan area. Although other locations would have meant shorter commutes to work, a much lower cost of living, and, as they put it, “far more house for their money,” the Wrights explained that they wanted to live where the best schools were located. For the families we

interviewed, this was the norm. They most often cited schools as their primary consideration in deciding where to live. Figures from the U.S. Department of Education show this as the pattern nationally: at least one out of four families nationwide chose their neighborhood specifically for the schools there (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

At least in terms of the public school system, where we live determines where we go to school. And, since perhaps more than any other variables race and class segregation characterize our residential living patterns, significant schooling differences go hand in hand. If all of us—from all walks of life, from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and representing every point on the socioeconomic spectrum—were spread out evenly in the country’s cities and neighborhoods, then perhaps school funding and student populations would be generally equivalent. If that were the case, then perhaps localized school systems might result in more or less equal education—which might correspondingly go a long way toward making neighborhoods more uniformly desirable (or undesirable, as some would argue). However, we are not spread out evenly throughout the neighborhoods of America. Residential segregation is a major linchpin in educational inequality.

Patterns of residential segregation in post-civil rights America have been well documented by scholars across disciplines (Meyer, 2000). Data from the past two decades, for example, show that while residential racial segregation declined slightly through the 1980s (Farley & Frey, 1994), that decline has since reversed and segregation is again on the rise (Orfield & Eaton, 1997; Yinger, 1995). In *American Apartheid*, sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993) detailed the contours of race and class segregation and described the contemporary United States as categorized by “persistent” and “severe” segregation. Their work showed how racial groups—most acutely, African Americans—are intensely “hypersegregated”: isolated from other groups, clustered in contiguous areas, concentrated in small areas, and centralized within urban areas (Massey & Denton, 1993). Other data—for

example, a 2002 report from the U.S. Census Bureau—confirm that blacks are still the most residentially segregated of any racial or ethnic group (Iceland, Weinberg, & Steinmetz, 2002).

Due to the ways that race and class are linked (through, for example, the historic racial wealth gap [Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Shapiro, 2004]), racial segregation is also, of course, inexorably class segregation. The resulting social inequalities are extreme, causing segregation scholars to conclude, as Massey and Denton did, that “racial residential segregation is the principal structural feature of American society responsible for the perpetuation of urban poverty and represents a primary cause of racial inequality in the United States” (Massey & Denton, 1993, p. iii). Others have noted the ways in which residential segregation has molded our society into “a country of strangers” (Hacker, 1992), and how we are, for all intents and purposes, living in “two nations” with great divides between racial and class groups (Shipler, 1997). In Mary Jackman’s words, residential segregation “achieves an unprecedented physical separation of the groups—it maximizes the spatial distance between the groups and it radiates over many domains of social life as separate schools, shopping, places of employment, and recreational facilities effortlessly form the existence of separate neighborhoods. Spatial segregation in neighborhoods thus spills over into all walks of life, creating de facto physical separation of the groups throughout social life” (1994, p. 136).

One of segregation’s greatest fault lines lies in the fact that the nation’s younger generations are perpetually educated in separate and unequal schools. A 2003 U.S. Department of Education report showed that 70 percent of white students attend schools that are at least 75 percent white. The same report revealed that 32 percent of black elementary and secondary school students are enrolled in schools located in large cities, compared to only 6 percent of white students (Hoffman & Llagas, 2003). Other studies’ results are even more acute: Gary Orfield and John Yun’s examination of school segregation shows that, in industrial states, over half of all black

children attend schools that are of over 90 percent minority students; in large urban areas, over 90 percent of black children attend schools that are predominantly nonwhite (Orfield & Yun, 1999). In 2004, 70 percent of black students were eligible for free or reduced school lunches, compared to 23 percent of white students. Of those children who qualified, 76 percent of the black students lived in central cities, compared to 24 percent of the qualifying white students. In center-city schools, 61 percent of black students attended schools where over 75 percent of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Rather than being a Great Equalizer, separate and unequal schooling presents a direct contradiction to the American Dream of meritocracy. If schools are segregated and unequal, then a major avenue of ensuring equal opportunity is blocked. Efforts to reconcile this issue have been part of social justice agendas and education reform goals for decades. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” is probably the most large-scale and well-known example. Fifty years have passed since the famous *Brown* opinion was declared, and while desegregation did achieve some very real gains in the school systems, substantive desegregation efforts have been more or less stalled for the passed 25 years (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Orfield & Eaton, 1997), levels of school segregation have been worsening since the early 1990’s (Orfield & Eaton, 1997), and both integrated and equal education remain, for the most part, unrealized (Orfield & Eaton, 1997; Steinhorn & Diggs-Brown, 1999).

The results of what Jennifer Hochschild refers to as “deeply embedded patterns of inequality” is that, as she puts it, “the worst-off students and schools have a completely different educational experience from the best-off students, with predictably different outcomes” (Hochschild, 2003, pp. 825–826). Wealthier schools spend on average 56 percent more per student than do poorer schools (Children’s Defense Fund, 1998). Seventy percent of teachers in schools located in

low-income areas say they lack the books, supplies, and other materials necessary for them to successfully teach their students (Children's Defense Fund, 1998). Children from poor families disproportionately attend weaker schools and are at greater risk for serious academic failure (Pagani, Boulterice, & Tremblay, 1997). They are much more likely to drop out of their schools, attain fewer years of education, and earn less income later in life than children from more well-off families (Children's Defense Fund, 1998, p. xiv; Duncan & Gunn, 1997; Fine, 1991; Haveman & Wolfe, 1994).

Essentially, the research literature supports what the parents we interviewed believed. The schools that were perceived as "good" and "bad" were indeed probably better or worse in terms of the resources they offered, the educational opportunities they provided, and the chances and outcomes of their students. While there are always exceptions, the funding, resources, opportunities, and student outcomes of poorer, more urban, disproportionately black public schools are generally weaker relative to the "whiter, wealthier," more suburban schools that the parents so often compared them to (Anyon, 1997; Fine, 1991; Hochschild, 2003; Orfield & Eaton, 1997; Wells, 1995).

"RUNNING WITH FAST HORSES"

In regard to school inequality, it was not only differences in funding, resources, opportunities, and student outcomes that concerned parents. Parents were highly cognizant of what they perceived as enormous differences in schools in terms of the social status of the students who attended them. While they were clearly concerned with making sure their children received a high-quality education, they were exorbitantly more concerned with the caliber, social standing, and family backgrounds of their children's potential classmates. From their perspectives, enrolling their children in school meant providing them with reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, but it also meant choosing their social

environment, determining who their classmates and friends may be, and selecting their peers.

Parents wanted their children to, as Carter Martin put it, "run with fast horses" so that they would "run fast, too." They emphasized the importance of a school's social environment in determining the prospects for student achievement—achievement educationally, and achievement in life. They talked about wanting their children to be "exposed to" and "surrounded by" kids who were "smart"; "striving to achieve"; "well-behaved"; and would "do well in life." As one father said, "The person's ability is one factor. But a good portion of the deal is that, as they say, 'It's not what you know, it's *who* you know.'"

Parents wanted their kids to attend schools with peers who would positively influence their work habits, social lives, and life chances. They were also quite clear regarding those with whom they did *not* want their children to attend school. As Deborah Curley explained her logic, "I was just really concerned about the kinds of children that my child would be exposed to. I definitely didn't want her exposed to a lot of the kids that are in the population that I work with. So that's a consideration too, you know? So the more that you spend on a school, then you guarantee that that's not going to happen. You know that your children won't be exposed to, uh, kids that have been abused or neglected. You know, that kind of thing."

Impressions of student populations and perceptions of school reputations, whether grounded in direct experience (as was the case with Deborah), or based purely on ungrounded speculation (as was the case with the majority of parents we spoke with—especially white and middle-class parents) (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro & Johnson, 2005), often had deep race and class undertones. Often, of utmost importance in parents' minds (and often undoubtedly tied to race and class stereotypes) were questions about the "character" or "values" of the student population: Are the school's students "good kids," "from good families," with "the right values," and "bright futures?" Or are they not? The subtle—and not so subtle—subtext of such reasoning on the part of parents involved their

questioning the race and class composition of schools. . . .

Often having never visited the schools they were judging, nor directly observed any of the students at them, parents' perceptions about their children's potential peers were based almost entirely on word-of-mouth or blatant presumptions. Thus, school reputations were constructed almost entirely around parents' subjective impressions of who attended the school. Results from other recent research show similar findings. For example, in a study by education researcher Jennifer Jellison Holme, parents of high socioeconomic status in California were found to know virtually nothing firsthand about the schools to which they chose to send their children. Parents' school decisions had been based solely on the subjective reputations of area schools. These reputations, as it turned out, were founded almost exclusively within parents' own social networks, and were based almost entirely on the race and class characteristics of the families whose children were attending the schools (Ball, 2003; Brantlinger, 2003; Holme, 2002).

Research studies have documented that the social environment of a school does indeed significantly impact student achievement and student outcomes. The greater the proportion of wealthy students who attend a school, the higher the likelihood of that school's students completing high school, and the higher the chances for their successful educational outcomes (Mayer, 1997). Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick's extensive review of the literature on this subject has concluded, "One of the few things we know for certain about schooling is that the class background of a student's classmates has a dramatic effect on that student's level of success. . . . This finding has been documented over and over in various countries and schools and with different methodologies and sets of data" (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003, p. 26).

Some may wonder if the schools themselves really make such a large difference at all, if we can even be certain that education is central to achievement or, ultimately, to an individual's social positioning later in life. Indeed, some

experts have argued that schooling does not matter nearly as much as it is presumed to matter, that life chance outcomes would be similar regardless of educational experiences (Coleman, 1996; Jencks, 1979). For example, some claim that the supposedly poor parenting skills of black families and the supposed cultural deficits of poor families are actually the significant agents in negative outcomes of black students and the long-term intergenerational transmission of poverty (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Surely family background and many factors besides schools and outside of the education system matter greatly to individuals' life chances, and variables well beyond school quality affect children's trajectories and chances for success (Conley & Albright, 2004). Schools can not be isolated as the sole distributors of opportunity or even as the primary influence on a person's life course. However, ultimately it seems that not just the families we interviewed, but also most researchers and policy makers tend to agree that, as social welfare scholar Mark Rank puts it, "A quality education is one of the most vital assets that an individual can acquire" (2004, p. 207). It would be naïve to think that school experiences and school quality do not have at least a significant effect, if not profound effects, on a child's path in life.

As Rank argues, "It is blatantly wrong that some American children, simply by virtue of their parents' economic standing, must settle for a substandard educational experience, while others receive a well-rounded education" (2004, p. 210). As he discusses in his book *One Nation, Underprivileged*, due to the fact that public schools are funded primarily through their local tax bases (mostly property taxes), school districts in wealthier areas generally have more ample funding (for things such as teachers' salaries, smaller class sizes, purchasing books, supplies, equipment, and technological resources, etc.) and thus, can offer higher quality education to their populations. The sorts of things that wealthier school districts can afford for their students correspond directly to the key school quality benchmarks identified as positively

influencing student learning and performance. A report by the U.S. Department of Education pointed to indicators such as a school's academic environment, teacher academic skills and pedagogy, technology, and class size as characterizing high quality educational environments (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2001). Indeed, in their research, education scholars Jeannie Oakes and Marisa Saunders (2004) found that such things as textbooks, technology, and curriculum materials are "educationally important," and the consequences of not having such things (or having inadequate levels of them) on student learning and student outcomes are "particularly harsh." They also found that schools serving low-income students are the schools that are most affected by shortages of such resources (Oakes & Saunders, 2004). In the end, most of us would be hard-pressed to claim that differences in schools do not matter when, as Linda Darling-Hammond and Laura Post (2000) report, in the United States the wealthiest 10 percent of school districts spend ten times the amount on educating their students than the poorest 10 percent, where poor and minority students are concentrated, spend. Certainly none of the parents we interviewed made the claim that school inequalities did not matter. In fact, they claimed the opposite: they believed that the differences between "good" schools and "bad" schools mattered greatly to their children's experiences. And they attempted to act on that belief.

Regardless of the reasons why, and regardless of whether they thought it was "fair or right," the parents we interviewed believed that some children were advantaged and some were disadvantaged based on where they could go to school. Schools, in their view, were profoundly important; schools were seen as the ticket to the American Dream, the route to success in the meritocracy. So, for them, getting their children into "good" ones was critically important (Warren & Tyagi, 2003). While they believed in the American Dream and defended the education system as the Great Equalizer, parents at the same time emphasized the uneven landscape of school inequalities. With all of them intent upon sending

their children to a "good" school, the question logically follows: Who gets to go where?

NOTE

1. The degree to which the parents were consciously aware of the discrepancies between what they said and what they did was not clear and would require further research to explore. For discussion and analysis regarding the relationship between what people say and what people do, see Deutscher, Pestello, and Pestello, 1993.

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TRACKING IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Courses and Course Selection Procedures

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This reading examines the courses offered and the procedures in place at six different high schools located in working-class, middle-class, and affluent communities. The high schools described in this research were carefully selected to represent schools that had records of achievement in mathematics and science well above what could be expected for the social class of their community and backgrounds of the students as well as schools that had average records. The reading compares these "excellent" schools to their average counterparts and examines differences across social-class communities. "Excellent" is used cautiously here; these schools were chosen because of their performance on statewide examinations in mathematics and science and are defined as excellent only within the context of this study. Not included in this excerpt is the detailed discussion of how tests are used to place students in high school classes. Such

tests and extensive evaluation measures are used primarily in affluent communities as a way of justifying placement against potential parental objections and not in working-class communities in which outstanding students could be targeted and encouraged. This reading illustrates the multitude of ways students are tracked and placed in curriculum that ultimately determine their future work opportunities.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How does the pattern of course offerings affect student achievement?
2. What differences did these researchers find in course offerings and course placement procedures across the six schools they studied?
3. What reasons can you give for why they found these patterns across social-class communities?

For many years, researchers have argued that tracking in high schools contributes to stratification and status maintenance (Alexander, Cook, & McDill, 1978; Hauser, Sewell, & Alwin, 1976; Heyns, 1974; Oakes, 1986; Rosenbaum, 1976; Vanfossen, Jones, & Spade, 1987). They noted that small initial differences in students' achievement, derived mainly from differences in social-class background, become accentuated over time through a continuing process of organizational selection (McPartland & McDill, 1982). Whereas earlier research focused almost entirely on the effects of tracking on students, attention has shifted to an examination of how tracking is nested in the organizational structure of schools (Garet & DeLany, 1988; Hallinan, 1991; Kilgore, 1991; Oakes, 1990; Riehl, Natriello, & Pallas, 1992; Useem, 1992a). More recent studies focused on how organizational characteristics of schools define the social context for teaching and learning, funneling students of similar backgrounds into a hierarchy of tracks, programs, and schools that are associated with different learning environments.

Many researchers found that the availability of diverse course offerings and procedures used by counselors, teachers, and schools to place students in courses is important in linking students to different opportunity structures (cf. Garet & DeLany, 1988; Kilgore, 1991; Oakes, 1985, 1990; Riehl et al., 1992; Stevenson, Schiller, & Schneider, 1992; Useem, 1992a). Also important are differences rooted in the social-class backgrounds of the students who attend the schools. Unfortunately, much of the research looked at individual students, rather than school organization. Thus, researchers focused less on organizational differences among schools of various social-class compositions than on differences among students of different social-class backgrounds. Although enrollments in courses and course-placement procedures are related to the distribution of social classes in particular school districts (Garet & DeLany, 1988; Monk & Haller, 1993; Oakes, 1990), there is nevertheless a need for more systematic comparisons and analyses of the organization of curriculum in schools across different social-class communities.

In this article, we explore how social class interacts with the organization of curriculum by examining course offerings and placement procedures in six high schools, carefully selected from all high schools in one state to represent average and excellent achievement in mathematics and science in working-class, middle-class, and affluent communities. In doing so, we present a detailed analysis of how the organization of schooling across social-class communities exerts indirect control over the tracking of students, both via the course options available and the mechanisms that place students in classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Oakes (1986) argued that curriculum tracking reinforces social class by providing differential opportunities to students. Students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds are typically found in a track where they are exposed to "high-status" content (including science, mathematics, and foreign languages), while students from working-class backgrounds are often placed in the lower-track, where they are presented with a sharply limited range of topics and skills. Oakes (1985) carefully documented differences in the content presented, use of time, quality of instruction, classroom climate, and students' attitudes in different tracks. Because the curriculum for the lowest track is aimed at getting students to pass minimum-competency examinations, lower-track students have neither the opportunity nor the credentials to develop higher-order knowledge and skills (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985).

Tracking is often referred to as the placement of students in courses of similar levels across disciplines. In our research, however, we focus more on the practice of offering courses at different levels of difficulty within subject areas. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) defined this practice as the "vertical curriculum." In theory, the vertical curriculum allows students to take a mathematics course at one level and a science course at a different level or to switch back and forth between levels of difficulty from one year to the next (Garet & DeLany, 1988).

Garet and DeLany (1988) argued that the placement of students in courses is the result of a twofold process in which courses are created and then students are matched with courses. Others have suggested that a variety of school policy decisions influence which courses are offered and that there are considerable differences across schools (Riehl et al., 1992; Stevenson et al., 1992; Useem, 1992a). Differences in the patterning of vertical curriculum have been found both in the flexibility or rigidity of course sequencing and the range of course offerings available to students (Hallinan, 1991; Powell et al., 1985; Rosenbaum, 1976).

Range of Course Offerings

Unless a sufficient range of courses is offered, students cannot be encouraged to take courses at different levels or to move up to higher levels of study. Thus, decisions about the organization of curriculum can truncate or encourage further study (Useem, 1992a). Many factors intercede in the processes by which course offerings are determined. Organizational demands and intraschool politics are just as likely to shape course offerings as are the ability levels of students (Finley, 1984; Hallinan, 1992; Kilgore, 1991; Sanders, 1990). Students' social class and the social class of their communities also influence students' and administrators' expectations of what courses are preferred (Garet & DeLany, 1988; Oakes, 1990; Sanders, 1990; Useem, 1992a; Vanfossen et al., 1987). Yet, schools vary considerably in the way they pattern the curriculum, even within the same social-class communities. Useem (1992a) found differences in the policies adopted by schools in middle- and upper-class communities. The net effect of these differences was that some schools exclude students from higher-level courses and other schools promote such study.

Course Placement

Besides the opportunities offered or denied by the range of courses offered, schools also effect learning via the criteria and processes they use to place students in courses. Although tracking in

high schools reflects students' orientation and ability to a certain extent (Alexander & Cook, 1982), we cannot ignore the correlation of track placement with the social class of students (Oakes, 1990; Vanfossen et al., 1987). Students are shuffled into different levels of the curriculum as early as kindergarten on the basis of extraneous, class-based characteristics, such as physical appearance (including cleanliness and the condition of their clothes), interpersonal behavior, use of language in the classroom, and parental influence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Lareau, 1989; Rist, 1970). By the time a student reaches high school, many social and interpersonal forces converge to make it appear that the process of course selection is based on personal choice. However, the procedures schools use to help students choose courses are a critical part of the puzzle in understanding students' achievement (Rosenbaum, 1976).

Most schools include parents and students in placement decisions. However, parents' and students' actual influence on the selection of courses varies, with some of this variation again linked to social class (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Gamoran, 1990; Useem, 1992b). Gamoran (1990) found that schools in higher social-class districts emphasized testing and competition within schools in their course-placement decisions. Whereas Gamoran viewed testing as more equitable than parental influence in making placement decisions, others have argued that an emphasis on test scores excludes students from advanced classes by denying them the opportunity to enter the "fast track" (Oakes, 1985; Useem, 1992a).

Our study examined both the types of courses offered to assess the number of options available to students, as well as how students are placed in classes, by studying course-placement decisions and the criteria used to make those decisions in "excellent" and "average" schools across social-class communities. We addressed the following questions:

1. How do school policies and practices affect what courses students take?
2. Does the social-class composition of the district affect what courses students are offered, as

well as the policies and procedures used to place students in courses?

3. Do excellent schools offer a different menu of courses and guide their students into courses differently from average schools?

METHOD

Overview

Using a series of regression analyses, we selected three pairs of schools from affluent, middle-class, and working-class districts as sites for the field research. One school in each pair, the excellent school, was chosen because students' knowledge of mathematics and science increased far more over the course of the high school years than it did in other schools. In the second school in each pair, the average school, students' gains in knowledge of mathematics and science were average.

During spring 1985, three researchers conducted two days of interviews with administrators and teachers in each of these schools. Attention focused on courses in Grades 9 and 11 in mathematics and science because students learn these subjects almost entirely in school and are less likely to be affected by family background and influences outside school.

RESULTS

The Structure of Curriculum

As earlier research indicated, college-preparatory and advanced honor courses differ in substantial ways from general or remedial courses. In particular, college-preparatory courses cover more material, in more depth, and with more assigned homework and laboratory work, than do non-college-preparatory courses. Thus, the availability of courses is important in explaining differential access to learning opportunities and will affect the academic outcomes of the student body.

College-Preparatory Courses

An analysis of Tables 29.1 and 29.2 identifies a range of mathematics and science courses offered in the six schools and permits two important generalizations: (1) the number of advanced courses offered in both mathematics and science increases with the social class of the school and (2) excellent working- and middle-class schools offer one or two more advanced courses in their area of excellence than do the average schools of the same social class.

The effect of social class on course offerings is seen in the range of higher-level courses offered by affluent schools in this study. The higher the social class of the district, the greater the diversity in the college-preparatory or advanced courses offered in the schools. For example, both working-class schools had only one college-level advanced-placement (AP) course and four honors courses. In contrast, both schools in affluent districts offered six to seven accelerated, honors, or AP courses in both mathematics and science.

Patterns of course offerings also varied across excellent and average schools, particularly in the working-class schools. The working-average school offered no accelerated, honors, or AP courses in either mathematics or science, whereas the working-excellent school offered four honors courses in science (its area of excellence) and one AP course in mathematics. The orientation of these schools is reflected in the responses of the heads of the science departments of the working-excellent school and the working-average school, respectively, to the interviewers' question, "Next, would you describe the advanced science courses which are offered?"

Head of working-excellent science department: "We originally were concerned that those students who were above average in ability, interest, and motivation were not getting the science course they deserved or needed from a regular Regents class. So, we created the E-program. . . . These students are sometimes gifted and talented in the technical sense of that term. They are almost always above their peers in terms of IQ scores, DAT scores, CTBS scores. They are the kinds of students who

can relate what's going on in science to something they heard in social studies, to a novel they've read, to something they've heard on the news.

They see the connection to a lot of different areas. They've got inquiring, creative minds. They'll have questions that are just incredible."

Table 29.1 Range of Mathematics Courses Offered in the Six Schools

<i>School</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>Accelerated</i>	<i>College Preparatory Regents</i>	<i>General Non-Regents</i>	<i>Basic or Remedial</i>
Working-Class Average						
9th grade	—	—	—	1	2	.5 ^b
10th grade	—	—	—	1	1.5 ^b	—
11th grade	—	—	—	1	1	—
12th grade	—	—	—	2 ^b	1 ^c	—
Working-Class Excellent						
9th grade	—	—	—	1	1	1
10th grade	—	—	—	2 ^d	1	1
11th grade	—	—	—	1	1	—
12th grade	1	—	—	1 ^b	—	—
Middle-Class Average						
9th grade	—	—	—	1	1	1
10th grade	—	—	—	1	2	—
11th grade	—	—	—	1	1	—
12th grade	1	—	—	—	—	—
Middle-Class Excellent						
9th grade	—	—	—	1.5 ^b	1	—
10th grade	—	—	—	2	—	—
11th grade	—	—	—	1	—	—
12th grade	1	—	—	1 ^b	—	—
Affluent Average						
9th grade	—	1	1	1	1	1
10th grade	—	1	—	1 ^e	1	—
11th grade	—	1	—	2	1	—
12th grade	1	1	—	1	1	—
Affluent Excellent						
9th grade	—	—	1 ^b	1	1	1
10th grade	—	1 ^b	1 ^b	1	1	—
11th grade	—	1	1	1	1	—
12th grade	2	—	—	1 ^b	1 ^b	—

^aThe School's class schedules and descriptions of courses prepared for students, as well as interviews with department heads and teachers, were used to formulate this table. The table indicates the yearly equivalent of unique courses taught at this level.

^bThe number includes at least one one-semester (half-year) course.

^cThis course has not been taught for a number of years because of low enrollments.

^dOne of these courses can be taken for Regents credit or not, depending on the student's preference.

^eIn addition, a 10-week course in PSAT/SAT mathematics is offered.

Table 29.2 Range of Science Courses Offered in the Six Schools^a

<i>School</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>College Preparatory Regents</i>	<i>General Non-Regents</i>	<i>Basic or Remedial</i>
Working-Class Average					
9th grade	—	—	2	1	—
10th grade	—	—	2 ^a	1	—
11th grade	—	—	2.5 ^b	1	—
12th grade	—	—	1	—	—
Working-Class Excellent					
9th grade	—	1	1	1	—
10th grade	—	1	1	1.5 ^b	—
11th grade	—	1	1	1.5 ^b	—
12th grade	—	1	2.5 ^b	—	—
Middle-Class Average					
9th grade	—	—	1	1	—
10th grade	—	—	1	1	—
11th grade	—	—	1	1	1
12th grade	1	1	—	1	—
Middle-Class Excellent					
9th grade	—	—	1	1	—
10th grade	—	—	1	1	1
11th grade	—	—	1	1	—
12th grade	2	—	1	1	—
Affluent Average					
9th grade	—	1	2	3	—
10th grade	—	1	2	2 ^b	—
11th grade	—	2 ^c	1	1.5 ^b	—
12th grade	2	.5 ^b	2	1	—
Affluent Excellent					
9th grade	—	1	1	1	—
10th grade	—	1	1	1	—
11th grade	—	1	1	2	—
12th grade	3	—	1	1	—

^aIn addition to a Regents biology class, two half-year courses in environment science are offered to students with either a Regents or non-Regents background.

^bThis number includes at least one one-semester (half-year) course.

^cOne of these courses is listed as advanced biology, with the prerequisite of Honors or Regents biology. Note: Course sequencing in science is not as apparent as in mathematics. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, we used a general guideline that includes earth science as 9th grade, biology as 10th grade, chemistry as 11th grade, and physics as 12th grade.

Head of working-average science department:
 “We have no advanced placement. We have three courses that might be considered, well four, chemistry, physics, they are usually the top kids in our

school. Then we have a problems and research class which is for a few select kids and then there is on the books an advanced biology class that has not met in two years.”

Differences in course offerings at the higher levels were less clear in the middle-class and affluent schools. Both the middle-excellent and middle-average schools offered one AP mathematics course, but the middle-excellent school had more college-preparatory courses in mathematics (its area of excellence). In science, the middle-excellent school offered one more course at both the college-preparatory and AP levels, the middle-average school offered one honors course, and the middle-excellent school offered none. In the affluent schools, the number of AP, honors, and accelerated courses was almost identical for both mathematics and science. Unlike the pattern in the middle-class schools, the affluent-average school offered more college preparatory courses in both mathematics and science than did the affluent-excellent school.

Non-College-Preparatory Courses

An examination of Tables 29.1 and 29.2 suggests that (1) variation in the social-class composition of the student body does not appear to have had a marked effect on the diversity of general and basic courses offered and (2) the excellent middle-class and affluent schools offered fewer non-college-preparatory courses in their areas of excellence.

Most of the schools in the sample offered three to five general and basic courses in mathematics and science, regardless of the range of higher-level courses they offered. However, a comparison of the offerings of excellent and average schools in the same social-class category indicated that there were some differences. The middle-excellent school offered almost all its mathematics courses (its area of excellence) at the college-preparatory level, while two-thirds of the middle-average school's offerings were at the general or basic level. Several teachers in the middle-excellent school believed that all students should take mathematics at the Regents level. The pattern for science courses in the two schools in the affluent districts was similar; the average school offered more general science courses than did the excellent school.

The working-class schools did not follow this pattern. The working-excellent school offered one more general, non-Regents course in science (its area of excellence) than did the working-average school. Because it offered more courses across the spectrum of science, the working-excellent school might have been able to encourage students to study science and to keep students interested in the subject. In contrast, in mathematics, the working-average school offered one more general mathematics course than did the working-excellent school.

Course Enrollments

Course offerings alone do not indicate how learning opportunities are distributed. Whether students actually enroll in the courses offered is even more important. We used two different types of data to examine how students were distributed across the curriculum—estimates of enrollments given during interviews and data on enrollments furnished by the department heads. The combination of these two sources gave us a sense of the enrollment patterns in 11th-grade mathematics and science courses at the six schools when neither subject was required.

We found that the lowest social-class districts and the average schools were less successful in getting students to enroll in 11th-grade mathematics and science courses. Less than half the 11th graders in the working-class schools enrolled in these courses, compared to from 60 percent to more than 100 percent of those in the middle-class and affluent schools. . . .

To summarize, we found that both social class and excellence of school interacted to affect the diversity of course selections in the schools in our study. In higher social-class districts, schools offered a broader selection of courses. The differences in course offerings were particularly apparent when we compared the schools in affluent communities to the others in our sample. However, at all social-class levels, the excellent schools offered a wider array of courses than did the average schools. The working- and

middle-class excellent schools offered more courses for college-bound students, and the working-excellent school offered more courses at the general or basic level in its area of excellence. It is interesting to note that these differences in curricular patterns occurred in a state that prescribes the curriculum both formally, through carefully developed course outlines and materials, and informally, through statewide examinations.

However, offering courses in the course catalog did not always mean that the classes would actually be taught. For example, the working-average school had an impressive array of mathematics courses for non-college-bound students, but the 12th-grade course was not taught because of the students' lack of interest in it. The affluent-average school was considering dropping its 9th grade general science course, AP biology, and mathematics sequence for gifted students because of low enrollments. Also, the affluent-average school offered just as many courses as did the affluent-excellent school, but the number of enrollments in these courses in the 11th grade fell well below the enrollments at the affluent-excellent school and the middle-class schools in our study. Although both schools in the affluent districts have the resources to offer a variety of courses, the affluent-average school was not as successful in getting students to enroll in these courses. Therefore, it is important to understand not only what courses are offered, but the procedures used to assign students to classes.

Placement in Courses

Procedures for placing students in courses can range from a minimalist *laissez-faire* approach, in which students and parents are the main selectors, to an extensive selection program involving teachers and counselors, as well as students and parents, in an elaborate system of testing, recommendations, and counseling, designed to distribute students on the basis of multiple criteria.

We found that all schools formally included parents and students in the course-selection process. Common practices across the schools

included orientation meetings held when students entered the school and forms sent home for parents to indicate approval of the courses selected for the coming year. The guidance counselors in all the schools also met with the students and directed their selection of courses. However, excellent schools and those higher in social class differed in the degree to which decisions were relegated to parents, the roles of the guidance counselors and teachers, and the reliance on tests and objective indicators to guide placements. . . .

In conclusion, the procedures used to place students in courses varied somewhat across the six schools we studied. School personnel in working-class communities were less active in the selection process, and more emphasis was placed on parents' and students' choices in course-placement decisions. In contrast, counselors and teachers in the middle- and upper-class communities are more central in the process, both in the use of objective measures and in how actively they were involved. Although the differences between average and excellent schools are more subtle, the excellent schools were more likely than the average schools to influence students' course decisions by relying on objective measures and having more formal advisory procedures.

Parents and students in the working-class and average schools appeared to be making course decisions with less guidance from teachers as well as counselors. We call this situation *laissez-faire* decision making, and it is characterized by statements such as "Parents and students decide courses and programs" (the working-average school) or "The family has the right to choose the courses they wish [the student] to take" (middle-average school). The administrators and teachers in schools that seem to be doing the best job in educating students in mathematics and science took more active and systematic roles in placing students in courses. In these schools, the teachers did not "politick" or randomly recruit to get students in higher-level courses. Instead, the teachers and counselors talked with the students

about the courses they should be taking and used students' own records in framing their recommendations. All staff in the excellent schools spent more time counseling students. Although the guidance departments had more influence in schools in higher social-class communities, all staff in the excellent schools tended to consider their role to be critical in course-placement decisions. This tendency is clear when the two schools in the affluent communities are compared. While both schools emphasized teachers' recommendations, the teachers appeared to take these recommendations more seriously in the affluent-excellent school. In fact, the middle-excellent and affluent-excellent schools were the only schools in which the staff indicated that they ignored or denied parents' requests for courses.

The criteria used in the procedures to place students in courses are an important component in determining students' academic trajectories (Oakes, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1976; Useem, 1992b). Our analyses of the procedures associated with course placement suggest that both scores on standardized tests and teachers' recommendations are used differently across schools in different social-class communities. A *laissez-faire* policy in higher social-class districts may increase students' opportunities to enroll in higher-level courses (Useem, 1992b), but not in working-class schools, where the backgrounds and experiences of parents often do not provide the information necessary to assess their children's potential in the school system. Consequently, parents in working-class schools are less likely to become involved in school decisions (for similar conclusions, see Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Lareau, 1989; Useem, 1992b). If guidance is not provided by counselors and teachers, working-class students and parents will be left on their own.

CONCLUSION

Evidence of structural differences in learning opportunities existed in all the schools in the form of hierarchical levels of courses offered in mathematics and science (the vertical curriculum), as

well as in the patterns of placing students in those courses. Although curricular tracking was set into motion long before students entered high school via previous course placement and exposure to different learning opportunities, the organization of the schools we studied differed in the ways they structured opportunities to take higher-level courses. We found an interaction between course offerings and procedures for placing students in courses that was driven by both students' desires and administrative decisions (cf. Riehl et al., 1992).

Schools in higher social-class communities offer more advanced classes, reflecting both higher financial resources and expectations in the community. Furthermore, the social class of districts is related to the intensity of counseling activities around course selection, the use of standardized tests in making decisions on students' programs, and the greater number of advanced classes that are offered. Although there are clear differences in per-pupil expenditures among these schools, financial advantage does not automatically benefit a district. The best performer in this study was the affluent-excellent school, which operated with \$600 less per pupil than did the affluent-average school. In our interviews at the affluent-excellent school, the science teachers complained of inadequate laboratory supplies and said that they repaired laboratory equipment themselves at the same time that they bragged about how many students worked into the evening on science projects and the number of Westinghouse Scholars (a prestigious science award for high school students) that they had at their school. This school's excellence clearly reflected more than additional financial support.

The financial and cultural resources in the community in which the working-excellent school was located were decidedly low; most of the children came from poor, rural families, and some were children of migrant farm-workers. Yet, this school used its resources within the school, with teachers and counselors encouraging students to take more difficult courses because knowledge of science is important in their lives.

Therefore, although we found that the organization of schooling reflects the social class of the communities in which schools exist, schools can improve learning by offering more demanding classes and channeling students into higher-level courses. For the schools in this country that continue to struggle with fewer monetary resources and less cultural capital, our findings show that there are still things they can do to change the organization of schooling and improve students' performance.

Although only six suburban-rural schools were examined, this research provided for a more systematic analysis of social-class differences than have other case studies. We found, as did Monk and Haller (1993), that the social-class composition of communities accounts for considerable differences in curricular offerings. The broadest array of course offerings and most elaborate course-placement procedures are in the mid-sized schools in the affluent communities—not, as may be expected, in the largest school (in the middle-class community). These findings suggest that one should use caution when drawing conclusions about school structure without considering the social-class composition of the community. Further research is needed to examine whether the relationships between the social-class composition of communities and structural characteristics of schools apply to urban schools as well as to suburban-rural schools and to analyze the interaction of race and social class.

Course taking is the most powerful factor affecting students' achievement that is under the school's control. In this study, excellent schools and schools in higher social-class districts offered the broadest assortment of courses in mathematics and science, including more college-preparatory classes. Our findings suggest that administrators, especially those in schools in working-class communities, should focus on expanding the number of courses, particularly honors courses, that are offered (cf. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989). They also indicate that to encourage additional study, schools must offer an array of courses, rather than terminal courses in the first or second years of high school (Secada, 1990).

Although schools cannot do much about the social class of the students who attend them, they can do something about the patterning of courses and the procedures used to place students in classes. The very fact that we found subject specific differences in our analyses indicates that schools' course offerings and placement policies can make a difference in encouraging students to study particular subjects. Our findings suggest that schools can influence the achievement of students, even when the social-class origins of the students they serve may not be conducive to achievement, by restructuring the patterning of classes and facilitating the placement of students in more challenging courses.

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HOW RACE AND EDUCATION ARE RELATED

CAROLINE HODGES PERSELL

In this reading, Caroline Hodges Persell, a highly regarded sociologist of education, explores various theories to explain unequal educational outcomes for children of different races. She examines genetic, structural, and cultural explanations and proposes a new approach that incorporates structural, cultural, and interactional factors. Persell's argument is important because the explanations we give for racial differences in education influence how we approach solutions to these problems

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Which of the reasons for racial inequality in education that Persell discusses do you think is most plausible?
2. How does Persell's explanation overlap with the theories in Part I?
3. Given Persell's argument, what steps do you think should be taken to improve the educational experience of racial minority groups?

experiences, and outcomes. This chapter begins by considering educational outcomes such as achievement and completion, why they are important, and how they vary by race/ethnicity. It then examines existing explanations, proposes a new synthesis, and considers relevant evidence.

Much of the research on racial differences has been based on black-white comparisons for several reasons. Historically and today, blacks¹ and Native Americans have been the most intensely "hyper-segregated" group, that is, isolated from other groups, clustered together in small concentrated areas. Moreover, slavery of blacks created a system of stratification based on race where whites enjoyed political, economic, legal, and social rights that were denied to blacks on the basis of race. Thus, in the U.S. blackness and whiteness "are the symbolic anchors of our racial hierarchy" (Morning, 2007). Where data exist on other racial/ethnic groups, it is included here. It is important to stress that race is a socially constructed, somewhat fluid, changeable, and complex concept, containing considerable variation within whatever categories are used (Omi, 2001). "Races are labels not people," and some individuals and groups can change races over time (Morning, 2007). Boundary crossing varies widely between

Racial differences exist in many aspects of education, including access, resources,

racial/ethnic groups, as does the extent of domination experienced by groups.

VARIATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Of the possible educational outcomes, considerable research has focused on differences in educational achievement. Despite individual exceptions, there are variations in the educational achievement of African American, Latino/a, and Native American students which, on average, is lower than that of whites and Asian Americans. Gaps occur in standardized test scores,² grade point averages, rates of placement in gifted or special education programs, drop out rates, and college attendance and graduation rates (Hallinan, 2001; Kovach & Gordon, 1997; National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Nettles & Perna, 1997). These differences in educational achievement outcomes are significant predictors of an individual's employment opportunities and wages, as is race.³ Over the past 30 years, racial differences in achievement became smaller for a while, then stayed level, and recently started to increase.

Explanations for Different Outcomes

For a long time, no research could fully explain the variation in academic achievement. Recently, researchers⁴ using different datasets found that a small number of social factors could statistically eliminate racial differences in achievement. This means, for example, that black and white children of the same age and birth weight, whose mothers have the same test scores, education, occupation, income, and wealth; whose mothers were the same age when they had their first child, and who have the same number of children's books or similar cultural resources in their homes, scored the same on their reading and math tests. But, you may be thinking, black and white children are not equally likely to share these indicators of life chances, so we need to explain (or understand) why they do not. A second puzzle is why by the third grade the

achievement gap between those same white and black children reappeared, and why the factors that explained it statistically among kindergarteners no longer fully explain the gap among older children. Scholars have considered genetic, cultural, and structural explanations for racial variations in achievement.

Genetic Explanations

There have been recurrent efforts to offer genetic explanations for racial differences in educational achievement (e.g., Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969). In their 1994 book, *The Bell Curve*, Herrnstein and Murray presented evidence showing that when socioeconomic status was controlled, racial differences in educational achievement remained. Their measures of social factors were very incomplete, however. They then went on to suggest that the remaining difference must be due to genetic differences in intelligence (IQ) between the races since it was not explained by social factors. However, intelligence is not a simple, one-dimensional concept (Fischer et al., 1996; Gardner, 1983, 1993). Nor is intelligence unchanging through time and experience, as evidenced by Flynn's research showing a rise in Western countries of roughly fifteen IQ points in a single generation (1987). Neither is intelligence rooted in a particular gene. In short, genetic explanations lack empirical support, and race is seen by social scientists as being a socially constructed concept, rather than a biological or genetic entity. Writing about the IQ test score gap, Nisbett (1998, p. 101) concluded, "The most relevant studies provide no evidence for the genetic superiority of either race, but strong evidence for a substantial environmental contribution to the IQ gap between blacks and whites. Almost equally important, rigorous interventions do affect IQ and cognitive skills at every stage of the life course." Studies of mixed-race children with one white and one black parent show that children with white mothers and black fathers have considerably higher IQs than those with black mothers and white fathers (Nisbett, 1998, p. 100). Although their genetic inheritance is similar, their social exposure to

activities favored by a predominantly white society differs according to the race of their mothers. If environment not genes is central, what aspects of environment matter? Cultural explanations are frequently offered.

Cultural Explanations

Standing in apparent opposition to a genetic explanation for racial/ethnic differences in school achievement, sociocultural explanations tend to root the causes in the cultural values, parenting practices, and linguistic codes of families and children, and some research is consistent with such an explanation. A broader measure of family environment, including grandmother's education, explained two-thirds of the racial gap in achievement (Phillips et al., 1998, p. 138), twice as much as earlier studies. Ogbu's (2003) observations of greater degrees of "disengagement" from school among black compared to white students is also a cultural explanation. While such cultural explanations—such as family environment, parenting practices, and student behavior—explain more of the achievement gap than do traditional measures of socioeconomic status (SES) alone, they fail to explain when and how such potentially important cultural differences arise.

Cross-cultural research suggests the importance of contextual factors for differences in the culture, IQ, and educational achievements of different racial/ethnic groups. For example in Japan, the ethnic-minority Buraku have lower IQs and educational achievement than the dominant, ethnic-Ippan group, even though the two groups are of the same race. However, when members of both groups migrate to the United States, they do equally well on standardized tests and in school (Ogbu, 2001, 2003; Ogbu & Stern, 2001). These cross-cultural findings are consistent with evidence that other social factors, which Herrnstein and Murray did not measure, affect different achievement levels (Fischer et al., 1996).

Both genetic and cultural explanations attribute the source of failure to children and their families and, unless the cultural explanation pushes beyond individuals to their social contexts, both may have self-fulfilling potency. That

is, if people in the larger society come to believe these explanations, such beliefs may contribute to children being taught less. Both genetic and cultural explanations tend to legitimate inequalities and divert attention and reform efforts away from structural inequalities in society, which need to be considered as a source of racial differences in educational achievement.

Structural Explanations

The first structural condition to consider is race, which needs to be viewed not as an individual attribute, but as a system of social relationships that creates systematic advantages for members of one group while the members of another group are systematically disadvantaged. The important work of critical race theorists such as Bonilla-Silva (1996, 2001, 2003) and Omi (2001) see race as a system of organized power in society.

A group's subordinate position in a racialized system of power relations affects its measured intelligence and school achievement through three processes according to Fischer et al. (1996, p. 174): 1) socioeconomic deprivation, 2) racial/ethnic segregation which concentrates disadvantages and accentuates them, and 3) stigmatization as inferior by the wider society's perception of them. However, none of these approaches—genetic, cultural, or structural—have fully explained racial differences in educational achievement past kindergarten.

Toward a Fuller Explanation

The explanation proposed here links structural, cultural, and interactional elements. Structurally, it is important to measure the degree of racial stratification (i.e., structured inequality). This includes the historical, social, symbolic, economic, educational, and political domination of one race over another either in different nations or regions of the same country. Those historical legacies are related to economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Lewis, 2003), wealth (Conley, 1999; Oliver & Shapiro, 1997), and an individual's sense of efficacy.

Historical and current racial stratification is related to socialization contexts, particularly neighborhoods, families, and schools. Racial stratification, ideologies, and socializing contexts shape and constrain culture, interactions, and responses that occur between parents and children, teachers and students, parents and teachers, and among peers. All three major components in the model are implicated in creating racial differences in educational outcomes. The importance of multiple, interrelated factors is consistent with the evidence that relatively small educational differences between children in kindergarten grow in magnitude the longer they are in school. Since both race and educational achievement are related to occupations, incomes, marital status, housing, social respect, and opportunities for the next generation, they have intergenerational consequences. One reason individuals may work hard in school is to help their children thrive. So the degree to which such "payoffs" of education vary for different races may undermine confidence in the system.

Historical and contemporary structural inequalities between races have been well documented in economics, politics, prison populations, and social status.⁵ When the degree of racial inequality is measured, the achievement gap is greater in U.S. counties with more racial stratification. Roscigno developed a model including the local class context and the local racial context in which families, schools, and students were located (1999, p. 163). He stressed that family and school influences on educational achievement and attainment "are themselves embedded in, and partially a function of, broader structures and spatial variations in class- and race-based opportunity" (1999, p. 159). He found that class context (measured at the county level) is related to race, with blacks significantly more likely than whites to live in communities with larger numbers of families in poverty (1999). What is really important to notice is the way that black educational achievement is depressed in areas of high racial inequality, above and beyond the effects of higher rates of absolute poverty. Greater racial inequality at the county level

strongly depresses black student achievement, but not white student achievement. In counties where racial inequality in the local labor market is low, there are only small achievement differences between blacks and whites, compared to highly unequal counties where racial achievement differences are three times as large. Not only the absolute level of poverty, but also the degree of racial inequality in an area affects the racial gap by depressing the educational achievement of black students. Local racial inequality explains nearly half of the racial gap in achievement (Roscigno, 1999, p. 180).

Other race inequalities in wealth, political power, social interactions, and experiences with the police and courts generally have not yet been included in analyses of educational experiences and outcomes, but need to be if we are going to understand fully the reasons for racial differences in education.

While we cannot consider here all the differences in neighborhoods, family structure, and school characteristics that vary by race, we do examine some of the ways race is related to educational opportunities and experiences. Children of color and white children are not equally likely to attend private schools, socio-economically advantaged schools, smaller schools, or have small classes.

Whites are more likely than blacks to attend private school, and attending private school is related to higher chances of taking an academic curriculum, being in smaller schools, having student bodies with higher socioeconomic status, greater discipline, and higher rates of attending college (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Public school students are much more likely to drop out of high school than are Catholic or other private school students (24%, 12%, and 13% respectively) (Coleman et al., 1982). Moreover, the strong academic curriculum and homework required in many private schools is important for student achievement (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Bryk et al., 1993).

In public schools, blacks are more likely than whites to attend schools with larger numbers of low-income students and schools with higher

proportions of racial minorities. Many studies find correlations between the percent minority, or low income, in school and student achievement (e.g., Roscigno, 2000). Studies of black students who attended desegregated schools, usually because of desegregation court orders, find that they were “more likely to achieve at higher rates and have higher aspirations than those in segregated schools and (were) more likely to go on to college and secure high-status jobs” (Schofield, 1989, 1991; Wells & Crain, 1994).

Black students are more likely than whites to attend large urban schools. Both school size and percent minority students in a school are related to the amount of tracking in it (Lucas & Berends, 2002), and Blacks and Chicano/as are more likely than whites to attend schools with curricular tracking. Track placement is often related to what is taught, what is learned, test results, and continuing one’s schooling (Oakes, 1985; Persell, 1977; Persell et al., 1992), but not always (Dreeben & Gamoran, 1986; Hallinan, 1987). Other potential contributing factors include the time teachers expect students to spend on homework (Oakes, 1985) and teacher-student interactions (Good, 1987; Oakes, 1985; Persell, 1977).

School size affects the type of governance. In large urban schools the authority of professional educators is often buttressed by bureaucratic procedures and by unionization of teachers and administrators (Persell, 2000; Rogers, 1968; Rogers & Chung, 1983), a governance system that may be less responsive to student needs. Blacks are more likely than whites to be in larger classes, once special education classes are held constant (Coleman et al., 1966). Smaller classes are related to higher achievement, particularly among blacks (Finn & Achilles, 1999).

Because schools are supported by local-property taxes and because there is so much housing segregation by social class and race in the United States, students that live in low-income areas are very likely to attend schools with lower per pupil expenditures on instructional program. Such disparities in educational opportunities affect how much children learn, how long they stay in school, their graduation rates, and the rates at

which they successfully pursue further education after high school.

Schools with more low-income and racial minority students are more likely to have teachers who are not certified or are teaching out of their area of certification (Ingersoll, 2002), as well as teachers with lower achievement-test scores (Coleman et al., 1966). Yet, teachers’ test scores are related to students’ test scores (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Having a series of “high-achieving” teachers vastly increases the achievement of low-income and minority students.

Student Attitudes and Behaviors

Despite all these structured inequalities in the types of education received by students of color, numerous researchers have found that black students value education as much if not more than whites (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Blau, 2003; Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Mickelson, 1990). Black students also value social goals and personal responsibility for achieving them more than white students do (Blau, 2003, p. 69). Among the differences in behavioral responses, black teens are less likely than whites but more likely than Asian or Latino students to report they have had discipline problems (Blau, 2003, p. 104). Blacks were more likely than whites, Asians, or Latinos, however, to report being unprepared for class and cutting classes (p. 104), reports that are consistent with higher rates of absenteeism among blacks in San Francisco high schools (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003, p. 141). Overall, black students report doing fewer hours of homework per night and watching more TV or videos compared to other racial/ethnic groups. A panel analysis of a nationally representative sample of high school students found that extra time spent on math homework increased student test scores, while an extra hour of TV viewing negatively affected scores (Aksoy & Link, 2000).

Some of these behavioral responses have been taken as showing an “oppositional culture” among black or other minority race youths. A much contested cultural explanation, the concept of oppositional culture emerged from a study of

one all-black, inner-city high school in Washington, D.C. (Fordham, 1988, 1993, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Subsequent researchers have found some (Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Farkas et al., 2002) or no empirical support (Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Ferguson, 2001; Kao et al., 1996) for the concept. Overall, oppositional culture appears among some students of all races, is not uniform among all blacks, is class-linked, is most relevant for adolescents, and is more likely in schools where the race of students in all tracks does not reflect the racial composition of the school (Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Farkas et al., 2002; Horvat & O'Connor, 2006; Tyson, 2006).

We need to consider how racial inequalities in school practices may affect student responses, including effort and achievement. Early academic performance and evaluations affect students' self-perceptions, and "these perceptions subsequently influence the decisions students make with respect to effort expended on schoolwork, course choices, and post high school plans, as well as how attached they feel to school" (Tyson et al. 2005, p. 16). The high value black students place on school and education may help to explain why doing poorly may be even more demoralizing for them than for whites, and thus be more consequential for their subsequent behavior (such as school disengagement). It may also be one reason for why school characteristics have more impact on black achievement compared to that of whites.

Educational Payoffs

Some students of color do complete higher education, despite the pitfalls of race inequalities in their neighborhoods, families, and schools. Do they receive the same "payoffs" from their educations as whites? Asian Americans have high levels of educational achievement. Do they earn the same as whites with similar education? The answer is yes, but only if they received that education in the U.S., not if their degree is from another country (Zeng & Xie, 2004). Among blacks who attended selective colleges, Bowen

and Bok (1998) found that, even among the most highly educated males, racial differences in income remained—although no earnings differences existed among women.

Education does not afford members of all racial groups the same payoff in housing choices, treatment by the police, legal system, merchants, or restaurants, suggesting that educational achievement and attainment do not have the same "payoff" for blacks and whites, in material, symbolic, or social terms. Such unequal effects might corrode trust and educational effort among some members of the next generation.

CONCLUSIONS

Racial differences in educational achievement—that some have tried to explain by genes or culture—are better understood by rooting them in historical and current systems of race inequality which, in turn, affect the socializing contexts of neighborhoods, families, and schools, as well as individual responses, and rewards. When social class and/or racial differences are large, enduring, and institutionalized, they are consequential for the next generation and beyond and they affect educational experiences and outcomes in some of the ways we have delineated here. Without understanding the larger social constellations in which race and education are embedded we can never challenge and change them.

NOTES

1. While we mostly use the word black, we use it interchangeably with African-American (see Tatum, 1999).

2. Research based on test results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted from 1971 to 1996 showed a substantial lag in the achievement of black students. Among other indicators, the study found that 17-year-old blacks had an average reading proficiency equivalent to that of 13-year-old whites (Hallinan, 2001). Comparisons of math, science, and writing scores revealed similar patterns. Analyses by Hedges and Nowell (1998), based on results from six

major national surveys of high schools since 1965, showed a decline in differences but a slowed rate of decrease since 1988. Despite the decline, Jencks and Phillips point out that a typical African American still scored below 75% of American whites on most standardized tests (1998). In the early 1990s the gap began widening again (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). These gaps have been observed to exist before children enter kindergarten, widen as they move through elementary and middle schools, and persist into adulthood (Phillips, Crouse & Ralph, 1998).

3. According to Moss and Tilly (2003) and Pager and Quillian (2005), among others.

4. Fryer and Levitt, 2004; Yeung and Conley, 2006; Yeung and Pfeiffer, 2006.

5. See Persell and Hendrie (2005) for more details.

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MOMENTS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Race, Class, and Cultural Capital in Family–School Relationships

ANNETTE LAREAU AND ERIN MCNAMARA HORVAT

In their case study of parents' involvement in their children's educations, Annette Lareau and Erin Horvat found that race and social class come together to affect teachers' definitions of appropriate involvement for parents. Those parents with more cultural capital (defined in Part I) are in a better position to influence their children's educations. Because the cultural capital of school personnel is most likely to be of the middle or upper class, parents with similar social class backgrounds are likely to share that cultural capital and the expectations and meaning of education. This reading uses the concept of cultural capital to understand the complex interactions of race and class in defining children's educational experiences.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. From examples in this reading, how do parents either have or not have appropriate cultural capital?
2. How is parental involvement complicated by both race and class?
3. Given Lareau and Horvat's argument, how can African-American parents successfully effect change in their children's schools?

Scholars who are interested in how schools replicate existing social inequalities have found the concept of social reproduction to be useful, especially as articulated in the work of

Bourdieu and his associates (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1990; Wacquant, 1992, 1993). One of Bourdieu's major insights on educational inequality is that students with more valuable social and cultural capital fare better in school than do their otherwise-comparable peers with less valuable social and cultural capital. The social reproduction perspective has proved especially useful in attempts to gain a better understanding of how race and class influence the transmission of educational inequality.

However, a key dilemma that confronts those who seek to understand how the reproduction of inequality occurs in schools has been where to focus the debate. Exactly how is inequality perpetuated in school settings? Much of the literature has identified important class differences in parents' and students' attitudes or behaviors toward schools and has shown that these class differences affect children's progress in school (Brantlinger, 1993; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Lareau, 1989; McDonough, 1997; Useem, 1992). As valuable as this line of research has been, these theories do not always attend to individual interactions and interventions that more accurately characterize the students', teachers', and parents' interactions in schools. In other words, these studies have identified cultural and social factors that contribute to educational inequality but have not advanced knowledge of the process whereby social and cultural resources are converted into educational advantages. Thus, the picture that emerges from them is incomplete and overly simplistic.

Despite these difficulties, the overall perspective of social reproduction, with its focus on conflict, change, and systemic inequality, is still worthy of attention. Bourdieu's method allows for a more fluid interplay and better understanding of the relationship between structure and agency than do other theoretical perspectives. Although the theoretical potential of offering an intricate and dynamic model is embedded in Bourdieu's original conceptual work, the empirical research has often been disappointing. The translation of the theoretical model into

"variables" has often decontextualized key concepts from the broader theoretical mission (see Wacquant, 1992, 1993 for a discussion of these issues).

Still, Bourdieu has always remained attuned to the strategies and actions that individuals follow in their daily lives. Nevertheless, he has not always been sufficiently aware of variations in the ways in which institutional actors legitimate or rebuff efforts by individuals to activate their resources. Nor has he given sufficient attention to the moments of reproduction and exclusion. Although both these points are clearly implied in Bourdieu's work, we see it as an important clarification.

In sum, the empirical work on social reproduction, despite the original theoretical richness of Bourdieu's writing, has not sufficiently recognized three important points. First, the value of capital depends heavily on the social setting (or field). Second, there is an important difference between the possession and activation of capital or resources. That is, people who have social and cultural capital may choose to activate capital or not, and they vary in the skill with which they activate it. Third, these two points come together to suggest that rather than being an overly deterministic continual process, reproduction is jagged and uneven and is continually negotiated by social actors.

We find it helpful to point to moments of "social inclusion" and "social exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). To understand the character of these moments, one needs to look at the context in which the capital is situated, the efforts by individuals to activate their capital, the skill with which individuals activate their capital, and the institutional response to the activation. These factors, working together, can produce moments of reproduction or moments of contestation, challenge, and social change.

In this article, we highlight three aspects of the reproduction process: the value attached to capital in a particular social context, the process through which individuals activate their social capital, and the legitimacy the institutions accord these displays. In our analysis of these patterns, we explicate specific moments of inclusion and exclusion

that have been muffled by the overly global approach to the process of social reproduction.

In exploring these theoretical issues, we investigate the complex topic of the relative influence of race and social class in aspects of children's school experiences. Although previous research (Lareau, 1989; Spade, Columba, & Vanfossen, 1997; Useem, 1992) stressed the importance of social class in shaping family-school relationships, in this article, we show how race acts to mediate the importance of class and has an independent theoretical significance in shaping family-school relationships. We suggest that it is more difficult for black parents than white parents to comply with the institutional standards of schools. In particular, educators are relentless in their demands that parents display positive, supportive approaches to education. The historical legacy of racial discrimination, however, makes it far more difficult for black parents than white parents to comply with such demands. Although social class seems to influence how black and white parents negotiate their relationships with schools, for blacks race plays an important role, independent of social class, in framing the terms of their relationship.

METHOD

The study was conducted in Lawrence (a fictitious name, as are all the names used here), a small Midwestern town with a population of about 25,000. Located two hours from a metropolitan center, the town's commercial base is dominated by farming, coal mining, light manufacturing, retail stores, state government offices, and a university. At the time of the study, the public school system enrolled approximately 1,500 elementary and junior high school students in six schools. Of these students, 52 percent were white, 44 percent were black, 3 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were Hispanic. Forty percent of the children were classified as low income (eligible for the free-lunch program or receiving public assistance).

Quigley Elementary School, with around 200 students in Grades 1-3, is located in an overwhelmingly white and affluent part of town. Most

of the staff members—the superintendent, principal, teachers, and janitors—were white; only one first-grade teacher and the school secretary were black. The first author, a middle-aged white woman, conducted participant-observation in each of two third-grade classrooms twice a week from September to December 1989 and less frequently (for example, three times per month) from January to June 1990. Both teachers, Mrs. Erickson and Mrs. Nelson, were white middle-aged women, each with about 25 years of teaching experience. . . .

RESULTS

The educators thought that they enthusiastically welcomed parental involvement and believed that their requests for parental involvement were neutral, technically efficient, and designed to promote higher levels of achievement. In reality, from a range of potential socioemotional styles, they selected a narrow band of acceptable behaviors. They wanted parents not only to be positive and supportive but to trust their judgments and assessments—a pattern noted by other researchers (Epstein, 1986, 1987, 1991; Van Galen, 1987). One third-grade teacher stressed the importance of parents being “supportive” when asked about the qualities of an ideal parent.

The teachers repeatedly praised parents who had praised them. They liked parents who were deferential, expressed empathy with the difficulty of teachers' work, and had detailed information about their children's school experiences. In addition, the teachers often stressed the importance of parents “understanding” their children's educational situations, by which they meant that the parents should accept the teacher's definitions of their children's educational and social performance.

Compliance With School Standards

The expected standard that parents should be positive and supportive was difficult for some black families to meet. One reason for the difficulty was the parents' understanding of the

broader context of race relations and the ways in which it pervaded the school. In these cases, black parents' attempts to criticize educators directly were rebuffed. For example, the Mason family had a difficult and unhappy relationship with the school, partly because Mr. and Mrs. Mason criticized and expressed their anger directly to the educators. This display of parental concern and involvement through anger and criticism was deemed unacceptable and "destructive" by the educators.

Mr. Mason, a pastor of a small church, and his wife, a beautician and associate pastor, were troubled by patterns of racial injustice. Mrs. Mason thought that a "wave of prejudice" was sweeping the country and the community. . . .

Mrs. Mason complained that these broader patterns could be seen at Quigley, particularly in the ways the school lavished attention on some holidays and then systematically ignored the celebration of black heroes. . . .

The lavish attention to Halloween and little notice of Martin Luther King's birthday were noted in the field observations. Overall, however, the school officials were resistant to Mrs. Mason's arguments that there were patterns of racial injustice in the school. The principal rejected her claims of bias and found her accusations upsetting. . . .

The teachers also thought that the Masons' claims were undermining their authority by making it more difficult for them to educate their children. . . .

Mrs. Erickson found the Masons to be among the "most upsetting" parents in her teaching career. She was particularly disturbed by them raising their voices in conversation and "just out and out yelling." Because the Masons seemed always to be angry, Mrs. Erickson tried to avoid interacting with them. . . .

For the most part, the Masons' efforts resulted in moments of exclusion. Faith stayed in her reading group (below grade level), rather than being moved up, and hence was not exposed to the higher-level reading curriculum. Still, there were some changes. At the end of the year, Mrs. Erickson "boosted" Faith's English grade a few points because "I just didn't want to have a scene." Thus, rather than appreciate Mr. and

Mrs. Mason's interest and concern for the school, the educators defined it as singularly unhelpful.¹ In this educational setting, open conflict and anger were not considered legitimate.

As we discuss shortly, there were variations in how the black parents activated their concern for race with the school. In addition, both the black and the white parents differed in their levels of concern. A few white parents presented a negative vision of racial interaction at the school; for example, one mother thought that the white children were being treated unfairly, and she "resented" it. Overall, however, the white parents' enthusiasm for busing for racial integration and levels of empathy and concern about the potential racial bias at school differed. But none of the white parents exhibited, in the interviews or observations, the wholesale suspicion, distrust, and hostility toward schools that we found among some of the black parents.

Thus, the white parents were privileged in the sense that they began to construct their relationships with the school with more comfort and trust than did the black parents. This lack of suspicion took on substantially more value (capital) in an institutional framework in which the educators stressed positive, affirmative, supportive family-school encounters. Had the school adopted the norms, for example, of a trial court or of a debating team, then the racial differences might not have been of value. In this setting, in which the educators were extremely hostile to expressions of criticism toward them, the membership of whites in a dominant race, without the risk of historical patterns of discrimination, was an advantage in complying with the school's standards.

Race Intertwining with Social Class

Other black parents also approached the school with a suspicion that the legacy of racial discrimination was continuing. There were, however, important social-class differences in how the black parents managed their concerns. The middle-class parents were much more likely than the poor parents to maneuver and "customize" (Lareau, 1989) their children's school experiences. At times, they diffused the risk of racial

discrimination without the teachers ever knowing of their concern. These patterns point to the importance of differentiating between the possession and activation of capital. In addition, they point to variations (often by temperament) in the parents' skill and shrewdness in the activation process that have not always been noted in the empirical literature.

Some black parents were extremely skillful in fostering interactions with educators. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Irving, a middle-class couple, were apprehensive that black children were discriminated against in the school and actively monitored their daughter's schooling. But the teacher never knew the source of their concern because they shielded it from her.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving thought that some of the black children were being treated differently from the white children in the school. As members of a black middle-class church, they were friends with other middle-class blacks, including several teachers, who shared their criticisms with the Irvings of how some white teachers treated black students. . . .

When asked if he thought black children were being discriminated against, Mr. Irving said:

It's probably happening. I'm just considering the ratio between black teachers and white teachers, I would say it's happening. . . . I think as long as you have black and whites, there is going to be some kind of discrimination—some kind of problems; I don't think it's as bad as it used to be. . . . You don't come out and see it now; it's more covert.

Indeed, his wife appeared to see her husband's bimonthly visits to the school as an activation of resources to prevent problems from developing. . . .

Mr. and Mrs. Irving kept a close eye on their daughter Neema's schooling. Mrs. Irving monitored Neema's homework closely and insisted that Neema read regularly. Mr. Irving would stop by to bring their daughter Neema her lunch, to volunteer, or just to check on how things were going. . . .

Not only did Mr. Irving supervise his daughter's progress, but he would occasionally make

requests. When Neema was in the first grade, for example, he asked that she be tested for the academically talented program; Neema was tested and admitted to the program. In this case, Mr. Irving activated knowledge (from his days as a teacher) to improve his daughter's educational experience.

The teachers did not seem to know about the Irvings' apprehensions of racial discrimination. In both the interviews and the day-to-day chatter about parents after school, the teachers had only positive things to say about Mr. and Mrs. Irving and thought they were among the most supportive and helpful parents in the school. Thus, unlike the Masons, the Irvings were able to activate their cultural and social resources to intervene in their daughter's school career in a way the school defined as helpful and supportive. The Irvings' efforts to customize Neema's school career were partially motivated by their concern about the broader context of racial treatment in the schools. The Irvings were particularly masterful in gaining advantages for their daughter (for example, enrollment in the academically gifted program) and managing her schooling so they could be reassured that she was not subjected to unfair treatment without revealing their concern to the educators. The interventions provide a portrait of a series of moments of social inclusion in which parent-teacher contacts facilitated Neema's inclusion in high-status educational programs and her continuing success in school.

In contrast, some poor black parents who were concerned about racial discrimination handled the matter differently. Some saw a separation between home and school (Lareau, 1989) and did not seek to intervene in the school process. For example, Ms. Caldron had been an alcoholic and cocaine drug addict for most of her children's lives but had been sober for two months. She lived in a government-financed housing project with her children; on her welfare subsidy, she could not afford to have a telephone. Ms. Caldron was concerned that the school was treating the black children, especially those who lived in the housing project, unfairly. . . .

Ms. Caldron objected to children attending a school in the white part of town and thought it contributed to the racial discrimination at the

school. When asked if she thought that the black children were being treated differently from the white children, she replied:

I just feel that they do. They are being treated differently. For one thing they just got out there. They hadn't been there when the rest of that school was all white. . . . So the kids that are still there get more seniority than these kids who are just coming in there. But it shouldn't be like that.

Ms. Caldron had little contact with the school during the academic year. Although Ms. Caldron requested spelling lists a few times, Mrs. Erickson complained that she did not return forms that required her signature or respond to notes that were sent home. Although Ms. Caldron had negative and hostile feelings toward the school, she did not discuss these concerns with other parents because she did not know any of the mothers of the other children in her children's classrooms. The only person she shared her concerns with was her friend Hope, whose child also attended the school. . . .

Unlike the Irvings, Ms. Caldron was not knowledgeable about her child's schooling (for instance, she did not know the name of his teacher or what reading group he was in), did not monitor and oversee the school experience through volunteer work, and did not attempt to intervene and change the character of the school experience.

In Bourdieu's terms, Ms. Caldron's habitus meant that she approached the educational field with fewer resources to influence her children's schooling successfully. It is also possible that because she was plagued with problems of substance abuse, she "played" her resources (Bourdieu, 1976) less successfully than did other parents with comparable resources. In any case, she felt (and appeared to be) excluded from the educational process. Her son, who had repeated a grade and was at the bottom of the class in educational performance, did not have promising educational prospects. The most important point, however, is that social class appears to mediate how parents with similar types of concern about racial discrimination seek to manage their children's school careers. The results point to the

influence of social class on how families manage their concerns about racial injustice at school.

White working-class parents also experienced distance from or conflict with the school. However, they focused exclusively on their own children's experience independent of the political or racial climate at the school. These parents did not talk about "the school" having a particular attitude or stance; rather, they talked about teachers treating their children in a specific manner.

Chad Carson's parents are a case in point. His mother, a manager at a local motel, and his father, a car salesman, never married and do not live together. Ms. Carson had a number of conflicts with Chad's teacher, Mrs. Nelson, which centered on the communication between them. . . .

This pattern of difficult communication between the teacher and parent appeared in regard to other issues as well. Ms. Carson detailed the problems she had with the school in keeping Chad supplied with paper for school.

Chad would call me here at work and say, "I ran out of paper." And I would say, "Chad, could you borrow some from someone, and we'll be sure to get you some for tomorrow." [Chad replied]: "No, Mrs. Nelson won't let me do that. She made me call you." I said, "Chad, I can't leave work to bring you paper." The next day I sent four notebooks with Chad. . . . Well, it happened again. So, the way I handled it the second time was I took two of those big 500-sheet things into the principal's office and said, "Here, if any child comes in here to call their parent for paper, please give them this." I said, "You know, I can't just leave work. . . . If I don't know that Chad is out of paper, I can't do anything about it."

Even though the lack of communication between Mrs. Nelson and Ms. Carson involved a visit to the principal's office to drop off more paper, Ms. Carson remained focused on her and Chad's relationship with the teacher, not with the school in general.

Another white working-class couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jennings, attributed the problems that their daughter Lauren was having in third-grade mathematics to problems that began in the first grade. . . .

Despite her daughter's persistent problem in mathematics that was traceable to the first grade, Mrs. Jennings did not hold the school as a whole responsible.

These two families' experiences represent the most difficult conflicts that white working-class parents reported having with teachers or the schools. They clearly did not have the diffuse and pervasive race-based distrust of the school that some of the black parents identified. For them, conflict with the school was limited to and centered on their individual relationships with the teachers.

Variations in Parents' Perceptions

Black Parents

Not all the black parents and guardians had difficult and unhappy relationships with the educators at Quigley school. Some were very positive. One black grandmother, whose daughter died suddenly during the spring, was grateful to Mrs. Erickson. Saying she was "just super," the grandmother could not say enough good things about her. At the end of the year, she gave Mrs. Erickson a necklace as a thank-you gift.

Moreover, not all parents shared the view that black children at the school were subjected to unequal and less favorable treatment compared to the white children. A number of black parents stated that they did not know if there were problems at the school. For example, the grandmother of a child (the drug-addicted mother was unable to provide care) had not heard anything. . . .

Other black parents stated that children at Quigley school were not being treated unfairly on the basis of race. Some of these parents, from a range of social-class positions, were openly hostile to the black parents who complained about racial injustice. For example, one poor mother energetically defended the principal, Mrs. Hertman, from accusations of racism that she had heard in the public housing project in which she lived. . . .

A working-class father who worked as a laborer on the railroad was cautious as well:

Tracking [of black students] is a problem, but I've got different feelings: . . . A lot of parents don't

take the time and make their kids do their part. If parents participated more, I don't think you [would] have a problem.

In a different vein, a middle-class father acknowledged that other parents were concerned that blacks were not sufficiently active in the schools but he, too, placed responsibility on the parents. He thought that the parents needed to take an active role in monitoring schooling: "My biggest thing is that a lot of black people just need to get more involved."

White Parents

The white parents' assessments of the existence of racial problems in the schools also varied. Some white parents agreed there were problems. As one white mother said:

I think the teachers need to go, a lot of them, for a good semester, not a Friday workshop, . . . and become sensitized to some of the problems these kids have.

This mother also noted that she would never discuss these issues with some parents because "I know that they are prejudiced."

Other white parents said that they did not know what to think about race relations in the schools. For example, one father had read of black parents' concerns in the newspaper, but he was not sure if they were happening in the school.

DISCUSSION

The conceptual model of social reproduction has been rightfully criticized for being overly deterministic. Although ethnographic research has stressed the meaning of daily life, the theoretical models have an "automatic pilot" quality to them. The skills that Bourdieu clearly pointed to in parents "playing their hands" are not brought to bear. The models also substantially underemphasize the crucial role of institutions in accepting or rebuffing the activation of capital by family members.

A more fruitful approach, we believe, is to adopt the conceptual framework of moments of inclusion and moments of exclusion. (One could also use the terms moments of reproduction and moments of contestation.) We define moments of inclusion as the coming together of various forces to provide an advantage to the child in his or her life trajectory. In the realm of school, these moments may include placement in an academically gifted program or the highest academic track (Oakes, 1985), enrollment in a suburban school (Wells & Crain, 1997), encouragement and preparation for applying to college (McDonough, 1997), attendance at an elite college, and use of networks for job placement. In contrast, moments of exclusion may include placement in a low reading group, retention, placement in remedial courses, and the failure to complete college-preparation requirements.

In this definition, we focus on the "objective" completion of or gaining access to a particular school task, not on the subjective experience attached to this task. Obviously, however, subjective experiences are integral to the entire process leading up to and through these critical moments in a life trajectory.

These moments are important. The social reproduction model has implied that the passing of privilege of family to child is relatively automatic. It is not. Although social class is heavily tied to educational outcomes, a student's performance is a core feature in determining educational access in the United States. Thus, even wealthy parents cannot guarantee admission to an elite university, such as Harvard, if their son or daughter has a combined SAT score of 780 and a grade point average of 2.2. By stressing the objective standards for entrance, this approach highlights more clearly the numerous strategies that parents, especially middle-class parents, take to gain advantages for their children in the educational system. For a strategy to be successful, however, it must be legitimated and accepted by the school officials. When it is, it can be termed a moment of inclusion.

To return to the parents, when Mr. and Mrs. Irving requested that their daughter Neema be tested for the academically gifted program,

she was tested and admitted. This was a moment of inclusion, since the program was prestigious and exposed children to a higher level of academic work than in the regular classroom. Generally, teachers recommend that children be tested for the gifted program. In this instance, the Irvings were able to gain an advantage that, in all probability, would not have occurred otherwise.

In contrast, Mr. and Mrs. Mason's involvement was, for the most part, less successful. Mrs. Mason repeatedly asked her daughter Faith's third-grade teacher, Mrs. Erickson, to move Faith up to a reading group at grade level, but Mrs. Erickson, who thought that Faith's vocabulary was inadequate for a higher group, refused. Mrs. Mason also complained that Faith wasn't being called on enough during class. In addition, she was unhappy that the school library did not have enough books that celebrated black heroes and expressed concern about the uneven distribution of detentions by race.

The situation of these girls, is, of course, not strictly comparable, since there were important differences between the girls, especially in reading level. Our point, however, is not the girls' absolute level of performance in the class, but the ability of their parents to intervene in a fashion that the educators defined as appropriate and legitimate.

One can argue that, in Bourdieu's terms, Mr. and Mrs. Mason were drawing on their habitus and seeking to activate cultural capital for their daughter within the educational field. Most of their efforts were rebuffed. For example, the school (with elaborate special decorations, a special program, and a special school assembly) devoted far more time and energy to the celebration of Halloween than to Martin Luther King's birthday, and their daughter's reading group was not changed. These interactions, which further compounded the Masons' feelings of alienation and anger, should be characterized as moments of social exclusion. Although Mrs. Erickson "boosted" Faith's grade on her report card, an action that could theoretically be considered a moment of social inclusion, this action was the exception, and the Masons did not know about it.

Moreover, these moments of social exclusion were heavily (but not entirely) connected to Mr. and Mrs. Mason's membership in a minority group with a history of legal discrimination. The Masons framed the issues with contestation and anger, but the school had a standard that emphasized positive, polite interactions. (The standard was not formally stated or made explicit.) In a setting (field of interaction) in which the educators defined a particular socioemotional style (calm voices, positive affirmations, and few criticisms) as legitimate, the anger and hostility that these black parents brought to bear were not recognized as legitimate.

Thus, we stress the value of particular cultural displays should not be presumed to be general, but should be linked to legitimated standards in specific social settings (fields). In the case of parental involvement in white-dominant schooling, being white is an advantage. Whiteness represents a largely hidden cultural resource that facilitates white parents' compliance with the standard of deferential and positive parental involvement in school. Even when white parents approach the school with suspicion and hostility, they are spared the concern over historically recognized patterns of racial discrimination of black children in schools.

CONCLUSION

What are the implications of this study for research in sociology of education? On a substantive level, the work points to the independent power of race in shaping key interactions in school settings. Although middle-class black families still benefit from their class position (and interact with schools in different ways than their less-privileged counterparts), they still face an institutional setting that implicitly (and invisibly) privileges white families. We assert that in this instance, the role of race is independent of the power of class. This study echoes, in some respects, other research that has suggested the primacy of race in shaping school experiences (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1974, 1988). Similar to O'Connor's (1997) and Fordham's (1996) findings, we point to the interplay of the individual and the institution in

mediating the complex ways that race shapes school experiences.

At the theoretical level, we suggest the value of using Bourdieu's theory to explore social reproduction. Our study sought to highlight the fluid nature of social interaction and the reproduction of inequality in society in a way hinted at, but often underdeveloped, in the literature on social reproduction. Relying on the theoretical purchase offered by Bourdieu's method, our results suggest three modifications to notions of social reproduction. First, researchers should pay more attention to the field of interaction and the explicit and implicit rules for interaction embodied in a given field. Any form or type of capital derives value only in relation to the specific field of interaction. Particular types of social capital do not have inherent value exclusive of what is accorded in a specific field. Second, individuals must activate capital in social environments, and they vary in the level of skills they have to do so.

Accepting these two points leads to our third and concluding point. The process of social reproduction is not a smooth trajectory based on individual characteristics that are seamlessly transmitted across generations. An individual's class and racial position affect social reproduction, but they do not determine it. Each person (in this instance, a parent), through the skill with which he or she activates capital or plays his or her hand, influences how individual characteristics, such as race and class, will matter in interactions with social institutions and other persons in those institutions. Thus, a closer focus on moments of the activation of capital situated in a field analysis that emphasizes how individual behaviors are recognized and legitimated or marginalized and rebuffed provides a more conceptually accurate picture of how social reproduction occurs.

The process of social reproduction is not a continual, deterministic one. Rather, it is shaped moment by moment in particular social fields. By not abandoning the concept of capital, but showing more forcefully the individual's use of strategies in their displays, as well as the nature of the field, researchers stand to develop more nuanced and accurate models of the continuing nature of social inequality.

NOTES

1. We do not want to paint an overly deterministic picture of the relationship between the Masons and Mrs. Erickson. Although they had clear periods of conflict, they also had times when relations were more cordial.

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“TUCK IN THAT SHIRT!”

Race, Class, Gender, and Discipline in an Urban School

EDWARD W. MORRIS

Using a theoretical framework similar to Lareau and Horvat, Edward W. Morris describes findings from an ethnographic study of a middle school located in a large Texas city. For over two years, he studied this school, which included six months of regular visits. He describes the interaction between students and teachers over the school's dress code. Race, gender, and social class all intersect to create very different approaches to student behaviors.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What motivates teachers to discipline children? Are the assumptions driving their motivations accurate?
2. How is the discipline of girls different from that of boys? Why is race or

ethnicity less salient for teachers when making decisions about girls behavior?

3. Considering your own educational experiences, what do you find most surprising in this reading?

Virtually every day that I conducted research at Matthews Middle School,¹ a predominately minority, urban school, I heard an adult admonishing a student, “Tuck in that shirt!” The prevalence of this phrase represents the connections among dress, behavior, and discipline that composed a primary but unofficial emphasis at the school. In this article I incorporate the theoretical concepts of cultural capital and bodily discipline to analyze this concern with student dress and comportment. I show how educators identified students deemed deficient in cultural capital, especially regarding manners and dress, and

“‘Tuck in that shirt!’ Race, Class, Gender and Discipline in an Urban School” by Edward W. Morris from *Sociological Perspectives* 2005, Vol. 48(1). Copyright © University of California Press. Reprinted with permission.

attempted to reform these perceived deficiencies through regulating their bodies. This process differed by race, class, and gender as interconnected, rather than distinct, concepts. Perceptions of race, class, and gender guided educators' assumptions of which students lacked cultural capital and which students required disciplinary reform. Although many school officials viewed this discipline as a way of teaching valuable social skills, it appeared instead to reinforce race, class, and gender stereotypes and had the potential to alienate many students from schooling.

BACKGROUND

I explore the relationship among race, class, gender, bodily display, and discipline in more detail. Using observational and interview data from an urban middle school in Texas, I expand our view of this problem to include the educational experiences of African American girls, Latino boys, and white and Asian American girls and boys. I examine how educators' assumptions about these students drove the different ways they disciplined their bodies, especially in dress and manners. School officials tended to interpret African American girls as not "ladylike" and Latino boys as oppositional and potentially dangerous, and disciplined these students regularly. White and Asian American students, by contrast, were seen as less problematic, even though they lived in the same low-income area, and these students often avoided discipline. I suggest that educators' responses to students based on intersections of race, class, and gender resulted in disciplinary practices that could inadvertently maintain these areas of educational inequality.

FINDINGS

The Importance of Dress at Matthews

Matthews was a public school but required students to wear uniforms based on the school colors—navy blue, red, or white shirts, and navy

blue or khaki shorts or pants. Girls could wear navy blue or khaki skirts or skorts (half skirt, half shorts) that fell below the knee. Most sneakers and dress shoes were allowed, except sandals and boots. The school expected students to have their shirts tucked in at all times. According to teachers, the movement for uniforms at Matthews began about eight years before I started my fieldwork. Teachers told me that this was a collaborative effort between parents and the school, and the few parents I spoke with supported the uniforms. Similar to many urban schools, the uniform dress code at Matthews was intended to decrease gang activity (to rid the school of the "flying colors," according to one teacher) and make student poverty less visible. The regulation of the dress code, however, was a constant source of conflict between teachers and students.

Teachers' profound interest in instilling discipline through dress was reflected in their nearly ubiquitous calls to "tuck in that shirt!" This phrase is peppered throughout my field notes, and although adherence to the dress code was not an initial concern of my study, I soon found it emblematic of the school's exhaustive focus on bodily discipline. According to the principal, a survey of teachers conducted by the school just before I arrived found that dress code violations and discipline problems were among the top issues teachers wanted improved. Indeed, like other urban schools that require uniforms, teachers and administrators at Matthews linked the dress code to student discipline and order in general (Stanley, 1996). The school sent an information sheet titled "Standard Mode of Dress" to each student's home. This document states that the purpose of the dress code is to "ensure a safe learning environment" and "promote a climate of effective discipline that does not distract from the educational process." It describes the dress code and emphasizes in bold print that "baggy and over-sized clothing *will not* be allowed" (original emphasis). Students who deviated from this code, typically those who did not tuck in their shirts, were often spotted by adults and disciplined into compliance.

For many of the educators at the school, policing the dress code extended to an emphasis on teaching students how to dress “well.” Many even coupled this interest with genuine, caring concern for student upward mobility in this working-class context. For example, the school held what it called a “dress for success” day, when students were invited to dress as one might for the “business world.” Also, many teachers encouraged their students to dress up when giving a presentation in class, and teachers at the school were expected to dress up (often suits and ties for men and dresses and nylons for women), lending a tone of formality to the school. Matthews devoted entire assemblies to instructing students on how to dress properly.

Thus, beyond the uniforms, the school sought to discipline the kids² into wearing clothing considered appropriate on nonuniform school days and events. This discipline served as part of a hidden curriculum, emphasizing strict regulation of dress for working-class students whom adults thought did not possess knowledge of “appropriate” manners and clothing. . . . I also observed other school officials, all of them African American women, critiquing girls (who were almost always African American as well), for wearing “hoochie-mama” clothing. These adults appeared to identify the styles of black girls in particular as overly sexual and sought to reform them (see also Collins, 1990, 1998).

However, concerns over clothing and appearance were not just directed toward girls. Adults also feared that boys, especially black and Hispanic boys, might wear something considered inappropriate to formal events, such as oversized pants that sagged below the waist. Several African American men and women at the school encouraged boys to dress like “gentlemen,” even giving some practical advice such as not wearing white socks with a suit. In this sense, these boys appeared to educators to display “marginalized masculinities,” interpreted as overly coarse and aggressive (Connell, 1995). Educators aimed to reform these styles and behaviors into what were perceived to be

mainstream masculine forms. School officials viewed the gendered prescription of dress for both girls and boys as a central part of teaching the students appropriate manners. In this process, they distinguished “street” styles, which they deemed brash, from “appropriate,” conservative styles of dress and behavior.

Many adults at Matthews saw making students adhere to the dress code and use proper manners as a way to provide them with social skills, including those needed for future employment. This concern is interesting, because research on cultural capital has rarely examined public institutions that attempt to transmit such cultural skills.

Many adults thought that teaching students “the rules” of dress and manners, including adherence to the dress code, was an important way to prepare students for future success. School officials viewed their discipline of student’s bodies, especially in appropriately masculine and feminine ways, as transmitting cultural capital—modeling the type of dress and conduct that could be linked to upward mobility.³

However, school officials did not appear concerned with the dress and manners of all students in the same way. Disciplinary action differed according to how perceptions of race and class interacted with perceptions of masculinity and femininity. In my observations, disciplinary focus at Matthews took three general forms, which I discuss in detail below. First, educators were concerned with “ladylike” behavior and dress, especially for African American girls. Second, educators were concerned with threatening and oppositional behavior and dress, especially for African American and Latino boys (because Ferguson [2000] has already provided an in-depth account of the disciplinary experiences of African American boys, I focus on the discipline directed at Latino boys below). Third, many school officials assumed that some students, especially white and Asian American students, required little guidance or discipline in their behavior and dress. Fourth, I consider how these disciplinary patterns may have provoked alienation and resistance from many of the students targeted for reform.

Acting Like a Young Lady: Race and Perceptions of Femininity

Aside from "Tuck in that shirt!" the most often used phrase that I recorded in my fieldnotes was some variation on "Act like a young lady!" Adults invariably directed this reprimand at African American girls; I never recorded it directed at Latina girls, Asian American girls, or white girls (although members of these groups did receive other reprimands). Adults occasionally instructed boys (primarily black boys) in how to act like "gentlemen," but this was far less common and was never used as a reprimand. Teachers and administrators used the phrase "Act like a young lady" to instruct black girls in how to sit and get up properly, dress appropriately, and speak quietly, as the following excerpt illustrates.

As the students are working on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (the state achievement test) worksheets, Brittany, a black girl wearing dark blue shorts and a white shirt, gets up from her desk to get a tissue. The action seems perfectly innocuous to me, but Ms. Taylor, a black teacher, sees something unacceptable in it. Before Brittany can get to the tissue box, Ms. Taylor makes her go back to her seat, sit down, and then get up "like a young lady." Brittany seems rather confused by this and seems about to protest but eventually obeys with some huffing. She gets up much slower this time and with her legs closer together, looking at Ms. Taylor the whole time for assurance that everything is correct. Ms. Taylor says, "Thank you, Brittany." And Brittany proceeds to get her tissue while still looking rather perplexed. (fieldnotes, 3/21/01, 1:00)

In a subsequent interview I conducted with Ms. Taylor, a veteran teacher, she explained why she considered it necessary to teach some girls "ladylike" behavior, as she did with Brittany:

I talk to them about how a lady talks and walks—I used to put books on their heads, so they would learn to stand straight and sit straight, with no slouching. I've had to say things like "Close your legs—ladies don't sit like that" But there is a lack of parental involvement, and they are not taught

these things. Some come in here as young ladies already, but some have to learn. (3/27/02)

According to my observations, the girls adults thought needed to learn this ladylike behavior tended to be African American. One first-year teacher, a black man named Mr. Neal, told me in a conversation that black girls in particular required instruction in acceptable manners:

Mr. Neal talks to me about how important he thinks it is for black, urban youth to learn how to express themselves in acceptable ways, like through video and film. He tells me: "Like the black girls here—they lack social skills. The way they talk, it's loud and combative. They grow up in these rough neighborhoods, and that's how they act to survive. We need to teach them more social skills because that's one of the big problems now." (fieldnotes, 3/6/02)

Mr. Neal's statement echoes Grant's (1984) finding that teachers tend to focus on improving the social skills of black girls. As he mentions, many teachers, both black and white, interpreted black girls as overly "loud" and aggressive. This was one of the main ways adults thought these girls deviated from their model of ideal feminine behavior, and it often stimulated reprimands.

Mr. Henry is offended not only by the volume of the girls' laughter but also by the speed of their movements. Adults did not often demand that boys (of any racial-ethnic background) exert similar control over themselves. I witnessed no admonitions to "act like young gentlemen!" for example. Thus, similar to Martin (1998), I find that school officials restricted the movements of girls more than boys and encouraged girls to exert greater control over their bodies. While most of the children in Martin's (1998) study were white, however, my findings from Matthews indicate that adults directed these bodily restrictions at black girls far more than at white, Asian American, or Latina girls (discussed below). Race appeared to shape the perception of femininity. Educators tended to read the behaviors of black girls as more stereotypically

masculine than feminine and attempted to discipline them into exhibiting behavior closer to stereotypical femininity.

Interestingly, however, this concern with the gendered comportment of black girls did not seem to affect teachers' perceptions of them academically. Although black girls were frequently disciplined, they were not viewed as particularly "bad." They were overrepresented in pre-Advanced Placement classes, and teachers frequently described them in "regular" classes as among their best students. In fact, stereotypically masculine behavior, such as the boldness many adults interpreted as "loud," often seemed to benefit black girls in the classroom. As Mr. Wilson, a veteran white teacher, said in describing some of the best students in his class, "The black girls up there I don't worry about, they can fend for themselves—they're loud, but they're a sharp bunch and do their work" (fieldnotes, 10/3/01). Although many adults viewed training girls to "act like young ladies" as putting them on the path to upward mobility, their discipline of black girls seemed to curtail some of the very behaviors that led to success in the classroom. Despite adults' good intentions, this disciplinary pattern could actually serve to solidify racial and gender inequality by restricting the classroom input and involvement of black girls.

Symbolizing Opposition: Race, Masculinity, and Style

In contrast to girls, adults saw many boys at Matthews as "bad" and occasionally threatening. This was particularly true for Latino and African American boys. In my observations, members of these groups were the most likely to "get in trouble." Unlike that for most girls, this discipline often entailed stern reprimands and referrals to the office for punishment. My findings of the negative disciplinary experiences of African American boys match those of Ferguson (2000). However, I found that school officials at Matthews also considered many *Latino* boys equally if not more dangerous and subjected them to constant surveillance and bodily discipline. The discipline

directed at Latino boys was strongly mediated by their presentation of self, however, especially through their choice of clothing, hairstyle, and response to authority (Bettie 2000; Goffman 1973; West & Fenstermaker, 1995). Teachers interpreted Hispanic students who projected a "street" persona through their dress and behavior as indifferent to school. Markers of this persona included gang-related dress such as colored shoelaces, colored or marked belts, or a white T-shirt or towel slung over a particular shoulder. However, other markers of this street style were less directly related to gang involvement, such as baggy Dickies brand pants, shaved or slicked-back hair, or refusal to keep the shirt tucked in. Many of these markers appeared instead to reflect a working-class identity.

Latino boys provoked fear in many teachers, especially when the boys were suspected of gang involvement. One white teacher, for example, referred to a group of Hispanic boys she called "gangsters" as "the type that would get back at you" (fieldnotes, 5/13/02). Although many adults and students told me that most kids affiliated with gangs at the school were wannabes rather than full-fledged members, and I never witnessed any gang violence on or near school grounds, teachers viewed any "gang-related" students as potentially dangerous and disciplined them accordingly. Students suspected of being in gangs were almost always Latinos and were monitored closely by adults, especially in terms of their dress.

Although many of the students at Matthews resisted the dress code prescription to tuck in their shirts, it was the resistance of Latinos that was viewed as especially threatening and oppositional. As Mr. Wilson told me, "The gang influence is bad among these Hispanics" (fieldnotes, 10/3/01). Many teachers expressed a similar othering of Latinos, constructing the group as exotic and untrustworthy and connecting them to negative gang activity.

For example, many school officials interpreted types of clothing as gang related when worn by Latino boys. Ms. McCain, a white fourth-year teacher, expressed this view when

asked in an interview how she identified gang members: "Like if one of my Hispanic boys is wearing all blue—blue shirt and blue pants. The Crips, they wear blue rag." Many students, irrespective of race or gender, wore blue clothing at Matthews, occasionally all blue. Yet Ms. McCain implied that she interprets such clothing to indicate gang membership only when worn by Latino boys. The combination of race and gender with dress in this case could signal the difference between a potentially dangerous student and a harmless one.

Some Hispanic boys at the school were indeed involved with gangs, including the Crips, and announced this verbally as well as through their bodily displays. But outright gang members constituted only a small percentage of Latino boys at the school. I also knew of Asian boys and Hispanic girls who were involved in gangs, for instance, but teachers did not generalize that these groups of students, defined by race and gender, were dangerous. In addition, many adults viewed Latino boys in general as having the potential for gang involvement or violence, even if they did not openly display gang markers. For example, in another class I observed with Mr. Pham, he reprimanded a Latino boy who was wrestling with another boy. The Latino boy protested, saying he did not think he was hurting the other boy. Mr. Pham told him to stop anyway and added, "One day you're gonna hurt someone and not know it and go to jail." This particular Latino boy did not wear any salient markers of gang affiliation typically used at the school. However, Mr. Pham still interpreted his actions as overly aggressive and warned that they could one day land him in jail.

Discipline and surveillance were especially directed at Hispanic boys who projected various elements of a "street" persona. This persona did not necessarily include direct gang markers but almost always included wearing baggy Dickies brand pants. Many Latino and African American boys preferred this brand of pants and shorts and usually wore them oversized and low on their hips. The choice of Dickies by these students suggests a working-class-based, "tough" identity because the

brand is primarily marketed as men's blue-collar work clothing. Many adults at Matthews, such as Ms. Boyd, an African American fifth-year teacher, interpreted Dickies negatively: "You know how they wear these baggy Dickies pants and stuff—you know where that comes from? It's like how they dress in prison. A lot of them see their older brothers or whatever in prison and that's what they pattern themselves after" (fieldnotes, 4/20/01). For Ms. Boyd, Dickies represented oppositional values. Interestingly, I rarely saw white students wearing Dickies, and only a few Asian students wore them. The brand was overwhelmingly preferred by black and Latino students, usually boys. This parallels Ferguson's (2000) finding that school officials viewed many black boys as "bound for jail." My findings from Matthews expand this view to include Hispanic boys and highlight how something as simple as a style of pants can indicate potential criminality when worn by black or Latino boys.

However, bodily display, especially clothing choice, had a major influence on how educators viewed and treated Latino boys. The few Latino boys who wore Dockers brand pants and dark sneakers or dress shoes and kept their shirts tucked in signaled to teachers that they were good students. One Hispanic student of this type was named Thomas. Thomas projected a middle-class, "schoolboy" persona through his Dockers pants, tucked-in shirt, and parted hair (see also Ferguson, 2000). Although I heard him called a "little nerd" by some of his classmates, he received positive reactions from teachers in class. Thomas was rambunctious and did have a few referrals to the assistant principal's office. However, these referrals were not for severe and persistent behavior, and teachers did not interpret Thomas's actions as threatening.

Thomas serves as an example of how Latino boys, largely through their dress and manners, could signal to school officials that they were conscientious students and came from middle-class backgrounds. These students paralleled the African American boys that Ferguson (2000) terms "Schoolboys" because of their strict adherence to school rules (in contradistinction to boys

considered “Troublemakers”). At Matthews I noticed a similar split between those considered “schoolboys” and “bad boys” among Latino students.⁴ I suggest that this dichotomous view stemmed largely from educators’ perceptions of social class. Teachers seemed to hold more polarized views of the potential class backgrounds of Latino students than they did for other students. Many told me that the Hispanic students’ backgrounds could be relatively wealthy and upwardly mobile or very disadvantaged. A veteran white teacher named Ms. Phillips, for instance, explained in our interview that she thought many of the school’s Hispanic students were middle class or at least stable working class and in a better economic situation than most of the white students: “I’m pretty sure most of the white kids who go here live in apartments, and are poor like a lot of the other kids. Now, if you drive through the neighborhood just down from here—the one with all the houses—it’s all Hispanic. A lot of the Hispanic families here are home owners.”

I found that many Latino students at Matthews actively “performed” (Bettie, 2000) class identity and membership, especially through their dress. A middle-class performance displayed the students’ possession of cultural capital in the form of dress and grooming, indicating a middle-class or upwardly mobile background and mitigating the discipline they received. Although Latino boys in general were viewed as potentially problematic, social class-oriented signals, in the form clothing and manners, could ameliorate the negative perceptions associated with being male and Hispanic.

At the same time, any display of a working-class street style by Latinos could lead educators to perceive them as oppositional. This was true for boys as well as girls but appeared less acute for girls. Latinas who displayed a street style could be disciplined and seen as “bad” but not as dangerous as Latinos who displayed this style. Teachers suggested that although they believed many of the Latinas were connected to gangs, they did not see them as “ringleaders” or instigators of trouble in classrooms, or as overly

aggressive. Some teachers even tried to protect Hispanic girls from boys they suspected of gang activity. Mr. Wilson told me, for example, that he tried to separate the Hispanic boys and girls in one of his classes because he thought that the girls “wanted to do their work”: “I try to give them as much positive reinforcement as possible, so they don’t get under the influence of those boys” (fieldnotes, 10/3/01). Teachers could view Latinas exhibiting a street style as oppositional, but they did not see this as the tendency for Latinas in general. By contrast, they did view many Latino boys as inclined to opposition and having the potential to influence others in that same way. Thus, race- and class-oriented style did not really compromise femininity for Latinas or lead adults to view them as resistant, but these factors had important implications for perceptions of masculinity for Latino boys.

Self-Discipline and Benign Resistance: Race, Class, and Gender in the Perception of Acceptable Behavior

Most research employing concepts of cultural capital and bodily discipline has given little attention to how these processes might work for white and Asian students, especially those in predominantly black and Latino urban areas. Matthews had a small minority of white students and a larger minority of Asian American students. I almost never saw these students disciplined in terms of dress or manners, even when I observed clear violations.⁵ School officials appeared to view Asian students at the school through the lens of the “model-minority” stereotype of high academic achievement and discipline (see Lee, 1994, 1996). I never saw Asian American girls disciplined for behavior or dress; in many ways these girls exemplified the educators’ ideal self-disciplined student. I rarely observed school officials discipline Asian American boys. Behaviors for which adults frequently rebuked African American and Latino boys (e.g., getting out of their seats without permission, being loud) often went unnoticed when engaged in by Asian American boys. Further,

some Asian American boys exhibited behavior and dress almost identical to that considered dangerous and gang affiliated when engaged in by Latinos boys, but the Asian Americans were still considered good students.

A Pakistani student named Roshan, for example, dressed in a street-based style that included baggy Dickies pants. Roshan could be quite disruptive in classes and received some discipline, but educators did not describe him as "bad," and I never saw him referred to the assistant principal's office (for serious infractions). Roshan often dressed in all blue, and I observed him hanging out with kids that teachers considered gang affiliated. In fact, one day when I was helping Roshan write a paper, he calmly informed me that he was indeed involved with a gang (fieldnotes, 4/15/02). Thus, even when Asian American boys such as Roshan exhibited specific markers associated with gang affiliation, and in his case actually did have some involvement in gangs, educators still did not view them as threatening or dangerous, especially compared to Latino boys.

Adults rarely disciplined white girls or boys, although, as was the case for Latinos, this was strongly mediated by race- and class-based performance. Some white students, through their interactive style, choice of clothing, and friendship groups, signaled a type of street persona similar to many other students. This persona incorporated styles of dressing and speaking commonly associated with urban black youth. Although I never saw these white students wear Dickies pants, some wore gold chains outside their shirts, like many of the black and Latino students, and used expressions and spoke in a cadence similar to many black students at the school, what many might call "Black English" or "ebonics" (Labov, 1972). Students affecting this persona tended to receive more disciplinary action than other whites.

In her study of the disciplinary experiences of black children, Ferguson (2000, p. 72) states, "The closer to whiteness, to the norm of bodies, language, emotion, the more these children *are* self-disciplined and acceptable members of the

institution." In my observations, students performed identities that deviated from stereotypical whiteness despite their white skin and despite their categorization of themselves as white on a survey form. Perhaps because these students lived in this working-class, predominantly minority urban neighborhood, they reflected and aligned themselves with their experience in this context, which produced an alternative projection of whiteness. However, although this performance tended to slightly differentiate these students from other white students in terms of discipline, their whiteness still afforded them less concern and monitoring from teachers than that directed at most African American and Latino students, especially in terms of manners and dress. This provided white students with latent racial benefits, something scholars have referred to as "white privilege" (Fine et al., 1997; McIntosh, 1988/1998). Whiteness, even when expressed through a streetwise demeanor in the working-class context of Matthews, was still considered quietly central and normative.

Impacts of Disciplinary Control

Several scholars suggest that discipline, especially when harsh and controlling, often engenders resistance and alienation (Ferguson, 2000; Foucault, 1977/1995; McNeil, 1986). When directed at historically marginalized student groups, such discipline may only perpetuate their marginalization and inequality in the educational system. At Matthews, the different ways in which students and teachers interpreted discipline in dress and manners provides insight into how this discipline might actually reproduce educational inequalities.

Although most teachers at Matthews favored strict discipline in dress and manners, a few did not. A white teacher named Ms. Scott, for example, said this when I asked why she thought so many adults insisted on making the students tuck in their shirts: "Because it's an easy battle. You might not be able to get them to sit in their seat and do their work, but you can make them tuck their shirt in. It's an easy way for teachers to

assert their authority over the kids and make it look like they have control" (fieldnotes, 2/1/02). Ms. Scott implied that teachers who did not have enough control over their students to make them do schoolwork could project a facade of control through the regulation of student clothing. Similarly, some teachers I observed also made their students tuck in their shirts before going to lunch while ignoring untucked shirts in their own classrooms. These findings emphasize how important teachers considered the visibility of student compliance with clothing rules and echo Foucault's (1977/1995, p. 187) assertions that "in discipline it is the subjects that have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of power that is exercised over them." Students displaying tucked in shirts symbolized and embodied the control and order sought by the school.

In contrast to adults, virtually all the students I talked to at Matthews expressed displeasure with the dress code, especially the policy of keeping shirts tucked in. Most complained that the dress code made them physically uncomfortable and stifled their ability to express creativity. The students most persistently targeted for dress code infractions—black and Latino boys—appeared most resistant to this policy. For example, I tutored Daniel, a Latino boy, on a persuasive paper he was writing against the school's tucked-in shirt policy. I asked him why he thought adults cared so much about this. He replied, "Because they think it makes us look like we're educated." When I asked him why he opposed that, he thought for a while and finally stated, "Because it doesn't matter what you look like to be educated, it's all up here [points to his head]."

Student displeasure with the dress code often translated into resistance. This resistance, especially in the form of untucked shirts and baggy pants worn low on the hips, symbolized defiance of the school for many teachers. According to Mr. Simms, a veteran white teacher, "We've tried to get them to wear pants that fit around their waist, but that hasn't really worked. That baggy style with the pants hanging low came from the black community and the prisons—they use it as a way to defy authority" (interview, 5/8/02). Although

white and Asian American students also resisted the dress code, adults interpreted their resistance as benign and harmless. Mr. Simms, along with other school officials, interpreted the race- and class-based "street" styles of black and Latino children in particular as purposely oppositional. Many educators seemed to think that purging these styles from the school would also purge the opposition. However, as Valenzuela (1999) reported also, most youth I talked to at Matthews wanted to wear baggy pants and untucked shirts not specifically to oppose the school but because this was normative dress among youth in their neighborhood. The restriction of these styles perplexed many students and led them to see the school as an alien, unfairly punitive institution. Because of its restrictions, the school inadvertently transformed the expression of youth identity, encompassing relatively innocuous stylistic rebelliousness, into a mode of subversive opposition. This, it appeared, only promoted more resistance from many students and did little to bond them to the school.

Whereas adults such as Mr. Simms saw the restriction of certain styles of clothing and behavior as eliminating prisoner-like defiance, [students] interpreted this discipline as creating a prisonlike atmosphere in the school. Foucault (1977/1995) argues that disciplinary institutions such as schools and prisons intend to produce individuals who internalize discipline and regulate themselves. Similarly, the disciplinary practices aimed at students at Matthews, often based on stereotypical assumptions about their lack of conformity, seemed to produce students who internalized these very assumptions. Because some adults interpreted certain dress and behaviors as oppositional or inadequate and sought to discipline them away, this meant that students subject to this discipline could come to see themselves as oppositional or inadequate.

CONCLUSION

Schools teach children many lessons. These lessons often transgress the formal elements of

overt curricula and instruct children how to speak, what to wear, how to move their bodies, and, ultimately, how to inhabit different race, class, and gender positions. At Matthews, school officials helped implement and regulate dress and manners out of an expressed, genuine desire to help students.⁶ Left hidden, however, were the assumptions of which students needed this discipline, and in what form.

I want to highlight two ways in which this study advances our understanding of inequality in education. First, it demonstrates how the production of difference and inequality in schooling takes place not just through gender, or just through race, or just through class, but through all of these at once. Similar to Collins's (1990) concept of a "matrix of domination," race, class, and gender interrelate to profoundly alter one another in guiding expectations and sanctions of young people. We know that identity formation works through intersections of race, class, and gender (Bettie, 2000), but previous research has not fully developed how organizations respond to these overlapping concepts. We have also seen that schools shape how students will embody race, class, and gender positions (e.g., Lewis, 2003; Martin, 1998; Thorne, 1993; Willis, 1977), but previous research has not explored how this process works for various combinations of identities. I have examined how teachers and schools interpret and respond to students based on previously underexplored intersections of race, class, and gender. My study suggests that race, class, and gender profoundly alter each other in framing perceptions of different students, which translates into different methods of regulating and shaping their behaviors. Examining organizational discipline at these intersections is crucial to developing a more nuanced understanding of the role of schools in producing and reproducing social inequalities.

For instance, in my observations the "blackness" of students seemed to indicate aggression and forcefulness. When combined with gender, this influenced perceptions of masculinity and femininity. As a result, adults not only viewed black boys as dangerously masculine, as Ferguson

(2000) finds, but also viewed black girls as inadequately feminine. This perception of black girls influenced educators to restrict behaviors perceived as loud and aggressive, even though these very behaviors aided black girls in the classroom. Although not always producing the intended results, the discipline adults directed at black girls aimed to mold these energetic girls into models of quiet compliance and deference. In this way, perceptions of race can work through perceptions of masculinity and femininity to guide how adults approach different youths, resulting in different ways that race and gender inequality can manifest in school settings.

For Latinos in this urban, southwestern setting, "brownness" worked somewhat differently when combined with gender and social class perceptions. School officials did not view Latinas as inadequately feminine but did view many Latino boys as potentially aggressively masculine, similar to popular culture characterizations of dangerous Latino masculinity (see Fregoso, 1993, p. 29). Latino boys in this setting endured adult assumptions that because of their race and gender, they had the potential for danger and should be monitored and disciplined accordingly. Overcoming this assumption required displays of cultural capital from Latino boys in the form of dress and manners not required of other students (especially white and Asian American students, whose race often seemed to represent cultural capital in itself [see also Lareau & Horvat, 1999]). Through these displays, Latino boys could signal a middle-class background, which reduced the surveillance and discipline directed at them. By contrast, adults viewed Latinos and Latinas who displayed a non-middle-class "street-based" persona as oppositional. The negative perceptions of this class-based display were especially acute for Latino boys, however. Thus, for Latino boys in particular, adults' perceptions of their class could alter perceptions of their race and masculinity.

When adopted by white and Asian American students, a street-based style elicited some discipline but seemed to be less menacing to educators. In this way, race modified perceptions of

class- and gender-based behavior. Even when these students affected a street style almost identical to that of black and Latino youth, educators typically interpreted white and Asian American boys as harmless and white girls as well mannered. "Whiteness" and "Asianness," although partially qualified by class-based performative display, appeared to indicate docility and normative masculinity and femininity. Educators assumed at the outset that white and Asian American students did not need disciplinary reform, which only solidified their connection to educationally valuable forms of cultural capital in dress and manners. These examples point to the complex ways in which race, class, and gender combined to shape perceptions and regulations of students at Matthews. Future research should clarify further how such processes work to re-create disadvantages in schooling for some and advantages for others.

Further, I wish to emphasize how such race, class, and gender assumptions actually worked to subvert the goal of many educators at the school to provide students with the skills to gain upward mobility. Research using Bourdieu's reproduction theory has not often examined organizations that actually attempt to teach students the skills and styles of the dominant culture. Using evidence from a school that emphasized informal training in dress and manners, my research exposes the difficulty of transmitting cultural capital in a public organizational setting, even if this is ostensibly a "caring" pursuit (see Valenzuela, 1999). Educators' identification of which students lacked cultural capital was greatly influenced by their perceptions of students' race, class, and gender. Students identified as lacking or resistant would never measure up to those whose race and class position suggested the possession of social skills in and of itself. In addition, the methods for transmitting and instilling this form of cultural capital involved persistent bodily discipline, which many students experienced as confusing and alienating. My observations suggest that students targeted for disciplinary reform can internalize the discipline aimed at them, and while for some

this may lead to self-regulation and complicity, for others it could produce resistance and disengagement from school.

Rather than create opportunities for advancement, the emphasis on regulating students into embodying dominant modes of dress and comportment only seems to bolster perceptions of poor and minority youth as flawed in some way. Schools employing disciplinary regimes steeped in race, class, and gender assumptions (however well intentioned) risk pushing many students away and, ironically, reproducing the very inequalities they are attempting to change. This study suggests that to truly advance toward equality of opportunity, schools and society should seek to value, rather than reform, marginalized forms of style and appearance.

NOTES

1. A pseudonym, as are all names in this analysis.
2. I occasionally refer to adolescents as "kids" because that is how teachers often referred to them and how they often referred to themselves (see also Thorne, 1993).
3. This interest in gender-specific manners—particularly when invoked by black teachers—perhaps stemmed from the influence of African American fraternities, sororities, and other social clubs that have historically emphasized social etiquette.
4. To be sure, there were black boys who were considered "school-oriented" and "street-oriented" at Matthews as well. However, educators seemed to especially identify this distinction among Latinos, many of whom could be considered extremely polite and from upwardly mobile backgrounds and others of whom could be considered among the most dangerous students in the school. This polarity did not appear to exist for black students; compared to Latinos, few were described as middle class, and fewer were also described as threatening gang members.
5. One could argue that this stems from the fewer numbers of white and Asian American students at the school and that I was simply less likely to encounter discipline aimed at these students. However, as this article is part of a broader research plan focusing on white students in this predominantly racial-ethnic minority school, I purposely observed more classes

and interactions involving white students than other students. It is possible that I missed some instances of discipline aimed at Asian American students, but this is highly unlikely in the case of white students.

6. While certainly strict, Matthews's climate was not one of harsh and severe discipline, such as that described by Anyon (1997) in her study of an urban school. Indeed, many adults at Matthews, including the principal, expressed a desire to create a caring, family atmosphere at the school.

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GENDER AND EDUCATION

ROSLYN ARLIN MICKELSON

In 1989, Roslyn Mickelson published an article entitled "Why Does Jane Read and Write So Well?" She revisits those premises in this reading, asking why women's achievement is an anomaly—being particularly successful in school but not being able to parlay their successes into occupational and financial returns. She also examines the recent concern about underachievement of boys. These questions are addressed using several explanations and test score data.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why does the article indicate that "Jane" reads and writes so well, and what are the concerns about her doing so?
2. How does girls' performance in school compare to that of boys? What changes have occurred recently?
3. Is there a problem for boys in school? If so, what is it?

Contemporary gender trends in educational outcomes reveal recognizable patterns. Familiar gender differences can be summarized as follows: net of race and social class, women do, on

average, better in school and attain more education than do men; men's achievement and attainment patterns are somewhat bimodal in that men are more likely than women to be both academic stars and school failures; and women are less likely than men to excel in mathematics, science, and technical fields, while men are less likely to shine in reading, writing, social sciences, and humanities. Post-high school careers, college majors, and professional degrees reflect these same gender patterns in choices of college majors.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the historic male advantages in access to schooling and educational outcomes have largely disappeared. Women's educational achievements have closed many of gender gaps favoring men, and in some cases, new ones favoring women have emerged. To be sure, there are important social class and ethnic variations in gender differences. Nevertheless, overall, female students in the U.S. achieve at higher levels soon after they begin school and attain more education than their male counterparts at almost every degree level. However, at all degree levels, men receive larger occupational and income returns to their education.

This chapter begins with a more detailed description of gender differences in educational processes, outcomes, and returns to schooling from the opportunity structure. Gender

differences suggest two dilemmas: the first one concerns the underperformance of male students, especially males from disadvantaged ethnic minority backgrounds. The second dilemma involves why women do so well in school. In the face of continuing male income and occupational advantages in income returns for similar educational credentials, women's educational achievements and attainments appear anomalous. The chapter concludes with observations on trends in gender and education.

K-12 EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

The years between children's birth and entry into kindergarten are critically important for readying them for school. There are very few gender differences in young children's access to preprimary school. Nonetheless, by kindergarten, females have a slight advantage in word recognition. By third grade males begin to perform slightly better in mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). These early, small gender differences in academic performance foreshadow the achievement patterns that continue through high school and postsecondary education.

Tracking and Grouping

Ability grouping within elementary school classrooms and tracking of academic courses in secondary school are two of the most common organizational features of U.S. public education that shape educational outcomes. A student's gender alone rarely has a large effect on ability group or track placement, but elementary school placements in special education and gifted programs often reflect an intersection of students' gender, social class, and racial background. For example, although a majority of students are not identified for any special programs during elementary school, middle-class and White students are more likely to be identified as academically gifted, while ethnic minority and working-class students are more likely to be identified for

special education. Disadvantaged minority males (especially African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans) are disproportionately placed in special education while White, middle-class females are disproportionately identified for gifted education programs (Oakes, 2005). These placements are consequential because elementary school ability groupings launch students onto educational trajectories that influence outcomes from elementary through postsecondary education (Lucas, 1999).

Academic Performance K-12

A key reason that tracking and ability grouping are important is because they influence students' exposure to the formal curriculum. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is widely recognized as a measure of how well students learned the formal curriculum. NAEP assesses student academic performance in a given school at grades 4, 8, and 12 in a variety of subjects. NAEP results since 2000 show gender gaps exist in reading, writing, and mathematics. Overall, at each grade level, females outperform males in reading and writing. Males slightly outperform females in mathematics; however, when 12th grade NAEP performance is broken down into subject areas, male performance exceeds females' in only two of four mathematics content areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 16). Males outperform females in science during the early grades but by 12th grade, their advantage disappears. Overall, the gender gaps in math and science have narrowed since the 1970s but the ones in reading and math persist.

SAT

College entrance exams such as the SAT are highly influential. The majority of SAT takers are females (54.6%) and overall scores reflect a large gender gap (1506 compared to 1532) in favor of males (College Board, 2006). It is worth noting that gender differences in SAT scores are dwarfed by ethnic differences in them. Males' SAT math scores exceed those of females. On

average, males' scores in critical reading fall slightly above those of females, which is the opposite of the pattern found in NAEP scores, where females do much better than males in reading. Women's writing scores exceed those of men. The population of students who take the SAT includes those planning to attend college whereas NAEP tests reflect the overall population of students. This may be one reason that SAT scores do not reflect gender patterns in found in NAEP results, where females excel in reading and writing relative to males.

High School Curricula

Students cannot learn what they have not been taught. Pallas and Alexander (1983) demonstrated that a major factor in SAT score gaps is students' differential enrollment rates in key high-level courses; students enrolling in higher-level courses in math and science generally score better on their college entrance exams. Analyses of high school transcripts reveal that large proportions of male and female students enroll in geometry, algebra II, chemistry, and biology (IES, 2007). In fact, compared to the gender gaps of 1970s, contemporary enrollment gaps in these courses are relatively small. With the exception of calculus and physics, females are slightly more likely than males to enroll in these math and science courses.

Today, there are few official systematic gender differences in curricular offerings for public school students. That was not always the case. Until the early 20th century, female students were unlikely to enroll in certain courses because of pervasive gender stereotypes about the proper kinds of knowledge for males and females. Curricula in coed schools varied but always reflected the local community's social construction of gender, especially the gendered nature of men's and women's public and private roles. Historically, some secondary science electives offered gendered curricula. For example, in a physics course for girls, students learned about the mechanics of vacuum cleaners and sewing machines (Tyack & Hansot, 1990). Observable

gender differences in math and science enrollments that grew out of the ways that schools organized access to the curricula resulted in females taking far fewer advanced math and science courses than males. Tyack and Hansot (1990) conclude that this historical gendering of the science curricula resulted in few if any females prepared for college science or engineering courses during the early decades of the 20th century.

At present there are no gender differences in the likelihood of students' placements in higher-level math and science secondary tracks once their prior achievement and previous track placements are taken into account. Research identifies persistent race and social class effects in track placements, though. Ethnic differences in higher-level course enrollments are related to many factors, including the fact that disadvantaged minority males were disproportionately placed in special education during elementary school. By high school, very few disadvantaged minority males are prepared to enroll in top-level academic courses.

Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer the most rigorous, college level coverage of subject matter. Compared to other high track courses, AP courses provide students with several advantages including exposure to college level course work. If they pass the AP exam, students receive college course credit. To pass the AP exam, students must score a 3 or 4 on the exam.

In 2002, 56 percent of AP exams takers were women. Females were the majority of exam takers in social studies, English, and foreign languages; males were the majority of exam takers in calculus, computer science, and sciences. Nevertheless, females fared relatively poorly compared to males in almost all categories of AP exams. Males' average AP scores in social studies, English, calculus, computer science, and sciences exceeded those of females. Females' average AP scores exceeded males' average scores only in foreign languages (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 6). In fact, foreign

languages is the only subject area in which females' average scores exceeded the threshold of 3.0 necessary for college credit; whereas males' average scores exceeded the 3.0 threshold in all subject areas. The gendered patterns of achievement favoring male students in AP exam results are more similar to SAT scores than to NAEP gender patterns. It is important to remember that because the population of students taking AP exams is not the same as the population that takes NAEP tests, it is not appropriate to compare scores across tests.

Extra- and Co-Curricular Activities

For most students, high school is much more than academic courses. Extra- and co-curricular activities are important components of students' social lives as well as key contributors to their cognitive development, especially activities considered as co-curricular. Sociological research indicates that positive school outcomes are correlated with participation in extra- and co-curricular activities.

There are clear gender differences in the degree and type of participation in extra-curricular activities. Females are more likely than males to participate in extra- and co-curricular activities, a fact that may be related to their overall higher academic performance. With the exception of student government, where participation rates are comparable among males and females, other activities are clearly gendered. Athletics are the only activity in which more males (45%) than females (32%) are involved. Females are much more likely than male students to participate in yearbook, newspaper, music and performing arts, and academic clubs.

Risky Behavior in High School

Students who dislike school or who engage in risky behavior are less likely to succeed academically and they are more likely to drop out of high school. NAEP data suggest that while most students are not involved in risky behavior, male students are more likely than female peers to have

engaged in drug or alcohol use, to have carried a weapon to school, or to have been a participant in or victim of school violence. Childbearing has a negative effect on females' likelihood of completing high school, although young mothers from higher socioeconomic status are more likely to graduate than young mothers from low SES backgrounds (Freeman, 2004).

Nearly one-third of public high school students fail to graduate (Swanson, 2004). Nationally, an estimated 78 percent of Whites, 72 percent of Asian Americans, 55 percent of African Americans, and 53 of Latinos graduated from high school in 2003 (Greene & Winters, 2006). Overall, male students are 8 percent less likely to graduate from high school than are females (Swanson, 2004). Gender differences in dropout rates exist in all ethnic groups: among Whites, 5 percent fewer males than females graduate from high school; among Asian Americans the rate is 3 percent lower than for females; among African Americans 11 percent more women than males graduate; and among Latinos there is a 9 percent female graduation advantage (Greene & Winters, 2006). Dropout rates are declining for all male ethnic groups, except Latinos for whom rates are holding steady (Freeman, 2004).

POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES

Postsecondary Enrollments

Forty years ago men were the majority of students at all levels of postsecondary education. Today, gender differences in postsecondary enrollments reflect patterns seen in earlier grades. Females are more likely to enroll in college and to graduate than their male peers. Fifty-six percent of undergraduates and 58 percent of graduate students are women. There are striking ethnic variations in undergraduate enrollments by gender: 49 percent of White, 37 percent of Black, 34 percent of Latino, 30 percent of American Indian, and 54 percent of Asian undergraduate students are male.

Although men are still a majority of students in first-professional degree programs (medicine, dentistry, law, optometry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, podiatry, and theology), women have made striking progress in first-professional degree enrollment since the 1970s when only 9 percent of students were women. In 1970, for instance, women received 5 percent of law degrees, 8 percent of medical degrees, and 1 percent of dentistry degrees (Freeman, 2004). By 2001, the percentages were 47, 43, and 39 respectively. In some fields, like veterinary medicine, a majority of recent recipients are women (Wright, 2006).

Postsecondary Attainment

Enrollment is the first step to obtaining a higher education. Persistence to graduation is the final and most important step. Males are less likely than females to persist in higher education. Fifty-nine percent of undergraduate degrees are awarded to female students. Important ethnic variations exist in undergraduate degree attainment: among White bachelor's degree recipients, 57 percent are female; among Blacks 66 percent are female, and among Latinos, 60 percent are females.

Table 33.1 indicates students majoring in engineering, computer and information systems, and agriculture are disproportionately male; those majoring in biology and life sciences, accounting, education, psychology, and health fields are largely females. The only majors that approach gender balance are mathematics, business administration, and the social sciences and history.

These patterns both reflect and deviate from earlier trends in academic outcomes. Accounting, social science, mathematics, and history were fields historically dominated by males but are increasingly becoming female dominated. At the same time, the grossly disproportionate enrollment of males in engineering and computer and information systems majors is inconsistent with the minor gender disparities in high school course-taking and academic achievement. The virtual monopoly that men once enjoyed in engineering and computer and information sciences has been broken, but the fields of study are far

Table 33.1 Percentage of Bachelor's Degrees Granted by Field and Gender (2001)

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Engineering	20	80
Computer and Information Systems	28	72
Physical Sciences	41	59
Agriculture and Natural Resources	45	55
Mathematics	48	52
Business Administration	49	51
Social Sciences and History	52	48
Biology and Life Sciences	60	40
Accounting	61	39
Education	77	23
Psychology	78	22
Health and Related Services	84	16

Source: Freeman (2004).

from parity (Huang, Taddese, & Walter, 2000). Gender differences in fields of study have implications for labor force participation.

Labor Force Participation

Labor market outcomes for men and women have changed during the past 35 years in ways that reflect many of the trends in education. During the past half-century as the U.S. economy transformed from one based upon manufacturing to one dominated by services, gender roles became less rigid, more women obtained educational credentials, and greater proportions of them entered the labor force.

Women today are much more likely to work outside the home across all levels of educational attainment, and the occupational structure is much less sex segregated than it was a generation ago. Nonetheless, at every level of education, women's labor force participation rates are lower than men's. For example, in 2001 among 25- to 64-year-olds with less than a high school

diploma, 75 percent of men compared to 52 percent of women were employed or looking for work. Labor participation rates for men and women increase as their educational credentials increase. Among those with some postsecondary education, 86 percent of men compared to 73 percent of women participated in the labor force; among those with a BA degree or higher, 92 percent of men and 81 percent of women were employed (Freeman, 2004, p. 96).

Income Returns to Educational Credentials

Just as labor force participation rates increase with educational attainment levels, so do earnings. Both females and males enjoy a positive relationship between their educational credentials and income at every level of education; those with more education earn more. Still, females continue to earn less than males in comparable occupations. The 2000 U.S. Census shows that for all year-round full-time workers, overall females earned 69 percent of what males earned. The gap in female-male earnings ratio tends to narrow as occupations require greater education. Women in retail sales earn 65.5 percent of what males in retail sales earn, while women in computer programming earned 88.5 percent of what males in the same occupation earned. Still females in medicine earned 68.6 percent of the income of male physicians, most likely because they specialize in less lucrative fields such as family medicine as compared to orthopedic surgery, a specialty dominated by males (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

There is also a gender gap in income returns at every level of educational attainment. In 2000, women without a high school diploma earned 80 percent of men with similar education; women with a high school diploma earned 73 percent of what men earned; women with associate's degrees received 72 percent of men's income; women with master's degrees received 74 percent of men's income; and women with first-professional degrees earned 86 percent of their comparably educated male colleagues (Freeman, 2004, p. 105).

Economists and sociologists offer several possible reasons for the education-to-earnings gap and the within-occupation gender gaps in income. Structural explanations include the tendency for women to major in fields that are less lucrative (teaching verses engineering), sex-composition bias—whereby people who work in female dominated fields or subspecialties are paid less (Bellas & Reskin, 1994), the likelihood that women will drop in and out of the labor force to have children, and the relatively higher rate of part-time employment among women (Freeman, 2004, p. 98). Sociologists also recognize that sexist norms that devalue women's work may also contribute to the income gap.

THE FEMALE QUESTION: WHY DO FEMALES DO SO WELL IN SCHOOL?

Exploring structural reasons women earn less for their educational credentials is useful for understanding income differences by gender but it does not help to account for *why* women continue to achieve so well and attain so much education in the face of the education-to-earnings gender gap. Given that American society is purportedly a meritocracy that rewards those who accomplish more, the academic success of women relative to men in the face of such income disparities seems anomalous.

Mickelson (1989) proposed several hypotheses to account for the apparent anomaly of women's educational accomplishments. The various hypotheses draw from social scientific theories of human behavior that build upon the intersection between structural forces and individual components of achievement motivation.

The first one challenges the notion that discrimination in the labor force still exists. The Pollyanna hypothesis proposes that contemporary women believe men and women are rewarded equally by the opportunity structure based on their merit, not gender. For the young women who believe discrimination in labor force returns to women's education is a thing of the past, doing well in school is the rational

course of action. Under this scenario, women's achievement is not anomalous because they expect to be equally rewarded for their efforts and accomplishments.

Even the young women who accept that gender discrimination still exists in the occupational structure nevertheless do well in school. The differential reference group hypothesis proposes that they gauge fairness of rewards to education by comparisons among women with different levels of education, not necessarily between men and women with the same education. Women with more education work in more lucrative, higher status occupations than women with less education; therefore, women's growing educational accomplishments make perfect sense.

Second, the social-powerlessness hypothesis proposes that well-educated young women expect to obtain returns on their own schooling through their husbands' occupational successes. They do well in school because better educated women make more desirable wives and mothers, and educational achievements will better position them in the marriage market. The social powerlessness perspective rests on the premise that young women are keenly aware that the sex-segregated occupational structure and lower wages paid to women mean their educational efforts will not necessarily be rewarded based on merit. Given this reality, they expect academic achievement will reap the greatest rewards from the marriage market, not the labor market.

The next hypothesis rests on theories of gender-role socialization. According to this view women do well in school because they have been socialized to respond to external validation for their efforts, whereas males are more likely to have an internal orientation. "Good girls" comply with directives from authority figures like parents and teachers because they desire the praise of these significant others. Because their motivation to excel in school is not necessarily linked to external rewards such as occupational prestige or high incomes, the weaker returns they receive do not render their achievement anomalous.

The fifth hypothesis proposes that women are more likely than men to evaluate returns to

education in terms not only of the income, status, and careers it brings, but of their education's potential to enhance the quality of their personal, familial, and community lives. Feminist theory challenges the traditional views that labor market rewards are the appropriate measure of returns to educational successes. Feminist theory suggests that there are fluid boundaries between women's public and private spheres. From a young age, women are socialized to approach their lives by weaving public and private roles into a single tapestry. For women, the public (the economy and the polity) and the private (family and community) exist as a continuum, rather than as a dichotomy.

Dumais (2002) observed that each of Mickelson's hypotheses for women's school success reflects a different habitus, one of three core components in Bourdieu's theory of practice, more commonly referred to as social action. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital, habitus, and field operate together to generate social action—in this case school success. The concept of cultural capital refers to objects that require special cultural abilities to appreciate, such as art; educational credentials and the credentialing system; and the capacity to appreciate and understand cultural goods (Dumais, 2002, p. 46). Schools reward students with greater cultural capital. Consequently, those who possess cultural capital excel in school. Middle-class girls are likely to possess more cultural capital than are boys. An important source of middle class females' cultural capital edge is their greater participation in private music, dance, or art lessons and co-curricular activities, all of which contribute to their stock of cultural capital (Dumais, 2002).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus refers to dispositions that influence a person's actions. The gendered nature of habitus is a consequence of the different possibilities that women and men perceive as available to them. Habitus is developed during childhood as a person grows to understand her or his place in the social structure. A student's habitus expresses perceived aspects of the gendered structure of opportunity that awaits her or him (race and social class are also relevant). Habitus plays a large role in school success because students' decisions

to invest in their education, whether or not to study hard, and what college major and career to pursue depend on their expectations of whether people like themselves can and should be academically successful.

The research of sociologists like Dumais and Mickelson offers various theories to account for the female portion of the dilemma of gendered patterns in academic achievement, specifically the anomalous achievement of females in the face of relatively inequitable rewards for their accomplishments. While none of the theories provides a definitive explanation for women's academic successes, each one sheds some light on the ways that social structure and individual agency contribute to school outcomes. This chapter now turns to the dilemma raised by male patterns in of academic underperformance.

THE MALE QUESTION: IS THERE A MALE CRISIS IN EDUCATION?

The previous sections of this chapter described how, on average, beginning in elementary school males fall behind females on many measures of academic achievement. Even taking into account the striking ethnic and social class differences in these outcomes, overall, males demonstrate lower verbal skills and are more likely to be identified for special education, to engage in more risky behaviors, to have lower high school graduation rates, and to attend and graduate from college at lower rates than females.

The gender gaps in primary, secondary, and postsecondary enrollments, performance, and outcomes have gained attention from policy makers, parents, and educators. Adherents to one school of thought consider the gender gaps as indicators that American society is leaving boys behind. Many of the observers who perceive "a boy crisis" believe that the societal focus on females' educational disadvantages (c.f., Sadker & Sadker, 1995; AAUW, 1992) during the past 30 years has resulted in neglect of the genuine problems of male students (Sommers, 2000). Some argue that the presence of so many female

teachers in elementary school, behavioral norms that require students to sit still for extended periods of time in combination with a curriculum that emphasizes reading and verbal skills create learning environments that are less conducive to boys' early educational successes. Consequently, these critics argue, males fall behind their female counterparts beginning in the early grades and they are launched on less positive educational trajectories than females with similar backgrounds and cognitive strengths.

Many educators, parents, and scholars find the situation of Black male students particularly troubling (Kunjufu, 1985; Jackson & Moore, 2006). Ferguson (2000) proposes that widely held negative societal images of Black masculinity result in many educators, primarily Whites, "seeing" Black boys as adults. Educators' responses to Black boys, especially the harsh discipline they dole out, contributes to the early educational failures that later become the high rates of special education placement, low test scores, high rates of dropping out, and consequent low rates of college attendance and graduation among Black males. Lopez (2003) makes a similar argument about immigrant Caribbean males' negative educational experiences. She describes the toxic race-gender stigma that accompanies immigrant Caribbean male students to urban schools and educators' harsh responses to the stereotypes of them as "hoodlums."

A second school of thought, while acknowledging the existence of gender gaps, rejects the notion of a boy crisis. Those who hold this view note that when educational outcomes are broken out by social class and ethnicity, a much more nuanced view of the gender and education landscape appears. There is more within-gender variation in educational outcomes by ethnicity and social class than variation in outcomes between the genders. From this perspective, each gender faces unique problems, but the gender gap is dwarfed by race, ethnic, and social class gaps. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein (1988) calls this phenomenon a deceptive distinction, because gaps appear to be about gender when, in fact, they are about something else.

Those who reject the existence of a boy crisis in education point to evidence that contradicts the sweeping generalization that male students are being left behind. They note that wealthy males do not lag behind females in middle or high school. Poor and inner city males—primarily Blacks, Latinos, and American Indian males—have significantly less educational success than females from their ethnic group (Kimmel, 2006). Throughout K–12 schooling, males tend to perform better than females in math and science, a longstanding pattern according to historians of education (Tyack & Hansot, 1990). On achievement tests, especially the important Advanced Placement exam, and SAT college entrance exams, males outperform females.

Postsecondary enrollment gaps are genuine, yet ethnicity and social class complicate the picture once again. For example, at most elite private institutions including Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Duke, Yale, Chicago, there is no gender imbalance in enrollment. At UC Berkeley, the California Institute of Technology, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the gender balance in enrollment favors males (Kimmel, 2006). Male undergraduates are more likely than females to major in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and math) that lead to lucrative careers. Importantly, labor force data indicate that compared to females, males earn more at all levels of the occupational structure and at all educational levels.

Whether or not one considers the relative underachievement of males to be evidence of a crisis or not, patterns of male underperformance require an explanation. Social conservatives, like Sommers (2000), argue that the educational system operates in ways that are destructive to boys. For example, the overwhelmingly female elementary teacher force means boys have little access to adult male role models during a critical period in their early development. She finds that schools are organized in ways that devalue or actually work against males' innate strengths. Moreover, she maintains, progressive educators and feminists have ignored boys' educational problems while focusing on girls' needs.

Kimmel (2006) and Lopez (2003) imply that the nature of some school subjects either work in support of or against certain norms of masculinity. From this perspective, succeeding in the humanities, reading, English, foreign language requires "feminine" ways of thinking; Kimmel (2006) argues that boys hate English for the same reasons that girls love it—there is no single correct answer. Science, mathematics, and technology, all of which have discrete correct answers, are more in tune with stereotypical masculine norms. Willis (1977) proposed a variation of this argument to explain why British working-class males rejected working hard in school. He found that working-class males defined schoolwork and other forms of intellectual labor as feminine in contrast to physical labor, which they considered to be masculine. These arguments are consistent with the data showing that working-class and low-income males, rather than elite males, are the most likely to underperform in school relative to females of the same social class background.

Sociologists also have proposed a more obvious reason that boys do less well in school. Essentially, why should men work so hard? Given the fact that males at every level of educational attainment will likely obtain greater occupational and income rewards than females even with less education—some studies show that male high school graduates earn as much or more than female college graduates—males have less incentive to achievement and attain to their full potentials.

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, gender differences in educational processes and outcomes exist. Because gender patterns in academic outcomes are consequential, they require continued attention by educators, parents, and policy makers. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the fact that there are greater within-gender variations by social class and ethnicity than there are differences between the genders. The ways that gender shapes a given

student's educational experiences and eventual outcomes are intimately tied to her or his social class and ethnicity and to the larger social structural context in which the person lives.

The twin dilemmas of female achievement in the face of uncertain rewards and male underachievement are more than flip sides of the same coin. They raise important issues for sociologists trying to understand how the processes involved in educational stratification contribute to social stratification more generally.

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Social Stratification and Schools

Using an academic database, look up the topic of “RACE” and “ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT” to see what other research has been done in this area. How does this compare to the arguments made by Caroline Hodges Persell in this part?

Try to replicate the study by Joan Spade, Lynn Columba, and Beth Vanfossen by collecting information on what courses are offered at the schools on which you have been collecting data. This information may be on the Web pages for those schools, or you could get a list of courses available from the school offices. How does what you find compare with the arguments in the reading by these authors?

Using the U.S. Census Web page, collect information about the poverty level of the school districts you studied in the projects under Parts II and V. Are there patterns between socioeconomic class of district and the measures of achievement on which you previously collected data?

PART VII

EFFORTS TOWARD EQUALITY AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Why is there inequality in the educational system and what can we do about it? As suggested by the readings in Part VI and the introduction to it, the U.S. education system is rife with problems of inequality. Many programs to bring about change have been designed to remedy these inequalities. In Part VII, we present descriptions of some of these efforts, most of which are current issues in education today. Although we cannot cover all attempts at equality and equity, we focus on those most salient, both from this historical record and at the present time. We do not cover general educational reforms in this part of the book, but leave the discussion of those efforts to Part X.

In studying broad changes in education of any kind, we notice that the impetus for these changes comes from many different directions, with the most far-reaching changes generated at the federal level, either through judicial decisions or via massive funding efforts. This should not be surprising, given the preceding readings about the organization of schools in the United States (Part II) and the way schools are financed (Part V). In fact, loose coupling combined with local financing of schools makes broad-based reform efforts very difficult in the United States, as the readings in this part of the book suggest.

All six readings in this part of our examination of the Open Systems Model focus on structural changes in education, that is, attempts to modify what we can call “Real School” to accommodate the needs of children of racial and ethnic and/or poverty-stricken backgrounds. The reading written by Kathryn Borman and Bridget Cotner reviews general legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), designed to change the structure and functioning of schools in order to improve educational opportunities and experiences for all children. Borman and Cotner discuss a series of federal reform efforts that culminated in 2002 in the NCLB legislation. This most recent federal attempt to “shake up” education and improve the educational performance of America’s students includes a focus on accountability. NCLB puts schools on notice if they cannot meet the standards set for students, and includes a market philosophy in which parents have the right to choose schools for their children if schools do not achieve certain standards. Both of these features of NCLB give the federal government a stronger role in dictating school policy.

Another recent reform effort that is gaining momentum as a result of NCLB is the charter school movement. If schools do not perform to NCLB standards, parents of children in those schools are given vouchers and have the right to send their children to another school.

Charter schools provide unique educational opportunities in public school systems. Charter schools share many similarities with the earlier magnet schools; however, charter schools operate with much more freedom from regulation by federal, state, and local authorities. The reading by Linda Renzulli and Vincent Roscigno describes the rise of charter schools in the United States and considers the future of this recent school movement.

Although not discussed in readings in this part of the book, magnet schools, the precursors to charter schools, were one way that school districts attempted to desegregate without busing students involuntarily from one school to another. Magnet schools were organized in districts to attract students from different backgrounds around particular subject areas such as math and science or the arts. Successful magnet schools should have desegregated school districts; however, this was not always the case. In many cases, magnet schools enrolled only white students because those students had the cultural resources to both learn about and qualify for admittance to these specialized schools. Furthermore, teachers in magnet schools were trained in the particular area of the magnet, not necessarily in working with children from diverse racial backgrounds, as would be the case in desegregated schools (Metz, 1994).

A little background may be useful to understand the controversy surrounding the idea of parents choosing schools for their children. School choice became a political issue in the 1980s. At that time Americans were concerned about the quality of education their children were receiving. Choice was seen as a way of improving education without increasing costs and getting parents more involved in the education of their children. Models of school choice, however, varied considerably; some were statewide, some only involved districts, and some included private schools. Whereas some people argue that school choice gives lower-class families an opportunity to get their children out of inferior educational settings and send them to better schools, others believe that lower-class parents will not have the “cultural capital” necessary to find their way through the system to the best schools (Saporito & Lareau, 1999) or to broker the best education for their children, as described by Lareau and Horvat in Part VI of this book. Unfortunately, the first criterion in making a school choice for the white parents is the racial composition of the school their children will attend (Saporito & Lareau, 1999). The result of such choices reinforces the resegregation of schools discussed in the first reading in this part.

The reading by Erwin Chemerinsky and that by Jennifer Jellison Holme, Amy Stuart Wells and Anita Tijerina Revilla deal specifically with attempts to improve educational opportunities for minorities. Both policies of desegregation and affirmative action are currently being challenged and overturned in the courts. Focus on minority status and social class is important because poverty is not distributed evenly across racial and ethnic households. In 2004, far more Black (32.9 percent), and Hispanic (28.6 percent) households with children under the age of 18 live below the poverty level than white (14.4 percent) or Asian and Pacific Islander (9.5 percent) households (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

In 1954, the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ruled that separate but equal education was unconstitutional. This decision set in motion many changes in public school education today and is thought to be responsible for changing the composition of cities and their schools as whites fled urban areas to avoid sending their children to desegregated schools. In 1964, James Coleman was commissioned by the U.S. Congress to assess changes in schools 10 years after this ruling.

Coleman found that the 1954 decision had little impact on the segregation of America's schools. Pressure began to mount as school districts were "encouraged" to desegregate. These changes sometimes meant closing all-black schools and moving those students into formerly all-white schools (Cecelski, 1994). White residents also worked to alter the shape and structure of school districts during this period in an attempt to keep from desegregating their children (Rubin, 1972). The early 1970s were active times, with courts mandating school desegregation across the country, particularly in the South.

The first reading, by Chemerinsky discusses the legal history of school desegregation and the current state of "resegregation" in American schools. The second reading by Holme, Wells, and Revilla used interviews with individuals who graduated in 1980 and were forced to attend desegregated schools in the early years of the implementation of the desegregation legislation to better understand the short- and long-term impacts of these laws.

The problems faced by schools are enormous, and setting standards does not make up for inequality in the United States. As Richard Rothstein describes, the achievement gap is rooted as much in the effects of poverty on children's lives as it is in the structure of our schools. He argues that children from poverty backgrounds have a considerable disadvantage in schools, regardless of what the school has to offer. As a result, he believes that reform efforts must go beyond the schools to address issues of poverty in general.

One school reform that is getting more attention internationally than within the United States is early childhood education. Sheila Kamerman describes the programs and policies in other advanced industrial countries. These programs include parental leave policies, something not talked about in the United States relative to education. However, Europeans and other advanced industrialized countries see early child care as part of an educational agenda. In the 1960s, a preschool program for children living in poverty was developed as part of the War on Poverty. Head Start was designed to prepare poor youngsters for entering school. Although the program was hastily constructed, it continues to provide services to preschool children and their parents living in poverty. However, funding for the program itself has waxed and waned over the years as different administrations and different evaluations of the effects of Head Start on youngsters who have attended the program influenced funding.

All of these efforts to achieve equity and equality are very different; none are without controversy, but some are more controversial than others. It could be argued that none have been entirely successful because the condition of education for poor and minority children has not improved significantly. The readings in this section point to the problems of achieving equality, especially when doing so can affect the privilege of those who benefit from the unequal conditions.

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THE SEGREGATION AND RESEGREGATION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Courts' Role

ERWIN CHEMERINSKY

In this reading, Erwin Chemerinsky, a professor specializing in constitutional law, reviews the consequences of court decisions leading to desegregation and resegregation of American schools. He describes legislation, consequences of the legislation, and societal factors that influenced and were influenced by these decisions. His analysis and prognosis for the future suggests further segregation by race in America's already segregated schools.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. According to Chemerinsky, where did the court cases fall short in assuring desegregation of American schools?
2. What societal responses to the 1970s legislation made resegregation of America's schools inevitable?

3. What difference does it make if schools are segregated?

A half century of efforts to end school segregation have largely failed. Gary Orfield's powerful recent study, *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*, carefully documents that during the 1990s, America's public schools have become substantially more segregated. In the South, for example, he shows that from "1988 to 1998, most of the progress of the previous two decades in increasing integration in the region was lost. The South is still more integrated than it was before the civil rights revolution, but it is moving backward at an accelerating rate" (Orfield, 2001, p. 2).

The statistics presented in his study are stark. For example, the percentage of African American students attending majority white schools has

steadily decreased since 1986. In 1954, at the time of *Brown v. Board of Education*, only 0.001 percent of African American students in the South attended majority white schools. In 1964, a decade after *Brown*, this number had increased to just 2.3 percent. From 1964 to 1988, however, significant progress occurred: the figure grew to 13.9 percent in 1967, 23.4 percent in 1968, 37.6 percent in 1976, 42.9 percent in 1986, and 43.5 percent in 1988. But since 1988, the percentage of African American students attending majority white schools has declined. By 1991, the percentage of African American students attending majority white schools in the South had decreased to 39.2 percent, and over the course of the 1990s this number dropped even more, reaching 36.6 percent in 1994, 34.7 percent in 1996, and 32.7 percent in 1998 (Orfield, 2001).

Orfield's 2001 study shows that the nationwide percentage of African American students attending majority African American schools and schools where more than 90 percent of the students are African American also has increased in the past fifteen years. In 1986, 62.9 percent of African American students attended schools that were 50–100 percent nonwhite; by 1998–99, this number had increased to 70.2 percent.

Quite significantly, Orfield's 2001 study shows that the same pattern of resegregation is true for Latino students. Desegregation efforts have historically focused on integrating African American and white students, but the burgeoning Latino population requires attention, too.¹ The percentage of Latino students attending schools where the majority of students are of minority races or where students are almost exclusively of minority races increased steadily during the 1990s. Orfield notes that Latinos "have been more segregated than blacks now for a number of years, not only by race and ethnicity but also by poverty."

The simple and tragic reality is that American schools are separate and unequal. As Orfield documents, to a very large degree, education in the United States is racially segregated. By any measure, predominantly minority schools are not equal in their resources or their quality. Wealthy suburban school districts are almost exclusively

white; poor inner-city schools are often attended exclusively by African American and Hispanic students. The year 2004 was the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and American schools marked that occasion with increasing racial segregation and gross inequality.

There are many causes for the failure of school desegregation. None of the recent presidents—Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and even Clinton—have done anything to advance desegregation. None have used the powerful resources of the federal government, including the dependence of every school district on federal funds, to further desegregation. "Benign neglect" would be a charitable way of describing recent presidents' attitudes toward the problem of segregated and unequal education: the issue has been neglected, but nothing about this neglect has been benign. A serious social problem that affects millions of children has simply been ignored.

The federal government—and, for that matter, state and local governments—also have failed to act to solve the problem of housing segregation. In a country deeply committed to the ideal of the neighborhood school, residential segregation often produces school segregation. But decades have passed since the enactment of the most recent law to deal with housing discrimination,² and efforts to enhance residential integration seem to have vanished.

There is no simple explanation for the alarming trend toward resegregation. In this chapter, I argue that the courts must share the blame: courts could have done much more to bring about desegregation, but the judiciary has instead created substantial obstacles to remedying the legacy of racial segregation in schools. I do not want to minimize the failure of political will, but every branch and level of government is responsible for the failure to desegregate American public education. I contend that Supreme Court decisions over the past thirty years have substantially contributed to the resegregation that Orfield and others document.

Desegregation will not occur without judicial action: desegregation lacks sufficient national

and local political support for elected officials alone to remedy the problem. Specifically, African Americans and Latinos lack adequate political power to achieve desegregation through the political process. This relative political powerlessness was true when *Brown* was decided and remains true today. The courts are indispensable to effective desegregation, and over the past thirty years the courts, especially the Supreme Court, have failed. To be sure, as I discuss later in this chapter, individual court orders have brought about desegregation in many areas of the country. Courts could have done more, but even merely continuing rather than ending existing desegregation orders (as the Supreme Court has mandated) would have limited resegregation of southern schools.

This chapter focuses on two major sets of Supreme Court decisions that have contributed to resegregation. I will first examine the Supreme Court's decisions of the 1970s, especially those decisions rejecting interdistrict solutions to segregation and funding inequities.³ Second, I will turn to the Supreme Court's decisions of the 1990s ordering an end to desegregation efforts.⁴ These cases and subsequent lower court decisions have substantially contributed to resegregation of public schools.

Some commentators, including Gerald Rosenberg (1991), have argued that the failure to achieve desegregation reflects inherent limits on judicial power. I strongly disagree: the judiciary's failure instead lies in its actions. Had the Supreme Court decided key cases differently, the nature of public education today would be very different. Although segregated schools have many causes, the overarching explanation for the Court's rulings is simple: justices appointed by Republican presidents have undermined desegregation. Four justices appointed by President Richard Nixon are largely to blame for the decisions of the 1970s: the crucial cases were 5–4 decisions, with those four justices helping to make up the majority. Five justices appointed by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush are responsible for the decisions of the 1990s that have contributed substantially to

resegregation of schools. The resegregation of schools has resulted largely from the Court's decisions, not from the inherent limits of the judicial process.

Today, there are voices—often strong voices—in minority communities that have turned against desegregation as the solution. The rejection of desegregation as a policy objective very much results from the lack of success—and possible success—given the current realities of desegregation described in this chapter. In cities with minority populations of 80–90 percent, meaningful desegregation just is not possible under current law. Understandably, many in these minority communities say that efforts at strengthening education should no longer focus on desegregation but should instead concentrate on improving schools for minority students. But history offers little reason for hope that dual school systems ever will be equal. As Thurgood Marshall expressed thirty years ago in a prophetic dissent in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), “we deal here with the right of all children, whatever their race, to an equal start in life and to an equal opportunity to reach their full potential as citizens. Those children who have been denied that right in the past deserve better than to see fences thrown up to deny them that right in the future. Our nation, I fear, will be ill served by the Court's refusal to remedy separate and unequal education, for unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together” (Milliken, p. 783 [Marshall dissenting]).

THE DECISIONS OF THE 1970S: THE SUPREME COURT CONTRIBUTES TO THE RESEGREGATION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The 1970s were a particularly critical time in the battle to desegregate American schools. From *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 until *Brown* in 1954, government-mandated segregation existed in every southern state and in many northern states.

As mentioned earlier, in 1954, when *Brown* was decided, only 0.001 percent of the South's African American students attended majority white schools. After *Brown*, southern states used every imaginable technique to obstruct desegregation. Some school systems attempted to close public schools rather than desegregate.⁵ Some school boards adopted "freedom of choice" plans, which allowed students to choose the school where they would enroll and resulted in continued segregation.⁶ In some places, school systems outright disobeyed desegregation orders.⁷ The phrase "massive resistance" appropriately describes what occurred during the decade after *Brown*. By 1964, in *Griffin v. County School Board*, the Supreme Court had grown tired of the delay, lamenting that there had been far too little speed, and ordered that all vestiges of prior segregation be eliminated "quick[ly] and effective[ly]."

The result of this massive resistance was that a decade after *Brown*, little desegregation had occurred. In the South, just 1.2 percent of African American school-children were attending schools with whites (Klarman, 1994, p. 9). In South California, Alabama, and Mississippi, not one African American child attended a public school with a white child in the 1962–63 school year. In North Carolina, only 0.2 percent of the African American students attended desegregated schools in 1961, and the figure did not rise above 1 percent until 1965. Similarly, in Virginia in 1964, only 1.63 percent of African Americans attended desegregated schools (Klarman, 1994).

But the persistent efforts at desegregation had an impact. One by one, the obstructionist techniques were defeated. Finally, by the mid-1960s, desegregation began to proceed. By 1968, the integration rate rose to 32 percent, and by 1972–73, 91.3 percent of southern schools were desegregated (Klarman, 1994, p. 10).

Many factors explain the delay between *Brown* and any meaningful desegregation. Efforts to thwart *Brown* had to be defeated. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which tied local receipt of federal funds to agreement to eliminate segregation, played a crucial role. But

so did renewed Supreme Court attention to segregated schools. For a decade after *Brown*, the Court largely stayed out of the desegregation effort. Not until 1964 did the Court lament, "There has been entirely too much deliberation and not enough speed" in achieving desegregation (*Griffin*, p. 229).

By the 1970s, as described earlier, the nation finally saw substantial progress toward desegregation. But three crucial problems emerged: white flight to suburbs threatened school integration efforts; northern school systems, which had not enacted Jim Crow laws, required desegregation; and pervasive inequalities existed in funding, especially between city and suburban schools. The Court's handling of these issues was critical in achieving desegregation. In each instance, the Court, with four Nixon appointees in the majority, ruled against the civil rights plaintiffs and dramatically limited the effectiveness of efforts to achieve desegregation and equal educational opportunity.

White Flight

By the 1970s, a crucial problem had emerged: white flight to suburban areas. White flight came about in part to avoid school desegregation and in part as a result of the larger demographic phenomenon of suburban development. In virtually every urban area, the inner city was increasingly composed of racial minorities. By contrast, the surrounding suburbs were almost exclusively white, and what little minority population resided in suburbs was concentrated in towns that were almost exclusively African American. School district lines often parallel town borders, meaning that racial separation of cities and suburbs results in segregated school systems. For example, by 1980, whites constituted less than one-third of the students enrolled in the public schools in Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Memphis, New York, and Philadelphia (Smedley, 1973).

Thus, effective school desegregation required interdistrict remedies. The lack of white students in most major cities prevented desegregation, and

intradistrict remedies could not desegregate suburban school districts because of the scarcity of minority students in the suburbs (Smedley, 1973).

In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), the Supreme Court held that district courts have broad authority in formulating remedies in desegregation cases. The Court upheld the power of the district courts to take “affirmative action in the form of remedial altering of attendance zones . . . to achieve truly nondiscriminatory assignments.” The Court also stated that courts could use busing as a remedy where needed and that bus transportation is an important “tool of school desegregation.” The Court found that busing students is a constitutionally acceptable remedy unless “the time or distance of travel is so great as to either risk the health of the children or significantly impinge on the educational process” (pp. 30–31). But *Swann* focused exclusively on remedies *within* a school district. The holding did not address interdistrict remedies. When a school system comprises predominantly minority students, there is a limit to how much desegregation can be achieved without an interdistrict remedy.

In 1974, the Supreme Court took a different turn in its jurisprudence on the powers of federal courts in desegregation cases. In *Milliken v. Bradley*, the Court imposed a substantial limit on the courts’ remedial powers. *Milliken* involved the Detroit-area schools. Like cities in so many areas of the country, Detroit was a mostly African American school district surrounded by predominantly white suburbs and school districts. A federal district court imposed a multidistrict remedy to end de jure segregation. The Supreme Court ruled that this desegregation technique is impermissible, concluding that “without an interdistrict violation and interdistrict effect, there is no constitutional wrong calling for an interdistrict remedy” (p. 745).

Milliken has had a devastating effect on efforts to achieve desegregation in many areas. In a number of major cities, inner-city school systems are substantially African American and are surrounded by almost all-white suburbs. Desegregation would require transferring students between

city and suburban schools because there are simply too few white students in the city and African American students in the suburbs to achieve desegregation without an interdistrict remedy. Yet *Milliken* precludes such a remedy unless plaintiffs offer proof of an interdistrict violation. In other words, a multidistrict remedy can be formulated only for those districts whose policies fostered discrimination or if a state law caused the interdistrict segregation. Otherwise, the remedy can include only those districts found to violate the Constitution. While such proof is often unavailable, plaintiffs in relatively rare cases have met *Milliken*’s requirements.

This segregated pattern in major metropolitan areas did not occur by accident but rather was the product of myriad government policies (Massey & Denton, 1993; Powell, Kearney, & Kay, 2001). Moreover, *Milliken* has had the effect of encouraging white flight. Whites who wish to avoid desegregation can do so by moving to the suburbs. If *Milliken* had been decided differently, one of the incentives of such moves would be eliminated. In reality, in many areas the *Milliken* holding makes desegregation impossible.

Proving Discrimination in Northern School Systems

Plaintiffs had no difficulty in proving discrimination in states that by law had required separation of the races in education. But in northern school systems, where segregated schools were not the product of express state laws, an issue arose about what would suffice to prove an equal protection violation and to justify a federal court remedy. Northern school systems were generally segregated; the issue was what plaintiffs had to prove for courts to provide a remedy.

The Supreme Court addressed this issue in *Keyes v. School District no. 1, Denver, Colorado* (1973). Substantial segregation existed in Denver’s public schools even though Colorado law had never mandated the separation of the races. *Keyes* held that absent laws requiring school segregation, plaintiffs must prove intentional segregative acts on the part of a school

board or other local officials and affecting a substantial part of the school system.

The Court therefore drew a distinction between the *de jure* segregation that existed throughout the South and the *de facto* segregation that existed in the North. The latter is deemed to be a constitutional violation only if there is proof that the racially separate student populations were the product of some official discriminatory purpose. This approach is consistent with the Supreme Court cases holding that when laws are facially neutral, proof of a discriminatory impact is not sufficient to show an equal protection violation; proof of a discriminatory purpose must also exist. But requiring proof that local schools officials acted with discriminatory purpose created a substantial obstacle to desegregation in northern school systems, where residential segregation—a product of myriad discriminatory policies—caused school segregation. *Keyes* in reality created an almost insurmountable obstacle to judicial remedies for desegregation in northern cities. The government was responsible for segregation in northern schools, but plaintiffs often found it impossible to prove that responsibility.

Inequality in School Funding

By the 1970s, substantial disparities existed in school funding. In 1972, education expert Christopher Jencks estimated that, on average, the government spent 15–20 percent more on each white student's education than on each African American child's schooling (Jencks, 1972). This disparity existed throughout the country. For example, the Chicago public schools spent \$5,265 for each student's education, but the Niles school system, just north of the city, spent \$9,371 (Kozol, 1991). The disparity also corresponded to race: in Chicago, 45.4 percent of the students were white and 39.1 percent were African American; in Niles Township, the schools were 91.6 percent white and 0.4 percent African American (Steele, 1993). In New Jersey, largely black Camden spent \$3,538 on each pupil, while highly white Princeton spent \$7,725 (Kozol, 1991).

A simple explanation exists for the disparities in school funding. In most states, education is substantially funded by local property taxes. Wealthier suburbs have significantly larger tax bases than poor inner cities and can tax at lower rates and still have more to spend on education (Coons, Clune, & Sugerman, 1970; Shalala & Williams, 1976). The Court had the opportunity to remedy this inequality in education in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973) but failed profoundly, concluding that the inequalities in funding did not deny equal protection.

Rodriguez involved a challenge to the Texas system of funding public schools largely through local property taxes. Texas's financing system meant that poor areas had to tax at a high rate but had little to spend on education; wealthier areas had low rates and more funds. One poorer district, for example, could afford only \$356 per pupil, while a wealthier district spent \$594 per student.

The plaintiffs challenged this system on two grounds: it violated equal protection as impermissible wealth discrimination, and it denied children in the poorer districts the fundamental right to education. The Court rejected the former argument by holding that poverty is not a "suspect classification"; consequently, discrimination against the poor need meet only rational basis review. Under equal protection analysis, discrimination against racial minorities is treated as highly suspect and must meet "strict scrutiny"—that is, must be found necessary to achieve a compelling government interest. The government usually loses when strict scrutiny is used. At the opposite end of the continuum, laws that do not discriminate with regard to "suspect classifications" have to meet only rational basis review. That is, they only have to be "reasonably related to a legitimate government interest." The government usually wins under rational basis review. Thus, the Court's choice of rational basis review ensured the government's triumph. The Court explained that where wealth is involved, the Equal Protection Clause does not require absolute equality or precisely equal

advantages. In thoroughly reviewing the Texas system of funding schools, the Court determined that the state had plausible concerns about maintaining “local control” of educational funding that were constitutionally adequate if not very compelling.

Moreover, the Court rejected the claim that education is a fundamental right. Justice Lewis Powell, writing for the majority, concluded that “education, of course, is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution. Nor do we find any basis for saying it is implicitly so protected” (pp. 28–29). The court came to this conclusion in spite of the fact that education obviously is inextricably linked to the exercise of constitutional rights such as freedom of speech and voting.

The Court also noted that the Texas government did not completely deny an education to students; the challenge was to inequities in funding. In concluding, the Court found that strict scrutiny was inappropriate because neither discrimination based on a suspect classification nor infringement of a fundamental right occurred. The Court found that the Texas system for funding schools met the rational basis test.

In *Kadrmas v. Dickinson Public Schools* (1988), the Court reaffirmed that education is not a fundamental right under the Equal Protection Clause. *Kadrmas* involved a challenge brought by a poor family against a North Dakota statute authorizing local school systems to charge a fee for the use of school buses. The Court reiterated that poverty is not a suspect classification and that discrimination against the poor must meet only rational basis review. The Court found that the law did not deny any child an education because the fee did not preclude the student from attending school. Hence, the Court said that rational basis review was appropriate and concluded that the plaintiffs “failed to carry the ‘heavy burden’ of demonstrating the challenge statute is both arbitrary and irrational” (*San Antonio Independent School District*, p. 463).

These decisions are wrong—tragically wrong—in holding that no fundamental right to education exists.

The combined effect of *Milliken* and *Rodriguez* cannot be overstated. *Milliken* helped to ensure racially separate schools, and *Rodriguez* ensured that the schools would be unequal.⁸ American public education is characterized by wealthy white suburban schools that spend a great deal on education surrounding much poorer African American city schools that spend much less.

THE DECISIONS OF THE 1990s: THE SUPREME COURT ENDS DESEGREGATION ORDERS

Orfield briefly but accurately notes a cause for the resegregation of the 1990s: Supreme Court decisions ending successful desegregation orders (Orfield, 2001). In several cases, the Court concluded that school systems had achieved “unitary” status and consequently decreed that federal court desegregation efforts were to end. These decisions resulted in the cessation of remedies that had been effective and, ultimately, in resegregation. Many lower courts followed the lead of the Supreme Court and have likewise ended desegregation orders, causing resegregation.

In several cases during the 1990s, the Supreme Court considered when a federal court desegregation order should end. In *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell* (1991), the Court determined whether a desegregation order should continue even when its termination would mean a resegregation of the public schools. Oklahoma schools had been segregated under a state law mandating separation of the races. Not until 1972—seventeen years after *Brown*—did courts finally order desegregation. The federal court order subsequently succeeded in desegregating the Oklahoma City public schools. Evidence indicated that ending the desegregation order would likely result in dramatic resegregation. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court held that after Oklahoma City’s racially dual school system had become “unitary,” a federal court’s desegregation order should end, even if the action could lead to resegregation of the schools.

The Court did not define “unitary system” with any specificity; it simply declared that the desegregation decree should end if the school board has “complied in good faith” and “the vestiges of past discrimination have been eliminated to the extent practicable” (*Board of Education v. Dowell*, p. 249–250). In evaluating these two factors, the Court instructed the district court to look “not only at student assignments, but ‘to every facet of school operations—faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities and facilities’” (*Board of Education v. Dowell*, p. 250).

In *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992), the Supreme Court held that a federal court desegregation order should end after a school district complies with the order, even if other desegregation orders for the same school system remain in place. A federal district court ordered desegregation of various aspects of a school system in Georgia that previously had been segregated by law. Part of the desegregation plan had been met: the school system had achieved desegregation in pupil assignment and in facilities. Another aspect of the desegregation order, concerning assignment of teachers, had not yet been fulfilled, however. The school system planned to construct a facility that likely would benefit whites more than African Americans. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court held that the federal court could not review the discriminatory effects of the new construction because the part of the desegregation order concerning facilities had already been met. The Court order stated that when a portion of a desegregation order is met, the federal court should cease its efforts to enforce that part and remain involved only with those aspects of the plan that had not been achieved.

Finally, in *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995), the Court mandated an end to a school desegregation order for the Kansas City schools.⁹ Missouri law had previously required the racial segregation of all public schools, and not until 1977 did a federal district court order the desegregation of the Kansas City schools. The federal court’s desegregation effort made a difference. In 1983, twenty-five schools in the district had an African American enrollment of greater than 90 percent.

By 1993, no elementary-level student attended a school with an enrollment that was 90 percent or more African American. At the middle school and high school levels, the percentage of students attending with an African American enrollment of 90 percent or more declined from about 45 percent to 22 percent.

This progress was halted, however, in an opinion authored by Chief Justice William Rehnquist that ruled in favor of the state on every issue. The Court’s holding consisted of three parts. First, the Court ruled that the district court’s effort to attract nonminority students from outside the school district was impermissible because the plaintiffs had not proved an interdistrict violation.

Second, the Court ruled that the district court lacked authority to order an increase in teacher salaries. Although the district court had found that an across-the-board salary increase to attract teachers was essential for desegregation, the Supreme Court concluded that the increase was not necessary as a remedy.

Finally, the Court ruled that a continued racial disparity in student test scores did not justify continuance of the federal court’s desegregation order. The Court concluded that the Constitution requires equal opportunity, not equal results; consequently, disparities between African American and white students on standardized tests were not a sufficient basis for concluding that desegregation had not been achieved. Disparity in test scores is not a basis for continued federal court involvement. The Supreme Court held that when a district has complied with a desegregation order, the federal court effort should end.

Together, *Dowell*, *Freeman*, and *Jenkins* have given a clear signal to lower courts: the time has come to end desegregation orders, even when the effect could be resegregation. And the lower courts have followed this lead. Indeed, it is striking how many lower courts have ended desegregation orders in the past decade, even when provided with clear evidence that the result will be to increase segregation of the public schools.

Similarly, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit recently ended federal judicial

oversight of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Although the school system had historically been segregated and although desegregation had succeeded, the court nonetheless ordered an end to desegregation efforts. In Charlotte, local control was taken away by the court's order not to use race in student assignment, even though the school district fought to maintain the desegregation policy.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit ended the desegregation order for the Duval County schools in Jacksonville, Florida, concluding that district had achieved unitary status. At the time of the Eleventh Circuit's conclusion, Latino students outnumbered whites and African Americans combined at thirteen Duval County schools. The Eleventh Circuit stated that the segregation resulted from white flight and voluntary residential segregation and thus did not provide a basis for continued desegregation efforts.

In addition to these decisions by federal courts of appeals, many district courts have ordered an end to desegregation efforts, including several in 2002. In none of these cases did the courts give weight to the consequences of ending the desegregation orders in causing resegregation of the public schools.

The nationwide trend of federal courts ending desegregation efforts means that resegregation will increase, potentially dramatically, in the next decade. Orfield (2001) documents the resegregation that occurred during the 1990s. Recent decisions indicate that the first decade of the twenty-first century may see a much worse return to resegregation.

NOTES

1. Desegregation in the South has traditionally focused on whites and African Americans because they were the concern of the litigation of the civil rights movement. At the time, the states did not have a significant Latino population. Now, however, the growth in the Latino population requires that this group also be considered in evaluating desegregation efforts. See Grieco and Cassidy, "Overview" (on file

with the *North Carolina Law Review*) (illustrating that Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States); see also G. Orfield, *Schools More Separate*, p. 17, table 1 (indicating that from 1968 to 1998, the Latino population enrolled in public schools has grown from 2 million to 6.9 million, a 245 percent growth in thirty years).

2. The last national housing law addressing discrimination, the Fair Housing Act, was enacted in 1968.

3. *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* held that inequities in school funding do not deny equal protection; *Milliken v. Bradley* limits the power of the courts to impose interdistrict remedies for school segregation.

4. *Board of Education v. Dowell* held that after a public school system has achieved unitary status, desegregation orders should end, even if a resegregation of the public schools would result; *Freeman v. Pitts* clarified that partial compliance with a desegregation order should end that part of the order, even if other parts of the order remain to be met; *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) held that disparities in white and African American students' test scores alone does not prove the lack of a unitary system or justify continuing desegregation orders.

5. See, e.g., *Griffin v. County School Board*, holding that the closing of public schools, combined with tuition grants and tax breaks to private segregated schools, violates the Constitution.

6. See, e.g., *Green v. County School Board*, overturning New Kent County's "freedom of choice" plan as unconstitutional, finding that it burdened students and parents with a responsibility that properly remained on the school board.

7. See, e.g., *Cooper v. Aaron*, demanding that states follow Supreme Court orders.

8. This is not to minimize the adverse effects of the other decisions, but *Milliken* and *Rodriguez* are crucial because the former ensured the separateness of American public education and the latter ensured their inequality. In theory, effective desegregation could still have occurred through actions of the federal or state legislatures, but such actions did not occur, and *Milliken* and *Rodriguez* ensured that courts, the most likely agents for change, could not achieve desegregation.

9. *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995), p. 103. Earlier in *Jenkins*, the Supreme Court ruled that a federal district court could order a local taxing body to increase taxes to pay for compliance with a desegregation order, although the federal court should not itself order an increase in the taxes.

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LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

What Graduates Gained by Attending Desegregated High Schools

JENNIFER JELLISON HOLME, AMY STUART WELLS, AND ANITA TIJERINA REVILLA

Jennifer Jellison Holme, Amy Stuart Wells, and Anita Tijerina Revilla present the results of their study of graduates of the class of 1980 from six high schools in six different states who desegregated as a result of *Brown v. The Board of Education* and other court orders described in the previous reading by Chemerinsky. Using random sampling, they interviewed 40 to 45 graduates from each high school. Of the 245 individuals interviewed, 33% were African American, 56% White, 9% Latino/a, and 2% other race/ethnicity. The results of this study help us to understand both how desegregation worked in these high schools and what it meant for those individuals forced to attend the desegregated schools.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What was the effect of desegregation on the school lives of white, African American, and Latino students?

2. How did desegregation affect these students in their later lives?
3. How does your school experience compare to that described in this reading?

At this 50th anniversary of the landmark *Brown* decision, one of the most important questions about desegregation policy has remained unanswered: What impact did school desegregation have on the “hearts and minds” of students who lived through it? Indeed, little is known about how graduates of racially diverse schools understand the ways in which their school experiences shaped their lives.

In an effort to answer this question, our team of researchers from Teachers College, Columbia University and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) set out to study what school desegregation meant to the people who attended racially diverse schools in the late 1970s.¹ We conducted in-depth case studies of six different school districts across the country, focusing on

one racially mixed high school in each.² At these sites, we interviewed policymakers, activists, and educators, as well as students who graduated from these schools in 1980—during some of the peak years of school integration. In total, we interviewed 540 people, including 242 high school graduates from the Class of 1980.

In this article, we discuss one of the central findings from this study: what the graduates said about the impact of attending a desegregated high school on their understanding of race and on their lives in a racially diverse society. We found that all of the graduates—from each of the racial and ethnic groups—expressed gratitude for having had the opportunity to attend a racially diverse school. Reflecting back, these graduates said that their public high school years provided them rare opportunities to come together with and get to know people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds. This does not mean that attending a desegregated school was easy. In fact, in a number of cases racial tension and distance fostered mistrust, hurt feelings, and frustration. Furthermore, we know that in these schools, like most racially and ethnically diverse schools in this country, students were resegregated by classrooms where most of the students in high-track classes were white while most of the students in the lower-level classes were African American or Latino (see Wells, Holme, Revilla, & Atanda, in press). Still, nearly all graduates we interviewed—even those who have few fond memories of high school—said that they learned invaluable lessons about race and living in a diverse society that they never could have learned elsewhere. In fact, these graduates emphasized that by living through the daily challenges of dealing with racial differences in high school, they gained insights and understandings that they could have never appreciated by simply reading about race or discussing it in the context of a one-race school.

The lessons these graduates said they took away from their high school years were all the more valuable because they realized just how unique these experiences were once they graduated.

Most of them said that it was only when they got to college or to their workplaces that they realized what they had learned vis-à-vis their peers who had not attended diverse schools. Compared to these peers, the graduates said they were more open-minded, less prejudiced, and less fearful of other races. They attribute much of this to their experiences in racially diverse schools.

Despite these similarities, there were important differences across racial and ethnic groups in terms of what the students learned about race and how it has helped them as adults. In other words, while both white graduates and graduates of color said that their diverse schooling experiences prepared them to be more comfortable around people who are racially different from themselves, the specific skills they gained and the meaning they made of the lessons were quite different. For instance, many white graduates said they learned to be more comfortable in interracial settings in part because they had broken down stereotypes of what members of “other” races are like. While graduates of color also said they were more comfortable in interracial settings and had broken down some stereotypes of Whites, many of them added that one of the most valuable lessons they gained from high school was preparation for the discrimination they would face in a white-dominated society. Therefore, these graduates believe their schooling experiences helped them learn how to be less fearful of all-white or racially mixed environments, more confident in their ability to compete in such settings, and better able to cope with prejudice.

One of the most interesting aspects of the findings from our study is that graduates only came to understand what they learned from their high school experience *after* they left high school. While a small number of studies have been conducted on the effect of school desegregation on students’ racial attitudes, the vast majority of that research has asked students to reflect on their views while they are still in school (Schofield, 1995). Our study, which interviewed graduates 20 years after they left high school, shows that much of what they understood about their school experiences was hindsight—lessons that they did

not really appreciate until they had different experiences as adults and interacted with peers who had attended more racially segregated schools. We argue that our findings are highly significant in terms of efforts to fully appreciate the impact of high school desegregation on students' lives because the graduates we interviewed could not have fully articulated the "lessons they learned" from racially mixed schools when they were still in high school. Paradoxically, then, at the same time that these graduates were coming to understand what these experiences had meant to them, school desegregation has being curtailed and even eliminated in hundreds of school districts across the country (Orfield, Eaton, & The Harvard Project, 1996; Orfield & Lee, 2004). In this way, our study documents long-term consequences of a policy that the government had started to dismantle by the late 1980s, long before we even understood its impact on those who experienced it.

In this article, then, we explain the significance of our findings about what graduates learned from attending racially diverse schools in light of the current trend toward increasingly segregated schools in this country and policymakers' resistance to promoting diversity in public education.

THE UNDERSTANDING RACE AND EDUCATION STUDY

As we noted above, our study consisted of historical case studies and interviews with graduates of the Class of 1980 from six racially diverse high schools in the U.S. We chose to study the history of these schools during this time because most desegregation in this country did not occur until late 1960s and early 1970s when white resistance had finally been squelched by additional federal court orders. Thus, the Class of 1980, which entered kindergarten in 1967, was moving through the elementary grades just as the old system of segregation was finally breaking down. National data show that members of the Class of 1980, on average,

were more likely to have classmates of other races than any class before them or more recent classes of the last 15 years.

Living Through School Desegregation: You Had to Be There

With very few exceptions, the graduates we interviewed said that, as a result of attending their racially diverse high schools, they felt more prepared for a racially diverse society than they would otherwise be. All the graduates said that their high school experiences left them with a deeper understanding of people of other backgrounds and an increased sense of comfort in interracial settings. In fact, many of these graduates stressed the importance of their daily experiences of negotiating race in high school as one of the most challenging yet rewarding aspects of their education. The lessons they learned from these experiences, they said, could not have been taught through history books or documentary films; rather, many observed simply that they had to be there, living in these diverse schools on a daily basis. Furthermore, it is important to note that graduates of all races say that they often only appreciated how valuable their diverse schooling experiences were once they left high school and interacted with people who had not attended diverse schools. These findings highlight the need for policymakers and the public to pay attention to the voices of these graduates now—in their adult years—in evaluating whether desegregation was a success or failure and whether to reconsider our national retreat from policies designed to foster diversity in public schools.

Still, we do not mean to imply that these graduates learned exactly the same things in the same ways across racial groups and school context. In fact, we found that how these lessons were learned and what these lessons mean to our participants today, differ for the white graduates and graduates of color. The lessons graduates learned also varied across the six high schools, according to their context, in subtle but important ways.

Experiencing Integration First-Hand: An Altered “World View”

Perhaps the most important testament to the power of policies designed to promote school integration is the strong belief by graduates that the type of lessons they learned in high school about diversity could only be gained through personal, day-to-day experience. In other words, these graduates reflected, such life-lessons could not be gained through books or courses on multicultural education or festivals celebrating diversity—they had to be lived first-hand in shared spaces and times. A number of graduates also recognized the role that the schools themselves played in teaching these lessons, as it was through their high schools that they had the opportunity to spend many years with the same cohort of students, and therefore had a chance to get to know members of other racial groups and learn how to negotiate racial differences.

Indeed, many graduates contrasted their own experience in high school with those of their friends and spouses who attended racially homogeneous schools—the type of schools that are becoming all the more common in the U.S. as schools resegregate across the country (Orfield & Lee, 2004)—and observed that those segregated settings provide no genuine opportunities for students to learn about race or to learn to negotiate racial difference. As a white female West Charlotte High School graduate said: “You cannot suddenly teach someone how to get along with someone [who’s] different from them. You can’t learn that from a book!”

Rather, many of these graduates note, having day-to-day high school experiences with members of other racial groups—the good and the bad—left them with a fundamentally altered way of seeing the world. As a white female Shaker Heights High School graduate explained in talking about what she learned by being there:

I mean, that it’s a world view thing . . . it’s not just a sociological little experiment, it’s your entire world view is altered by who you’re growing up with, and it’s not just who you’re going to school with, but who you’re growing up with, who you

are sharing every minute of your day and every secret that you have. . . . When that, when you have that experience, that alters your entire world view, which then is the lens that you’re operating through every day.

Though some would argue that such lessons about race could be learned at any time in one’s life, a number of graduates said that these lessons were all the more powerful to them because they were learned when they were in their youth. For instance, an African American graduate of Dwight Morrow High School reflected that having had interracial contact in schools from a young age was particularly helpful to her:

That really put me ahead of the game being exposed to children, innocent children from other groups because there is no pretense about anything. You actually learn what people are about because you are kids, you don’t have time to be pretentious.

Similarly, a graduate of John Muir High School who is of both white and subcontinent Indian descent said that while he faced some interracial conflict during his high school days, he also feels that learning about race at a young age was important to him:

I found [John Muir HS] maybe a little bit harder than somewhere else, but I also knew that it was teaching me life lessons that no college can teach you. And those are invaluable. I know a lot of people who do a lot of college work and they test really well, but you put them out in the real world and . . . they can’t make it.

While graduates of different racial backgrounds experienced their racially mixed high schools in very different ways, the one thing that all of them took away from that experience as they reflect back 20 years later was the impact that *living through* desegregation had on them. These lived experiences, as we shall show, taught graduates a number of important lessons about race that profoundly affected the way they interact with other racial groups, and the way they view the world. Below we discuss the racial and

school-level variations on this theme of “having to be there” to show that Whites and students of color had slightly different ways of making meaning of the value of their experiences.

White Graduates: Increased Comfort, Decreased Fear

While all of the white graduates we interviewed said they believe attending a racially diverse school changed them in lasting, positive ways, we found that the more specific lessons that white graduates took away from their school experiences both differed from those of the graduates of color and varied to some degree by school.

Increased Comfort and Understanding

The one consistent finding from our interviews with white graduates across the six high schools was the increased sense of comfort that they say they gained in racially mixed and predominantly non-white settings as a result of their high school experiences. Many white graduates say that because they attended diverse high schools, as adults they were more at ease in interactions with people of different backgrounds and more willing to engage in conversations with people of color than many other whites they know. As a white graduate from Austin High School said of his experience: “It gave me the ability to relate to just about any person and feel good about it, and to be sincere—not putting on an act.” Similarly, a white female graduate from Topeka High noted, as a result of attending a racially diverse high school:

I can walk into any room or any situation and I don't care if they are black, yellow, white, orange or whatever. I feel that I can have a conversation with anybody or not be afraid to talk to somebody just because of their social status or because of the color of their skin.

Many white graduates say that they only realized how much more comfortable they were in diverse settings when they encountered racially mixed situations after high school with a friend or

spouse who had attended predominately white schools. For example, a white graduate of Dwight Morrow High School recalled an evening when she attended a racially mixed retirement party for her mother, who taught in a predominantly black school district. Her husband, who attended predominately white rural schools, had a very different reaction to the experience from hers:

You know, the room is mostly Black, the families of the retired teachers, the other teachers that came, and a lot of them were teachers I had growing up, and you know, they'd see me, “Oh, how are you,” and I introduced [my husband], and his comment, which was sort of a sad thing later on, he's like, “Wow.” He had a great time, everybody was so nice. I don't remember his exact words but, “God, they were actually really nice.” And I felt bad for him for a minute, I was like, “Yeah, they are.” It was funny, but he doesn't know any different than that, and he still has that mindset although he's much more open-minded than his family . . . but he doesn't understand, he doesn't know a lot of things, so whenever he doesn't know he reverts back to what he knew growing up.

The point illustrated in this one story is reiterated throughout dozens of transcripts as these graduates came to realize how different they are from whites who were educated in segregated schools.

Many white graduates traced their increased sense of comfort in racially mixed environments today to the way in which their experiences with members of other racial groups in high school challenged their own misconceptions about people of color. It was through daily, up-close interactions with members of other racial groups in high school, many white graduates observed, that allowed them to see through their previously held stereotypes. A white graduate from Topeka High noted:

[My high school experience] gave me an opportunity to know that some people that were Black or Hispanic that are not like stereotypes at all. . . . I think that my ideas about other races at that point in my life had been probably just formed by television stereotypes and there wasn't any real life experience before this for me.

A number of white graduates also recalled specific incidents with students of color during their high school years, which changed how they viewed those students. For example, a white West Charlotte High School graduate said that early on in her high school career she was afraid of the African American students at her school, but after having an experience where several African American students helped her stand up to a white high school bully, she said:

It just changed that fear and it changed a lot of the prejudice that I had carried because of stories told to me by my neighbors. So at that point I just . . . I really lost a lot of my prejudice and that's why I'm so grateful, to this day, that . . . I did go to a desegregated school because I feel that just with family values, with my friend's ideas, I think I would have been extremely narrow minded, extremely prejudiced growing up.

Like this woman, many graduates told us that had they not attended their high schools and had an opportunity to have up-close interactions with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, they would be more prejudiced, closed-minded, and even fearful of people of color.

Decreased Fear

Part of feeling more at ease around people of color, the white graduates noted, is realizing that the fear that most white people have of African Americans and Latinos is unfounded. Many white graduates, in fact, said that their experiences with people of color in high school made them feel less fearful in interracial settings, particularly compared with Whites they know who had attended all-white schools. The decreased fear white graduates report as a result of going to a racially mixed school is particularly important in light of U.S. culture and media, which often suggests that people of color and predominately non-white settings are something to be feared and avoided (Williams, 2000).

Several graduates only recognized how much less fearful of non-white settings they were when they encountered a predominately non-white

situation with a spouse or a friend who had attended majority-white schools. For instance, a white male graduate from Shaker Heights High School said that he realized how comfortable and unafraid he was around people of color on a recent family trip to Baltimore, when he and his wife got on a bus that was filled with Latinos and African Americans. He contrasted his sense of comfort in getting on the bus to his wife's unease:

I think we were the only white people on the bus, there were some Hispanic people, African American . . . My wife . . . went to pretty much an all white high school, and to listen to the way her father talks and, you know, he hadn't been around too many minorities . . . but I felt very comfortable, you know, getting on the bus and I really didn't feel out of place. . . . But I could definitely tell that my wife was not, you know, a hundred percent comfortable getting on that bus.

Another white male graduate from Austin High said that his white wife's lack of experience with students of color in high school left her extremely fearful in predominately non-white situations. He contrasts her fear with his own feelings of comfort, which he feels he gained through daily interactions in high school with members of different racial and ethnic groups:

If you just hang out with a bunch of white people and . . . and you do everything that you can to say I'm going to act like a nice, open minded person when I get around these black folks and Mexican folks, you're not going to be as good at it. You're going to be more uptight. You're going to be stressed out. It's going to be a problem. There's . . . there are all kinds of things. Whereas because I was around black folks and Mexican folks and learned that they weren't going to kill me and . . . and you know, I can . . . I can go to the . . . to the Texas Relays where my girlfriend, now wife, is hyperventilating . . . [and I said] "It is correct that we're in a group of 20,000 people and 75% of 'em are black people, but we're going to be all right. They're not going to hurt us. They're not going to knife us. They're not going to kill us. They're not going to rob us. We're going to be okay. Just act nice and . . . and treat people the way you like to be treated and . . . and you're going to be okay."

An interesting and unexpected finding of this study is that several of the white graduates who reported living through uncomfortable racial situations in high school, where they felt intimidated or physically threatened by members of another racial group, also said that, as a result of these experiences, they ultimately felt a decreased fear of people of color as adults.

For example, a white graduate of John Muir High School who reported feeling intimidated by the African American students said that ultimately her high school experience left her with not only a decreased fear of people of color, but a longing for more diverse environments than the all-white suburb she currently lives in. She notes:

I don't feel fear when I see a black person or a Hispanic person walking down the street. In fact, I feel kind of like. . . I feel kind of nostalgic 'cause it reminds me of growing up. . . 'Cause around here, all I see are pretty much white people everywhere I look. So I'm grateful for that because I think some of the people that I knew and I met in San Diego grew up in an all-white neighborhood and I think they couldn't help but look at black people or Hispanic people as different or as, you know, a black person or a Hispanic person and not just a person. Yeah. So, like, in the workforce, I think, having. . . that background hopefully made me. . . look at people as equal. And I judge them based on their abilities, not based on the color of their skin. And when I encounter people that don't have that same belief, it makes me really uncomfortable.

Thus, even white graduates of the two high schools in our study in which Whites were in the minority—John Muir High School and Dwight Morrow High School—and where many Whites reported a higher level of racial uneasiness—and even fear while in school—say that those experiences ultimately left them more at ease in racially mixed settings, in part because they learned how to handle difficult interracial situations.

Increased Empathy and Insight

Another important outcome of attending racially mixed schools, at least for a small number of white graduates, was the better understanding

they say they gained about what it was like to be a person of color in the U.S. In this way, these graduates' high school experiences played a very important role in opening their eyes to other ways of seeing and knowing the world. For instance, a white West Charlotte graduate said that he not only learned an appreciation for African American culture but he also learned what it was like to be a minority—an experience he realizes that most Whites have not had:

I mean, I think I'm more attuned . . . a little bit more attuned towards black music, black history, black things that I might not have been exposed to. And at West Charlotte I . . . I mean, there were times when I felt like I was the minority and I think that was good for me, you know, in a way, to know a little bit what it feels like to walk down the hall full of these people and feeling like, ok, I'm the odd man out here, and to know what that feels like, you know, to not always be among the majority and on top of your game.

According to a white Topeka High School graduate, being exposed to different perspectives and points of view was one of the main ways he feels he was changed by attending his racially mixed high school. In such a setting, he said:

You get a lot of different input from different walks of life. . . I have never been pulled over [by the police] simply because I met a profile. But I have friends who have been pulled over because they matched a specific profile. Those are issues that I wouldn't be aware of if I went to a totally Caucasian school. Or I wouldn't have experience with that.

A white male graduate from Shaker Heights High noted that his experience in his racially mixed community and in his schools gave him a critique of the larger society and caused him to question why most communities in the U.S. are so segregated. He notes,

[Growing up] you develop a sense that this is the way the world is and then you go out in the world and you realize that that's not the way the world is, and then you can question the way the world is rather than the way Shaker Heights is. . . So, I

think, in a subtle sense, it develops sort of a devil's advocate mentality.

While this finding was less universal across the white graduates, the ability of these graduates to see the world from the point of view of people of color and even to question the larger social structure was all the more profound because, more often than not, we found that in racially diverse high school classrooms there was very little discussion about race and racial inequity (see Revilla, Wells, & Holme, 2004). These lessons these graduates learned outside of the classroom about racial inequality—often in spite of their formal schooling experience—attests to the potential of policies promoting racially diverse schools to help promote a deeper understanding of racial difference and foster interracial understanding.

Graduates of Color: Survival Skills for a White World

Looking at racial understandings from the other side of the color line we also saw the powerful impact of desegregated schools on African Americans, Latinos, and other graduates of color more than 20 years later. Not only did these graduates' experiences differ to some degree from the white graduates but, like Whites, the lessons learned varied somewhat depending on the high school they attended. In particular, the racial make-up of these schools and the behaviors of the teachers and administrators in these schools seemed to matter a great deal.

Increased Comfort, Less Intimidation

Like Whites, graduates of color we interviewed said that going to a desegregated high school prepared them for a diverse society in that they had a greater sense of comfort in interracial settings. In saying that, many of these graduates of color meant that they were not simply prepared to get along with others but that they were prepared to function in predominately white work and social settings—often dominated by powerful Whites—that would otherwise be intimidating to many people of color.

An African American male graduate from Dwight Morrow High School said that his experience with Whites in high school gave him a confidence in racially diverse settings that he may not have otherwise gained. He reflects on what was gained from his high school experience this way:

Today I would say that it makes me feel comfortable, that I can go anywhere and not feel intimidated, I just always feel like I belong and it didn't matter who was in the majority or minority, that I knew how to deal with all of them. . . . It definitely gave me the confidence to know that it didn't matter, people were people, and I could just interact.

Above all, graduates of color say that had it not been for desegregation, they would have gone through segregated schools with little or no exposure to Whites. The exposure that they did get in high school gave them a sense of comfort in interracial work and social settings that they find very useful today. As an African American female graduate from Dwight Morrow High School says:

I feel that it really shaped me in terms of my ability to move into different circles of people. I'm not limited in terms of, you know, when I walk into a place, I can speak the same king's English, I can do that, and I can speak to my friends on a different level. So I think that it's made me a diverse person, and I was able to see other lifestyles and how people live. I mean, it's not, you know, you have some people in the inner city who never really experience, you know, rub shoulders with people that have six-figure incomes, and it's not, in other words, I don't get nervous when I'm dealing with someone who is a CEO of a company because his experiences and my experiences are so different. You know, I've been around certain things that have afforded me a certain confidence.

As with Whites, the graduates of color reported they now feel a level of comfort in racially mixed or predominately white environments that could only be gained through the lived experience of attending a racially diverse school. In addition, what many graduates of color talked about in terms of the effect of their school experiences on their racial attitudes were understandings that they

did not and could not appreciate until *after* they left those schools and were finding their way into college, jobs, families, and houses. Like Whites, these graduates said they only fully came to appreciate the skills they gained when, as adults, they met other people of color who had attended segregated, predominately minority schools. For example, an African American female graduate from West Charlotte High School said that she felt she had gained a useful set of skills vis-à-vis her African-American friends who had attended all black schools:

I know a lot of black people have only been around Blacks and they really can't see past being around anyone other than Blacks. So, you know, I feel like that has helped me in a way that . . . that I was already comfortable enough being around a different racial group to now, when there are so many different racial groups that I'm around on a daily basis, it doesn't bother me at all.

Similarly, an African American graduate of Topeka High School said his adult experiences in a large city in Texas, where he has lived for nearly 20 years, highlighted for him the comfort that he gained interacting with Whites by attending Topeka High. He says that as a result of attending such a diverse high school, he is far less intimidated by Whites than the African American people he has met in Texas who have not had the chance to interact with Whites in school.

For graduates of color, then, living through the experience of attending racially diverse schools gave them a greater sense of comfort in interracial settings compared with their peers who had attended segregated schools. Even those graduates who attended racially mixed schools where interracial relationships were not necessarily positive also say that they gained valuable skills from their high school experiences.

Learning to Face Prejudice

For the graduates of color, learning comfort in racially diverse settings has different implications given their different locations in the racial hierarchy of the U.S. society. This means that not

only were they learning to feel more comfortable around people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, but also that they were learning to deal with prejudice and cope with discrimination in ways they would not have learned had they attended all-African American or all-Latino schools.

The way they learned to cope with this discrimination differed, however, depending on the high school these graduates attended. For example, a number of graduates of color from Austin High School said that attending AHS helped them better deal with prejudice as adults because they encountered it so often at AHS. A Hispanic male graduate of AHS noted, had he not attended Austin High: "I wouldn't know what the word 'prejudice' was. I would have been in like a cocoon. . . . I was prepared. High school prepared me for prejudice. It did. That's what helped me."

Those graduates of color who had more positive experiences dealing with white students in their high schools said they were better able to cope with the prejudice they encountered because they knew first-hand that all Whites weren't as racist as the ones they met as adults. An African American female graduate of Shaker Heights High School reflected on her positive experiences with Whites at her high school:

It prepared me for the ignorance of college to understand everyone's not ignorant. I knew that, so it was able to probably help me have more confidence and be able to deal with the racial discrimination I *did* deal with in college [that] I [had] never dealt with in my life. So, I think having friends that were not African American probably prepared me for, you know, the ignorance that I had to deal with.

Even those graduates of color who say they had particularly painful racial experiences, such as being discriminated against by teachers or counselors, resegregated into lower level classes, or socially shunned or intimidated by white students, say that they are glad they had the opportunity to attend those schools, to learn the lessons that they did. As an African American female graduate from Austin High School reflects: "I'm

glad I went to Austin High in spite of the pain and difficulty. I'm glad I went to school there. I think it prepared me in some ways for the real world. Not that I necessarily like the real world, the way it is, but you've got to start somewhere."

In this way, the graduates of color from our study show us that not all lessons learned in a racially diverse school are positive. In fact, some of the stories we heard from graduates of these schools—of all races and ethnicities—were quite upsetting and no doubt have had a lasting impact. Still, these experiences taught them lessons that they now find valuable as adults navigating a racially divided and unequal world.

NOTES

1. Our study, entitled "Understanding Race and Education," was funded by the Spencer Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. We are grateful to these foundations for their support, but the views expressed in this article are our own, based on our analysis and findings.

2. By "racially mixed," we mean between 40% and 75% of any one race, and no more than 25% of the racial balance of the city or town for any one race.

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CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

LINDA A. RENZULLI AND VINCENT J. ROSCIGNO

In this reading, Linda Renzulli and Vincent Roscigno examine the growth and possible outcomes of the increase in the number of charter schools. These schools provide a radical approach to traditional schooling in the United States because they operate outside of many regulations that dictate the structure of schooling across the country. The idea of charter schools, embedded in a “market economy” framework, also involves parents in the selection of schools for their children. Yet, as the authors argue, by changing the focus of accountability in schools these new freedoms for school administrators, teachers, and parents come with problems as well as hopes for the future of education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How and when did the charter school movement begin?
2. How do charter schools differ from public schools?

3. Do you think changes in accountability described in this reading will lead to improved education for the nation's poorest children? Why or why not?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, “No Child Left Behind is designed to change the culture of America’s schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options, and teaching students based on what works.” Charter schools—a recent innovation in U.S. education—are one of the most visible developments aimed at meeting these goals. Although they preceded the 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, charter schools are now supported politically and financially through NCLB. Charter schools are public schools set up and administered outside the traditional bureaucratic constraints of local school boards, with the goal of creating choice, autonomy, and accountability.

Unlike regular public schools, charter schools are developed and managed by individuals, groups

of parents, community members, teachers, or education-management organizations. In exchange for their independence from most state and local regulations (except those related to health, safety, and nondiscrimination), they must uphold their contracts with the local or state school board or risk being closed. Each provides its own guidelines for establishing rules and procedures, including curriculum, subject to evaluation by the state in which it resides.

Charter schools are among the most rapidly growing educational institutions in the United States today. No charter schools existed before 1990, but such schools are now operating in 40 states and the District of Columbia. According to the Center for Educational Reform, 3,977 charter schools are now educating more than a million students.

Charter schools have received bipartisan support and media accolades. This, however, is surprising. The true academic value of the educational choices that charter schools provide to students, as well as their broader implications for the traditional system of public education, are simply unknown—a fact that became obvious in November 2004, when voters in the state of Washington rejected—for the third time—legislation allowing the creation of charter schools. Driven by an alliance of parents, teachers, and teacher unions against sponsorship by powerful figures such as Bill Gates, this rejection went squarely against a decade-long trend. Reflecting on Washington's rejection, a state Democrat told the *New York Times*, "Charter schools will never have a future here now until there is conclusive evidence, nationwide, that these schools really work. Until the issue of student achievement gets resolved, I'd not even attempt to start over again in the Legislature."

THE RATIONALE

Most justifications for charter schools argue that the traditional system of public schooling is ineffective and that the introduction of competition and choice can resolve any deficiencies. The

leading rationale is that accountability standards (for educational outcomes and student progress), choice (in curriculum, structure, and discipline), and autonomy (for teachers and parents) will generate higher levels of student achievement. The result will be high-quality schools for all children, particularly those from poor and minority backgrounds, and higher levels of student achievement.

While wealthy families have always been able to send their children to private schools, other Americans have historically had fewer, if any, options. Proponents suggest that charter schools can address such inequality by allowing all families, regardless of wealth, to take advantage of these new public educational options. Opponents contend that charter schools cannot fix broader educational problems; if anything, they become instruments of segregation, deplete public school systems of their resources, and undermine the public good.

Given the rationales for charter schools before and after the NCLB Act, it is surprising how few assessments have been made of charter school functioning, impacts on achievement, or the implications of choice for school systems. Only a handful of studies have attempted to evaluate systematically the claims of charter school effectiveness, and few of these have used national data. The various justifications for charter schools—including the desire to increase achievement in the public school system—warrant attention, as do concrete research and evidence on whether such schools work. The debate, however, involves more than simply how to enhance student achievement. It also involves educational competition and accountability, individual choice and, most fundamentally, education's role in fostering the "public good."

IS THERE PROOF IN THE PUDDING?

Do students in charter schools do better than they would in traditional public schools? Unfortunately, the jury is still out, and the evidence is mixed. Profiles in the *New Yorker*, *Forbes*, *Time*, and

Newsweek, for example, highlight the successes of individual charter schools in the inner cities of Washington, DC, and New York, not to mention anecdotal examples offered by high-profile advocates like John Walton and Bill Gates. While anecdotes and single examples suggest that charter schools may work, they hardly constitute proof or even systematic evidence that they always do. In fact, broader empirical studies using representative and national data suggest that many charter schools have failed.

One noteworthy study, released by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 2004, reports that charter schools are not providing a better education than traditional public schools. Moreover, they are not boosting student achievement. Using fourth- and eighth-grade test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress across all states with charter schools, the report finds that charter-school students perform *less* well, on average, in math and reading than their traditional-school counterparts. There appear to be no significant differences among eighth-graders and no discernable difference in black-white achievement gaps across school type.

Because the results reported in the AFT study—which have received considerable media attention—do not incorporate basic demographic, regional, or school characteristics simultaneously, they can only relate average differences across charter schools and public schools. But this ignores the huge effects of family background, above and beyond school environment. Without accounting for the background attributes of students themselves, not to mention other factors such as the race and social-class composition of the student body, estimates of the differences between charter schools and traditional public schools are overstated.

In response to the 2004 AFT report, economists Carolyn Hoxby and Jonah Rockoff compared charter schools to surrounding public schools. Their results contradict many of the AFT's findings. They examined students who applied to but did not attend charter schools because they lost lotteries for spots. Hoxby and Rockoff found that, compared to their lotteried-out

fellow applicants, students who attended charter schools in Chicago scored higher in both math and reading. This is true especially in the early elementary grades compared to nearby public schools with similar racial compositions. Their work and that of others also shows that older charter schools perform better than newly formed ones—perhaps suggesting that school stability and effectiveness require time to take hold. Important weaknesses nevertheless remain in the research design. For example, Hoxby and Rockoff conducted their study in a single city—Chicago—and thus it does not represent the effect of charter schools in general.

As with the research conducted by the AFT, we should interpret selective case studies and school-level comparisons with caution. Individual student background is an important force in shaping student achievement, yet it rarely receives attention in this research or in the charter school achievement debate more generally. The positive influence of charter schools, where it is found, could easily be a function of more advantaged student populations drawn from families with significant educational resources at home. We know from prior research that parents of such children are more likely to understand schooling options and are motivated to ensure their children's academic success. Since family background, parental investments, and parental educational involvement typically trump school effects in student achievement, it is likely that positive charter school effects are simply spurious.

More recently, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), using sophisticated models, appropriate demographic controls, and a national sample, has concurred with the AFT report—charter schools are not producing children who score better on standardized achievement tests. The NCES report showed that average achievement in math and reading in public schools and in charter schools that were linked to a school district did not differ statistically. Charter schools not associated with a public school district, however, scored significantly *less* well than their public school counterparts.

Nevertheless, neither side of the debate has shown conclusively, through rigorous, replicated, and representative research, whether charter schools boost student achievement. The NCES report mentioned above has, in our opinion, done the best job of examining the achievement issue and has shown that charter schools are not doing better than traditional public schools when it comes to improving achievement.

Clearly, in the case of charter schools, the legislative cart has been put before the empirical horse. Perhaps this is because the debate is about more than achievement. Charter school debates and legislation are rooted in more fundamental disagreements over competition, individualism, and, most fundamentally, education's role in the public good. This reflects an important and significant shift in the cultural evaluation of public education in the United States, at the crux of which is the application of a market-based economic model, complete with accompanying ideas of "competition" and "individualism."

COMPETITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To whom are charter schools accountable? Some say their clients, namely, the public. Others say the system, namely, their authorizers. If charter schools are accountable to the public, then competition between schools should ensure academic achievement and bureaucratic prudence. If charter schools are accountable to the system, policies and procedures should ensure academic achievement and bureaucratic prudence. In either case, the assumption is that charter schools will close when they are not successful. The successful application of these criteria, however, requires clear-cut standards, oversight, and accountability—which are currently lacking, according to many scholars. Indeed, despite the rhetoric of their advocates and legislators, charter schools are seldom held accountable in the market or by the political structures that create them.

In a "market" view of accountability, competition will ultimately breed excellence by "weeding out" ineffectual organizations. Through

"ripple effects," all schools will be forced to improve their standards. Much like business organizations, schools that face competition will survive only by becoming more efficient and producing a better overall product (higher levels of achievement) than their private and public school counterparts.

Social scientists, including the authors of this article, question this simplistic, if intuitively appealing, application of neoliberal business principles to the complex nature of the educational system, children's learning, and parental choice for schools. If competition were leading to accountability, we would see parents pulling their children out of unsuccessful charter schools. But research shows that this seldom happens. Indeed, parents, particularly those with resources, typically choose schools for reasons of religion, culture, and social similarity rather than academic quality.

Nor are charter schools accountable to bureaucrats. Even though charter schools are not outperforming traditional public schools, relatively few (10 percent nationally) have actually been closed by their authorizers over the last decade. Although we might interpret a 10 percent closure rate as evidence of academic accountability at work, this would be misleading. Financial rather than academic issues are the principal reasons cited for these closures. By all indications, charter schools are not being held accountable to academic standards, either by their authorizers or by market forces.

In addition to measuring accountability through student performance, charter schools should also be held to standards of financial and educational quality. Here, some charter schools are faltering. From California to New York and Ohio, newspaper editorials question fiscal oversight. There are extreme cases such as the California Charter Academy, a publicly financed but privately run chain of 60 charter schools. Despite a budget of \$100 million dollars, this chain became insolvent in August 2004, leaving thousands of children without a school to attend.

More direct accountability issues include educational quality and annual reports to state

legislatures; here, charter-school performance is poor or mixed. In Ohio, where nearly 60,000 students now attend charter schools, approximately one-quarter of these schools are not following the state's mandate to report school-level test score results, and only 45 percent of the teachers at the state's 250 charter schools hold full teaching certification. Oversight is further complicated by the creation of "online" charter schools, which serve 16,000 of Ohio's public school students.

It is ironic that many charter schools are not held to the very standards of competition, quality, and accountability that legislators and advocates used to justify them in the first place. Perhaps this is why Fredrick Hess, a charter school researcher, recently referred to accountability as applied to charter schools as little more than a "toothless threat."

INDIVIDUALISM OR INEQUALITY?

The most obvious goal of education is student achievement. Public education in the United States, however, has also set itself several other goals that are not reducible to achievement or opportunity at an individual level but are important culturally and socially. Public education has traditionally managed diversity and integration, created common standards for the socialization of the next generation, and ensured some equality of opportunity and potential for meritocracy in the society at large. The focus of the charter school debate on achievement—rooted in purely economic rationales of competition and individual opportunism—has ignored these broader concerns.

Individual choice in the market is a key component of neoliberal and "free-market" theory—a freedom many Americans cherish. Therefore, it makes sense that parents might support choice in public schooling. Theoretically, school choice provides them market power to seek the best product for their children, to weigh alternatives, and to make changes in their child's interest. But this power is only available to informed consumers, so that educational institutions and policies that

provide choice may be reinforcing the historical disadvantages faced by racial and ethnic minorities and the poor.

We might expect that students from advantaged class backgrounds whose parents are knowledgeable about educational options would be more likely to enroll in charter schools. White parents might also see charter schools as an educational escape route from integrated public schools that avoids the financial burden of private schooling. On the other hand, the justification for charter schools is often framed in terms of an "educational fix" for poor, minority concentrated districts in urban areas. Here, charter schools may appear to be a better opportunity for aggrieved parents whose children are attending poorly funded, dilapidated public schools.

National research, at first glance, offers encouraging evidence that charter schools are providing choices to those who previously had few options: 52 percent of those enrolled in charter schools are nonwhite compared to 41 percent of those in traditional public schools. These figures, however, tell us little about the local concentrations of whites and nonwhites in charter schools, or how the racial composition and distribution of charter schools compares to the racial composition and distribution of local, traditional public schools.

African-American students attend charter and noncharter schools in about the same proportion, yet a closer look at individual charter schools within districts reveals that they are often segregated. In Florida, for instance, charter schools are 82 percent white, whereas traditional public schools are only 51 percent white. Similar patterns are found across Arizona school districts, where charter school enrollment is 20 percent more white than traditional schools. Amy Stuart Wells's recent research finds similar tendencies toward segregation among Latinos, who are underrepresented in California's charter schools. Linda Renzulli and Lorraine Evans's national analysis of racial composition within districts containing charter schools shows that charter school formation often results in greater levels of segregation in schools between whites and nonwhites. This is not to suggest that

minority populations do not make use of charter schools. But, when they do, they do so in segregated contexts.

Historically, racial integration has been a key cause of white flight and it remains a key factor in the racial composition of charter schools and other schools of choice. Decades of research on school segregation have taught us that when public school districts become integrated, through either court mandates or simple population change, white parents may seek alternative schools for their children. Current research suggests that a similar trend exists with charter schools, which provide a public-school option for white flight without the drawbacks of moving (such as job changes and longer commutes). While those from less-privileged and minority backgrounds have charter schools at their disposal, the realities of poor urban districts and contemporary patterns of racial residential segregation may mean that the "choice" is between a racially and economically segregated charter school or an equally segregated traditional school, as Renzulli's research has shown. Individualism in the form of educational choice, although perhaps intuitively appealing, in reality may be magnifying some of the very inequalities that public education has been attempting to overcome since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

Regarding equality of opportunity and its implications for the American ideal of meritocracy, there is also reason for concern. Opponents have pointed to the dilution of district resources where charter schools have emerged, especially as funds are diverted to charter schools. Advocates, in contrast, argue that charter schools have insufficient resources. More research on the funding consequences of charter school creation is clearly warranted. Why, within a system of public education, should some students receive more than others? And what of those left behind, particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds whose parents may not be aware of their options? Although evidence on the funding question is sparse, research on public schools generally and charter school attendance specifically suggests that U.S. public education may be

gravitating again toward a system of separate, but not equal, education.

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Variation across charter schools prevents easy evaluation of their academic success or social consequences for public education. Case studies can point to a good school or a bad one. National studies can provide statistical averages and comparisons, yet they may be unable to reveal the best and worst effects of charter schools. Neither type of research has yet fully accounted for the influence of family background and school demographic composition. Although conclusions about charter school effectiveness or failure remain questionable, the most rigorous national analyses to date suggest that charter schools are doing no better than traditional public schools.

Certainly some charter schools are improving the educational quality and experience of some children. KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools, for example, are doing remarkable things for the students lucky enough to attend them. But for every KIPP school (of which there are only 45, and not all are charter schools), there are many more charter schools that do not provide the same educational opportunity to students, have closed their doors in the middle of the school year, and, in effect, isolate students from their peers of other races and social classes. Does this mean that we should prevent KIPP, for example, from educating students through the charter school option? Maybe. Or perhaps we should develop better program evaluations—of what works and what does not—and implement them as guideposts. To the dismay of some policymakers and "competition" advocates, however, such standardized evaluation and accountability would undercut significant charter school variations if not the very nature of the charter school innovation itself.

Student achievement is only part of the puzzle when it comes to the charter school debate; we need to consider social integration and equality as

well. These broader issues, although neglected, warrant as much attention as potential effects on achievement. We suspect that such concerns, although seldom explicit, probably underlie the often contentious charter school and school choice debate itself. We believe it is time to question the logic pertaining to competition, choice, and accountability. Moreover, we should all scrutinize the existing empirical evidence, not to mention educational policy not firmly rooted in empirical reality and research. As Karl Alexander eloquently noted in his presidential address to the Southern Sociological Society, "The charter school movement, with its 'let 1,000 flowers bloom' philosophy, is certain to yield an occasional prize-winning rose. But is either of these approaches [to school choice] likely to prove a reliable guide for broad-based, systemic reform—the kind of reform that will carry the great mass of our children closer to where we want them to be? I hardly think so." Neither do we.

[Editors' note: No references were provided in this article; however, the authors recommend the following for further research into the subject.]

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THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

A Broader Picture

RICHARD ROTHSTEIN

Richard Rothstein presents a very complicated picture of the factors that lead to student achievement in schools. The problems he describes in this reading are problems of poverty, which children bring with them to school and which influence their abilities to learn. As such, the recommendations he makes in this reading go far beyond reforming schools and classrooms and link schools with the community to solve broader issues in society.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How does poverty shape children's ability to perform in classrooms?
2. Is it possible to solve issues related to children's health by only providing better health care?

3. What one thing would you change to enhance the learning environment for students living in poverty?

The large achievement gap between white and minority students is generally viewed as a failure of the U.S. education system. Policymakers almost universally conclude that this gap must result from ineffective school policy and practice: low expectations, unqualified teachers, badly designed curriculum, large classes, undisciplined school climates, unfocused leadership, or a combination of these.

Many well-intentioned people blame the achievement gap on "failing schools" because common sense tells them that it could not be otherwise. The amount of money a family has—or the color of a child's skin—should not determine how well that child learns to read. If teachers

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know how to teach and schools permit no distractions, all students should be able to learn.

This commonsense perspective, however, is misleading. For although income and skin pigment don't directly cause low achievement, the characteristics that in general define social-class differences inevitably influence learning. Here are some examples.

CHILD REARING PRACTICES

Parents from different social classes often have different child rearing habits, disciplinary philosophies, ways of communicating expectations, and even styles of reading to children. These differences do not hold true in every family, but they influence the average tendencies of families from different classes.

Social-class patterns in child rearing make sense when you think about them. If upper-middle-class parents have jobs in which they collaborate with fellow employees and resolve problems, they are more likely to show their young children how to figure out answers for themselves. Parents whose jobs require them to follow routines are less likely to encourage creative problem solving in their children. Therefore, youngsters raised by parents who are professionals will generally have a more inquisitive, active approach to learning than will youngsters raised by working-class parents.

Thirty-five years ago, Kohn (1969) found that parents whose occupations required creativity and decision making were less likely to punish their children for actions in which the children's intentions were desirable, even if matters did not work out as intended. Parents who were closely supervised at work were more likely to base punishment on their children's actions, regardless of the children's intentions.

More recently, two researchers visited homes of families from different social classes to record conversations between parents and toddlers (Hart & Risley, 1995). On average, professional parents spoke more than 2,000 words per hour to their children, working-class parents spoke about

1,300, and welfare mothers spoke about 600. At 4 years old, children of professionals had vocabularies that were nearly 50 percent larger than those of working-class children and twice as large as those of welfare children.

The researchers also tracked how often parents verbally encouraged or reprimanded their children. Toddlers of professionals received an average of six encouragements per reprimand. Working-class children got two. For welfare children, the ratio was reversed: They received an average of one encouragement for every two scoldings. It seems reasonable to expect that when these children eventually go to school, their teachers will not be able to fully offset such differences in early interactions. Students whose parents have encouraged initiative from an early age are more likely to take responsibility for their own learning.

HEALTH NEEDS

Many social and economic manifestations of social class also have implications for learning. Among these are differences in health.

For example, vision problems have an obvious effect on school success. Poor children have twice the average rate of severe vision impairment (Starfield, 1997). One reason for this higher rate of vision problems may be inadequate prenatal development resulting from mothers' poor medical care and nutrition. Visual deficits may also arise because low-income children are more likely to watch too much television, an activity that does not develop hand-eye coordination and depth perception. Forty-two percent of black 4th graders watch six hours or more of television a day, compared with 13 percent of white 4th graders (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003, Table 117).

Typical vision screening in school only asks students to read charts for nearsightedness. Most students are never tested for farsightedness or for difficulty with tracking, problems that are most likely to affect academic performance. Even when testing leads to optometric referrals, low-income

children are less likely to follow up. When they get prescriptions for lenses, they less frequently obtain them or wear them to school (Gould & Gould, 2003).

Vision problems make it difficult to read from a book or see the chalkboard. The disproportionate assignment of low-income black students to special education may partly reflect a failure to correct their vision. When students have puzzling difficulties learning to read, the explanation is often no more complex than their inability to see well.

Differences in dental care have a similar impact: Untreated cavities are nearly three times as prevalent among poor children as among middle-class children (U.S. General Accounting Office [U.S. GAO], 2000, Figure 1). Students with toothaches, even minor ones, will tend to pay less attention in class and to be more distracted during tests than will students with healthy teeth.

Low-income children have dangerously high blood lead levels—at five times the rate of middle-class children's—diminishing their cognitive ability (U.S. GAO, 1999). Although lead-based paint was banned from residential construction in 1978, low-income children more often live in buildings constructed prior to that date and in buildings that are not repainted often enough to prevent old layers of paint from flaking.

Low-income children, particularly those who live in densely populated city neighborhoods, are also more likely to contract asthma. The asthma rate is substantially higher for urban than for rural children, for those on welfare than for nonwelfare families, for children from single-parent families than for those from two-parent families, and for poor than for nonpoor families (Forrest, Starfield, Riley, & Kang, 1997). The disease is provoked in part by breathing fumes from the low-grade heating oil often used in low-income housing and from diesel trucks and buses. Excessive dust and allergic reactions to mold, cockroaches, and secondhand smoke also provoke it.

Asthma keeps children up at night; even if they make it to school the next day, they are likely to be tired and inattentive. Many children with asthma refrain from exercise and so are less

physically fit. Drowsy and more irritable, they also have more behavioral problems. Middle-class children typically get treatment for asthma symptoms; low-income children often do not. Lower-class children with asthma are about 80 percent more likely than middle-class children with asthma to miss more than seven days of school a year because of the disease (Halfon & Newacheck, 1993).

Children without regular medical care are also more likely to contract other illnesses—some serious, others minor—that keep them out of school. Despite federal programs that make medical care available to low-income children, gaps between access and use remain. Many families do not enroll in such programs because they don't know of the programs' availability, are intimidated by the process, or are unaware of the importance of medical care. Even when enrolled, they are less likely to use the services to which they are entitled.

MOBILITY RATES

The growing shortage of affordable, adequate housing for low-income families also affects achievement. Urban rents have risen faster than working-class incomes have, forcing many families to move frequently because they fall behind in rent payments. Family breakups and bouts of unemployment also contribute to low-income children's high mobility rates. In some schools in minority neighborhoods, mobility rates are above 100 percent: For every seat in the school, two children were enrolled at some time during the year (Bruno & Isken, 1996; Kerbow, 1996).

A 1994 report found that 30 percent of the poorest students had attended at least three different schools by 3rd grade, whereas only 10 percent of middle-class students had done so. Black students were more than twice as likely as white students to change schools this often (U.S. GAO). High mobility depresses achievement not only for the students who move—each move means readjusting to teachers, classmates, and

curriculum—but also for other students in high-mobility schools. Teachers with ever-changing classrooms are more likely to review old material than introduce new material, and they are less able to adjust instruction to the individual needs of students they barely know.

Financial Assets

Differences in long-term economic security are also important predictors of student achievement. Most analysts overlook these differences and use only annual income to indicate economic status. But when we recognize that black families who earned a low income in one specific year are likely to have been poor for longer than white families who earned a similar income that year, it helps explain why black students, on average, score lower than white students with the same family incomes.

White families are also likely to own more assets that support children's achievement than are black families at the same current income level. Median black family income is now about 64 percent of median white family income, but black family net worth is only 12 percent of white family net worth (Mishel, Bernstein, & Boushey, 2003, Tables 1.4 and 4.6). So white middle-class families are more likely than black middle-class families to have adequate and spacious housing, even when their annual incomes are similar, not only because whites suffer no discrimination in real estate markets but also because white middle-class parents are more likely to have received capital contributions from their own parents—for a down payment on a first home, for example. Black middle-class parents are more likely to be the first generation in their families to have middle-class status, and their own parents are less likely to have been able to help financially. As with all these examples, not all middle-class whites get first-time down payments from their parents, and not all middle-class blacks fail to get them. But on average, more whites than blacks with similar incomes benefit from this practice, and this contributes to average differences in neighborhood resources and in housing quality that add to the test score gap.

Asset differences also influence how much families save for college educations. A student's awareness that his or her family has resources for college can influence whether or not that student believes that college attendance is within reach. Comparing black and white middle-class students whose families have similar current incomes, it would be reasonable to expect the white students to be more confident about affording college and thus more dedicated to working hard in school.

MAKING PROGRESS

To make significant progress in narrowing the achievement gap, we must pursue three tracks simultaneously.

Certainly, schools need to raise the quality of instruction. Better schools are important, and better school practices can probably narrow the gap. School reform, however, is not enough.

We must also invest resources to expand the definition of schooling to include crucial out-of-school hours in which families and communities are now the sole—and disparate—influences. Because the gap is already huge among 3-year-olds, this investment should probably concentrate initially on early childhood programs for infants and toddlers that provide the kind of intellectual environment that middle-class children typically experience. This goal probably requires professional caregivers and low child-adult ratios.

Another essential out-of-school focus is giving low-income students after-school and summer experiences similar to those that most middle-class students take for granted. These experiences should not consist only of remedial programs that provide added drill in math and reading. The advantage that middle-class children gain after school and in the summer comes mostly from the self-confidence they acquire and the awareness they develop of the world outside their homes and immediate communities as they participate in organized athletics, dance, drama, museum visits, recreational reading, and other activities that develop their inquisitiveness,

creativity, self-discipline, and organizational skills. After-school and summer programs will narrow the achievement gap only if they duplicate such enriched experiences.

Finally, the federal and state governments need to develop social and economic policies that enable children to attend school more equally ready to learn. These policies include offering health services for low-income children and families, providing stable housing for working families with children, taking aggressive action against discrimination, and boosting the incomes of working parents employed in low-wage occupations.

Although many characteristics of social class are impervious to short-term change, many others would respond to achievable policy reforms. For example, establishing optometric clinics in schools to improve the vision of low-income students may raise their test scores more than spending the same money on instructional improvement. Likewise, schools could provide dental clinics at a cost that is comparable to what schools typically spend on less effective reforms. If the United States truly intends to raise the achievement of low-income students, however, we need to make a more expansive commitment and provide a full array of health services. We should also evaluate whether increasing low-income families' access to stable housing raises student achievement.

To date, there have been few experiments to test the relative benefits of these alternative strategies, partly because people are so wedded to the notion that school reform alone is sufficient. But we could easily design experiments of this sort, and we should make them a priority.

For nearly half a century, economists, sociologists, and educators have been aware of the association of social and economic disadvantage with student achievement gaps. Most, however, have avoided the obvious implication of this understanding: Raising the achievement of low-income children requires ameliorating the

social and economic conditions of their lives, not just reforming schools.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Current Policy and Program Trends

SHEILA B. KAMERMAN

Sheila Kamerman compares the early childhood education systems of European Union countries. Motivations for these policies are linked to both workforce issues related to equality for men and women and the health and well-being of children. She describes the various policies and practices of these countries as they try to provide early childhood education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are the benefits of a strong program of early childhood education for a society?
2. What issues have EU countries considered as they developed programs for early childhood education?
3. Do you think early childhood education is a right?

Whether in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, the countries of the EU (European Union), the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Central and Eastern European countries, the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, or others, interest in and attention to early care and education (ECE) is clearly growing. For the first time in about three decades, the OECD carried out a thematic review of ECE policies and programs in 20 of its 30 member countries, and UNESCO joined with the OECD in a subsequent review of ECE in four developing (or less-developed) countries, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, and Kazakhstan.

ECE is a policy priority throughout the EU countries in particular, even if curricula and rates of coverage vary. My focus here will be on three trends in ECE policy that have emerged in the

EU and in selected OECD countries that are collectively referred to as “advanced industrialized countries.”

Two factors have been especially important in bringing ECE to the forefront in these countries. First, increasing numbers of women have entered the labor force. Thus ECE services have become necessary to ensure that men and women have equal work opportunities and to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Second, there has been a growing recognition that a positive group experience enhances the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children and can help compensate for early disadvantages that many children experience.

THREE POLICY TRENDS

Among the advanced industrialized countries, there have been three important recent developments in the area of ECE policy:

- specifying targets for achieving an expansion of ECE services, often by the year 2010;
- extending the duration of paid parental leaves, both to support the nurturing and caring role of parents and to reduce the need for out-of-home infant and toddler care; and
- changing the governance structure of ECE so that all policies and programs fall under the auspices of education, rather than being divided between education and health or social welfare.

EXPANDING ECE SERVICES

Increasing the employment rate in the EU, especially the percentage of women in the labor force, is an explicit goal of the European employment strategy.¹ At its Lisbon summit in March 2000, the EU set a goal to increase the rate of female employment from 51% at that time to 57% by 2005 and 60% by 2010. Two years later, at the Barcelona summit, the EU took an important step toward achieving this goal by setting specific targets for the expansion of ECE services: at least 90% of children between age 3

and the age of compulsory school entry (age 5, 6, or 7) and at least 33% of children under age 3 are to be enrolled in ECE programs by 2010.

Although not binding, the Barcelona targets emphasize the importance of ECE for working parents, just as earlier the OECD had emphasized the importance of ECE for children's socialization and future school success.² The Barcelona targets for young children have not yet been achieved; however, access to ECE programs is clearly increasing. Nine of the 25 EU countries plus Norway and Iceland have already achieved the 90% goal for this age group, and half of the 16 remaining countries have 80% of this group enrolled. Among the OECD countries, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK enroll around 90% of their children by the age of 4 in free (or very low-cost) early education services. Not all of the programs cover the full workday, but the school day in these countries is often significantly longer than the U.S. school day.

EXTENDING PARENTAL LEAVE

Now we turn to the goal for the under-3s. While not all countries have a sufficient supply of services to cover one-third of the under-3s, some countries have established an alternative approach: paid and job-protected leaves from work to allow parents to care for a very young child at home.

There are several different types of parental leave plans that permit women, or men and women, to take time off from work at the time of childbirth or adoption or to meet other family needs. These plans are an essential element in reconciling work and family life and constitute the first component of an ECE system. Almost by definition, extended leaves following childbirth determine when out-of-home infant and toddler care services are needed.

The leave policies in the different countries vary in terms of their duration, benefit levels, eligibility criteria, and flexibility. Rather than set a target for the future implementation of leave

policies, the EU has issued directives that member countries must provide at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave (18 if the child is disabled) supplemented by at least 13 weeks of unpaid parental leave (18 if the child is disabled) for each parent.

The duration of these leaves is critical, as is the extent of the accompanying cash benefit, which will replace all or a significant part of the wages of an employed parent staying home to provide care and nurturing for a new baby. The Nordic countries provide a parental leave lasting about one year and a social insurance benefit that nearly replaces full wages, thus ensuring that a parent can provide infant care without significant loss of earnings. Several EU and Central and Eastern European countries provide extended parental or child-rearing leaves of two to three years, but with significantly less financial support.

The major trend in the 1980s and 1990s was to extend the various leave policies so as to create a real alternative to out-of-home infant care. Long leaves of up to three years may not be ideal for all parents and may have negative consequences for women's later wages and careers, but they do expand the care options for some.

INTEGRATING CARE AND EDUCATION WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Nordic countries made early care and education an explicit policy priority and stressed the integration of the two functions from the beginning of the movement in the 1970s. However, initially, the concept was to integrate the services under a free-standing social welfare system of care. In 1986, New Zealand became the first country to institute a dramatic and significant change in the delegation of policy responsibility, placing child care under the department of education.³ Other countries subsequently transferred the responsibility for early care and education (for children of varying ages under the age of compulsory school entry) from social welfare or health ministries to education ministries. Sweden did so in 1996,⁴ and similar developments occurred in some regions of northern Italy, in Spain, and then in England and Scotland in 1998.⁵

The reasoning in New Zealand was that moving child care to the department of education would facilitate the integration of care and education, improve the quality of child care, and increase the government's financial support for ECE.⁶ A major theme in England and Scotland was that the integration of care and education—replacing a previously fragmented system divided between education and health—and the inclusion of child welfare services along with education and care in deprived areas in England and in all areas in Scotland would improve the situation of disadvantaged children especially. The reorganization in England and Scotland emerged in response to changes in welfare and social-assistance policies, the desire to increase employment among low-income single mothers, and a conviction that expanding the supply of early care and education services and placing them under education would help to reduce child poverty.

Sweden had already integrated care and education more than three decades before it put its education ministry in charge of those services. It had gone beyond a focus on the children of working parents and had a fully universal policy in place. The country also had very low rates of child poverty and social assistance. Thus in Sweden the focus became the simultaneous improvement of both ECE and primary schooling. The idea was for schools to adopt the greater emphasis on quality that characterized the ECE system and for the early childhood program to adopt educational principles.⁷ At the same time, however, there was (and there continues to be) some anxiety about the possible “schoolification” of ECE.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AS A RIGHT

In this brief article, I have highlighted three important current trends in ECE policy: increasing the supply of services and expanding access, acknowledging the role of parental leave policies in reducing demand for out-of-home infant and toddler care, and integrating care and education within ministries or departments of education.

Other trends appear to be emerging as well, if not quite as clearly as those discussed here. Among these are:

- a move to look beyond the kinds of quantitative goals set at Barcelona and to pay more attention to quality (group size, staff/child ratios, and staff qualifications) and affordability (including financing strategies);
- a growing awareness of the link between a decent-quality preschool experience and primary school readiness and performance; and
- a growing conviction that ECE should be an entitlement—that children should have the right to ECE just as they have the right to primary and secondary education now.

With regard to casting ECE as a right, although the European Commission does not have the authority to require member states to set national child-care policies based on the rights of children, these rights have already been recognized by the European Council of Ministers and are recognized in the proposed EU constitution and by many member states.⁸ In Sweden, the reforms of 2001 and 2002 established preschool as a right for all children, regardless of the employment status of their parents; it is provided free to 4- and 5-year-olds and at a low cost to younger children.⁹ And since New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights have been emphasized as part of the rationale for that country's ECE policy as well.¹⁰

There is increasing discussion of the notion that all children have the right to free, high-quality early care and education. Acknowledging this right may become a major trend in the future.

NOTES

1. Janneke Plantenga and Melissa Siegel, *Child Care in a Changing World: European Child Care Strategies*, paper presented at the Conference on Childcare in a Changing World, Groningen, Netherlands, 21–23 October 2005.

2. *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care* (Paris: OECD, 2001).

3. Anne Meade and Val Podmore, *Early Childhood Education Policy Co-ordination Under the Auspices of the Department/Ministry of Education: A Case Study of New Zealand* (Paris: UNESCO, Early Childhood and Family Policy Series, No. 1, 2002).

4. Hillevi Lenz Taguchi and Ingmarie Munkammar, *Consolidating Governmental Early Childhood Education and Care Services Under the Ministry of Education and Science: A Swedish Case Study* (Paris: UNESCO, Early Childhood and Family Policy Series, No. 6, 2003).

5. Bronwen Cohen et al., *A New Deal for Children? Reforming Education and Care in England, Scotland, and Sweden* (Bristol, England: Policy Press, 2004).

6. Meade and Podmore, op. cit.

7. Cohen et al., op. cit.; and idem, *Reforming Education and Care in England, Scotland, and Sweden* (Paris: UNESCO, Policy Brief on Early Childhood, 2003).

8. Plantenga and Siegel, op. cit.

9. Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, op. cit.

10. Meade and Podmore, op. cit.

PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Efforts Toward Equality and Equity in Education

Find the school report cards (part of the No Child Left Behind Act) for two schools in your area (one from a rural area and one from a urban area, if possible) and compare the data for each school.

Using an academic database, locate information on early childhood education and family leave in the United States. Also, using a general search engine (i.e., www.google.com) look up Head Start programs and try to find information on income eligibility requirements for that program. If you cannot find information on the Web, call a local Head Start program. Are early education programs available to all children regardless of social class?

Using an academic database, look for the most recent studies on "CHARTER SCHOOLS" and compare the findings from these studies to those presented in the reading by Linda Renzulli and Vincent Roscigno.

PART VIII

HIGHER EDUCATION

Educational systems provide knowledge and skills from basic literacy to professional training. Higher education is part of that system in most countries, providing specialized professional and vocational preparation. In Part VIII, we include readings that examine the various issues faced by institutions of higher education. Some of these issues are similar to those at other levels of education—pressures from the environment for external funding, demands from businesses and communities, negotiating roles and relationships, interactions between students and teachers, and the role of higher education in maintaining inequality in society.

With more and more students seeking postsecondary educational experiences, higher education has become an important part of the structure of education, particularly in the United States. College enrollments in the United States are at an all-time high, with 17.4 million students enrolled in fall 2005, representing steady increases in full-time enrollment over the past several years (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). This increase was stronger for women, with women making up 57.2 per cent of those enrolled in post-secondary degree granting institutions in 2004.

In the United States, higher education takes several different forms. Part VIII provides an overview of what is becoming a required part of this country's educational experience. A brief history of the development of higher education in the U.S. helps to explain where we are today. Harvard University, the first institution of higher learning in America, was founded in 1643, followed in 1693 by William and Mary College. By 1770, there were only nine colleges in colonial America. The growth of colleges during the next 90 years was spotty, with over 700 colleges failing to survive prior to 1860 (Rudolph, 1990, p. 219). Lawrence Veysey (1965) described college life prior to 1865 as "archaic" (p. 2), one in which the task of education was to instill discipline and piety. Despite the fact that post-secondary education was faltering and intended for white males only, three black colleges were established before the Civil War (see reading by Sarah Willie in this part) and two women's colleges were opened in 1855 (see reading by Leslie Miller-Bernal in this part).

The end of the Civil War and nascent industrialization in this country, however, revitalized higher education. This growth included new colleges for blacks and women; these colleges were the only option for blacks and women as only a few blacks or women were allowed into colleges serving white, elite males (see readings by Willie and Miller-Bernal in this part). Indeed, the greatest growth was in those colleges for white, elite men. According to Frederick Rudolph (1990, p. 244), "the movement for technological and scientific education, which had been underway before the war, spawned new and more popular colleges and institutes." Federal and state aid and bequests by wealthy industrialists led to the chartering of newer, more practical institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Cornell, both in 1865. Changes in society also prompted changes in many of the older, established colleges. For instance, Princeton added its engineering school in 1871 (Rudolph, 1990).

In addition to the considerable growth in the number of colleges and universities, the post-Civil War era saw enrollments increase with the first waves of immigration in the 1890s. Higher education during this time period continued to be limited to the wealthy, who at that time recognized the advantages of educating their children as a means of distinguishing themselves as a class above the newly arrived immigrants. Indeed, the enrollments in higher education grew at 4.7 times the rate of growth of the population during the years from 1890 to 1925 (Rudolph, 1990, p. 442). Higher education, however, was not necessarily focused around academics. According to Veysey, the college experience at the end of the nineteenth century “meant good times, pleasant friendships, and, underneath it all, the expectation of life-long prestige resulting from the degree” (p. 269) at the most elite colleges.

The turn of the century saw a blending of worldly issues into the university, as business and academics mingled more so than in the past. Among the changes in higher education that occurred after the Civil War was the introduction of an elective curriculum in which students could choose from an array of courses; this curriculum replaced the rigid classical curriculum previously in use. However, at the same time that colleges worked to attract more students, they also raised standards (Veysey, 1965). In addition, the development of advanced programs in graduate studies transformed universities during this time period (Rudolph, 1990).

Drawing on the ideas of Progressivism at the early part of the 20th century, the ideal of service was introduced as a goal of higher education. During this time period, universities developed extension courses and programs that attempted to serve community needs and provide expertise to the country (Rudolph, 1990). Scholarship, however, did not drop in significance as college and university professors formed learned societies, and the role of higher education was solidified in the early 20th century. Rudolph argues that the turn of the century was accompanied by a push toward more “organized” colleges and universities, with changes such as the move away from installing only members of the clergy as college presidents.

World War I brought a counterrevolution, with pressures to return to a course of study that produced a more well-rounded and academically grounded graduate. Thus, there was a push toward a general education or core curriculum. Service and practical learning, however, was still evident in land-grant universities and colleges of business administration (Rudolph, 1990).

The period from the depression of the 1920s through World War II was a time that tested higher education’s resilience. Colleges and universities struggled to survive. With money scarce, college was a luxury neither society nor students could easily afford. Many students attending college during this period freely admitted to being “broke” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 466). Throughout this history of higher education institutions just described, blacks and women generally were segregated in their own colleges as described by Willie and Miller-Bernal in this part.

The end of World War II brought enormous changes to college campuses previously enrolling only white, upper-class men. The GI Bill, which provided the means for many soldiers to attend college, was responsible for an enormous increase in the size of campuses, including what was once called “normal schools” that evolved into teacher’s colleges. Across the country temporary classrooms and housing were hastily constructed to accommodate the returning soldiers. This growth in higher education continued through the end of the 20th century. In 1960, 3.5 million students attended higher education, a figure that doubled by 1970 (Rudolph, 1990, p. 486). As Kevin J. Dougherty notes in the third reading in this section, the demand for community colleges grew in response to the massive growth in higher education during the decade of the sixties. Community colleges could not only be built more cheaply than residential campuses, but they could accommodate the weaker students, thus permitting existing colleges and universities to continue to be more selective. Dougherty also describes the role that community colleges play today, including their close ties to business communities.

In contrast to the ideal of service to the community, higher education in the United States did not contribute to the development of new knowledge until they were called on during World War II (Graham & Diamond, 1997). Shortly after the war ended, the federal government created the National Science Foundation to fund scientific research. The funding was primarily in the physical sciences and engineering and used merit-based competition to distribute the research funds to universities and professors. The Department of Defense also provided support for research during the war and thereafter (Graham & Diamond, 1997).

The launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 unleashed even more federal funds for universities, as the United States raced to catch up in the new space-age technologies. The amount of federal funding to universities has waxed and waned over the years since World War II. The first reading in this part, by Zelda F. Gamson, describes how this influx of funding has fundamentally changed the mission of universities and indirectly changed the nature of faculties in colleges as well.

In addition, colleges and universities continue to receive pressure from the business community to make education useful. The push today is to focus more on preparing students to enter an increasingly global economy as discussed in the reading by Alan Ruby in this part of the book. For example, Dougherty describes how American community colleges are responding to the business community's desire to educate workers for a global economy, a concern from the early part of this century that is once again the focus at all levels of higher education today.

More than the orientation in higher education is changing as we move into the 21st century. Indeed, the very structure of the institution is changing. The readings by Gamson, Dougherty, Willie, and Miller-Bernal illustrate some of the most recent changes, but other changes are happening as well. We can now find universities online, in which students complete a degree through distance learning (see reading by Ruby in this part). In these cases, campuses no longer are needed. The increase in the use of automation in higher education has led one scholar to call these universities "digital diploma mills" (Noble, 1998). Increasing competition for the market of higher education is attracting interest from different corridors. The company that owned Harcourt Brace (a textbook publisher), Bergdorf Goodman, and Nieman Marcus (the latter two are upscale department stores) announced in 1999 that beginning in fall 2000 it hoped to offer baccalaureate and master's degrees via distance learning (Blumenstyk, 1999).

Along with changes in the structure and purpose of college come changes in the composition of the student body. Among the most significant post-World War II changes in student composition are the increases in the numbers of women and minorities attending college in the United States, a change that began dramatically in the 1970s as you will read about in the readings by Willie and Miller-Bernal in this part. The numbers of women and blacks who now have a Bachelor's degree or higher has grown enormously from 5.8 percent of women 25 years and older in 1960 to 26.5 percent in 2005 and from 3.5 percent of black (non-Hispanic) to 17.7 percent in 2005 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The corresponding figures for white, non-Hispanic men are 10.3 percent in 1960 and 34.1 percent in 2005 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

These numbers are not surprising since women and minority groups were kept out of most institutions of higher education until the 1970s, which were primarily all white and predominantly male. Therefore, women's and historically Black colleges and universities were the only avenue for higher education if you were not a white male prior to 1970. Although what was called "Negro colleges" were established in the South after the Civil War, and occasionally a black man graduated from college prior to the Civil War; the education of blacks and women in the United States continued to be an issue throughout the 20th century. Higher education was one of the issues that the civil rights movement of the 1960s addressed. By then, some strong black colleges had evolved and had graduated many people who went on to become early civil rights leaders. Those leaders, however, demanded access to primarily white colleges and universities. It wasn't until affirmative action legislation of the mid-1960s

that there was legal support to enforce the admittance of women and minorities to attend previously all white, male colleges and universities. The reading by Jerome Karabel in this part discusses the issue of college entrance decisions at three elite universities today and considers racial and social class barriers that remain for those attempting to enter the top colleges.

Despite the gains in access in recent years, life on college campuses continues to be difficult for black students, as described in the reading by Willie in this Part. Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996, p. 17) refer to “educational apartheid” when describing the position of black students at white colleges and universities. Issues for other minority groups in higher education are also of concern, not only in terms of access but also in terms of quality of academic and social life once they are on campus.

The women’s rights efforts of the 1970s opened up colleges and universities for women in many ways and women have been quite successful in gaining post-secondary degrees, except at the highest levels as discussed in the introduction to Part VI and the reading by Roslyn Mickelson in that part. However, the growth in women’s enrollment in higher education has led to a decline in the number of women’s colleges in the United States, as described by Miller-Bernal in this part.

The system of higher education in America is distinctly different from the patterns and practices of advanced education in other countries. In most European countries, students must take exams prior to being admitted to higher education institutions, and a smaller percentage of students go on to universities. Countries in the process of industrialization face other issues related to both access and cost of higher education as described in the reading by Ruby in this part. In fact, as Ruby suggests, the increased demand for education globally and the developments in technology to deliver education, may have profound effects on the structure and form of higher education in this country. Not only are there likely to be more international students from developed and developing countries across the world in America’s colleges and universities, but it is also likely that you could have a classmate from another country in an online course in which you speak together across differences in languages as your messages are translated electronically back and forth instantaneously in cyberspace. The latter possibility is likely because, with the growth of private, for-profit providers, a digital degree is quite cost-effective for the provider and convenient for individuals around the world.

As you can see, this part of the Open Systems Model, described in the introduction to this book, has undergone and will undergo many changes. This part of the reader is intended to familiarize you with some of the issues in higher education in the United States today and help you understand how the institution which you are currently attending fits into a history of higher education. All of the parts of the Open Systems Model can be applied to understanding higher education in the readings that follow—organization, input and output, and feedback and influences from the surrounding environment.

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THE STRATIFICATION OF THE ACADEMY

ZELDA F. GAMSON

In this reading, Zelda F. Gamson looks at the effects of research activities on colleges and universities. She describes the history of research expansion and contraction in major American universities, explores the effect of that trend on other colleges and universities, and considers the stratification of higher education within this context.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. When did research activities expand and contract on university campuses, and why?
2. What was behind these changes—government, business, or both?
3. How has research at major universities affected other colleges and universities?
4. What is the effect of research activities on the education of students?

Higher education is a mammoth industry. There are more than thirty-six hundred

colleges and universities in this country with one million faculty members and fifteen million students. The property owned by colleges and universities has been estimated to be worth over \$200 billion, total expenditures to be \$175 billion, and annual university research and development expenditures to be about \$20 billion.

This overall picture includes an enormous variety of institutions. Among four-year institutions, only 8 percent of private colleges and universities and 3 percent of public universities are very selective. All the rest, both public and private, are less selective or totally unselective, with the largest percentage concentrated at the bottom.

There are tremendous inequalities in the academy on almost any measure we might want to use. For example, the average family income of students in the very selective schools is three to four times that of students in the least selective schools. Faculty salaries do not show as extreme a ratio, but the differences are quite consistent: faculty in private research universities earn almost twice as much as faculty in liberal arts colleges. When we factor in total income—which includes consulting

income, royalties, and other institutional income—faculty in private research universities are by far the highest paid, earning two and one-half times more than liberal arts college faculty. Average instructional and student services expenditures per student, a figure that is imperfect but the best measure of institutional resources available for educational (as opposed to research) purposes, declines markedly across the spectrum. Expenditures per student in private universities are more than twice those in liberal arts colleges and more than three times those in community colleges.

THE POWER OF THE RESEARCH CULTURE IN THE EXPANSIONARY PERIOD

The academy is clearly at the end of the expansionary period that began after World War II and reached its pinnacle in the 1960s and 1970s. When Christopher Jencks and David Riesman published *The Academic Revolution* in 1968, the research university was at its height. The victory of the “academic revolution,” as they called it, had been a genteel and well-funded affair underwritten by enormous amounts of federal support for higher education: government support in 1950 was 3 percent of what it was in 1980.¹

Universities hired staffs of academics whose main work was doing research rather than teaching. If they did occasionally teach, these researchers were to be found in the graduate seminar, not the undergraduate lecture hall. The bargaining power of the faculty was heightened considerably during the early 1960s, especially in the research universities, when there were not enough college professors to teach the advance guard of the baby boom generation, which was beginning its march through higher education. College faculty began to be recruited nationally according to their scholarly research rather than their teaching ability. Faculty who never again did any scholarly work after their Ph.D. dissertations (and many did not) thought of themselves primarily as members of their [particular] disciplines—biologists, sociologists—not as educators.

In a general trend away from localism and single purposes, denominational colleges became

more secular, single-sex colleges went coed, and teachers’ colleges and other specialized institutions broadened their curricula. The exhilaration of expansion during this period propelled colleges across the country to broaden their missions and curricula. But in the process, older sources of legitimacy, such as commitment to a religious order or a particular population, became less serviceable, and the transformed institutions sought new markers of identity. The situation was ripe for what Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell term “mimetic isomorphism,” the imitation of apparently successful organizations by less successful ones.² Imitation is likely when organizations have ambiguous purposes or face uncertainty about their future. Many colleges and universities during the 1960s and 1970s allowed themselves to be pulled toward what appeared to be the only worthwhile model to emulate: the research culture.

The research culture draws its essential character from graduate faculty in research universities. It has three main elements: First, it is based on national rather than local allegiances. Second, it values research over teaching and service. Third, it prizes pure over applied research activities.³ Through the socialization of new generations of faculty, through invisible colleges of scholars across the country working in similar subdisciplines, and through the peer review of grant applications and publications, these graduate faculty define the content, methods, and research problems addressed in funded projects, journals, and professional associations.⁴

The preeminence of the research culture is underscored by almost a century’s worth of institutional ranking schemes. These ranking systems not only ensure visibility to those at the top but also legitimate an institutional hierarchy based on measures that are closely related to the research culture.⁵ To some extent, this can be said of the category system invented by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and widely used by researchers and granting agencies. These categories have spurred many a doctorate-granting university to be reclassified as “research university,” and “research university II” to be classified as “research

university I.” This giant classification sweepstakes can be seen as a kind of race whose winners are Harvard, the University of California at Berkeley, and Stanford.

By these means, a kind of invisible hand has guided the competition for faculty reputation, power, and prestige and, by extension, institutional prestige. In his study of the career mobility of faculty in a highly ranked department in a research university, Darwin Sawyer noted that “the professional status of an individual is as much an organizational resource in the institutional career of the department(s) which employ him/her as the institutional status of the department is a personal resource in the organizational careers of its members.”⁶ Prestige is a resource that enables universities to garner more tangible resources. An institution can offer its prestige by extension to its other constituents who, in return, place additional resources at its disposal. The greater the prestige generated by the institution, the more advantages it has in the competition for research funds, graduate students, and undergraduate enrollments.

It is no wonder that many formerly specialized colleges and universities aped the overwhelmingly successful culture of the research university. This mimicry became especially strong during the 1970s, when the scramble for resources became intense and administrators sought new ways to sustain the level of security and growth of the 1960s. The buyer’s market of the 1970s allowed many institutions to hire faculty with more prestigious pedigrees than they had previously attracted.⁷ This new breed of faculty brought a commitment to scholarly work that corresponded to administrators’ desire for institutional prestige.

Faculty in liberal arts colleges, state colleges, and universities—places noted for their commitment to teaching and students—talked about needing more time for research. Faculty teaching loads declined everywhere but in community colleges, where the research culture never took hold. This correspondence of interests led relatively quickly to the inclusion of new criteria for hiring, promotion, and tenure that emphasized scholarly standards.⁸ In other words, faculty who published a lot were favored with pay increases,

leaves, sabbaticals, and release time. This shift toward a research culture is demonstrated by the change in faculty responses to a survey taken by the Carnegie Foundation. The survey, first taken in 1969, asked faculty to respond to the following statement: “It is difficult for a person to receive tenure if he/she does not publish.” In 1969, 19 percent of the faculty in master’s-level institutions agreed with this statement. Twenty years later, 65 percent agreed. In liberal arts colleges the change is not as dramatic but nevertheless striking for teaching institutions: 18 percent agreed in 1969, and 39 percent agreed in 1989.⁹

The march of the research culture throughout higher education was uneven, to be sure, but it took hold and delivered the goods—at least during the expansionary period—from donors and state budgets, if not from federal research programs, whose grants and contracts overwhelmingly went to research universities. As with the general economy in the post-war era, a rising tide raised all boats. All of higher education benefited from the expansion of the system, and the research culture legitimated that system. But while all the boats were rising, not all were rising at the same rate. The luxury liners—research universities, and the leading private ones in particular—led the way, followed by a variety of small yachts, sailboats, and tugboats.

The Tide Turns

As the expansionary period peaked and then declined, the research culture began to lose its power. There are demographic, economic, and political reasons for this. Declines in the traditional college-going age group, whose impact has been greatest in the unselective colleges and universities, especially private ones, have led to great competition for a smaller pool of students in the last few years. The decrease in the eighteen to twenty-two-year-old, college-going population was balanced to some extent by increases in the attendance of older students overall, but not necessarily in the schools that have experienced the greatest enrollment stress—less selective private colleges with small endowments. Many of these colleges are barely surviving

today, and some have gone under. It does not help them to know that the tide is shifting in the other direction, as the children of the baby boomers hit the campuses in full force.

College and university tuitions have been rising. In the thirteen years between 1976 and 1989, tuition and fees in public four-year colleges and universities almost tripled; in private institutions, they increased three and one-third times. Job insecurity, falling wages, and economic uncertainty have led students and their families to find paying for a college education, even in the public sector, a major hardship. Indeed, surveys show that one of the greatest concerns of the general public is the costs of higher education. This concern has found its way into public policy and the media. Higher education has increasingly been treated as just another entitlement burden on taxpayers; decreasing support for higher education can be used to offset state deficits and as a trade-off with claims from other constituencies.

A series of reports and books attacking higher education have appeared in rapid fire from the mid-1980s through the 1990s: in the mid-1980s, we had *Involvement in Learning*, a higher education sequel to the U.S. Department of Education's *A Nation at Risk*, which focused on schools; *To Reclaim a Legacy* under the leadership of William Bennett when he headed the National Endowment for the Humanities; and *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, issued by the Association of American Colleges. A critique by insiders and liberal reformers took shape in hundreds of reports from state and federal agencies and from higher education associations, which argued that undergraduate education was in serious trouble and that faculty seemed unable or unwilling to do anything about it. More recently, Bruce Wilshire in *The Moral Collapse of the University* and Page Smith in *Killing the Spirit* offered explanations about why this was so, and those explanations rested squarely in a critique of the research culture.¹⁰

These critiques did not reach the general public. A campaign by conservatives, with a well-funded media program backed by right-wing foundations and think tanks, took higher education to the streets. First there was Allan

Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*, then in rapid fire Charles Sykes's *Profscam*, Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, Martin Anderson's *Imposters in the Temple*, and Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals*.¹¹

These books attacked the faculty for "political correctness" and 1960s radicalism; the curriculum for faddishness and neglect of the canon; and administrators for lack of leadership. In less than ten years the sanctity of the academy was in serious jeopardy. State and federal governments have been taking more control over university budgets, admissions criteria, financial aid, outcomes, research conditions—and most recently faculty workloads. The story line from the states and Washington goes something like this: Colleges and universities are irresponsible and arrogant. They cannot explain what they do. They charge high tuition and misuse money. Faculty have lifetime employment and long vacations and do anything they want. What they want to do is research, not teach. Their research is silly and useless. (Remember Senator Proxmire's Golden Fleece Awards?) They need to be brought into line.

Tenure and promotion committees and college presidents playing the Carnegie sweepstakes may not know it yet, but the research culture is losing its currency. The gains brought by the research culture are beginning to erode: research grants are harder to get, overhead is down, and the cost to institutions of carrying out research is up. Declines in tuition dollars because of lower enrollment or large amounts of student aid lead to questions about faculty productivity and teaching loads. Assistant professors, those indentured for years before winning tenure, are gasping for air from the stratospheric publication requirements to which they are being held. They have been evincing surprising support for the abolition of tenure. Like other industries, universities are hiring casual labor. So-called part-time or non-tenure-track faculty have been a growing part of the faculty labor force outside of the top tier.

Attacks on the research culture have not seriously affected the schools in which that culture was created. In the leading research universities, faculty continue to reap the fruits of the research culture in low teaching loads, time and resources

for research, and tenure. Despite efforts to spread their largess more widely than in the past, federal agencies, private foundations, and major donors still disproportionately fund a tiny group of leading research universities. Faculty salaries in most colleges and universities have been stagnant, whereas salaries in leading private research universities have been marching upward at a faster rate than those at equally eminent public research universities.

The stratification system in the academy is stronger than ever. The gulf is widening between a small number of affluent and highly selective institutions—where competition for admission is fierce and mostly privileges the wealthy—and hard-pressed public and private institutions. Low-income students are increasingly concentrated in community colleges. This divide mirrors the growing income inequality in the society as a whole.

What [activity] will replace the research culture in the majority of colleges and universities is still unclear, but we have glimmers of the future. Some colleges—women's colleges, sectarian colleges—are refocusing on the particular constituencies they had abandoned twenty or thirty years ago. Regional colleges and universities are rebuilding ties to regional and local organizations through service learning and mission-oriented research and professional expertise. There is much talk about recalibrating the faculty reward structure toward more recognition of teaching and service. Others are turning back to community as a way of enhancing their appeal to students and of recapturing faculty commitment to their institutions. It will be interesting for all of us to watch—better yet, to participate in—the process of finding new purpose in a world that has changed around us.

NOTES

1. See Table 95 in American Council on Higher Education, *1989–90 Fact Book on Higher Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1989).

2. Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields*,

American Sociological Review, 48, (April 1983): 147–60.

3. See Dorothy E. Finnegan and Zelda F. Gamson, *Disciplinary Adaptations to Research Culture in Comprehensive Institutions*, *Review of Higher Education* 19 (winter 1996): 141–77, for a fuller discussion of the research culture and its implications.

4. Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1989).

5. See David Webster, *Quality Rankings* (Springfield, IL: Thomas Crown, 1986), for a detailed analysis of the use of rankings in higher education.

6. Darwin O. Sawyer, *Institutional Stratification and Career Mobility in Academic Markets*, *Sociology of Education* 54 (April 1981): 86.

7. A recent study of how this happened in “comprehensive” universities—institutions with both arts and sciences as well as professional degrees at the bachelor's and master's levels—is reported in Dorothy E. Finnegan, *Segmentation in the Academic Labor Market: Hiring Cohorts in Comprehensive Universities*, *Journal of Higher Education* 64 (November/December 1993): 621–56.

8. Françoise A. Queval, *The Evolution toward Research Orientation and Capability in Comprehensive Universities: The California State System*, doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1990.

9. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *National Survey of Faculty* (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation, 1989).

10. Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1984); National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983); National Endowment for the Humanities, *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984); Association of American Colleges, *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community* (Washington, DC: Author, 1985); Bruce Wilshire, *The Moral Collapse of the University: Professionalism, Purity, and Alienation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Page Smith, *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

11. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Charles Sykes, *Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1988); Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of*

Race and Sex on Campus (New York: Random House, 1992); Martin Anderson, *Imposters in the Temple: American Intellectuals Are Destroying Our Universities and Cheating Our Students of Their Future* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992); Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

THE BATTLE OVER MERIT

JEROME KARABEL

Jerome Karabel provides a detailed description of the practices that highly selective universities use to decide whom to admit. This reading is clearly about social class, but also about race, and how the amount of money you have influences what college you are likely to attend, regardless of merit. Karabel gives an inside glimpse of the changes in college going patterns of the wealthy in the United States. In doing so, he argues that policies and practices around race-based admissions do not apply to the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Did affirmative action laws make a difference in who attends selective colleges?
2. How has the student body of these elite colleges changed over the last century?
3. Who is most likely to attend the three selective colleges described in this reading, and what barriers prevent others from entering these universities?

Had Franklin Delano Roosevelt returned to Harvard in the fall of 2000, precisely a hundred years after he had patiently waited in line in front of Sever Hall to register as a freshman, he would have been shocked. As he looked around, he would have seen immediately that nonwhites (half of them Asian Americans) made up over a third of the freshman class. Even more striking would have been the presence of women, now walking confidently through the Yard, where they constituted nearly half of the students.¹

Less noticeable, perhaps, would have been the extraordinary growth in the number of Jews, whose proportion of the freshman class had tripled from 7 percent in his time to over 20 percent a century later.² But what Roosevelt would have grasped above all was that Harvard was no longer the private property of his social group: white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant men, largely from the upper classes of New England and the mid-Atlantic states. Once the unquestioned rulers not only of Harvard (where they made up approximately 85 percent of students when FDR was an undergraduate) but of virtually all the

major institutions of American life, WASP men were now a small and beleaguered minority at Harvard—no more than 20 percent of freshmen.³

The transformation of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton from enclaves of the Protestant upper class into institutions with a striking degree of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity was by any standard historic. Yet beneath this dramatic and highly visible change in the physiognomy of the student body was a surprising degree of stability in one crucial regard—the privileged class origins of students at the Big Three. By 2000, the cost of a year at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had reached the staggering sum of more than \$35,000—an amount that well under 10 percent of American families could afford. (In 2004, annual expenses had risen to well over \$40,000 per year) Yet at all three institutions, a majority of students were able to pay their expenses without financial assistance—compelling testimony that, more than thirty years after the introduction of need-blind admissions, the Big Three continued to draw most of their students from the most affluent segments of American society.⁴

While “paying customers” still constituted the majority of students in 2000, students from modest backgrounds continued to be vastly underrepresented not only at the Big Three but at highly selective colleges nationwide.⁵ At Princeton, which offered the most generous financial aid packages in the Ivy League, students from families in the bottom 50 percent of the income distribution (that is, below the 1997 median income of \$40,000, with annual adjustments for inflation) made up just 10 percent of the freshman class; at Harvard, the number was a bit higher, at roughly 12 percent, but the majority of scholarship recipients had family incomes of over \$70,000 per year, with nearly a quarter of them reporting incomes in excess of \$100,000.⁶ At Yale, though no statistics are available on the income distribution of the freshman class, the paucity of students from families with limited education suggests a similar pattern; in 2001, just 8 percent of Yale freshmen came from homes where neither parent had attended college.⁷

Despite their consistent emphasis on “diversity,” highlighted recently in an amicus brief

submitted to the Supreme Court in the Michigan case on affirmative action, the Big Three are notoriously lacking one of its most critical dimensions: class diversity.⁸ In a study of the proportion of low-income students (as measured by the proportion of federal Pell Grants) at the nation’s leading universities in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, the Big Three were found to be among the nation’s least economically diverse schools. Of the 40 universities studied, Harvard and Princeton ranked 39th and 38th respectively, with Yale at 25th. While the three top universities in economic diversity were all public institutions (UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego), the next two—the University of Southern California and New York University—were private. And one university in the top ten, California Institute of Technology, is among the most selective private institutions in the nation.⁹

The Big Three and other highly selective private colleges have not been unaware of the paucity of students from poor and working-class backgrounds at their institutions. In their landmark study, *The Shape of the River*, William Bowen and Derek Bok report that only 1 percent of white students at the most selective institutions come from low socioeconomic backgrounds.¹⁰ While troubled about this finding, the authors—former presidents of Princeton and Harvard—make it clear that they believe there is little that can be done. Committed to maintaining “high academic qualifications” as measured by grades and test scores, they conclude that “the problem is not that poor but qualified candidates go undiscovered, but that there are simply very few of these candidates in the first place.” Selective institutions, they write, “continue to contribute to social mobility, but they do so primarily by giving excellent educational opportunities to students from middle-class backgrounds.” Though a number of scholars have proposed class-based affirmative action, Bowen and Bok reject such an approach, arguing that it would be “harmful to academic standards” and “probably prohibitively expensive.”¹¹

In accepting as inevitable the strikingly small number of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds at the nation’s leading universities,

Bowen and Bok express an attitude of resignation common among the gatekeepers of the elite private colleges. But such resignation is unwarranted, for there is in fact a significant pool of students from disadvantaged backgrounds with “high academic qualifications,” at least as measured by the SAT. In 2004, the number of students with family incomes under \$30,000 who scored 650 or higher on the math and verbal sections was 12,755 and 6,995, respectively; for students from homes where neither parent had more than a high school degree, the parallel figures were 22,477 and 14,812. In a nation in which more than 1.4 million students took the SAT in 2004, this is a modest pool. For purposes of comparison, however, it is worth noting that it is far larger than the comparable pool of African Americans with scores over 650: 2,962 (math) and 3,039 (verbal) in 2004.¹²

Yet despite the smaller pool of high-scoring black students, elite college administrators have shown no such resignation with respect to race, having noted with alarm that a race-neutral policy would reduce black enrollment at elite private colleges to perhaps 2 percent or less.¹³ Indeed, it was the prospect of such a reduction that led to a massive mobilization on the part of the nation’s most prestigious universities to preserve race-based affirmative action in the face of serious legal and political challenges.¹⁴ The point here is not that class-based affirmative action should replace race-based affirmative action; it is rather that the radical underrepresentation of students from modest socio-economic backgrounds at the nation’s elite colleges is a serious problem demanding immediate attention. Bowen himself has recently recognized this, reversing his position and issuing a compelling call for the adoption of class based affirmative action—a “thumb on the scale” for applicants from lower socioeconomic categories, to be put in place alongside (and not as a substitute for) the race-attentive policies that have long existed at the selective colleges.¹⁵ Harvard’s former president, Lawrence Summers, issued a similar appeal for preferences for the socioeconomically disadvantaged, noting in a major speech before the American Council on Education that “in the

most selective colleges and universities, only 3 percent of students come from the bottom income quartile and only 10 percent from the bottom half of the income scale.”¹⁶

Viewed from the perspective—that admissions policy tends to reflect power relations among major social groups—the heavy emphasis on race in the admissions decisions of the elite colleges and the relative lack of attention historically accorded class is hardly surprising. While there has been little political mobilization in recent decades on the issue of class inequality, the issue of racial injustice spawned the nation’s greatest political mobilization of the twentieth century—the civil rights movement. With the foundations of the social order seemingly at risk of crumbling in the late 1960s, important concessions were extracted by racial minorities and then institutionalized. The imprint of that pivotal period is with us still, inscribed in the definition of merit we now take for granted. That no parallel redefinition of merit occurred with respect to social class—an equally powerful source of inequality of opportunity—reflects the fact that subordinate social classes in the United States today lack the political power attained by racial and ethnic minorities after years of arduous struggle.¹⁷

The new and more academic definition of “merit” that emerged at the Big Three in the decades after World War II did not raise the number of poor and working-class students in the freshman class. On the contrary, the increasingly rigorous academic requirements for admission—among them, the rising scores on the SAT, generally considered a clear sign of rising “meritocracy”—may well have been associated with a decline in opportunities for students from modest backgrounds. At Harvard, in the eleven years between 1952 and 1963—a period when average combined SATs rose from 1181 to 1401—the proportion of freshmen whose fathers had not attended college plummeted from 38 to 16 percent.¹⁸ Though part of this decline could surely be attributed to rising rates of college attendance during the interwar period (when most of the fathers of students entering Harvard between 1952–1963 would have attended college),

the magnitude of the drop was far too large for it to have been the primary explanation for such a dramatic change.¹⁹

If the growing emphasis on high grades and high test scores in the early decades of the Cold War further reduced the already meager chances of students of low socioeconomic status to enter the Big Three, it did promote a degree of social mobility. But the main beneficiaries were the children of families that, while lacking the wealth of the old upper class, were richly endowed with cultural capital. In 1956, the sons of business executives (22 percent of all freshmen) outnumbered the sons of professors (5 percent) by a ratio of more than 4 to 1; in 1976, the sons of professors—who constituted perhaps one-half of one percent of the American labor force—made up more than 12 percent of Harvard freshmen compared to 14 percent for the sons of business executives.²⁰ At Princeton, a similar shift was visible; whereas in 1954 the sons of businessmen outnumbered those of elite professionals by a ratio of 2.5 to 1 (50 to 20 percent), by 1976 the gap had narrowed to 1.4 to 1 (32 to 23 percent).²¹

Under the more academically demanding admissions regime that prevailed by the 1960s, the scholastically brilliant children of the middle and upper middle class enjoyed greater opportunities than ever before to enter Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. At the same time, the less academically talented children of the old elite were finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to colleges where admissions had until recently been taken for granted. This shift toward what the sociologist Alvin Gouldner has called the “new class” was part of a genuine redistribution of opportunity in which cultural capital, especially in the years after *Sputnik*, increasingly displaced sheer economic capital as the principal pathway to the Big Three.²² To be sure, children of wealth and social standing remained vastly overrepresented. But unless they could demonstrate a high level of academic accomplishment, even the children of the old upper class faced the prospect of rejection. The specter of downward mobility now extended to the most privileged sectors of the old elite—a development that would enduringly transform the atmosphere of the Big Three.

Because of the Big Three’s dependency on powerful external constituencies, the tilt of their admissions policy has historically been toward the privileged. For it is the children of the established elite who are most likely not only to be the big donors of the future but also to supply the prominent alumni whose very success reinforces the prestige of the elite colleges. Yet Harvard, Yale, and Princeton have also been well aware that it is possible to overinvest in traditional elites, especially when they show signs of decline. The solution was to diversify the institutional portfolio to strengthen its connections to rising social groups—a strategy followed most dramatically by Yale in the late 1960s when, in the context of the emergence of postindustrial society and the increasing prominence of science and technology, it shifted its policy toward the brilliant children of the “new class” of credentialed professionals while eliminating the last vestiges of anti-Semitism.

Yet at certain historical moments—especially in periods of social crisis, when the legitimacy of the system itself is in question—the elite colleges will reach out beyond the privileged to the disenfranchised.²³ They do so not because the visible presence of previously excluded groups adds to the diversity of their students’ educational experience, but because it reinforces a belief—crucial to the preservation of the social order—that success in America is a function of individual merit rather than family background. Both the origins and the institutionalization of race-based affirmative action may be traced to a recognition by the elite colleges that the continued exclusion of a highly visible and restive segment of the population would undermine the legitimacy of the nation’s major social institutions.²⁴

These three tasks—the recruitment of the children of the traditional elite, the incorporation of talented members of rising social groups, and the inclusion of a sufficient number of the children of the disenfranchised to maintain the system’s legitimacy—have framed the admissions policy of the Big Three. But in recent decades, as inequality has grown and insurgent movements have receded, the pressure to further

incorporate the disadvantaged has waned at the same time that the efforts of the privileged to maintain their privileges have intensified. So great has been the pressure on elites that in large cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, the competition to get into the preschool that will supposedly put Junior on the track to Harvard has become fierce. An ever more ferocious competition for admission into the “right” kindergarten follows, complete with test scores, letters of recommendation, and interviews. In recent years, the frenzy has become so great that parents have begun to hire private counselors, at fees of \$500 to \$4,000, to guide them through the kindergarten admissions process and to prepare their four-year-olds for interviews and aptitude tests.²⁵

By secondary school, aspirants to the Big Three and similar colleges are busy filling their résumés with extracurricular activities that demonstrate “leadership,” “character,” and commitment to “service.” Not to be ignored are the SATs, for weak scores can ruin the chances of otherwise promising candidates; hence the growth of a vast industry of coaching firms like Stanley Kaplan and Princeton Review and the rise of SAT tutors for the affluent.²⁶ Finally, there is the culmination of this entire process—the act of selecting which colleges to apply to and determining how to maximize the candidate’s chances of gaining admission. Increasing numbers of students—including many at some of the nation’s leading private schools—have decided that the stakes are so high and the decisions of gatekeepers so mysterious that it is imperative to obtain the assistance of high priced college consultants, the most sought after of whom charge fees that approach \$30,000 per candidate. So great is the pressure on college applicants that Harvard Dean of Admissions William Fitzsimmons and two colleagues recently released a paper on “burnout” expressing concern that too many students “seemed like dazed survivors of some bewildering lifelong boot camp.”²⁷

The underlying source of the enormous stress surrounding college admissions is that even the privileged classes are no longer confident that they can pass their position on to the next

generation. True, the children of families with high levels of cultural and economic capital enjoy a tremendous advantage in the competition for admission to the elite colleges, and they continue to occupy the vast majority of places in the freshman classes at institutions like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. But under the current system, they, too, have to compete, and the majority of them are destined to fail in their quest for admission to the Big Three. Even those families that manage to get their children into the preparatory schools with the closest historic ties to the Big Three are unlikely to succeed; Groton, Exeter, and St. Paul’s, which as recently as 1954 sent roughly two-thirds of their graduates to Harvard, Yale, or Princeton, saw the proportion of their graduates there drop by 2000 to 22, 14, and 10 percent, respectively.²⁸ As a consequence, deep apprehension about college admissions now extends to the highest reaches of the upper class. At the same time, the children of the working class and the poor are about as unlikely to attend the Big Three today as they were in 1954.²⁹ It is no exaggeration to say that the current regime in elite college admissions has been far more successful in democratizing anxiety than opportunity.

To acknowledge that today’s system of admissions has not broadened opportunity for socioeconomically disadvantaged students is not to deny that it is far more meritocratic than the system in place in 1950. Nor is it to suggest that the shift in admissions toward individual achievement and away from family background was inconsequential. On the contrary, the shift to a more meritocratic system of selection at the nation’s leading colleges has had enormous consequences both for the distribution of opportunity and for the public’s perception of the fairness of by which rewards are distributed in America. One needs only think of what would have happened had the Big Three and other leading colleges *not* changed—had they remained *de facto* white institutions closed to women and rife with anti-Semitism—to grasp the magnitude of the transformation that has occurred since World War II.

Compared to the ancien régime in admissions, still largely in place in 1950, the system that had emerged by the mid-1970s was in many ways an

embodiment of meritocratic ideals. In a context profoundly shaped by the competitive pressures of the Cold War, one barrier to talent after another fell—first the favoritism toward applicants from private schools, then discrimination against Jews, and then the multitude of obstacles to African Americans and other minorities. By the end of the 1960s, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had taken a series of dramatic steps—introducing need-blind admissions, creating race-based affirmative action, and (at Yale and Princeton) eliminating age-old barriers to the enrollment of women—to open their gates to students who did not conform to the old profile of the upper-class, prep-school-educated WASP young man who had for so long set the tone of campus life.

With the advent of sex-blind admissions in the mid-1970s, the character of the Big Three had been irrevocably altered. In the last quarter of the century, the incorporation of new groups of talented students continued, first with the rapidly rising enrollments of Asian Americans and then, at the century's end, with the extension at Harvard and Yale of the core meritocratic principle of need-blind admissions to applicants from not only the United States but the entire world.³⁰ Meanwhile, the more meritocratic standards of the new regime in admissions had by every measure elevated the intellectual level of the student body at the same time that they had virtually eliminated the once numerous group that Charles W. Eliot had indelicately referred to as the “stupid sons of the rich.”³¹

Yet the current admissions system, though a decided improvement over the system that preceded it, is not a meritocracy. Most eloquently articulated in the American context by James Bryant Conant, the meritocratic ideal requires that “each generation may start life afresh and that hard work and ability . . . find their just rewards.” Drawing on Jefferson's famous appeal to “cull from every condition of our people the natural aristocracy of talent and virtue” (which Jefferson believed “nature has sown as liberally among the poor as the rich”), Conant wrote that the “American ideal” demands a “continuous process by which power and privilege may be automatically redistributed at the end of each

generation.”³² To Conant, as to other meritocrats, widespread social mobility through education was essential to the American dream, and the nation's leading colleges had a solemn obligation to admit students on the basis of individual talent and accomplishment, not family privilege.

By this standard, the current practices of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton fall well short of the meritocratic ideal. Most obviously, there is the matter of preference for alumni children—a peculiar practice more suited to a feudal aristocracy than a society that prides itself on its commitment to equality of opportunity. Then there is the institutionalized tilt toward applicants connected to powerful constituencies—whether feeder schools, the development office, or the athletic department. But the deeper problem is inherent in the meritocratic project itself—the very definition of “merit” systematically favors the privileged over the disadvantaged. Though in principle open to everyone, the elite colleges are in truth a realistic possibility only for those young men and women whose families endow them with the type of cultural capital implicitly required for admission.

The modest number of poor and working-class students at the Big Three is not an intended consequence of the prevailing definition of merit any more than is the vast overrepresentation of the children of privilege. It is a product of a powerful, if hidden, social process common to all societies—that the qualities that come to define “merit” tend to be attributes most abundantly possessed by dominant social groups. This is not to say that the privileged will always be able to transmit their privileges to their offspring under the existing system; on the contrary, one of the defining features of a school-mediated system of class reproduction (as opposed to a system based primarily on the direct transfer of property) is that, as Pierre Bourdieu has noted, it can reproduce the privileges of the class system as a whole only “by sacrificing certain members of the [dominant] class.”³³ Under this system, a limited amount of social mobility, both upward and downward, is not only possible but necessary.

But the existing system of ostensibly meritocratic selection does not, *pace* Jefferson and

Conant, find that “nature” has sown talent “as liberally among the poor as the rich.” Instead, it finds that “merit” is heavily concentrated of the privileged. Yet the apparent openness of the system—the availability of scholarships, the widely publicized efforts to recruit among the “disadvantaged,” and the highly visible racial and ethnic diversity of the student body—gives credence to the American dream of upward mobility through education. Transforming hereditary privilege into “merit,” the existing system of educational selection, with the Big Three as its capstone, provides the appearance if not the substance of equality of opportunity.³⁴ In so doing, it legitimates the established order as one that rewards ability and hard work over the prerogatives of birth.

The problem with a “meritocracy,” then, is not only that its ideals are routinely violated (though that is true), but also that it veils the power relations beneath it. For the definition of “merit,” including the one that now prevails at America’s leading universities, always bears the imprint of the distribution of power in the larger society. Those who are able to define “merit” will almost invariably possess more of it, and those with greater resources—cultural, economic, and social—will generally be able to ensure that the educational system will deem their children more meritorious. In this specific sense, the ideal of a meritocracy—a system in which power plays no role in defining “merit” and in which rich and poor alike enjoy genuinely equal opportunities to succeed—is inherently unattainable.

NOTES

1. Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of 2004,” n.d., HU.

2. In 1999, Harvard’s Hillel chapter estimated that 21 percent of the undergraduate student body was Jewish (Richard Just, “For the Jewish Community, Low Numbers and a Search For Answers,” *DP*, 27 April 1999). The figure for 1900 is from Marcia Graham Synnott, *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900–1970* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 96.

3. In 2000, 34 percent of Harvard freshmen were members of minority groups (17 percent Asian American, 8 percent African American, 7 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Native American and other minorities). In addition, roughly 21 percent were Jews and 6 percent foreign. This leaves approximately 40 percent of the remaining places in the freshman class for Americans of Christian background, and nearly half of these students were women. Of the 20–22 percent left who were male and Christian, perhaps a fifth were Catholic rather than protestant, leading to my conclusion that fewer than 20 percent—and perhaps less—of Harvard freshmen in 2000 were of WASP origin (Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of 2004,” HU).

4. The proportion of Big Three students on scholarship in the entering class of 2000 ranged from a high of 48 percent at Harvard to a low of 35 percent at Yale, with Princeton occupying an intermediate position at 40 percent. In 2004, the proportion of students on scholarship remained steady at 47 percent at Harvard, but had risen to 44 percent at Yale and 52 percent at Princeton (Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of 2004,” September 2000; “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of 2008,” September 2004; “Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid—Profile of the Class of 2004,” September 2000; Office of Undergraduate Admissions, “Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid—Profile of the Class of 2008,” September 2004; Office of Undergraduate Admissions, YU; Office of the Dean of the College, “Report on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid,” 2000–2001, September 2000; Office of the Dean of the College, “Report on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid,” 2003–2004, September 2004, PU).

5. See the study of 19 “elite colleges” (5 Ivy League universities, including the Big Three, 10 selective private liberal arts colleges, and 4 leading state universities) in William Bowen et al., *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2005), 95–100.

6. By 2004, well over a third of Harvard scholarship recipients came from families with incomes over \$100,000, and the median family income of all freshmen was roughly \$150,000 (Office of the Dean of the College, “Report on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid,” 2000–2001, PU, 5–7; Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of 2004,” HU; Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, “Harvard Admissions Profile—Class of

2008," HU; David Leonhardt, "As Wealthy Fill Top Colleges, New Efforts to Level the Field," *NYT*, 22 April 2004.

7. Office of Institutional Research, "Common Data Set 2002," YUA.

8. "Brief of Harvard Univ., Brown Univ., the Univ. of Chicago, Dartmouth College, Duke Univ., the Univ. of Pennsylvania, Princeton Univ., and Yale Univ. as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents," in *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.*, and *Gratz and Hamacher v. Bollinger, et al.*, Nos. 02-241 and 02-516 (2003).

9. Robert Shireman, "Campus Richies Need Archies," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 March 2002; "Campus Richie Riches Need Archies: Irvine Program Director Bob Shireman Compares the Economic Diversity of Colleges in a *Los Angeles Times* Op-Ed," press release, James Irvine Foundation, 1 March 2002; Robert Shireman, "Enrolling Economic Diversity," *NYT*, 4 May 2002. See also Donald E. Heller, "Pell Grant Recipients in Selective Colleges and Universities," in *America's Untapped Resource: Low Income Students in Higher Education*, ed. Richard Kahlenberg (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2004), 157-66, and the recent study by Carnevale and Rose, which finds that only 3 percent of the freshmen at the nation's 146 most selective colleges and universities come from the bottom 25 percent of the income distribution (Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose, "Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Selective College Admissions," in *America's Untapped Resource*, Richard Kahlenberg, ed. [New York: Century Foundation Press, 2004]).

10. Among the 8 colleges listed in the highest selectively level (SEL-1) in Bowen and Bok's study are Princeton, Yale, and Stanford. In their analyses of the national population, 28 percent of families are classified as having low socioeconomic status (SES), 9 percent as high, and 64 percent as middle. Though only 1 percent of white matriculants at SEL-1 schools were from low SES backgrounds, the proportion of blacks at SEL-1 colleges from low SES backgrounds was 12 percent (*The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1998], 48-50).

11. Bowen and Bok, *Shape of the River*, 288, 50. My own position, which argues for class-based affirmative action in addition to (and not as a substitute for) race-based affirmative action, is laid out in Jerome Karabel, "Freshman Admissions at Berkeley: A Policy for the 1990s and Beyond; A Report of the Committee on Admissions and Enrollment, Berkeley Division,

Academic Senate, University of California," 1989, Univ. of California, Berkeley; Jerome Karabel, "No Alternative: The Effects of Color-Blind Admissions in California," in *Chilling Admissions: The Affirmative Action Crisis and the Search for Alternatives*, ed. Gary Orfield and Edward Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Civil Rights Project and Harvard Education Publishing Group, 1998), 34-50. The most sophisticated argument in favor of substituting class-based affirmative action for race-based affirmative action is Richard D. Kahlenberg, *The Remedy: Class, Race, and Affirmative Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

12. Data on SAT scores by family income, parental education, and race calculated from data kindly provided by the College Entrance Examination Board. It should be noted that the large number of non-respondents on the questions on race (19.1 percent), parental education (24.4 percent), and family income (41.8 percent) means that the estimates of the numbers of minority and low-socioeconomic-status students with high SAT scores are almost certainly well below the actual numbers.

13. Based on a simulation, Bowen and Bok concluded that a race-neutral admissions policy would reduce the proportion of blacks at the most selective colleges to 2 percent (Bowen and Bok, *Shape of the River*, 41).

14. As an example of this mobilization, see the statement in favor of diversity in university admissions, reprinted in the *New York Times*, that was approved by all 62 member institutions of the Association of American Universities (Association of American Universities, "AAU Diversity Statement on the Importance of Diversity in University Admissions," 14 April 1997, www.aau.edu/issues/Diversity4.14.97.html [accessed January 15, 2004]).

15. Bowen, *Equity and Excellence*, 175-83.

16. "President Lawrence H. Summers Remarks at ACE: 'Higher Education and the American Dream,'" 29 February 2004, <http://www.president.harvard.edu/speeches/z004/ace.html>; see also Lawrence H. Summers, "Committing to Equal Opportunity," *HM*, January-February 2005, 83. President of Harvard since October 2001, Lawrence Summers was born in New Haven in 1954, the son of two Jewish economists (professors at the University of Pennsylvania) and the nephew of two Nobel Prize-winning economists: Paul Samuelson (on the side of his father, whose original name was Robert Samuelson) and Kenneth Arrow (on the side of his mother, Anita Summers). A 1975 graduate of MIT (which he entered after eleventh grade, having been turned down by Harvard), he received his Ph.D.

in economics from Harvard in 1982. In 1983, he became one of the youngest tenured professors in the history of Harvard, and in 1993 he was awarded the Bates Medal, given every two years by the American Economics Association to an outstanding American economist under the age of forty. After a stint from 1991 to 1993 as the chief economist for the World Bank, he joined the Treasury Department under the Clinton administration, becoming secretary of the treasury in 1998. In March 2001, the Harvard Corporation, with strong support from the former treasury secretary Robert Rubin (also a member of the Corporation), selected Summers as Harvard's 27th president (John S. Rosenberg, "A Worldly Professor," *HM*, May-June 2001; Morton Keller and Phyllis Keller, *Making Harvard Modern* [Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 2001], 489; Richard Bradley, *Harvard Rules* [New York: HarperCollins, 2005], 1-37; WWA 1998-1999).

17. For a similar perspective on access to elite colleges, see an important article by David Karen, which concludes: "Groups that mobilized made inroads even into elite institutions, while the group that did not mobilize appeared to make no such gains" ("The Politics of Class, Race, and Gender: Access to Higher Education in the United States, 1960-1986," *American Journal of Education*, February 1991, 227).

18. Committee on Admission, "Report of the Committee on Admission of Harvard College," 1951-1952, HU, 20; Admission and Scholarship Committee, "Report on the Admission and Scholarship Committee," 1962-1963, HU, 22.

19. See Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 379, 383.

20. Admission and Scholarship Committee, "Report on the Office of the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aids for Students in Harvard College, 1955-1956," HU, 233; Admissions and Scholarships committee, "Report on the Committee on Admissions and Scholarships, 1975-1976," HU, 105.

21. The data for 1954 are from the *Freshman Herald*, which did not publish statistics on "father's occupation" after that year. The 1976 data are from a survey of the freshmen class conducted jointly by the American Council of Education and UCLA ("Statistics of the Freshman Class-1958," *Freshman Herald: Class of 1958*, PU, 36; American Council on Education and the University of California, Los Angeles, "Princeton University—Summary of Data on Entering Freshmen for Fall," Cooperative Institutional Research Program [1976].)

22. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1982). For a useful, if critical, discussion of the new class, see Steven Brint, *In an Age of Experts: The Changing Role of Professionals in Politics and Public Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1994).

23. In his great work, *Economy and Society*, Max Weber emphasized the "need of any power, or even of any advantage in life, to justify itself. . . . Simple observation," he continued, "shows that in every situation he who is more favored feels the never ceasing need to look upon his position as in some way 'legitimate,' and the other's disadvantage as being brought about by the latter's fault." This need for legitimation "makes itself felt in the relations between positively and negatively privileged groups of human beings . . . Every highly privileged group develops the myth of its natural, especially its blood, superiority," and "under conditions of stable distribution of power . . . that myth is accepted by the negatively privileged strata." But there are also times when the distribution of power is in flux, and in these times "the class situation" can "become unambiguously and openly visible to everyone as the factor determining man's individual fate." At such historical moments, "that very myth about everyone having deserved his particular lot has often become one of the most passionately hated objects of attack" (*Economy and Society*, vol. 2, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich [Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 1978], 953).

24. This point was made with particular force in the Michigan case in a brief submitted by a group of retired military officers, who argued persuasively that "in the 1960s and 1970s, the stark disparity between the racial composition of the rank and file and that of the officer corps fueled a breakdown of order that endangered the military's ability to fulfill its missions" ("Consolidated Brief of Lt. Gen. Julius W. Becton Jr., Adm. Dennis Blair, Maj. Gen. Charles Bolden, Hon. James M. Cannon, Lt. Gen. Daniel W. Christman, Gen. Wesley K. Clark, Sen. Max Cleland, Adm. Archie Clemens, Hon. William Cohen, Adm. William J. Crowe, Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, Lt. Gen. Howard D. Graves, Gen. Joseph P. Hoar, Sen. Robert J. Kerrey et al. as *Amici Curiae* in Support of Respondents" in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, et al., and *Gratz and Hamacher v. Bollinger*, et al., Nos. 02-241 and 02-516 [2003], 28).

25. Robert Worth, "For \$300 an Hour, Advice on Courting Elite Schools," *NYT*, 25 October 2000; Emily Nelson and Laurie P. Cohen, "Why Grubman Was So Keen to Get His Kids Into the Y," *Wall Street*

Journal, 15 November 2002; Michael Wolff, "The Price of Perfection," *New York*, 2 December 2002; Tamar Lewin, "How I Spent My Summer: At Getting-Into-College-Camp," *NYT*, 18 April 2004; Jodi Wilgoren and Jacques Steinberg, "Under Pressure: A Special Report; Even for Sixth Graders, College Looms," *NYT*, 3 July 2000; Hannah Friedman, "When Your Friends Become the enemy," *Newsweek*, 19 April 2004.

26. The debate on whether coaching produces significant gains in scores on the SAT and similar tests remains unresolved, though the bulk of the evidence suggests that gains may be relatively modest. For some of the better scholarly studies of the issue, see Betsy Becker, "Coaching for the Scholastic Aptitude Test: Further Synthesis and Appraisal," *Review of Educational Research* 60, no. 3 (1990): 371-417; James Kulik et al., "Effectiveness of Coaching for Aptitude Tests," *Psychological Bulletin* 95, no. 2 (1984): 179-88; and Donald R. Powers, "Effects of Coaching on SAT I: Reasoning Test Scores," *Journal of Educational Measurement* 36, no. 2 (1999): 93-118.

27. On the growth of the private college counseling industry, see Patricia M. McDonough et al., "Access, Equity, and the Privatization of College Counseling," *Review of Higher Education* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 297-317; Ben Gose, "Anxious College Applicants Seek Edge by Hiring Consultants," *CHE*, 24 January 1997; Carol Loewith, "Independent Consultants and the College Selection Process," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 December 2002; and Ralph Gardner Jr., "The \$28,955 Tutor," *New York*, 16 April 2001, 32-36. See Kate Zernike, "Ease Up, Top Colleges Tell Stressed Applicants," *NYT*, 7 December 2000. For the original paper, see William R. Fitzsimmons, Marlyn Lewis, and Charles Ducey, "Time Out of Burn Out for the Next Generation," Harvard University, <http://admis.fas.harvard.edu/timeoff.htm> (accessed 13 December 2000).

28. Calculated from statistics reported in *The Handbook of Private Schools* (Boston: Porter Sargent,

1955 and 2001). Between 1998 and 2001, 94 of the 100 schools nationwide that sent the highest percentage of graduates to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were private institutions (Reshma Memon Yaqub, "Getting Inside the Ivy Gates," *Worth*, September 2002, 94-104).

29. Committees on Admission and on Scholarships and Financial Aids, "Report on the Office of the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aids for Students in Harvard College," 1953-1954, HU, 216; Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, "Report on the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, 1996-1997," HU, Table 13: "Statistics of the Freshman Class-1958," *Freshman Herald: Class of 1958*, PU, 36; Office of the Dean of the College, "Report on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid," 2001-2002, PU, 8-9.

30. In 2004, Princeton joined Harvard and Yale in admitting international students without regard to financial need ("Princeton Univ. Report on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid," September 2004, 2-3).

31. Quoted in John T. Bethell, *Harvard Observed: An Illustrated History of the University in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1998), 22.

32. Conant, "Education for a Classless Society," 595-98. Also, James B. Conant, "The Future of Our Higher Education," *Harper's*, May 1938, 563.

33. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (Stanford, CA: Stanford U.P., 1996), 287.

34. For the notion that the educational system transforms privilege into merit, I am indebted to the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron. See especially *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979) and *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), and also Bourdieu's later works, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1984) and *The State Nobility*.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Impact, Origin, and Future of a Contradictory Institution

KEVIN J. DOUGHERTY

Kevin Dougherty discusses the development of the community college and its role in American society. In doing so, he explores what he calls “the contradictory roles” of community colleges and considers the future of this important, but often neglected, part of higher education. As you read through this piece, consider how educational trajectories and future work careers are shaped by the type of educational institution you attend.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are the functions of community colleges? In what sense are they contradictory?
2. What is the role of community colleges in maintaining inequality in society?
3. How did business and government affect the growth of community colleges?

4. Was the impact of business and government on community colleges different from that on research universities?

Community colleges are one of the most important sectors of U.S. higher education. They are important because of their great number, their critical role in providing college opportunity (especially for nontraditional students), and the essential role that they play in providing postsecondary vocational training. These public two-year colleges—numbering 1061 in 2004—comprise one-quarter of all higher educational institutions in the United States (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2006, Table 243). Community colleges enroll over one-third of all college students (some 6.2 million in fall 2003).¹ This enrollment share is even greater for nontraditional students, whether older, part-time, minority, or

disadvantaged (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2006, Table 168). Finally, community colleges are important as key sources of post-secondary vocational education. Vocational enrollees at community colleges comprise over half of all students in all forms of postsecondary vocational training and provide a large share of our nation's graduates in such important occupations as nursing, computer operations, and auto repair (Dougherty & Bakia, 2000; Grubb, 1996, pp. 54–56).

Yet, because of this very importance, community colleges are contradictory institutions. Community colleges have taken on a host of different social functions, but some of these functions are partially incompatible. In this piece I explore these contradictory functions in closer detail.

CONTRADICTORY FUNCTIONS AND IMPACTS

Most community colleges are “comprehensive” institutions, offering a wide variety of programs to a diverse clientele. In most community colleges, a majority of students are enrolled in workforce preparation and economic development programs. However, three-quarters of all first-time community college students (including adults) aspire to get at least a baccalaureate degree and one-quarter transfer to a four-year college within five years of entering a community college (Kojaku & Nunez, 1998, p. 7; McCormick, 1997, pp. 32, 41). In addition, community colleges operate sizable programs in remedial education, adult education, and community services (such as concerts and day camps) (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Examining these functions in greater detail allows us to better understand the ways in which they are compatible or incompatible, synergistic or contradictory.

College Access and Opportunity

The community college is a central avenue into higher education and toward the baccalaureate degree, particularly for working class, non-white, and female students. Many baccalaureate

recipients, particularly in states such as California and Florida, got their start at community colleges. In fact, several studies find that states and localities that are highly endowed with community colleges have significantly higher college attendance rates than states and localities with a smaller community college presence (Dougherty, 1994, pp. 50–51; Rouse, 1998).

Several features of community colleges make them great avenues of college access. Community colleges are widely distributed across the country, located in urban, suburban, and rural areas. They are cheaper to attend than four-year colleges: Their tuitions are usually low and dormitory residence is not necessary because the colleges are nearby. And because of their open-door admissions policy, they are more willing to take “nontraditional” students: high school dropouts, vocational aspirants, and adults interested in education as a leisure activity.

However, despite the community college's success in widening college access, there is concern about its role in providing college success. Many students entering the community college do not leave it either with a degree in hand or having transferred to another institution. Among students who entered a community college in fall 1995 and were followed up six years later, 47% had left higher education without a degree of any kind (Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002, pp. 13, 15).

Preparation for the Baccalaureate (College Transfer)

Historically, one of the leading roles of the community college has been to provide access to the baccalaureate. Originally, this took the role of fostering transfer to four-year colleges but in recent years, community colleges have begun increasingly to offer their own baccalaureate degrees (see below for more). But despite the longstanding nature of this role of the community college, it has been fraught with controversy.

Many different studies find that entering a community college rather than a four-year college significantly lowers the probability that a student will attain a baccalaureate degree (Alfonso, 2006; Dougherty, 1994, pp. 52–61;

Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005).² Clearly, this gap in baccalaureate attainment could be simply due to the fact that community college students *on average* tend to be less well off, less prepared academically, and less ambitious educationally and occupationally than are four-year college entrants. But even when we compare community college entrants and four-year college entrants with the same family background, academic aptitude, high school grades, and educational and occupational aspirations, the community college entrants on average attain—depending on the study—11% to 33% *fewer* baccalaureate degrees than their four-year college peers (Alfonso, 2006; Dougherty, 1994, pp. 52–61; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 376). How do we explain this?

On closer inspection we find that—quite apart from the qualities students bring to college—entering the community college puts obstacles in the way of the pursuit of the baccalaureate degree. All other things being equal, baccalaureate aspirants who begin at a community college are more likely than comparable four-year college entrants to drop out during the first two years of college, not move on to become juniors at a four-year college, and drop out in the junior or senior year, if they go on to pursue a 4-year degree. Let's examine each of these three obstacles. Community college students more often drop out in the first two years of college because community colleges are less able to academically and socially integrate their students into the life of the college through such devices as living in campus dorms and being surrounded by academically oriented students and teachers. In addition, fewer community college students go on to the junior year at four-year colleges because, in comparison to four-year college entrants, they receive weaker encouragement to pursue a bachelor's degree, less adequate financial aid, and less interest by four-year colleges in admitting them to popular campuses and programs. Finally, community college students who do successfully transfer to a four-year degree are more likely to drop out than their four-year college peers because former community college students lose credits in transfer, find it more difficult to secure

financial aid, receive a poorer preparation in the freshman and sophomore years for the academic demands of upper-division courses, and often encounter inadequate efforts by universities to socially integrate community college transfers (Dougherty, 2002, pp. 315–323).

Workforce Preparation and Economic Development

The community college role in workforce preparation and economic development ranges from preparing students for their first job to retraining unemployed workers and welfare recipients, upgrading the skills of employed workers, assisting owners of small businesses, and helping communities with economic development planning (Dougherty & Bakia, 2000; Grubb, 1996).

In terms of initial job preparation, community colleges play a central role in supplying trained workers for “middle level” or “semiprofessional” occupations such as nurses, computer operators, and auto mechanics. In fact, about one-fifth of recent labor force entrants began at a community college (Grubb, 1996, pp. 54–56). These vocational graduates receive substantial economic payoffs. For example, students earning a vocational associate's degree from a community college earn 15% to 30% more in annual income than high school graduates of similar race and ethnicity, parental education, marital status, and job experience (Grubb, 2002; Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, & Kienzl, 2005).³ Still, the economic payoffs to community college degrees are, on average, not as good as those for baccalaureate degrees. Looking across all fields of study, the average baccalaureate degree pays about 40% to 50% more than the average high school degree, considerably more than the average vocational or academic associate's degree (Grubb, 2002; Marcotte et al., 2005).

The community college's role in job retraining, small business assistance, and economic development planning—though less heralded than its role in job preparation—is important. Today, almost all community colleges retrain workers for new jobs or new tasks in existing

jobs. In addition, many colleges assist small business owners by sponsoring small business development centers or simply offering courses that provide advice and training in management and personnel practices, marketing, finance, procuring contracts with government agencies, introducing new production technologies and work practices, and adapting to new government regulations. Finally, community colleges promote economic development by assisting local economic development planning efforts (Dougherty & Bakia, 2000).

While the community college's role in workforce preparation and economic development is very useful, it also can cause the community college considerable difficulties. Community colleges with very active workforce preparation programs can lose money on unpopular training programs, flood the market with too many graduates, provoke criticism by competing training providers, and give employers too much influence over the college curriculum (Dougherty, 1994; Dougherty & Bakia, 2000). Moreover, an active workforce preparation effort can interfere with other functions of the community college such as preparing students for transfer to four-year colleges and providing students with a general education.

Remedial and Adult Basic Education

From the beginning, community colleges have been gateways into higher education for students whom four-year colleges would turn away as unprepared for college. As a result, community colleges have long provided remedial education to many of their students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In 2000, 42% of freshmen in public two-year colleges were officially enrolled in remedial courses either in reading, writing, or arithmetic, as compared to 28% of college students generally (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2003, p. 18). This remedial role grew during the 1990s as state legislators and four-year college boards pushed to have remedial education reduced or even eliminated at four-year colleges and relegated instead to

community colleges (Shaw, 1997). This diversion of remediation into the community college poses a deep dilemma, one rooted in the contradictory effects of the community college. On the one hand, academically deficient students pushed into community colleges may attain more education by perhaps receiving better remediation and occupational education than they would at four-year colleges. (However, there is no conclusive evidence that this is the case.⁴) But on the other hand, their long-run educational attainment may be harmed by receiving less assistance in pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

Adult-education students are a key community college constituency. Many adult students enter the community college to take high school equivalency (GED), adult basic education (ABE), and English as a second language (ESL) courses. It is estimated that 33% of adult-education enrollees are in community colleges and such students make up 7% of total credit and noncredit FTE enrollments in community colleges. About three-quarters of these community college adult-education students are in the bottom half in socio-economic status and about half are nonwhite (Grubb et al., 2003, p. 223; Prince & Jenkins, 2005). Despite the hopes for adult-education programs, there is little evidence that they bring significant income benefits if they do not lead to a degree (Grubb et al., 2003, p. 229–233; Prince & Jenkins, 2005, pp. 5–6, 21). A study of first-time adult students entering Washington State community colleges in the late 1990's (the majority of whom did not have high school diplomas) found that the more college credits adult education students acquire the higher their annual earnings. In fact, the income payoff only becomes significant if students accrue at least a year's worth of credit and a credential. Unfortunately, the same study found that five years after entering the community college only 58% of adult education students had acquired *any* college credits (with only 13% of ESL entrants doing so) (Prince & Jenkins, 2005, pp. 13–16, 23).

Continuing Education and Community Services

Continuing education and community services are a catch-all aspect of the community college that often overlaps the previous categories. The offerings include courses for personal development and recreation, community services such as art events, vocational development and retraining (including contract training and small business development), adult basic education, and so forth (Downey, Pusser, & Turner, 2006).

General Education

Community colleges have made a major commitment to general education, whether defined as transmitting a common culture or fostering skills of broad utility in a person's life, such as critical thinking and communication skills. Unfortunately, this commitment is partially contradicted by the community college's other commitments, particularly to occupational education. An analysis of the catalogs of 32 community colleges found that all of them had some kind of general education requirement for their transfer programs and at least 90% had a general education requirement for their nontransfer programs. But though these figures are impressive, they also exaggerate the actual degree to which community college students receive a general education. For example, among the 90% of those 32 community colleges that had core curriculum requirements for their nontransfer programs, only half required taking even one course in U.S. government and only one-fifth required a course in ethnic studies or multiculturalism (Zeszotarski, 1999). These apparent gaps in the provision of general education are not surprising because community colleges face great difficulties in providing general education for all their students. The rise of occupational education has meant that community colleges now enroll many students whose primary purpose is likely to be preparation for a job rather than preparation for a variety of life roles. This problem is exacerbated if employers

are paying for the training. Contract training programs typically are narrowly focused on providing skills and usually devote little or no attention to broader social knowledge and life skills (Dougherty, 2002, pp. 333–338).

THE ORIGINS AND LATER DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Befitting their multiple and contradictory functions, community colleges have had equally mixed and contrasting origins. This is rarely acknowledged in the standard accounts of how community colleges were founded and later developed. Typically, these conventional accounts state that the community college was founded in response to calls by students, parents, and publicly interested educators and government officials for more college opportunities. And later, community colleges moved from an emphasis on academic education to a stress on occupational education primarily in response to the needs of students and employers for vocational training (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Monroe, 1972).

But other observers—particularly sociologists—have pointed out how these conventional chronicles miss much of the real history of the community college. For example, while these accounts mention the key role of state universities, they often misanalyze it. The state universities pushed the founding of community colleges not just to expand college opportunity, as is typically claimed, but also to keep the universities academically selective by channeling less able students toward the community colleges. Moreover, the universities unwittingly spurred the vocationalization of the community college by monopolizing greater status as “senior” colleges that trained for the most prestigious professional and managerial occupations. In order to escape the status of “junior” colleges, community colleges began in the 1920s to carve out an independent role as suppliers of a distinct training market of their own, the “middle level” or semiprofessional

occupations such as technicians, nurses, etc. (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994).

Local and state government officials also played a key role in the establishment and later vocationalization of community colleges, motivated not just by a sincere belief in educational opportunity but also by self-interest. At the local level, school superintendents and high school principals were the prime instigators of local drives to found community colleges. While they were certainly moved by a commitment to expand college opportunity, they were also driven by the desires to earn prestige as college founders and to secure jobs as presidents of the new colleges (Dougherty, 1994).

At the state level, governors, state legislators, and state education departments strongly pushed the expansion and later vocationalization of community colleges. Again, their support was prompted by more than just a desire to widen college access. State officials were mindful that building more community colleges, rather than expanding existing four-year colleges, could meet the great demand for college access in the 1960s and 1970s at a much lower cost to state government. Unlike the four-year colleges, community colleges would not require expensive dormitories, libraries, and research facilities. These savings would translate either into lower taxes or more state funds for other politically popular programs, both of which would make elected government officials more popular. In addition, community colleges, because of their strong commitment to vocational and technical education, could help stimulate the growth of state economies by attracting business firms with the carrot of publicly subsidized training of employees. This economic growth in turn would enhance the reelection chances of officials when they ran again for political office (Dougherty, 1994).

Business firms usually did not play a powerful direct role in founding or vocationalizing community colleges. But business played a powerful indirect role, based on business's central position within the United States' economic and ideological systems. Economically, business controls jobs and investment capital. Hence, in

order to get their graduates access to the jobs employers control, community college officials on their own initiative will develop occupational programs that employers find useful, even without business demand for such programs (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994). Business also owns investment capital and thus largely controls the pace and distribution of economic growth. Realizing that capital investment is key to economic growth and therefore their own political prospects, elected officials have taken the initiative to offer business publicly subsidized vocational education in order to secure business investment in their jurisdictions. Ideologically, business influences government officials because those officials subscribe to values and beliefs—such as that economic growth is vital and that this growth must come primarily through an expansion of jobs in the private rather than public sector—that have made them ready to serve business interests (Dougherty, 1994).

FROM COMPLEX ORIGINS TO CONTRADICTORY EFFECTS

An awareness of the community college's complex origins allows us to see how community colleges have come to powerfully hinder the baccalaureate opportunities of their students without this necessarily being an intended result. Because they lack dormitories, community colleges are less likely to keep their students in college by enmeshing them in a vibrant campus social life. But the reason community colleges lack dormitories is because this made the colleges cheaper to operate, a potent consideration in the minds of the local educators founding them and the state officials financing them. Because community colleges are heavily vocational, their transfer rate is lower than it might otherwise be.⁵ But a major reason community colleges are so strongly vocational is that this was a means of meeting elected officials' desire for economic investment and community college officials' desire for political support from business and jobs for their graduates. Finally, because community colleges are two-year schools,

students are discouraged from pursuing a baccalaureate degree because they have to transfer to separate four-year institutions with different academic standards. But the reason community colleges are two-year schools is largely because university heads did not want the competition of many more four-year schools, state officials did not want the financial burden of a myriad four-year colleges, and local educators felt two-year colleges would be easier to establish and be staffed by local educators. The precipitate of these many different interests is an institutional structure that, unfortunately and largely unintentionally, often subverts the educational ambitions of baccalaureate aspirants entering community college, even as it opens up opportunities for students with nonbaccalaureate ambitions. In short, the complex origins of the community college have created a contradictory institution: one serving many, often conflicting, missions.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES DO TO IMPROVE STUDENT SUCCESS?

Many of the difficulties the community college encounters are out of its control, lying in the nature of its students (who typically are less well off and less prepared than four-year college students) and the community college's very structure as a two-year nonresidential institution. Still, there is much community colleges can do to improve success rates for their students. They can reduce the number who leave without a degree by improving the academic and social integration of students by creating learning communities, employing more full-time faculty, maintaining a strong focus on student retention, providing specialized retention services for minority students, and working with high schools to improve the skills student enter college with (Bailey et al., 2006; Dougherty, 2002, pp. 324–325; Jenkins, 2006). Community colleges can increase transfer rates by encouraging transfer aspirations, working to facilitate the transfer of course credits (especially for occupational students), and helping students persist after transfer (Dougherty, 2002,

pp. 325–328). In addition to these operational reforms, community colleges can also consider more far-reaching structural reforms, particularly themselves offering baccalaureate degrees rather than requiring students to engage in the often difficult process of transferring to a four-year college (Dougherty, 2002, pp. 328–330).⁶

THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The community college will not remain static. It will continue to change, perhaps sharply, due to its diffuse institutional mission and high responsiveness to its economic, social, and political environments (Townsend & Dougherty, 2006). As our economy further globalizes, skilled and semi-skilled jobs in offices and factories continue to be eliminated or moved abroad and class inequality increases. In response, community colleges are being asked to revamp their job preparation and economic development efforts to put more emphasis on high skilled jobs, including ones requiring baccalaureate degrees. Yet at the same time, community college still feel they should meet the needs of the many people who require remedial and adult basic education and preparation for semi-skilled jobs (Jacobs & Dougherty, 2006). Meanwhile, as states conclude that their economies need more baccalaureate degree holders, community colleges are increasingly being asked by state officials to replace the more expensive public universities as the main site for the first two years of baccalaureate education (Wellman, 2002). But even as they respond to these demands, community colleges face increasing difficulties getting enough funds from state governments and rising competition from other colleges, whether four-year colleges offering continuing education or for-profit colleges offering occupational education with higher placement rates than community colleges typically produce (Bailey, 2006; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003; Kenton, Huba, Schuh, & Shelley, 2005). As the focus for these many cross-pressures emanating from a socially stratified

and conflictual society, the community college will continue to be an important, but also contradictory, institution.

NOTES

I would like to thank Floyd Hammack, James Jacobs, and Joan Spade for their comments on this chapter.

1. Though public two-year community colleges enrolled 36% of all students in 2003, they enrolled 43% of all minority students, 41% of all students age 25 and older, and 58% of all part-time students (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2006: Tables 168, 174, 177, 206). The figures are for students enrolled in degree-granting programs. They do not include the many students enrolled in nondegree credit courses in adult education and contract training.

2. Partially counterbalancing this diversionary effect is the finding (which is tentative and by no means conclusive because it is based on only a few studies) that community colleges are more helpful than four-year colleges to students who do not aspire to a bachelor's degree and come from disadvantaged backgrounds (Dougherty, 1994, p. 56; Whitaker & Pascarella, 1994).

3. Lower degrees receive smaller payoffs. Students receiving one-year certificates outpace high school graduates by only about 10% in annual earnings, and students who attend community college but do not receive a certificate or degree lead high school graduates by only 5% to 10% in earnings for every year of community college. Moreover, the payoff to a given community college credential varies by the student's social background, major, and job placement. For example, women make more from associate's degrees and certificates than do men but make less when they have secured no credential. The payoff is considerably higher for associate's degrees in engineering and computers, business, and (for women) health than in education or humanities. Finally, community college students get much better returns if they find employment in fields related to their training, than if they do not (Grubb, 1996, pp. 90, 95, 99, 102; 2002).

4. Despite the importance of remedial education, we have little hard data on how well community colleges actually remediate. We do not know what proportion of remedial students go on to graduate from college. We also do not know what role unsuccessful remediation plays in the poorer educational attainment

of working-class and minority students (Dougherty, 2002, pp. 309–314).

5. There is some debate over how much transfer rates are negatively affected by whether a community college is high in the proportion of its students and degrees that are in vocational fields. Compare Dougherty (1994, pp. 93–97) and Dougherty and Kienzl (2006) to Roksa (2006). In any case, the growing push to facilitate the transfer of occupational credits and degrees will help reduce the negative impact of the vocational emphasis of community colleges on transfer rates.

6. At this date, 13 states allow community colleges (or two-year university branches) to offer baccalaureate degrees, typically in technical fields (Dougherty & Reid, 2007; Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). The recommendation of having community colleges themselves offer baccalaureate degrees has been criticized on the grounds that it may be very difficult for community colleges to offer high quality baccalaureate programs and that in offering the baccalaureate they may cease to truly be community colleges (Townsend, 2005).

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BLACKS IN COLLEGE

Past and Present

SARAH SUSANNAH WILLIE

Sociologist Sarah Susannah Willie studies the growth of historically black colleges and universities [HBCUs] in the United States in this reading. In doing so, she examines the role of blacks in society, the shifting nature of education for blacks, and the changes in U.S. laws that affected the growth of HBCUs as well as influenced the characteristics of education available to blacks over time in the United States. This reading provides a deeper understanding of affirmative action as well as race relations on campuses.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. When and why were HBCUs founded and when and why did they experience growth spurts?
2. Do blacks fare better in HBCUs or in predominately white colleges and universities? Why?

3. Have laws been effective in improving the educational opportunities available to blacks in this country? Compare your answer to this question to your reactions to the reading by Jerome Karabel.

Today, discussions about race and college center on issues of diversity, the presence or absence of affirmative action, and multiculturalism in the curriculum. All of these are interrelated, and while they are not only about race they are almost always about who is included and who is excluded. These debates represent passionately held views on serious questions: What defines merit? Should education be conceived of as a privilege? Who gets to say what's fair? Are difference and equality mutually exclusive? Should education serve democracy, and, if so, what would that look like? What experts and lay people all agree on is that educational attainment is highly

correlated with the ability to choose one's occupation and by extension the income and prestige associated with occupation. Perhaps it should not surprise us, then, that since higher education is a gateway to opportunity, access to it and what happens on campus have become contentious issues.

The history that follows contains within it a review of the literature, revealing that the contemporary debates about justice and fairness with regard to blacks and college are as old as this country. It also reveals that African Americans have been central as both subjects and objects in the struggle among people in the United States over the impulse toward education as a right versus education as a privilege. As Ruth Sidel observes in *Battling Bias: The Struggle for Identity and Community on College Campuses* (1994), higher education "mirrors, just as it did in earlier eras, the values, the divisions, and the debates within the larger society, and, in fact, college campuses are often the arenas in which the schisms and conflicting values of the larger society are played out" (p. 9).

ILLEGAL TO READ: BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

The majority of African-descended people living in the United States before the Civil War were slaves. Legal codes maintained the legitimacy of slavery, recognized slaves as property, and guaranteed the rights of property owners. The Black Codes, as these statutory rights for whites and restrictions on blacks were called, were especially enforced in Southern states where slavery was the backbone of regional life. Although blacks were treated as if they were not human, the extensive legislation white Americans enacted to restrict the behavior of both slaves and free persons of color demonstrates white people's knowledge, or at least their fear, that blacks were indeed human and had to be schooled in ignorance in order to be kept subservient.

Alan Pifer interprets the Black Codes as an acknowledgment on the part of whites that blacks living in slavery both resented and resisted their situation:

The Black Codes . . . contained provisions aimed at safeguarding the white population against black uprisings. Fears of such uprisings were not baseless. Blacks could and did engineer minor and major uprisings against the white community which kept them in bondage. . . . In every Southern state these codes had statutes which forbade the schooling of black slaves. Education was thought to give the slave too high an opinion of himself and access to such pernicious ideas as those expressed in our Declaration of Independence, namely that all men are created equal and have certain inalienable rights. (1973, p. 8)

The legal circumscription of black peoples' behavior—including forbidding the teaching or learning of reading—discouraged any explicit show of revolutionary spirit. More insidiously, however, the constant threat of violence upheld the fragile social dynamic of the antebellum South and coerced from blacks the active display of ignorance, even if such display were not genuine.

Outlawing literacy, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes has argued, was a dam for a revolutionary river already flooding, and a goal of many slaves was to learn to read the Bible. While some slave owners had allowed the Bible to be *taught* selectively, literate slaves (and abolitionist whites) secretly read passages aloud that contradicted the hierarchy of slavery. Many slaves understood the central tenet of the New Testament to be equality among God's people. Others identified with the biblical Hebrews of Egypt, seeing themselves as God's chosen people, and believed that the after-life or freedom—whichever came first—would be a time when justice would prevail, making the last first and the first last.

Not all blacks who lived in the antebellum United States, however, were slaves. "By 1790, when the United States had its first census, there were some 628,000 black slaves in the country. In addition, there were some 60,000 free blacks, making a total of 688,000 or nearly one black to four whites in the total population of just under four million" (Pifer, 1973, p. 7). By the start of the Civil War, the number of slaves had risen to 4 million, but the number of free blacks had risen to almost 500,000. This latter group, who lived almost exclusively in the North, were descended

from free people, or had been manumitted by their owners through purchase of their freedom or upon their owner's death, or were runaways, many of whom had used the Underground Railroad to escape bondage.

With few exceptions, the colleges founded to educate America's white citizenry before the Civil War did not admit these free or freed African Americans. Three colleges, however, were established before the Civil War for the specific purpose of educating blacks: in Pennsylvania, Cheyney State College and Lincoln University, established in 1830 and 1854, respectively, and Wilberforce University of Ohio, established in 1856. Still, "up to the Civil War . . . only 28 Negroes had graduated from college" (Pifer, 1973, p. 29).

THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: FREE BUT SEPARATE

As Harold F. Williamson and Payson S. Wild report, the mid-nineteenth century saw the emergence of hundreds of colleges in the country.

[The] federal . . . attitude toward education empowered the individual states to grant colleges charters at will. As a result, America became a land of many small colleges. . . . By 1860, over 800 colleges had been founded, although only about 180 of these had succeeded in gaining a permanent foothold. . . . That one's children—especially males—should be educated was part of the democratic creed; there was nothing particularly exclusive about these numerous small colleges. (1976, pp. 1–2)

At the close of the Civil War, most blacks, even free men and women in the North, had no formal education. The land grant for public colleges that had been established with the Morrill Act of 1862, for the most part, did not admit or court blacks who were born free or who had been freed.

After the Civil War, a few historically white colleges opened their doors to a handful of blacks. The view that blacks were inherently inferior, however, was widespread, and greatly affected the attitude of their benefactors. "This 'inherent'

inferiority view was so widely held in the North that it excluded most Negroes from the burgeoning public schools. Most private schools for white students were also segregated" (Logan, 1969, p. 8). Records indicate that over the thirty-year span from 1865 to 1895, about two hundred blacks graduated from Northern white schools. Most noteworthy among these colleges is Oberlin, in Ohio, for it graduated seventy-five of the two hundred. The rest were scattered sparsely among the North's other historically white colleges.

Although the doors of most Northern white colleges were closed, the hearts of many Northern white missionaries were open, and it was these people, because of their connections to people with money and their own educational experiences, who made the greatest effort to provide education for blacks. Many saw it as their Christian duty to offer freed men and women the benefit of their knowledge. Still, the white founders of such schools often treated their black students as inferiors, and saw shaping the behavior and morals of former slaves as one of their primary responsibilities. Most of the educational facilities that missionaries established for freed men and women were colleges in name rather than in curriculum. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists—with help from Northern philanthropists—were among the most responsible for establishing institutions of higher education for blacks.

White religious philanthropists, however, were not alone in this cause. Contrary to the notion that African Americans do not have a history of helping their own, blacks, through their churches, contributed large portions of their meager earnings to found "a significant number of Black colleges and universities" (Anderson, 2002, p. 6). Although most of the schools were seminaries and colleges for teachers and home economists (the former called normal schools), a handful offered a postsecondary level of study. It looked as if the black South was on the move.

The white South, however, fought back. It may have lost the war, but Southern lawmakers continued to win numerous legal battles for decades, slowing and subverting Negro

education. As the twelve years of postwar Reconstruction came to an end (1865–77), the notion of separate but equal became more popular as a way for the power brokers of the South to circumvent both integration and equality for blacks. In an election-year deal, President Rutherford Hayes agreed to allow Southern legislators to police their own treatment of freed blacks, and promised that the Northern-dominated federal government would no longer interfere in Southern political life. “There was the feeling,” the eminent historian John Hope Franklin concludes,

on the part of most white persons that the success or failure of Negroes . . . depended on the type of education to which they were exposed. There were those who felt that the amount of education that blacks could or should receive was limited. . . . Still others contended that Negroes . . . could best serve themselves and their country with a type of education that could most rapidly help them find an indispensable place in the American social order. (Franklin & Moss, 1988, p. 244)

At the close of the Civil War, then, there were those who interpreted *any* education for Negroes as preferential treatment.

Into this debate over what kind of education would best serve free and freed blacks stepped two educated men of African descent from very different backgrounds, Booker T. Washington and William Edward Burghardt DuBois. Washington was a former slave and a graduate of Hampton Institute, in Virginia, a college that began as a vocational school for blacks. He became the spokesman for the Industrial Education Movement, popular among Southern whites, Northern philanthropists, and even some Southern blacks. Believing that patience, hard work, and thrift were the route by which blacks would eventually gain their constitutional rights, Washington offered a charismatic example of the benefits of this kind of education. He successfully opened the purse strings of wealthy white philanthropists not only for Tuskegee Institute, which he founded in Alabama in 1881, but also for other vocational colleges by speaking to the ideological leanings

of those in power. “Disproportionate amounts of public funds were [therefore] channeled into vocational institutions” (Fleming, 1984, p. 6), while many liberal arts colleges and professional schools were forced to shut down (Pifer, 1973, p. 18). Clandestinely, Washington supported lawyers who were challenging Southern Jim Crow laws, but publicly he espoused a stance of accommodation and remained opposed to groups that strove for equality of civil rights (Mullane, 1993, p. 355).

DuBois, on the other hand, was educated both at Fisk, a historically black university in Tennessee, and at Harvard, the nation’s preeminent (and a traditionally white) university, in Massachusetts. A Massachusetts native, DuBois argued that classical and liberal arts training helped Negroes to understand their potential and fight for civil rights and political power. Although he believed in the rights of all Americans and “rejected the policy of accommodation” (Mullane, 1993, p. 369), DuBois believed in the education of a black intelligentsia, who, he argued in his essay “The Talented Tenth,” had a special mission to lead the masses of African Americans.

In 1890, Congress passed the Morrill-McComas Act (also known as the Second Morrill Act), which made a feeble effort to require all states to admit blacks to existing institutions or to provide separate and equally funded schools for them (Fleming, 1984, p. 5). In response, most Southern and border states ignored the act altogether, and only four—Virginia, Alabama, North Carolina, and Maryland—made any effort “to establish tax-supported institutions for African Americans” (Anderson, 2002, p. 7).

In 1896, the Supreme Court, in the truest form of flattery, ratified Congress’s interpretation of the principle of equality (as contained in the Second Morrill Act) and reaffirmed the legality of the separate but equal doctrine. The landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* followed later that year, and segregation of public facilities was protected by a Court that saw its duty as the protection of political rather than social equality. The Court’s stamp of legitimacy on *Plessy* essentially

repeated Congress's 1890 decision to allow the South a wide berth in self-governance. Southern states interpreted the decision in *Plessy* broadly, well beyond the scope of public transportation and public facilities that the case had covered, and began to pass laws affecting every sphere of public and private life to keep blacks separate from whites.

Plessy's implications for private higher education became clear as a result of a ruling in the 1908 case of *Berea College v. Commonwealth of Kentucky*. In 1904, the state of Kentucky had passed a law requiring segregation in all state schools, both public and private. Berea, a small private institution in eastern Kentucky that had admitted both Blacks and Whites since its founding in 1859, challenged the constitutionality of a law (obviously aimed solely at the school, as there were no other unsegregated educational institutions in the state). For the hearing before the state Supreme Court, Kentucky provided an openly racist brief, suggesting that "if the progress, advancement and civilization of the twentieth century is to go forward, then it must be left not only to the unadulterated blood of the Anglo-Saxon-Caucasian race, but to the highest types and geniuses of that race." Seven of the sitting Justices in the *Berea* case had participated in *Plessy*, six of them concurring with Justice Brown's decision. Thus the decision not to overturn the Kentucky Supreme Court's ruling was not surprising; nevertheless, it broke new ground by permitting states to outlaw voluntary as well as obligatory contact between the races. (Drewry & Doermann, 2001, p. 21)

These laws became known as Jim Crow laws (*Jim Crow* was a slang term in the South for any black man [Pifer, 1973, p. 14]). The Kentucky statute, once upheld by the Supreme Court, had serious implications in the realm of education, where it was used to justify separate funding at every level of public educational institutions.

While the "separate" was carried out, the "equal" was not, and public schools for Negroes in the South were severely underfunded. By rhetorical contortion and with the support of Booker T. Washington, the doctrine of separate but equal in educational settings was interpreted

to emphasize industrial rather than liberal arts training for blacks. At the turn of the century, then, when many local government leaders used extralegal means, especially lynching, to keep blacks subservient and to discourage them from leaving the South in search of better jobs, DuBois' support of classical education for blacks was far less popular among Southern whites than Washington's limited formula.

Whether they followed in the tradition of Washington or the spirit of DuBois, the majority of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that are still running today were established by 1890—forty private colleges and seventeen public colleges. "By 1895 there had been more than eleven hundred graduates of the Negro colleges, most of whom entered teaching, the ministry, or other professions to serve their own people" (Pifer, 1973, p. 12). The number of blacks with college degrees was beginning to reach a critical mass and, with self-help organizations, they began to articulate the political aspirations of their group. Two of the more important self-help organizations with an emphasis on education were the Afro-American League of the United States, founded in 1890, and the American Negro Academy, founded in 1897. They each encouraged black youth to continue their education beyond high school.

BEYOND EMANCIPATION: THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By the turn of the century, it is estimated that 2,500 Negroes had graduated from both black and white colleges. This growing number of college-educated blacks highlighted the cultural disjunction between rising educational and professional status and continued low social status. Depending on one's point of view, of course, there was no contradiction: racial status trumped all others and either privileged or disadvantaged a person. How were blacks and fellow civil rights advocates to fight this legally? As long as defenders of segregation assured the courts that they could and would provide equal but separate protection under

the law, civil rights advocates were stymied in their goals for justice. By attacking the very legality of separateness, however, there was the chance to undermine the continuation of segregation. To this end, two more organizations were founded: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910 and the National Urban League in 1911. During the first half of the twentieth century, lawyers working on behalf of black plaintiffs changed their strategy from focusing on the right of Negroes to equal protection under the law (as provided under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution) to attacking the legality of racial separation.

Success was finally achieved with the NAACP's triumph in the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in 1954. Several other cases had preceded what became the most famous one, challenging states to provide plaintiffs with equal professional school training. One of those cases, *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), came before the Supreme Court. Sweatt, a black applicant, had been denied admission to the University of Texas Law School solely on the basis of color. The Court ruled that although there was a standing black law school, it was unequal and the State of Texas had to admit the applicant to the white law school.

The decision in *Sweatt* and several like it filed and won during the 1930s and 1940s encouraged the NAACP and other organizations to attack segregation in public elementary and secondary schools. In 1952, the NAACP filed appeals in cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. It was the NAACP's case against the School Board of Topeka, Kansas, however, that convinced the Court in 1954 that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal.

Despite this legal victory, the road to implementation would be long and would sometimes double back upon itself. The South refused to cooperate. "Although the Border States showed a disposition to comply with the Supreme Court's mandate, states in the deep South began a campaign of active and passive resistance" (Mason & Stephenson, 1987, p. 542). Almost a

hundred years after the Civil War had ended, states' rights, as interpreted by white Southern lawmakers, were again in contention with the federal government's right to make and enforce the law of the land.

While the federal government was struggling with state governments over control and autonomy, the numbers of black colleges, black students, black alumni, and black college administrators were slowly increasing. And although African Americans were forced to enroll in private colleges (Anderson, 2002, p. 9) they were beginning to organize themselves for the betterment of the community as well.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: NEGOTIATING FAIRNESS

Although Southern lawmakers obstructed and therefore retarded change, the desire of blacks for a better life catalyzed it. From World War I through the Korean War, blacks moved from rural to urban areas within the South and from southern to northern cities in search of jobs and better treatment, an event now characterized by historians as the Great Migration. Beginning in the South, the Civil Rights Movement followed suit. After several successful anti-segregation protests throughout the South in the 1950s and the success of the March on Washington in 1963, civil disobedience by blacks continued, including in the North, where racism was also entrenched but manifested differently.

Unlike the legally mandated barriers that characterized state systems of higher education in the South, the racial barriers in northern systems of public higher education were achieved through a complex process of institutionalized discrimination. . . . This process was based on an elaborate rationale that fused racism and meritocracy. Since institutionalized racism was a matter of social practice and not a matter of law, its defense and rationale became deeply entrenched in the cultural values and social norms of northern society. While southern institutions of public higher education barred African Americans as a matter of law,

northern institutions barred them as a matter of educationally and socially rationalized practices. (Anderson, 2002, p. 6)

As African Americans had political successes and yet material and educational gains failed to follow for most, rioting became an inevitable expression of frustration in most major northern and southern cities throughout the 1960s. It was at this point that "the nation as a whole had to face squarely the question of prejudice and discrimination" (Pifer, 1973, p. 21).

With regard to education, "the pace of integration quickened after 1965." In part, this more immediate response was a reaction to the race riots that were plaguing so many American cities. Social protests threatened to disrupt educational institutions as well. Many schools acquiesced to the protests of their students and concerns of surrounding neighborhoods at least in part to continue receiving federal funds, now made "conditional on integrated education" with passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Mason & Stephenson, 1987, p. 543).

The growing momentum of the Civil Rights Movement catalyzed an anxious reexamination of the federal funding that historically black colleges and universities received: Were they getting their fair share? Were they receiving enough to survive? After several studies that demonstrated the continued importance and need for funding, Congress reaffirmed its support of HBCUs in a more substantial way than it ever had, with the 1965 Higher Education Act. Also called Title III, the act legislated aid to historically black colleges, defined as "colleges founded prior to 1964" and

of Arkansas (Pine Bluff). (Drewry & Doermann, 2001, p. 257)

The commitment of the federal government to support historically black colleges and universities came from two unlikely bedfellows. First, there were those politicians who were convinced by black college presidents and Civil Rights Movement leaders that supporting greater funding for historically black colleges was simply the right thing to do. And second, there were those legislators whose support of black colleges was based on the desire to minimize black student attendance at historically white campuses (Nabrit, 1969, p. viii).

Although up to 1968, "80 percent of all African Americans who were awarded undergraduate degrees [still] graduated from HBCUs" (Anderson, 2002, p. 10), the population of the higher education pipeline was changing. True, elementary and secondary schools were still far from achieving court-ordered desegregation, but the presence of blacks in institutions of higher learning, especially in the North, had begun to increase dramatically. This was a result of several factors that came together over a twenty-year period. First, black World War II and Korean War veterans were beginning to go to college on the GI Bill. Second, several Supreme Court rulings during the late 1940s and early 1950s ruled in favor of admitting blacks to institutions that received federal monies. Third, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade discrimination based on race, color, sex, or national origin among federal government agencies and all organizations that received funding from the federal government. And finally, the Higher Education Act of 1965 made monies available to traditionally white colleges that were considered "developing" as well.

Those campuses that had begun to enroll black students were not immune to the climate of frustration and sense of empowerment among African Americans and young people of all colors that was emerging in the country at large. Black student frustration and desire for change were being channeled into groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black

whose founding purpose was the education of black students. . . . There are about a hundred two- and four-year historically black colleges, about half of which are public. Their student bodies are predominantly but usually not exclusively black. A few, mostly public schools, started as completely black but now have white student majorities: Kentucky State University, Lincoln University (Missouri), Bluefield State College (West Virginia), West Virginia College, Alabama A & M, Albany State College (Georgia), and the University

Panther Party. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that almost every predominantly white college or university with a population of more than twenty black students experienced a dramatic racial confrontation between blacks and whites between 1968 and 1971.

One of those dramatic confrontations occurred on Cornell University's campus in Ithaca, New York, in 1969 when African-American students took over a building and defended themselves with guns. Professors at a nearby university, Charles Willie and Arline Sakuma McCord, decided to examine the experiences of black students on other New York state campuses. *Black Students at White Colleges* (1972) is a study of black students at four predominantly white colleges in upstate New York during the 1969–70 school year. Willie and McCord interviewed black students and discovered that adaptation to an often hostile environment was the chief challenge for students. Willie and McCord observed three types of adaptation: black students cooperated or complied with white students and faculty; black students withdrew from white students and faculty; or black students were aggressive and protesting toward white students and faculty. Willie and McCord found that "the social life of most blacks on white college campuses is limited to interaction with other blacks" (1972, p. 15). And while many of the students they surveyed had not expected to spend a great deal of time with white students when they arrived at college, "the actual experience of racial exclusivity" both exceeded and disappointed their expectations (1972, p. 15).

Like Willie and McCord, William Exum also searched for explanations in this passionate era a bit further downstate. In his study *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University* (1985), Exum examined the black student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s at New York University. Studying it as an empirical example of social movement theory, Exum distinguished between value-oriented movements—those that seek to change fundamental values in an organization—and norm-oriented movements—those that adhere to

organizational values. He argued that although NYU's black student movement was reform or norm-oriented, it was misconstrued as radical and dangerous because of its apparent spontaneity, the level of anger and bitterness that was sometimes expressed, and because of students' refusal to use traditional avenues of dissent. Finally, Exum demonstrated the inherent contradictions that undermined the full success of the movement: its members had a necessarily short tenure, all relationships were defined by formally unequal roles, and members were more financially dependent upon the organization than the reverse.

By the early 1970s, most public universities in states with large black populations were admitting significant numbers of black students, and many private universities and colleges were admitting blacks regularly, even if they remained underrepresented as compared with their proportion in the national population. Many places added black faculty, black cultural houses, and black deans or residential staff to anticipate, massage, and if possible avoid the racial crises of the previous decade. "The proportion of twenty-five to twenty-nine-year-old Blacks who had completed four or more years of college increased by more than 150 percent between 1960 and 1975." (Astin et al., 1982, p. 87).

In their massive study *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement* (1975), Gurin and Epps argued that black colleges have been oases of acceptance, allowing otherwise excluded or disappointed black students the opportunity to learn while achieving positive self-concepts in non-racist settings. This study defended HBCUs, which began to suffer during the initial opening up of the white academy. Title III was now proving "to be a mixed blessing" for historically black schools, for, in addition to providing federal funds that "together amounted to almost half of an average private black college's annual budget," it also

helped northern and western predominantly white colleges to seek greater variety among their students, and thus stimulated an unprecedented recruitment and competition for the best-prepared black high school graduates. . . . Any black college

president who took the long view was unlikely to complain, since the new competition meant that for the first time, able black high school graduates enjoyed something like the same national range of college choice that had been reserved for whites only a few years earlier. But the effects of the new competition on many black colleges were severe. . . . Of all the changes of the 1970s, this probably provided the greatest challenge to the leadership of private black colleges. (Drewry & Doermann, 2001, pp. 8–9)

HBCUs were not alone, however, in facing challenges. The mood of the country was beginning to shift to the right, and increasing complaints of “reverse discrimination” revealed growing resentment on the part of whites, who were now expected (in the post-Civil Rights Movement era) to forfeit the unearned privilege of their racial status.

In 1978, the Supreme Court ruled in *The Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* that race *could* “be used as a criterion for admission to undergraduate or graduate and professional schools, or for job recruitment.” Stipulations included the following: it had to be for the purpose of improving racial diversity (Drewry & Doermann, 2001, p. 280); the race of an applicant had to be “combined with other criteria”; and “rigid racial quotas” could not be used (Andersen & Taylor 1999, p. 306). Thus, the outcome of that case continued to protect the right of university and college admissions offices (and other organizations that received federal funding) to consider race in attempting to achieve diverse student bodies or workplaces. This was yet another mixed blessing for those who were interested in racial equity in education, for the challenge to the law itself proved to be a warning of increasing conservatism and retrenchment both among the general public and on college campuses.

Despite this Supreme Court ruling, which appreciated the importance of diversity and fairness, the executive branch of the federal government began to chip away at results civil rights advocates thought had already been won. Philip G. Altbach, Kofi Lomotey, and Shariba Rivers observe that “By the 1980s . . . the growth rate for most [underrepresented] groups had slowed

significantly” (2002, p. 26). Donald Deskins agrees:

Since 1976, with changes in the political climate . . . support for “remedial action”—which once was dominant—lost ground to “no preferential treatment,” evolved into “undeserving advantage,” and finally culminated in the doctrine of “reverse discrimination.” Throughout this progression the plight of Blacks in higher education has worsened. . . . In essence, academia began to follow the color-blind doctrine of the Reagan administration and, in the process, dismantled equal-opportunity and affirmative-action programs. . . . During this period of increasing college tuitions, federal funding of education—particularly student aid—has declined, significantly so under the leadership of William Bennett, the former Secretary of Education. (1991, p. 36–37)

During the 1980s, then, black students lost ground, especially at traditional white schools, suffering from massive cutbacks in financial aid funding and the anti-affirmative action/anti-minority tone set by the executive branch.

In this moment of seeming crisis, psychologist Jacqueline Fleming attempted to find out about the experiences of blacks on both kinds of campuses for herself. Her study *Blacks in College* (1984) provided an updated and more comparative examination of Gurin and Epps’s work of a decade earlier. Adding interviews with black students on predominantly white campuses to her study and offering a policy-oriented discussion, Fleming found that black women who went to black colleges showed “strong improvement in academic functioning . . . [and] subjective gains in intellectual self-confidence [while also showing] consistent losses in social assertiveness and more submission to external authority” (Fleming, 1984, p. 168). On the other hand, African-American women who went to white colleges suffered from “painful frustration in every domain of experience.” These same women, however, also showed gains in their ability to develop “coping skills, working under pressure, role modeling, assertiveness, and career orientation” (Fleming, 1984, p. 169). The African American men who attended black

schools in Fleming's study exhibited "the happiest adjustment to college life," becoming more assertive, gaining confidence in dealing with others, and feeling that they could master any situation. Black men who went to predominantly white schools; however, had the "most grim" experiences. "Gains in educational aspirations . . . occur in the context of falling grades in the . . . major subject, diminishing feelings of intellectual ability, declining social adjustment, and losses in perceived energy level" (pp. 168–169). In short, Fleming's work showed that coeducational HBCUs were doing for black men what coed white colleges were doing for white men. On these campuses, Fleming observed, "it turns out to be a man's world" (p. 138).

Although the numbers of black students fell at white colleges during the 1980s, the numbers rose at HBCUs. As *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported in 1990,

The freshmen classes at many [predominantly white] colleges and universities shrank this year, with some institutions enrolling up to 35 percent fewer first year students than they did a year ago. . . . Many historically black colleges, however, experienced a surge in freshman enrollment. Several have had increases of 10 and 15 percent over their totals for academic 1989–90, and in many cases this is the second or third year of increases. (Wilson, 1990, p. A1)

For the first time since the turbulent 1960s, white colleges were getting negative publicity for what it was like to be a black student there. "Racial incidents ranging from name-calling to beatings [were] reported on more than 250 campuses" in the three years period between 1987 and 1990 (Camper, 1990, p. 1). It is unknown whether reports of harassment reflected rising numbers of incidents or the fact that violence against black students finally began to warrant media coverage. The results of *Acting Black* 2003 suggest the latter.

In addition, the 1980s also saw increasing political activism over the U.S. relationship with apartheid South Africa. Black students took leadership roles at historically black and traditionally

white colleges in campaigns urging boards of directors to divest invested funds from companies that conducted business with the overtly racist government of South Africa.

Although there were moments of declining enrollment, as the articles quoted above indicate, overall, between 1976 and 1994, there was a dramatic increase (of 30 percent) in enrollment at all higher education institutions across the country. Enrollment at HBCUs in particular rose by 26 percent, only slightly behind that of HWCUs [Historically White Colleges and Universities].¹ By the early 1990s, then, black colleges were holding their own in the competition for students; they were in the news as legitimate subjects for television fiction; white students were in the news for their bad behavior vis-à-vis blacks on predominantly white campuses; and black students were in the news for their political activism.

TURN OF ANOTHER CENTURY: THE 1990s TO THE PRESENT

The situation of blacks in college from the late 1980s to the present is best described as mercurial, if not ambivalent. On the one hand, the percentage of black students attending college has begun to increase again (as have the percentages of Asian and Latino and Latina students, which have increased dramatically), and most public and private selective, traditionally white colleges and universities embrace multiculturalism. This has meant an increase in the number of people of color at all levels of the campus, including representation in the curriculum.

On the other hand, the numbers of black students remain skewed—with men even more underrepresented than women—on both traditionally white and predominantly black campuses, and black students remain vulnerable to federal cutbacks, recession, and the sustained attack on affirmative action.² Furthermore, multiculturalism has been most enthusiastically embraced as an idea rather than in practice, in some cases creating "a break with the past [and a] basis for the

neoconservative claim that present inequities cannot be the result of discriminatory practices because this society no longer discriminates against blacks” (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 107). When racism is overtly expressed in a putatively anti-racist atmosphere, its presence is difficult for many students and faculty to make sense of as anything other than an “isolated incident” perpetrated by an “off-campus element.” The lack of dialogue on many campuses about racism and the inability or unwillingness of scholars to delineate for their colleagues and students the history and sociology of white supremacy has left many people, even in the academy, without the tools to analyze individual, institutional, and structural racism.

Today, there are roughly one hundred historically black colleges and universities in the United States that were established prior to 1964 with the principal mission to educate Americans of African descent (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. vii). And, while HBCUs enroll only 15 to 20 percent of the nation’s black students, they produce 37 percent of black college graduates.³ Although about 75 percent of all African Americans begin at predominantly white institutions, only 57 percent of them receive baccalaureate degrees from white institutions (Allen et al., 1991, p. 4). “At a time when they constitute only 3 percent of US colleges and universities, HBCUs educate almost 20 percent of the country’s African American youth, and enrollment continues to grow each year” (Manuel, 1994, p. B6). Even more striking, about 46 percent of African Americans who graduate from any college have attended a black college at some point during their college career (Rowland, 1990, p. 2). One might argue, then, that HBCUs allow many black students to get through college, whether by providing a start, a bridge, or a place to finish.

Turning to HWCUs, it is important to recognize that most colleges in the United States “accept all qualified applicants and thus do not give preference to any group defined by ethnicity or any other criterion” (Anderson, 2002, p. 15). Indeed, neither college nor graduate school is a universal experience for Americans.

Thirty-five years ago, the majority of adults in the United States—black and white—had not completed high school. Today, the overwhelming majority of adults do so, yet the absolute numbers of people who have completed college or more remain small. In 1965, one in ten white adults and one in twenty black adults had completed at least four years of college. By 2000, the numbers had jumped dramatically to one in four whites (26 percent) and one in six blacks (17 percent) who had completed college.⁴

Of those who do attend college, most do not attend colleges where admission is competitive, so why is there such passionate talk about affirmative action? In addition to the backlash against the challenges to race privilege mounted by the Civil Rights Movement, James Anderson argues that competition among privileged white parents who want privileges for their children drives the resistance:

[Twenty to thirty] percent of U.S. colleges receive enough qualified applicants to select on a competitive basis. These institutions have become the focal point for the current debate over the admission and support of students of color. This is so primarily because [privileged] Whites compete strongly to get their children into the most highly selective colleges. . . . They feel that affirmative action programs to recruit and retain students of color deprive their children of privileges and opportunities. They favor a system based on “strict merit,” meaning essentially that selective institutions should give preference to individuals with the highest grade point averages and standardized test scores[,] standards [that] favor the children of the dominant class since income is highly correlated to performance on standardized tests scores. (Anderson, 2002, p. 15–16)

Many whites still expect race and class privilege to translate into educational and occupational privilege. Vaguely aware for the first time in American history of the inappropriateness of their privilege, they are uncomfortable with the racist implications of their desires. The seemingly objective and neutral idea of merit, and merit measured in a particular fashion, allows many to cling to the idea that they are really endorsing

fairness rather than self-interest. Moreover, former president Bill Clinton's discomfort with affirmative action and most Republicans' outright dismissal of it, have led many fence sitters to feel that it is, in fact, a bad thing.

With *Bakke* in 1978, the Supreme Court implicitly acknowledged the importance of diversity in the health of organizations, especially public, educational organizations. However, the University of California Board of Regents' 1995 decision to stop using ethnicity, race, or gender in their consideration of students for admission reveals a rejection of that principle. On the heels of UCal's decision came the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal's 1996 ruling in *Cheryl J. Hopwood v. the University of Texas* that the policy of attending to race in consideration for admission to the University of Texas at Austin Law School was unconstitutional. Margaret Andersen and Howard Taylor observe, "Legal opinion on affirmative action is inconclusive" (1999, p. 306), but Henry N. Drewry and Humphrey Doermann offer a more cynical warning. The *Hopwood* decision has overturned a precedent set twenty years ago with *Bakke*, at least within the states of the Fifth Circuit Court's jurisdiction, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. "The inconsistency . . . has yet to be dealt with at the Supreme Court level," but many schools are preemptively greatly diminishing race as one of their admissions considerations, revealing fear of lawsuits as well as "deeper currents of racial resentment that continue to flow through the American social landscape" (Drewry & Doermann, 2001, pp. 280–81).

It should be no surprise, then, that in a 1996 poll of college freshmen, the majority favored eliminating affirmative action. Yet with campuses more racially diverse than ever in U.S. history, an even larger majority favored prohibiting hate speech and most agreed that racial discrimination is still a problem in the United States (Altbach et al., 2002, p. 24). These statistics represent the tension within many white college students: although the protection of race privilege remains a powerfully motivating force, civility becomes a priority in face-to-face contact with fellow students of color.

Face-to-face encounters increase the likelihood of friendships, and, since the end of the 1980s, campus racial tensions have become less severe. "The numbers of [racial] incidents have declined, and race is a *somewhat* less divisive issue on most campuses" (Altbach, et al., 2002, p. xvi). Does this actually mean greater civility? Not necessarily, for racial incidents have not disappeared. Joe R. Feagin, Hernàn Vera, and Nikitah Imani's research (1996) revealed scores of reports from colleges and universities across the country during the 1990s where black students were the targets of racist expressions ranging from faculty insensitivity to racial condescension to explicit harassment and violence. Indeed, Feagin and his colleagues noted that the withdrawal and confrontational modes of behavior Willie and McCord observed back in the early 1970s were adaptive responses that black students still used in the 1990s. To the charge of reverse discrimination, Feagin, Vera, and Imani reply:

The creation of distinct social support groups by the black students is *not* in any sense the counterpart of the old Jim Crow segregation. . . . On white-centered college campuses, most black student groups are defensive and protective, a response to what whites have done to exclude African Americans from white privileges and places. They are typically an attempt at self-determination and cultural maintenance in a sea of whiteness. (1996, p. 72)

Altbach, Lomotey, and Smith also note that "the location of racism has moved. E-mail and the Internet now seem to be a major source of racist messages and sentiments" (2002, p. xvi). While tensions may have eased, for those students still hanging on to racist ideas, the spaces in which to express them have become more private and anonymous, making confrontation especially challenging. Adding evidentiary fuel to the legitimacy of explicitly expressed racism is the lack of nonwhite students on some campuses. "Without affirmative action programs, public institutions in California and Texas have seen their admissions of students of color plummet" (Tierney & Chung, 2002, p. 276).

In *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions* (1998), William G. Bowen and Derek Bok examine the College and Beyond survey of more than eighty thousand students over almost forty years. Their focus is on the highly selective schools that expressed high expectations of their students. Black students graduated at a rate of 79 percent over five years from these schools, compared to the national graduation rate for African Americans in 1996 of 38 percent (Anderson, 2002, p. 14). Anderson buttresses Bowen and Bok's positive findings with the observations that "the affirmative action policies of the 1960s did not fail; indeed, they worked all too well and the thirty-year success of students of color has created a strong backlash against such programs" (2002, p. 15).

HBCUs, perhaps unwitting winners in this battle over affirmative action at the most selective colleges and universities, have continued to hold their own.

Despite the good news for the continued relevance of historically black colleges, anti-racist activists at traditionally white schools are still struggling.

For more than sixty years, the separate but equal clause of *Plessy* confounded activists who pursued equality. Today's anti-racist activists find themselves similarly hamstrung by the language of nondiscrimination and rhetorical equality used by their adversaries. Most civil rights activists of the 1960s interpreted the Civil Rights Act to mean that racial designation would no longer be held against people of color or used to exclude them. Today, racial conservatives, and even some liberals, interpret the Civil Rights Act as proof that the nation had successfully made the transition from being a racist country to being a nonracist one. For such people, the 1965 act of legislation was a final goal rather than a first step. Those who disagree are seen as oversensitive, race-obsessed, or asking for preferential treatment. As Feagin, Vera, and Imani argue (1996), the reverse is as often true; it is sometimes whites who are race-obsessed and oversensitive.

NOTES

1. From the National Center for Education Statistics, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: 1976–1994*. Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/96902.html>

2. Beverly Daniel Tatum explains,

The term *affirmative action* was introduced into our language and legal system by Executive Order 11246, signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. This order obligated federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." As set forth by this order, contractors were to commit themselves to "apply every good faith effort" to use procedures that would result in equal employment opportunity for historically disadvantaged groups. The groups targeted for this "affirmative action" were White women, and men and women of color (specifically defined by the federal government as American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian or Pacific Islanders, Blacks and Hispanics). In the 1970s, legislation broadened the protected groups to include persons with disabilities and Vietnam veterans. . . . Executive Order 11246 . . . did not specify exactly what affirmative action programs should look like. (1997, p. 116–117)

3. This statistic is from the *Black Collegian* (September–October 1989).

4. In 1965, 9.9 percent of whites compared to 4.7 percent of blacks had completed four or more years of college. By 2000, the percentages had risen to 26.1 and 16.5, respectively (2001 *Edition of the Statistical Abstract of the United States*, Table 215).

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CHANGES IN THE STATUS AND FUNCTIONS OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES OVER TIME

LESLIE MILLER-BERNAL

Sociologist Leslie Miller-Bernal studies women's colleges from much the same perspective that Sarah Willie uses to study historically black colleges and universities. She examines both the history of women's colleges in the United States as well as the changes in women's education over time. Her description of the changes in women's colleges tells us a great deal about the changing role of women in society and the use of education both to move women into appropriate roles in society and to contain them by keeping women from attaining too much or the wrong kind of education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How has women's access to higher education changed in the United States?
2. What role did women's colleges play in maintaining gendered roles in society?

3. What is the future of women's colleges and why should they survive?

People tend to associate women's colleges with the past, when women's and men's spheres were more separate than they are today. For this reason it may be surprising to learn that the first college in the United States that accepted women was coeducational—Oberlin College in Ohio, which admitted women in 1837. And yet the generalization still holds: Most of the few women who attended college in the mid-nineteenth century did go to women's colleges. Most colleges and universities were for men only, so women's colleges were important to women who wished to receive higher education.

This chapter traces the rise and fall of women's colleges from their beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century to their precarious position in the early twenty-first century. Not only has the number of women's colleges declined

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dramatically, from 233 as recently as 1960 to about 58 today, but the types of students and their reasons for attending single-sex institutions have also changed markedly. Today many people question whether women's colleges will continue to survive, despite the ardent belief of many of their students and alumnae that they provide the best education for women.

ORIGINS OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES

Scholars debate which was the first women's college. Some institutions described themselves as "colleges" even though that designation seems unwarranted given the age of their students and the curriculum they offered. Candidates for the earliest women's college include Mary Sharp in Tennessee, which awarded its first degrees in 1855, and Elmira in upstate New York, which opened in 1855. Both these antebellum institutions required their students to study Greek, a hallmark of the curriculum of men's colleges of the time. Neither of these colleges fared well, however; Mary Sharp closed in 1896, and Elmira shut down for a while during the Civil War.¹

Some women's colleges developed from seminaries, for example, Mills, Mount Holyoke, and Wheaton. Seminaries were not institutions for religious training but rather combined secondary education with some college work while they strictly regulated students' lives. Even if they were not first seminaries, early women's colleges often modeled themselves after seminaries. Vassar College, for example, opened in 1865 with one large seminary-like building in which all students and women faculty lived together. Such living arrangements enabled women teachers to monitor students closely to fulfill the colleges' claims that they provided a homelike atmosphere in which young women were trained to be "ladies." Students' posture and voice, for example, could be improved on a daily basis.

The heyday for women's colleges occurred at the end of the Civil War. Vassar, located in Poughkeepsie, New York, was the most famous women's college of that era because from its beginning, it had an endowment and a rigorous

curriculum. Wells College in Aurora, New York, opened only three years later, in 1868. Only for its first two years was Wells called a seminary, but its lack of endowment, its weak academic standards, and its large preparatory department for students not ready to do collegiate work meant that it functioned as a seminary for many more years. By 1885 such famous women's colleges as Smith, Wellesley, and Bryn Mawr had opened.

OPPOSITION TO WOMEN'S HIGHER EDUCATION

While today it is common to ask why women were prohibited from studying at most colleges in the nineteenth century, at the time people often asked: Why should women go to college? After all, women's "natural" place was in the home, looking after their husbands and children. Even if a woman did not marry and needed to support herself, most occupations, including such prestigious ones as medicine and law, did not require a college degree; many practitioners in these fields learned through apprenticeships. Also retarding the development of collegiate education for women was the widespread belief that women harmed their reproductive organs by too much study. In a book that was very popular at the time, *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for the Girls*, retired Harvard professor and doctor Edward Clarke claimed that women would experience dire effects if they failed to obey the "law of periodicity." He based his research mainly on seven women, including a student at Vassar who fainted during gym because, Clarke argued, she should have been quiet at that time of the month. Moreover, when she was examined, she was found to have "an arrest of the development of the reproductive apparatus" and, in place of developed breasts, "the milliner had supplied the organs Nature should have grown."²

Women researchers and organizations that favored women's higher education, such as the influential Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), refuted Clarke's research. Yet his book resonated with popular beliefs and managed to

frighten young women, including the later president of Bryn Mawr College and famous feminist M. Carey Thomas.³ Opposition to educating women may have been overcome more by practical concerns than by rational argument. As more and more communities established public schools, they favored hiring women as teachers since they received half or less of men's salaries. Teachers, of course, needed to be educated. A few other occupations opening up to women, such as clerical work, also required education.⁴

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS BY THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Women's colleges remained important for women's access to higher education throughout the nineteenth century. Many people saw them as more appropriate for women than were coeducational institutions, since their curricula could be modified in ways that were believed to fit women's talents and proclivities. The suspicion that women's colleges were thus not as intellectually challenging as men's colleges led most nineteenth-century women's rights advocates to favor coeducational institutions.⁵ Yet women's colleges did improve academically in response to student and alumnae pressures, as well as to the exacting standards of the ACA, the forerunner of the American Association of University Women. They closed their preparatory departments and offered only collegiate-level education, all the time employing mainly women faculty, thus providing "critical entry points" for women wishing to enter academic life.⁶ Nonetheless, even by 1880, a majority of women were being educated in coeducational institutions.⁷

Single-sex institutions for women and men were more prevalent in certain areas. Women's and men's colleges were mostly found in the Northeast, where many older colleges existed and which was a fairly wealthy region, and in the South, where people tended to adhere to traditional gender roles. In the Midwest and West, in contrast, frontier conditions often necessitated

economizing through coeducation; gender roles were also more flexible and egalitarian, not as supportive of the separate-spheres ideology favored in more settled regions. Because of such practical and ideological factors, colleges like Oberlin (1833) and Antioch (1852) in Ohio, as well as some universities like Chicago (1892), opened as coeducational institutions.⁸

Significant differences in preferences for single-sex education also existed among segments of the population defined by religious and ethnic affiliation. Catholic institutions, almost all single sex, were founded later than were the first secular or Protestant-affiliated women's colleges. They developed as the daughters of Catholic immigrant groups increasingly sought higher education and would have attended secular institutions in their absence. They also provided education for nuns or, more generally, the women religious. The earliest Catholic women's college to grant a bachelor's degree was College of Notre Dame in Maryland, which awarded its first college degrees in 1899. The rate of founding of Catholic women's colleges increased over the first few decades of the twentieth century, with the greatest number, thirty-seven, opening between 1915 and 1925.⁹

Black colleges and universities, in contrast to Catholic institutions, were almost all coeducational, with a few notable exceptions. For about one hundred years, these separate institutions were virtually the only place African Americans could receive higher education. Two black women's colleges opened in the first two decades after the Civil War: Barber-Scotia in Concord, North Carolina (1867),¹⁰ and Huston-Tillotson in Austin, Texas (1877),¹¹ but both later became coeducational. In contrast, Bennett College was founded in 1873 in Greensboro, North Carolina, as a coeducational institution, but it became a liberal arts college for women in 1926. The best-known historically black college for women is Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, which opened in 1881 and remains to this day a women's college.¹²

While most women's colleges were small and private, a few public institutions for women also

existed. Some state women's colleges developed in the South and Southwest. The first state women's university was the Mississippi Industrial Institute and College (later called the Mississippi State University for Women), which opened in 1884. By 1908, state women's colleges had also been established in Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Texas, Florida, and Oklahoma.¹³ New York City supported a women's college for the training of teachers—Hunter College, which opened in 1870 as the Normal College of the City of New York.¹⁴ Many states developed colleges for teacher training; these were usually referred to as “normal schools” and enrolled all or mostly women.

Founding dates influenced the nature of women's colleges. Women's colleges that began in the nineteenth century tended to stress liberal education for women's refinement. Simmons, in contrast, which opened during the Progressive Era, focused on career preparation for working- and lower-middle-class women. Mills, in Oakland, California, changed from a seminary to a college in the early twentieth century. Its curriculum changed over time, with more practical courses offered in the early part of the twentieth century and purely liberal arts later.

A HYBRID FORM:

COORDINATE COLLEGES FOR WOMEN

In addition to women's colleges and coeducational institutions, a third form of higher education developed in the late nineteenth century: coordinate colleges. Essentially, coordinate colleges were “sister” colleges of men's institutions, established in response to pressure to educate women. Educators could point to Girton and Newnham, two women's colleges of Cambridge University, as models of how prestigious men's institutions could incorporate women without admitting them outright.¹⁵ Some of the most famous examples in the United States were Radcliffe, the coordinate of Harvard; Sophie Newcomb, the coordinate of Tulane; Barnard, Columbia's coordinate; and Pembroke, Brown's

coordinate. Many lesser-known men's colleges or universities had coordinate colleges for women, for example, William Smith, the coordinate of the men's college, Hobart; Westhampton, associated with University of Richmond; and Saint Mary's, affiliated with University of Notre Dame. Still other universities had what were essentially coordinate colleges, but because they did not have a different name, they tended not to be widely recognized as such. This was true, for example, of Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Coordinate colleges represented a desire to keep women separate from men students to retain the prestige of men's institutions. Nonetheless, such separation had unanticipated benefits for women in terms of the support they received, as well as leadership opportunities.¹⁶ Coordination was also one of the ways coeducational institutions sometimes considered dealing with the “threat” of women, whose attendance rates were increasing faster than men's and who were receiving disproportionate shares of academic awards. Middlebury College and the University of Rochester, for instance, created coordinate colleges for their women students, although Middlebury lacked sufficient funds to implement coordination fully. Other coeducational institutions responded differently to the fears of “feminization” that were particularly acute at the beginning of the twentieth century. Stanford was one of the universities that established quotas on the number of women admitted. Wesleyan ceased to admit women altogether, thereby reverting to its previous all-male status.

WOMEN'S COLLEGES:

PARADOXICAL ROLES AND IMAGES

Ambivalence about women's higher education did not cease as women's educational opportunities increased. In fact, the early twentieth century, when male dominance seemed less secure than it had earlier, was a period of backlash against women.¹⁷ New arguments against educating women included the idea that educated

women were less likely to get married or have children and hence caused "race suicide," a term popularized by Theodore Roosevelt in 1905.¹⁸ Women's colleges were blamed in particular, although some commentators felt that coeducation caused greater damage, either by encouraging promiscuity or by contributing to the opposite problem—indifference to the opposite sex due to overfamiliarity.¹⁹ In the early 1920s, Vice President Calvin Coolidge wrote that some of the eastern women's colleges fomented radicalism and Bolshevism.²⁰ The 1920s was also a decade when students experienced increased sexual freedom and when many Americans became familiar with Sigmund Freud's ideas. The "crushes" between women at women's colleges that had previously seemed innocent were now suspected of indicating lesbianism. Administrators at women's colleges felt compelled to take special measures to avoid such imputations.²¹

Another image of women's colleges was as "finishing schools" for privileged white Protestant women. Some researchers in the early twentieth century criticized them for not providing enough vocational guidance or training.²² It was true that at many women's colleges, students received training in social graces, including how to be proper hostesses, how to talk in a refined manner, and how to develop good posture. While such training was not unknown in coeducational institutions, women's colleges generally gave more emphasis to the importance of women's refinement.²³

Regardless of these conflicting images, women's colleges had a respectable place among institutions of higher education. By avoiding such applied subjects as home economics and keeping their student bodies homogeneous, many women's colleges retained or even enhanced their prestige. Women's colleges were known to be academically rigorous; some such as Wells College instituted demanding honor programs. By the late 1920s the most elite women's colleges—Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley—had come to be known as the Seven Sisters and

were frequently seen as women's counterpart to what were later called the Ivy League colleges (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale). In the 1920s some private women's colleges, including Wells, had many more applicants than they could admit. Wells considered expanding; since the president was concerned that this would mean the college would lose its "family" atmosphere, the college planned to open a "sister" college on the same grounds. This never happened, however, as the Great Depression intervened, affecting college enrollments and finances.²⁴

ENROLLMENT TRENDS OVER THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Increasing numbers of women attended institutions of higher education throughout the twentieth century, from about 141,000 in 1909–10 to more than one million in the mid-1950s. At the same time, the percentage that enrolled in women's colleges decreased. Even as early as 1920, more than four-fifths of women attended coeducational colleges and universities. This proportion gradually grew, so that by the mid-1950s, nine of ten women attending institutions of higher education were enrolled in coeducational institutions.²⁵ These increases in enrollments at coeducational institutions affected women's colleges not only directly but also indirectly, as more and more faculty were likely to have received their education at coeducational institutions. Thus most people connected to higher education began to take coeducation for granted.

The rise of state universities affected women's colleges, since most women's colleges were and are private.²⁶ Particularly at times of economic hardship—for instance, during the Great Depression—students found the lower tuition of state institutions attractive. Traditional private liberal arts women's colleges responded to enrollment threats by offering more scholarships and becoming slightly more diverse, enrolling some Catholics and a small percentage

of Jews.²⁷ Nonetheless, some new private women's colleges opened—many Catholic women's colleges but also some secular ones, notably Sarah Lawrence (1928) and Bennington (1932) in the Northeast, and Scripps (1926) in California.²⁸

After World War II, many veterans took advantage of support from the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, frequently referred to as the G.I. Bill, to enter colleges and universities. While the number of women students also grew, the rate of growth for men was much greater, so the proportion of women in higher education decreased to about 30 percent. As women had been about 55 percent of college students at the end of the war, this drop was dramatic.²⁹ At the same time, marriage rates were high, and college women, as well as administrators and faculty, began to raise the familiar question of what women should learn if they were almost all going to become mothers. Some women's colleges, such as Vassar and Barnard, instituted programs to respond to women's interrupted lives and their return to college after marriage and childbearing.³⁰

The buoyant economy of the 1960s, with increasing foundation and federal support for higher education, had positive effects on many institutions, including women's colleges. In this halcyon period, colleges could both expand and be more selective. Wells College, for example, had its highest-ever enrollments—more than six hundred students—for seven consecutive years, from 1966 to 1972, while admitting only about half its applicants. New colleges were founded to meet the increased demand for higher education. Of approximately seven hundred new institutions established between 1960 and 1969, three-quarters were public institutions, including community colleges; some were experimental, for example, Old Westbury; and some were women's colleges.³¹ These categories overlapped, of course. Traditional all-male Hamilton College in upstate New York established Kirkland College in 1968, for instance, as an experimental coordinate women's college. Similarly, Pitzer College opened as an innovative women's college in the Claremont cluster of

colleges. Neither of these colleges lasted in this form, however. Hamilton College absorbed Kirkland a decade after it opened, and in less than ten years, Pitzer admitted men students.³²

Enrollees also diversified during the 1960s. At many colleges, including women's colleges, students and faculty, influenced by the national civil rights movement, pressured their institutions to recruit minority students, staff, and faculty. The civil rights movement's push for integration and, slightly later, the women's movement's demands for women to be admitted to male bastions meant that separate institutions of all kinds, including women's and men's colleges, began to be seen as old-fashioned or even anachronistic.³³

Men's colleges were some of the first to respond to this new cultural mood. Beginning in the mid-1960s, many men's colleges, particularly prestigious ones like Princeton and Yale, started to consider ways to incorporate women undergraduates. They were not motivated only by a desire to extend their educational privileges to women, however. Demographic trends favored women's admission: Women's enrollments were increasing at a faster rate than men's. Moreover, women were known to be serious students. By the late 1960s, as inflation became a national economic issue, all colleges were anticipating financial problems. Some colleges that had borrowed money to expand during the 1960s began to be concerned about filling their campuses and paying back their loans during the high inflation period of the 1970s.³⁴ Men's colleges knew that by admitting women, they could increase enrollments, reduce debts, become more selective, and obtain hard-working students. And this, in short, is what happened. The admission of women to the remaining all-men Ivy League colleges, as well as to such prestigious men's colleges as Amherst and Williams, maintained or improved these institutions' finances and academic standings. By the 1990s, virtually no men's colleges remained, as almost all had become coeducational.³⁵

Men's colleges' decision to become coeducational created problems for women's colleges.

Given the sexism of society at large, anything male tends to be defined as superior to anything female.³⁶ Educators at women's colleges recognized that women students, particularly some of the academically strongest who previously would have attended their colleges, would now apply to formerly men's colleges. To avoid anticipated declines in enrollments and academic standards, some women's colleges decided to admit men. Vassar, which had been negotiating with Yale about developing a coordinate relationship, chose instead to become "coeducational."³⁷ Other women's colleges that made this transition in the late 1960s or early 1970s included Connecticut, Elmira, Sarah Lawrence, and Skidmore.

JUSTIFYING THE NEED FOR WOMEN'S COLLEGES

At the same time that the number of women's colleges declined—from 233 in 1960 to 90 in 1986—systematic research demonstrated their benefits to women.³⁸ For many years, journalists had noted the confidence of women who attended women's colleges and lauded the training for leadership these institutions provided.³⁹ The evidence was anecdotal, however. As the women's movement progressed, academics concerned with demonstrating how women fared under existing social arrangements began to conduct systematic studies of the relative advantages of single-sex education and coeducation.

Researchers coined the phrase the "chilly climate" to describe the many ways coeducational colleges discouraged women students' achievement and led to their loss of confidence. Studies found that professors called on men students more than on women students, were more likely to know men students' names, interrupted women more than men, asked women mundane questions but probed men students' answers for elaboration, and in general gave men students more of their time and attention.⁴⁰ Combined with information about women students' experiences of sexual harassment, date rape, lack of

campus leadership positions, few female role models, and insufficient support for their sports, coeducational colleges and universities did indeed seem to be places where men consolidated their superior social position at the expense of women.

Women's colleges could correctly claim that they did not have "chilly climates." Moreover, a body of research, pioneered by M. Elizabeth Tidball in the early 1970s, began to accumulate that indicated that women who graduated from women's colleges were much more likely to succeed in later life than were women who graduated from coeducational institutions. Tidball's baccalaureate origin studies, which used listings in *Who's Who of American Women* and the *Doctorate Records File*, showed that graduates of women's colleges were two to three times more likely to become medical doctors, scientists, or recognized leaders in their fields.⁴¹ These results fit with what some people already knew: Many women in Congress and successful women writers, for example, were graduates of women's colleges. And yet, other researchers criticized Tidball's methods—for her data sources (she used *Who's Who of American Women*, while some people argued *Who's Who in America* would be preferable), for not separating prestigious women's colleges (the Seven Sisters) from more ordinary women's colleges, and for confusing the benefits of attending a women's college with the advantages of having a privileged family background.⁴² The latter—the so-called selection effect—would mean that women's colleges are successful not because of what they do for women but because of qualities that students bring to these colleges.⁴³

The debate over the value of women's colleges continues. Some researchers report no benefits of single-sex education for women once sufficient controls for preexisting or social background differences are taken into account.⁴⁴ Even after they control for students' family backgrounds, however, other researchers continue to find that women who attend women's colleges experience advantages in later life.⁴⁵ Several researchers have used Tidball's "baccalaureate

origin" research method for studying more recent cohorts of women graduates. Such studies have found generally positive results for women's colleges, although the differences between graduates of women's colleges and of coeducational colleges have not been as large as Tidball reported for earlier cohorts of women graduates.⁴⁶ Research on recent graduates is particularly interesting since, over time, the social characteristics of women who attend women's colleges have changed dramatically. While students at private women's colleges used to come from elite families, since the late 1970s and the use of extensive financial aid to attract students, they are more likely to come from families whose income and education level are lower than those of the families of women at comparable coeducational private liberal arts colleges.

Another argument made against the idea that women still need and benefit from single-sex education is that coeducational institutions have improved. Some analysts, noting that the original "chilly climate" studies were conducted during the 1980s, contend that their findings are no longer relevant.⁴⁷ While women's experiences in many coeducational colleges and universities have undoubtedly improved, equality does not yet exist. Women do not comprise half the faculty, for example, and the more prestigious the institution, generally the fewer the women faculty there are. Similarly, while more women are found among top administrators, they are still only about one-fifth of college presidents.⁴⁸ Women students' college experiences are different from and more likely to be negative than those of men students. Sex offenses on campuses throughout the country, most of them committed against women and many perpetrated by members of fraternities or athletic teams, have been documented, even though institutions report only some of these offenses to the federal government.⁴⁹

While gender equality remains more a goal than an actuality, what is different from the past is that many institutions are concerned about how their women students are faring and implement policies to promote equal opportunities for women

and men. A panel at Duke University, for example, recently did a study of gender issues on campus. The panel found that women undergraduates feel pressure to exhibit "effortless perfection," that they worry about the possibility of acquaintance rape, and that their campus leadership tracks are "somewhat separate" from men's. With knowledge of such difficulties faced by women, administrators at Duke are developing appropriate programs to help overcome them. These include, for instance, a "sustained leadership program" that will give undergraduate women who participate "some of the benefits of a single-sex educational experience embedded within their otherwise coeducational college life."⁵⁰

WOMEN'S COLLEGES TODAY

Despite the evidence that women's colleges not only have played a key role in women's access to higher education but also have enhanced their postgraduation success, most young women no longer consider attending them. The Women's College Coalition, formed more than thirty years ago to publicize the benefits of women's colleges, has not succeeded in changing high school girls' minds. Nor have the articles that appear in the popular press about women students' attachment to and defense of their women's colleges. For more than two decades, a low percentage of girls, about 3 or 4 percent, says that they would "consider" a women's college, and a much lower percentage actually ends up attending one.⁵¹ By 2006 only fifty-six women's colleges remained.

The persistent low interest in single-sex higher education continues to create enrollment and financial problems for women's colleges. Most women's colleges today no longer resemble people's images of a women's college—an isolated liberal arts college for women aged eighteen to twenty-two. Only a few very wealthy and prestigious women's colleges, such as Wellesley (whose endowment is over \$1 billion), Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Agnes Scott, have been able to continue successfully in this mold.⁵²

CONCLUSIONS

Women's colleges appear to be a dying institutional form of higher education in the United States. Each year fewer remain, and most of those that do are struggling to survive. Forecasting the demise of women's colleges is not the same as arguing that they are not valuable, however. Indeed, the majority of studies of outcomes for women who were educated at women's colleges compared to those educated at coeducational colleges shows that women fare better in single-sex environments. And yet the overwhelming preference of young women today is for coeducational colleges. With fewer than 5 percent willing to consider women's colleges, these institutions' enrollment and associated financial problems remain severe.

Even colleges that seem to be the same today as they were before the recent upsurge in coeducation about thirty-five years ago have tried various methods to stem enrollment declines or to prevent being taken over by another institution. In many other instances the changes in the women's colleges have been dramatic and hence easily visible. Whether college adaptations have been subtle or major, a basic question we have kept in mind.

Women's colleges have played an important role in the lives of thousands of women. They are defended passionately by many students and alumnae who see them as having a unique environment in which women's interests and needs are given priority. It behooves all of us who are committed to gender equity to study women's colleges so that we can better understand the particular ways in which they have benefited women and so that we can use them as models for the increasingly prevalent coeducational institutions.

NOTES

1. Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, vol. 2 (New York: Science Press, 1929), 171–78.
2. Edward H. Clarke, *Sex in Education; or A Fair Chance for the Girls* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1873/1972), 92–93.
3. See M. Carey Thomas's own assessment of her fears of Edward Clarke's conclusions: Refutations of Clarke can be found in Mary Putnam Jacobi, *The Question of Rest for Women during Menstruation* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1878); other refutations of Clarke's research are summarized in Sue Zschoche, "Dr. Clarke Revisited: Science, True Womanhood, and Female Collegiate Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 29 (1989): 545–69; and Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 20.
4. Barbara Sicherman, "Colleges and Careers: Historical Perspectives on the Lives and Work Patterns of Women College Graduates," in John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, eds., *Women and Higher Education in American History* (New York: Norton, 1988).
5. Leslie Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 203–5.
6. The role that the ACA played in strengthening women's colleges is discussed in *ibid.*, 33–34. On the role of women faculty at women's colleges, see Mary Ann Dzuback, "Gender and the Politics of Knowledge," historycooperative.press.uiuc.edu/journals/heq/43.2/dzuback.html, accessed June 28, 2005. Also available in *History of Education Quarterly* 43, 2 (2003).
7. Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for Women* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 40.
8. Rosalind Rosenberg, "The Limits of Access: The History of Coeducation in America," in Faragher and Howe, *Women and Higher Education in American History*.
9. By 1955, there were 116 Catholic colleges for women. See Mary J. Oates ed., *Higher Education for Catholic Women: An Historical Anthology* (New York: Garland, 1987), 121. Other helpful discussions of Catholic women's colleges can be found in Susan L. Poulson and Leslie Miller-Bernal, "Two Unique Histories of Coeducation: Catholic and Historically Black Institutions," in Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities: 1950–2000* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), as well as in Paula S. Fass, *Outside In: Minorities and the Transformation of American Education* (New York: Oxford University

Press, 1989), chap. 6, "Imitation and Autonomy: Catholic Education in the Twentieth Century."

10. In 1867, this institution was called Scotia Seminary, dedicated to preparing black women for careers in teaching and social work. In 1916, it became Scotia Women's College; in 1930 it merged with Barber College and changed its name shortly thereafter. In 1954 it became coeducational. www.petersons.com/blackcolleges/profiles/barber-scotia.asp?sponsor=13, accessed July 4, 2005.

11. Tillotson opened in 1877 as a Collegiate and Normal Institute and went through various changes over time. In 1926 it was reorganized as a junior college and in 1926 as a women's college. In 1931 it became coeducational. In 1952 it merged with nearby Samuel Huston College. www.umcgiving.org/content/BCF/sc_huston.asp, accessed July 4, 2005.

12. A few black colleges for men were also established, probably the most famous being Morehouse, located adjacent to Spelman, and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, which began admitting women in the 1950s. See Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan Gunn Pevar, "A Historically Black Men's College Admits Women: The Case of Lincoln University," in Miller-Bernal and Poulson, *Going Coed*.

13. Archived Information Web site, Irene Harwarth, Mindi Maline, Elizabeth DeBra, "Women's Colleges in the United States: History, Issues, and Challenges," www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/PLLI/webreprt.html, accessed July 4, 2005.

14. www.hunter.cuny.edu/news/inbrief.shtml, accessed July 4, 2005.

15. Thomas M. Landy, "The Colleges in Context," in Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett, eds., *Catholic Women's Colleges in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 61, cites an article written in 1898 that mentioned Girton as one of three prestigious institutions that women could attend.

16. Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*, and Leslie Miller-Bernal "Conservative Intent, Liberating Outcomes: The History of Coordinate Colleges for Women," in Amanda Datnow and Lea Hubbard, eds., *Doing Gender in Policy and Practice: Perspectives on Single-Sex and Coeducational Schooling* (New York: Routledge/Falmer, 2002).

17. Woody, *History of Women's Education*, 2:251; Rosenberg, "The Limits of Access"; Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*, 65–66.

18. Patricia A. Palmieri, "From Republican Motherhood to Race Suicide: Arguments on the Higher Education of Women in the United States,

1820–1920," in Carol Lasser, ed., *Educating Men and Women Together* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 57.

19. The first president of the American Psychological Association, G. Stanley Hall, argued in his famous book on adolescence that the easy association between the sexes in coeducational institutions caused men and women to lose interest in each other. "Familiar camaraderie brings a little disenchantment . . . [and] weakens the motivation to marriage." See Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton, 1904), 620–21. At the same time, the then president of Stanford, David Starr Jordan, defended coeducational institutions because although they encouraged marriage, the unions were of the "best sort," based on "common interests and intellectual friendships." Jordan, "The Higher Education of Women," *Popular Science Monthly* 62 (1902): 107.

20. Calvin Coolidge, "Enemies of the Republic," *Delineator* 98 (1921): 4–5, 66–67.

21. Florence Howe, *Myths of Coeducation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 277, 314; Dorothy Dunbar Bromley and Florence Haxton Britten, *Youth and Sex: A Study of 1300 College Students* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), 118; Katherine Bennett Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929), 245.

22. Marguerite Witmer Kehr, "A Comparative Study of the Curricula for Men and Women in the Colleges and Universities of the United States," *Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae* 14 (1920): 3–26.

23. Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*, 104–6.

24. *Ibid.*, 99–101.

25. Newcomer, *A Century*, 49.

26. Enrollment in public institutions was about half of total enrollment by 1929–30, a proportion that remained fairly constant until the 1950s. Then the proportion increased, so that by 1977, it was a little over three-quarters, a proportion that has remained fairly constant since. For the earlier part of the twentieth century, see Thomas D. Snyder, ed., "Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait," National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf. Figures from 1947 on can also be obtained at nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/tables/dt172.asp.

27. Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*, 101–3. See also Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 47–48, on the treatment of

Jewish women at Wellesley during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Gordon notes that there were fewer non-Protestant women in southern institutions than in colleges in the North (49).

28. These years refer to when these women's colleges opened, not their official founding dates.

29. Snyder, "Years of American Education."

30. See Fass, *Outside In*, 157–75.

31. Verne A. Stadman, *Academic Adaptations: Higher Education Prepares for the 1980s and 1990s* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), 4.

32. For more information about Kirkland, see Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*.

33. Miller-Bernal and Poulson, *Going Coed*.

34. Earl F. Cheit, *The New Depression in Higher Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

35. Three men's liberal arts colleges remain: Wabash in Indiana, Morehouse in Georgia, and Hampden-Sydney in Virginia. Deep Springs is an elite all-men two-year college in California.

36. For social-psychological evidence of this general principle, see the famous study by Goldberg on women's perception that essays are inferior if women are believed to have written them: Philip Goldberg, "Are Women Prejudiced against Women?" in C. Safilios-Rothschild, ed., *Toward a Sociology of Women* (Lexington, Mass.: Xerox College Publications, 1968), 10–13.

37. Most people refer to women's colleges that have admitted men students as having become "coeducational." This is ironic, since "coed" is a term that really pertains to women, and that originally had derogatory connotations. And yet, since this terminology is widespread, we sometimes also use it.

38. These figures come from Irene Hawarth, Mindi Maline, and Elizabeth DeBra, *Women's Colleges in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, U.S. Department of Education, 1997), 28. Different researchers come up with somewhat different numbers, but they all show a dramatic decline in the number of women's colleges. For different estimates, see, for example, Erich Studer-Ellis, "Diverse Institutional Forces and Fundamental Organizational Change: Women's Colleges and the 'Coed or Dead' Question," paper presented at the annual meeting of The American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C., 1995.

39. Eunice Fuller Barnard, "Our Colleges for Women: Co-ed or Not?" *New York Times Magazine*. March 26, 1933, 4–5.

40. For overviews of this research, see Roberta M. Hall with Bernice R. Sandler, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?* (Washington, D. C.: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1982); Howe, *Myths of Coeducation*; Bernice Resnick Sandler, "The Classroom Climate: Still a Chilly One for Women," in Carol Lasser, ed., *Educating Men and Women Together* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); and Myra Sadker and David Sadker, *Failing at Fairness* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994). For examples of specific empirical studies of women and men's behavior in classrooms, see David A. Karp and William C. Yoels, "The College Classroom: Some Observations on the Meanings of Student Participation," *Sociology and Social Research* 60 (1975): 421–39; and Sarah Hall Sternglanz and Shirley Lyberger-Ficek, "Sex Differences in Student-Teacher Interactions in the College Classroom," *Sex Roles* 3 (1977): 345–52.

41. Some of Tidball's studies are the following: M. Elizabeth Tidball, "Perspective on Academic Women and Affirmative Action," *Journal of Higher Education* 54 (1973): 130–35; M. Elizabeth Tidball and Vera Kistiakowsky, "Baccalaureate Origins of American Scientists and Scholars," *Science* 193 (1976): 646–52; M. Elizabeth Tidball, "Women's Colleges and Women Achievers Revisited," *Signs* (1980): 504–17; M. Elizabeth Tidball, "Baccalaureate Origins of Entrants into American Medical Schools," *Journal of Higher Education* 56 (1985): 385–402; M. Elizabeth Tidball, "Baccalaureate Origins of Recent Natural Science Doctorates," *Journal of Higher Education* 57 (1986): 606–20; M. Elizabeth Tidball, "Comment on 'Women's Colleges and Women's Career Attainments Revisited,'" *Journal of Higher Education* 62 (1991): 406–9.

42. Mary J. Oates and Susan Williamson, "Women's Colleges and Women Achievers," *Signs* 3 (1978): 795–806; and Mary J. Oates and Susan Williamson, "Comment on Tidball's 'Women's Colleges and Women Achievers Revisited,'" *Signs* 6 (1980): 342–45.

43. For more detailed summaries of this research and its criticisms, see Miller-Bernal, *Separate by Degree*, 212–16, and M. Elizabeth Tidball, Daryl G. Smith, Charles S. Tidball, and Lisa E. Wolf-Wendel, *Taking Women Seriously* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1999).

44. Judith Stoecker and Ernest Pascarella, "Women's Colleges and Women's Career Attainments Revisited," *Journal of Higher Education* 62 (1991): 394–406.

45. Riordan found that attending a women's college for just a year had a positive effect on women's postgraduate education; attendance for more years was required for women's colleges to have a positive effect on women's obtaining higher-status occupations and higher incomes. See Cornelius Riordan, "The Value of Attending a Women's College," *Journal of Higher Education* 65 (1994): 486–510.

46. Joy K. Rice and Annette Hemmings, "Women's Colleges and Women Achievers: An Update," *Signs* 13 (1988): 546–59; Lisa E. Wolf-Wendel, "Models of Excellence: The Baccalaureate Origins of Successful European American Women, African American Women, and Latinas," *Journal of Higher Education* 69 (1998): 141–87. There have also been many studies that have examined differences between women at women's colleges and at coeducational colleges in terms of such factors as their satisfaction with college life, their self-confidence, and their choices of major fields. Almost all these studies have found that women's colleges have more positive environments for women students. See for example, Sherrilyn M. Billger, "Admitting Men into a Women's College: A Natural Experiment," *Applied Economics Letters* 9 (2002): 479–83; Mikyong Kim and Rodolfo Alvarez, "Women-Only Colleges: Some Unanticipated Consequences," *Journal of Higher Education* 66 (1995): 641–68; and Daryl G. Smith, "Women's Colleges and Coed Colleges: Is There a Difference for Women?" *Journal of Higher Education* 61 (1990): 181–97.

47. An anonymous reviewer of Miller-Bernal and Poulson, *Going Coed*, made this comment, for instance, arguing that we were too negative about coeducational institutions.

48. Women's representation among the lowest faculty ranks is almost equal to men's, but women are much less likely to have tenure and to be full professors. Thus in 2001 45 percent of assistant professors were women, while only 20 percent of full professors were. At a prestigious institution like Princeton University, though, only 14 percent of full professors were women. See Karen W. Arenson, "More Women Taking Leadership Roles at Colleges," *New York Times*, July 4, 2002, www.nytimes.com/2002/07/04/education. Women are more likely to be presidents of two-year colleges than of doctoral universities, with their share being 22.4 percent of the former and 13.2 percent of the latter. See Kit Lively, "Diversity Increases among Presidents," *Chronicle of Higher*

Education, September 15, 2000, chronicle.com/weekly/v47/i03/03a03101.htm.

49. For information about underreporting college and university sex offenses, see Sara Hebel, "U. of Calif. Failed to Report Crimes," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 18, 2003, chronicle.com/weekly/v49/i32/32a03203.htm, accessed July 19, 2004. A recent notorious example, of sexual assaults involved seven rape charges brought against University of Colorado football players and recruits. The head football coach was placed on administrative leave after he made derogatory comments about one of the women who brought charges, and the governor of Colorado appointed a special prosecutor to investigate the situation. See Murray Sperber, "Sex and Booze: Two Steps to Winning Football," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 12, 2004, chronicle.com/weekly/v50/i27/27b02401.htm.

50. Women's Initiative Steering Committee, *Women's Initiative* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, 2003), 15. A useful Web site that provides links to studies of women's status at more than thirty educational institutions is universitywomen.stanford.edu/reports.html#ureports. Most of the studies listed focus on issues concerning women faculty, however.

51. This figure is based on a 2000 College Board survey in which only 4 percent of college-bound high school girls said that they would "consider" a women's college. It is mentioned in an article about Hollins College: Andrew Brownstein, "Enrollment Falls, and a Small College Debates Its Future," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 4, 2001, p. A39. Other smaller studies report similar figures. A study conducted by Hood College of five Frederick-area schools, for example, found that only 3.6 percent of 1,200 high school girls surveyed said that they would prefer a single-sex college. See www.hood.edu/news/articles/index.cfm?pid=_executive_summary.htm, accessed April 4, 2004.

52. A few women's colleges that do not have very high endowments and are not as well known have attempted to stay essentially the same but have had a great deal of trouble attracting a sufficient number of students. Besides using extensive financial aid and intensive, expensive recruitment, some of these women's colleges have tried slashing tuition dramatically. Pine Manor College, outside Boston, reduced its tuition by 34 percent in 1998; Wells College reduced its tuition by 30 percent in 1999.

RESHAPING THE UNIVERSITY IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

ALAN RUBY

In this reading, Alan Ruby discusses the effects of globalization on higher education. Some of his arguments may surprise you, as he argues that education is a commodity that is marketed across the globe. He describes the global "market" for higher education and what that means in terms of who will be attending college where. As he discusses the globalization of higher education, he considers the role of technology in the delivery of higher education and the growth of private providers.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What changes does Ruby envision in higher education?
2. What roles will developing countries play in the globalization of higher education?
3. Keep Ruby's arguments in mind as you read McEneaney and Meyer in the next

part of this book and consider what changes might be anticipated in the social construction of knowledge globally.

Globalization clearly affects every aspect of our lives. What does it have to do with universities? Quite a bit. It affects curriculum, faculty recruitment, student recruitment, sources of food for the dining halls and of funds for the endowment, and the value of investments. These are all important, but the biggest implication is that, in this global era, education at all levels, and especially at the tertiary level, has become a tradable commodity. It is a service that can be priced, paid for, and provided.

Education is included in the agreements between nations brokered under the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) framework. This fact allows governments to recognize education as a trade "good" and to enter

From Ruby, A., "Reshaping the University in an Era of Globalization" from *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2005. Reprinted with permission.

into agreements with other nations with regard to market access. More than 50 nations have commitments covering different aspects of education, and at least half of those agreements cover higher education.

The idea that higher education is a commodity no different from milk or a Norah Jones CD may be offensive to scholars who see commoditization as antithetical to the true mission of the university. Some commentators worry that business motivations will “lure” universities away from their “core responsibilities.” Others worry that competition will “undermine the capacity of domestic suppliers” and threaten national education systems.¹

But we need to understand that higher education does not have to become a passive victim of globalization. Universities are creators and disseminators of knowledge; they shape globalization as much as they are shaped by it.

Certainly this comes as no surprise to scholars of higher education. The university has been a global institution since the beginning, originally serving a small cadre of the elite. Philip Altbach points out that universities functioned in a common language (Latin), served at least a small international clientele, and had a faculty that came from different lands.² Graduates of these first universities took ideas, values, and scientific knowledge to other nations and, as rulers and members of the elite, changed those nations.

What is different today is the ease with which educational services, a large number of students, many faculty members, and lots of intellectual property move between nations. This change has generated five challenges for universities, particularly for institutions in the U.S., and these challenges also present critical areas of investigation as well as opportunities for greater international cooperation.

GROWTH IN GLOBAL DEMAND

The global demand for higher education is projected to grow from 97 million students in 2000 to 263 million in 2025. At least seven million of those students will be studying outside their

home nations—a 400% increase. For example, 9.1 % of Irish students in higher education were studying abroad in 1995; in 2000, the figure was 16.2%. For China, the comparable figures were 2.1 % in 1995 and 2.9% in 2000.³

Using the 2004 average total cost of acquiring a first degree in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, a cohort of students numbering seven million could represent an exchange of \$640 billion. Contemplating numbers of that magnitude, governments develop a keen interest in getting education services into GATS agreements.

For universities contemplating this increase in global demand, there is a temptation to look at it simply as a growth opportunity, a chance to increase the size of the institution. Of course, there will be fractious debates about the “right size” of the university if it is to maintain its culture, about commitment to teaching excellence, and about the quality of students and faculty.

Some may view this growth in international demand as a chance to form strategic alliances with like institutions in other nations. Beyond contributing to enrollment growth, such alliances could lay the groundwork for richer academic exchanges, shared research projects, shared resources, and an exchange of students that would benefit both nations. This is a stronger and probably more enduring outcome than simple enrollment growth.

DIVERSIFICATION OF STUDENTS

Growing demand also generates growing diversity within student bodies. One way to think about the increasing presence of “foreign students” on U.S. campuses is simply to look at gross numbers (Table 44.1).

GROWTH OF PRIVATE PROVIDERS

In the face of growing demand, many industrialized nations are now responding by expanding the role of the private sector in the provision of

Table 44.1 U.S. Institutions With the Highest Concentrations of International Students, 2002–03

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Number of international students</i>	<i>Total enrollment</i>	<i>Percentage of international students</i>
Columbia University	5,148	23,324	22.1
University of Southern California	6,270	30,682	20.4
Harvard University	3,459	19,536	17.7
University of Pennsylvania	3,856	22,326	17.3
Boston University	4,518	28,981	15.6

Source: Jennifer Jacobson, "U.S. Foreign Enrollments Stagnate," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 November 2003, p. A-46.

education—an issue that raises a new set of questions. The private sector has at least two faces: institutions that are not publicly funded or established by the government and for-profit education providers. The private sector's share of higher education enrollment is large and growing, exceeding 50% in Korea, Japan, and Indonesia.⁴

The growth of private providers poses some thorny questions. How do you ensure quality and fair prices in a market of dubious elasticity while still allowing a degree of academic autonomy? If private suppliers eschew a mission of research in order to contain costs, does this decoupling of the creation of knowledge from its dissemination lower the quality of education? If private institutions do take on research responsibilities, what are the ownership questions with regard to intellectual property?

Does government have a role in monitoring or controlling professional preparation by the private sector? After all, just how many doctors, lawyers, or MBAs does a nation need or can it afford? Or should the state allow potential consumers to make informed choices about how many of these professionals are needed?

There are many policy puzzles for officials, politicians, and scholars—especially in the developing world. In China, for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's review of tertiary education identified a range of policy problems facing the nation as it moves toward a more market-oriented economy and as demand for higher education effectively doubles in 10 years. These policy issues ranged from student loans to the need for reliable,

timely information about the demand for and value of particular skills and qualifications.⁵

DIVERSIFICATION OF DELIVERY

As demand continues to grow, supply is differentiating. Video streaming, tapes, and other technological innovations mean that classrooms are no longer the cornerstones of learning. Now that "where" is not so much a factor, learners have a wider range of options of when, what, and how to learn, along with whose content to use. And it makes little difference whether they do so in person or virtually.

Seven of the world's 10 largest tertiary providers of distance learning are in the developing world. The two largest, both enrolling over half a million students, are in Turkey and China.

Distance education is not all in the hands of state-owned or controlled institutions, however. Indeed, corporations, notably those in the U.S., have created an entire education industry that measures its success by revenues and economic efficiencies rather than test scores or research. Looking at this trend, the leaders of universities need to make an assessment: Does distance education fit with the business model and culture of their institutions? Or does it take them into a marketplace where mass providers establish price points that threaten broader standards of institutional quality? These challenges clearly raise many questions with regard to regulation, evaluation, and assessment that institutions of higher education in the 21st century will need to address.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONTENT OF RESEARCH AND LEARNING

The impact of globalization on the content of research and learning at both public and private institutions raises a wide spectrum of questions to explore, such as: What kind of curriculum will prepare global citizens for the rich opportunities of shared learning? How can institutions leverage the web of affiliations between scores of universities in all corners of the world?

Beyond these initial questions, it is vital that universities actively engage in shaping globalization through research. Here are two speculative and perhaps idiosyncratic themes for such inquiry:

The first issue is how to ameliorate the awful immediate outcomes that globalization has and will have for many people. Historically, disparities between rich and poor have increased during every phase of globalization; it is only in the longer term that benefits have trickled down to all. The public policy challenge lies in finding a way to reduce the inequitable distribution of benefits of globalization, both within and between nations. This challenge need not be confined to the distribution of capital but should also encompass better access to public health services and to basic education of a higher quality. How to achieve these redistributive effects in the developing world—or even in the industrialized nations—is no small question and is worthy of the best minds.

Second, we might also explore how this current wave of globalization (as compared to previous eras of exploration, colonization, industrialization, and innovation) will change the skills and knowledge required to participate effectively in the social institutions of the 21st century. Whether because of the scale, the rate of change, or the size of the rewards that this century's globalization is generating, we will need to know if the skill set required is fundamentally different from the one required yesterday.

Addressing both these questions, Howard Gardner argues that the biggest and most pressing

intellectual issues of the 21st century are problems that are intractable to single-discipline solutions: poverty reduction, the HIV pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, and personal privacy in an Internet-connected world. All these require interdisciplinary thinking. To become effective members of the teams that tackle these problems, Gardner suggests today's students need to graduate with these competencies:

- the ability to work with, lead, and influence others from a wide range of fields and cultures;
- the capacity and willingness to learn from success and failure;
- a highly developed skill in synthesizing knowledge and insights from different domains;
- oral and written communication skills, with particular emphasis on rendering complex ideas in accessible and persuasive language; and
- the ability to move across domains.⁶

Gardner is right, and that means that what is taught and learned in liberal arts colleges and how it is taught and learned need to change.

Clearly, globalization affects every aspect of higher education. Universities should not assume the role of victims, but rather should seize the day by addressing the most pressing questions posed by globalization:

- Do we need new approaches to how learning is structured and evaluated in light of recent trends in private-sector provision, distance learning, and student diversity?
- How do we ameliorate the disparities between rich and poor and speed the trickle-down of globalization's benefits?
- And finally, how do we refine the competencies needed to solve the pressing problems of a globalized world? Will a traditional liberal education carried out in a university setting be up to the task?

NOTES

1. Philip G. Altbach, "Why Higher Education Is Not a Global Commodity," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11 May 2001.

2. Philip G. Altbach, "Globalization and the University: Myths and Realities in an Unequal World," *Tertiary Education & Management*, No. 1, 2004, p. 1. See also idem, "Higher Education Crosses Borders," *Change*, March/April 2004.

3. Anthony Bohm et al., *Global Student Mobility 2025: Forecasts of the Global Demand for International Higher Education* (Sydney: IDP Education Australia, 2002).

4. Task Force on Higher Education and Society, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2000).

5. *Thematic Review of the First Years of Tertiary Education: Country Note, People's Republic of China* (Paris: OECD, 2001).

6. Howard Gardner, "How Education Changes: Consideration of History, Science, and Values," in Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco and Desirée B. Qin-Hilliard, eds., *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Using the Web pages listed in the Appendix, compare the number of African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American men and women graduates (BA/BS, MA/MS, and Ph.D.) of college to those of Caucasians. How does this compare to the arguments in the readings by Sarah Willie and Leslie Miller-Bernal?

Using the Web, compare the number and size of institutions of higher education in your area. Go to the Web pages of these colleges and compare their missions and criteria for acceptance. How does this information compare with the arguments made by Zelda Gamson and Kevin Dougherty?

Using an academic database (restricting your search to refereed journals only) find the most recent academic literature on colleges and global education.

PART IX

EDUCATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Children around the world attend school, but their goals and experiences vary greatly. For some, the goal is a university education and professional degrees. For others, basic literacy is all they can hope to achieve, regardless of ability. Not long ago in human history, education was considerably less formal than it is today; during the socialization process, parents, relatives, and elders taught children the skills they would need to survive. Early scholars were primarily religious figures, who studied to read and interpret religious texts. However, with industrialization and now globalization, new forces are driving education and educational reform as the growth of industry, trade, international business, and demands for an educated workforce are now heard around the world (Stewart, 2005).

Sociologists of education are particularly interested in the differences in educational systems in world countries because those differences help to put their own systems into a new perspective. The following paragraphs summarize several themes in comparative studies of education.

Most countries provide free education for required basic literacy skills, and many require schooling to the age of 16. Some countries provide free education through the university level for those who qualify. Though variations in educational systems around the world are great, there are also areas of similarity and competition (Boli, Ramirez, & Meyer, 1985; Zhao, 2005). Zhao points out the attempts by various countries to copy successful strategies of competitors, but warns that cultures and, therefore, educational systems cannot be transported from one culture to another.

Just as countries are divided by economic systems and wealth into center or core areas and poorer peripheral areas, so too do educational systems reflect the economic and political institutions of a given society and its place in the world system. Within countries, there are rich and poor families, and their educational levels reflect their economic status in their particular society. Distinctions between countries lie at the base of many comparative studies and sometimes reflect the former colonial status of countries.

Several sociologists have traced the origins of modern systems to former colonial systems. For instance, former British colonies often include classical British literature in their curriculum and require the British "O" and "A"-level (vocational and university entrance) examinations at the completion of high school and for entrance to university. However, critics argue that this type of system is not preparing all citizens for the realities

of their world because “O”-level students do not always receive the same amount or quality of education (Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, 1987).

An important area of research is comparative international testing. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the International Association of the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) compare scores of children around the world in literacy, mathematics, science, civic education, and foreign language. These rankings provide information on the similarities, differences, and effects of development on educational systems. The low scores of U.S. students are of concern to educators and governments. It is necessary to exercise caution, however, when interpreting international data, because data gathered in countries is not always standardized, despite United Nations guidelines. Therefore, when reporting results, comparative studies must take this into account. In the first reading, David Baker and Gerald LeTendre discuss the growing necessity for formal education in the world and the similarities in content, even if these systems adapt education to meet national needs.

Another group of studies compares the curricula of nations and changes in those curricula to determine how similar and different they are. Findings generally support a convergence of curricular themes across nations, reflecting the interdependence of nations (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000) as described in the reading in this part by Elizabeth McEneaney and John Meyer. Although there are commonalities in educational systems around the world, many researchers question whether that convergence is good for all members of all societies, especially students from peripheral Third World countries. These scholars suggest that learning to read materials relevant to the needs of rural farmers, for example, would be more appropriate for some members of society than learning Latin. This is a key point made by educational reformers Ivan Illich (see Part X) and Paulo Freire (1973, 1995) with regard to Latin America and other developing regions.

Every society expects schools to help in the transition of young people from school-to-work. The school-to-work transition has stimulated research in recent years, especially comparisons across societies. The third reading, by Alan Kerckhoff, explores the school-to-work transition and its effect on student placement, stratification systems, and societies. In his reading, Kerckhoff compares school-to-work plans of several European countries and the United States.

Another subject of research is the experiences and preparation that schooling provides to children around the world. Children have very different experiences in schools. Race, class, and gender all affect what chances a child has to achieve in school. For instance, a book by Edith W. King illustrates these differences in accounts of children around the world; most poignant are the cases of girls in some Middle Eastern and African countries who have limited opportunities in life, face female genital mutilation, and receive much less education than their brothers (King, 1999). The reading by Gene Sperling provides data on educational differences around the world and makes the case for educating the poorest girls and boys if countries are to improve the status of their citizens.

Finally, Martin Carnoy and Diana Rhoten look at the effect of globalization on educational change and the transmission of knowledge. They point out globalization’s impact on change in terms of the labor market, information technology, financing of schools, and comparison of test standards across nations.

As countries of the world become more interdependent and share institutional systems, including education, it will continue to be important to study the processes of globalization, urbanization, development, and change around the world.

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THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OF NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS

DAVID P. BAKER AND GERALD K. LeTENDRE

All societies must prepare the next generation to carry out the roles necessary for survival. In some cases this education is largely informal, received from parents, elders, and older siblings. More and more formal schooling is necessary for making it in today's world, and the content, seen as necessary, tends to be comparable across nations because all nations have similar needs for an educated citizenry to carry out tasks for the nation's well-being in the global system. Yet each nation adapts to meet its individual needs and cultural patterns. The authors discuss global trends in education as they impact national educational systems.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why is spending money on schools a budget priority in most nations?
2. What aspects of education do nations adapt from global educational systems and trends?

3. Is it inevitable that global trends will influence local school systems around the world?
4. Compare this reading to those in previous chapters. How do you think school organization and roles, the informal system, school environments, and stratification are similar worldwide?

Whatever success human society has mustered over the past hundred years is in large measure a result of widespread educational investment by nations in the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of all children. Schools are part of the essential fabric of life in a modern society. Although schools are so commonplace we often overlook them, they play a crucial role in the making of our social world. In the global community, a high-quality public system of education is the sine qua non of a modern democratic society. Many economists and others who

study how nations develop stress that high-quality schools are essential for the human capital development and economic growth of nations. Beyond economic development, a nation would be hard-pressed to consider itself a functioning country without a national system of education.

With all the importance attached to schools, it is no wonder that politicians and policy makers around the world place much emphasis on providing quality public education to their constituents. Operating and regulating a nation's schools—public or private—is of extreme importance to national leaders, and governments everywhere guide and direct the kind of education that children receive. In a very short time, public schooling has become the major means by which governments try to promote positive economic change, strengthen national identity, and inculcate citizenship values and behavior in entire populations of people. Consequently there is incessant public discussion about schooling, and political campaigns in all sorts of nations make educational policy and the performance of schools a central point.

By and large, most people most of the time think about education as solely a national undertaking. The trends we examine here, however, lead to quite a different vision, one where there is a considerable global process at work. To make sense of this contrasting globalized world of education, it is helpful first to describe the common image of schooling as a national enterprise. It is a vision with several components.

The everyday vision of schooling as a national enterprise sees it as chiefly a unique product of a nation's culture and governmental effort to foster prosperity for its citizens. This is thought to be true regardless of the particular level of governance of schools within the nation. It is common, then, to refer to French, Chilean, Japanese, American, and South African (or any nation's) schools as separate national entities. After all, what could be more deeply embedded in a nation's society than its schools preparing children for future adult lives in that country? The reigning image of education today is that schools are designed and managed within a national context for the specific needs and goals of a particular nation.

This vision also assumes that schooling is organized to educate and socialize children in a specific way that is directly linked to the future welfare of a particular nation. For example, German schools are thought to produce German adults with the technical skills, linguistic capabilities, and cultural awareness necessary to carry forth the entity of Germany into the future. A national product of educated citizens issuing forth from the school system is the main image of what schooling does in every nation. Educators may be aware of the larger global world, but their predominant image of a nation's schools is as a means to pass on a sense of national uniqueness and heritage, as well as meet the technical needs of its particular labor market. This image implies that schooling is limited to the specific needs of a nation, therefore schooling would not expand except as is needed for national reasons. Nor would schools engage in education that is separable from traditional values of the nation. Additionally, this image of schooling holds that because labor markets are hierarchical, so should schooling be hierarchical. For efficiency, the argument continues, the best and the brightest of a nation deserve the best educational opportunities for the best national outcomes, and those with lesser endowments should receive less. All of this is wrapped up in the picture of a national system of education operating uniquely to produce efficiently adults with the kind of skill necessary for a range of tasks in the labor market and adult life within a national context.

This common image of schooling bound up in a national context is further reinforced by the rhetoric of official comparisons of education across nations (Schümer, 2004). Observing schooling across nations is thought to reveal significant differences in specific and unique national features causing relative differences in academic outcomes, such as national achievement among nations. A common extension of this idea is that the specific characteristics of a nation's schools are partly responsible for its relative position in the world's economy, and that nations are different enough from one another in their implementation of education to make it possible to learn unique lessons from one

another on how to develop and manage schools better. Listen to how the founder of modern empirical comparison of academic outcomes of nations' schools in the late 1960s, Torsten Husén, describes the logic behind cross-national studies:

The more we have recognized education as an investment in human resources and as an instrument for bringing about economic growth and social change, the stronger has been the need to investigate the roots of the educational systems of which the world around us shows such a striking diversity. In the search for causative factors behind the development and "productivity" of educational systems there is a need for empirical data and for cross-nationally valid variables pertaining to these systems as they actually function. (Husén, 1967, p. 19, emphasis added)

Now listen to how he perceives schooling as inseparable from national context: "Any educational system can only be fully understood in the context of the culture, traditions, history and general social structure of the nation it is designed to serve" (p. 220, emphasis added).

This image of national schooling is how many think the educational world works, but ultimately it is mostly inaccurate, and becoming more so every moment. In spite of the fact that nations (and their subunits, provinces, and states) have immediate political and fiduciary control over schooling, education as an institution has become a global enterprise. We show here that there are all kinds of trends suggesting that ideas and demands and expectations for what school can, and should, do for a society have developed well beyond any particular national context. The same global ideas, demands, and expectations filter into nations, greatly shaping their schools in union with schools all over the world. Over the last century, there have been both steady expansion of schooling into our daily lives and deepening of education's meaning for things people hold dear. The current situation in schooling across nations is wholly unpredictable from the image of unique national models of schooling.

All the while that schooling has been considered a national technical project, from nation to nation considerable global forces are at work

shaping and changing schooling in fundamental ways that many people are unaware of as they view education mostly from a national perspective. But just like the shrinking of the world's marketplace, media, and politics, education too is undergoing intensive globalization. Whether you find them in Mexico City, a small town in Pennsylvania, or in rural Kenya, schools all over the world appear to run in much the same way everywhere. Whether we were educated in a public school in New York City or a Catholic school in Tokyo, we experienced the same basic patterns of education. Today we can walk into almost any public school around the world and be able to understand what is going on, even though the specifics of the lesson might be totally incomprehensible. Even if we do not know the language, social mores, or dominant religious dogma of a country, we can still identify central features and make sense of the general patterns when we step into a school there. We all recognize schooling just about everywhere because it entails a similar set of ideas about education held consistently throughout the world. This commonality—and the amazing story of what produces it—often goes unobserved, and its substantial consequences on the everyday world of students, parents, teachers, and administrators remain mostly unappreciated.

...[W]orldwide forces interact with local ones to create educational change among students, their families, teachers, and administrators in your neighborhood school. Although we focus on mathematics and science in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades, we generalize to all academic subjects in elementary and secondary schooling. We tell this story of globalized education through nine separate tales of educational trends, using some of an ever-growing stream of complex information intended to compare schooling across many nations.

Over the past three decades, there has been an explosion of information comparing schools and their outcomes, particularly the academic achievement of their students across nations. In most nations, this kind of information has become part of the dialogue about education improvement. But this information is often

misinterpreted or misused, deliberately picked through for certain results and highlighting a particular political position within a national debate. Two good examples are the massive debates resulting from the Reagan administration's *Nation at Risk* report, with its overly gratuitous negative misinterpretation of American student performance relative to other nations (Bradburn, Haertel, Schwillie, & Torney-Purta, 1991), and last year's debate in Germany over the causes of achievement differences among its provinces on the international assessment called PISA, in which politicians attributed educational outcomes to all sorts of unrelated policies.

With this recent flood of international information about schooling in various nations, it is not clear that national policy makers, educators, and even some policy analysts really understand how to interpret such data in conjunction with the global forces driving their school systems. We recognize that educational policy for running and improving schools is mostly aimed at national or subnational issues, and always will be. As the saying goes, all politics is local. Policy makers all over the globe have been organizing and reorganizing national school systems nationally or seminationally since at least the end of World War II, and in some nations well before that. But there is another major part of the story (increasingly becoming the main part of the story), namely, the effects of the globalization of schooling. As national and local educators alike are bombarded with comparative information that shows the results of this international process, the need to understand education on a more global level is inescapable in today's world.

Further, how global trends affect the operation of local schools is little understood by legislators and administrators who regulate and oversee them. These effects, we strongly suspect, will only increase in the future, with yet more globalization accompanied and reinforced by a growing array of international tests, studies, and politically motivated comparisons as well as the workings of numerous multinational and regional agencies such as the World Bank, OECD, and development foundations (see, for example, Dale & Robertson, 2002). . . .

Using analyses of the data from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), we give the reader a look at how schools work around the world, and how complex forces are affecting all nations, shaping both their understanding of educational problems and solutions to them. . . .

SUBPLOT ONE: THE WORLDWIDE SUCCESS OF MASS SCHOOLING

In developing tales about cross-national trends in education, we are struck by how successful schooling is in the world. But we don't mean just any kind of schooling; rather, we refer to a particularly successful type of schooling that has spread around the world and has become the *singular model* of educating children, regardless of a nation's political regime, level of economic wealth, cultural heritage, and social problems. This is often referred to as *state-sponsored mass schooling*, or "mass schooling" for short. It is mostly public schooling for large masses of children, hence the name.

The history of the spread of public mass schooling and its accompanying mass enrollments around the world is the biggest success story ever known about the implementation of education (Fuller & Robinson, 1992). Funding for schooling now rivals military and other social welfare expenditures in most national budgets, and educational spending continues to grow worldwide.

Comparing mass schooling with that of the education in premodern societies that has gone on throughout most of the history of human civilization shows how revolutionary an idea mass schooling really is. For most of recorded history, education was practical, situational, and highly limited—as with an apprenticeship to gain a set of skills—and it often did not require literacy. Most of the time, children learned all they needed to know within their family, clan, or tribe. Much of the content of premodern formal schooling was "religious" in nature: learning the legends, beliefs, and sacred traditions of a people

or culture, and some limited literacy for reading religious texts. It was in this situation that pre-modern schooling became most elaborated; a small, elite group of students were taught how to read, write, and memorize the texts important to that culture. Practical apprenticeships were education for some nonelites, but this was not available for all and was aimed at a specific craft.

This all started to change some 150 to 200 years ago with the rise of mass schooling in many Western nations. There were still elite forms of education, but over time schooling was developed in principle for all children to learn academic skills through a more or less common curricula. Since then mass schooling has become one of the most impressive cases of successful transmission of a cultural model in the history of human society, developing and spreading in a relatively short time without limitations. Using mass schooling, most nations have achieved mass literacy within just the last hundred years, and currently there are no real alternatives to mass schooling anywhere. Full enrollment in elementary education was achieved before the middle of the twentieth century in wealthier nations and over the next forty years in poorer nations. Mass secondary education expanded to the same full enrollment a decade or two after elementary reached full enrollment, and the growth of higher education continues unabated in many nations today. Mass schooling has developed and intensified over time as an institution, deepening its meaning for everyday life. A big part of our story is what effects this resilient institution has on students, families, teachers, and school administrators.

SUBPLOT TWO: SCHOOLING IS AN INSTITUTION

At the core of the spread of mass schooling is a set of fundamental ideas that were unique just a short time ago but now have become widely accepted and even cherished. For instance, the ideas that all children should be educated; that the nation has an interest in this and should

furnish funds; that education is for the collective good; that children should start early and receive continuous instruction for a relatively large number of years; that tradition of statuses such as race, gender, religion, or language should not be barriers to mass schooling; and that academic cognitive skills are useful to all children, are institutional foundations that underpin and give modern schooling widespread meaning in society. Adding to these powerful ideas is the rise of the exclusive currency of the educational credential, required to hold almost any position in labor markets all over the world. Now in human society, formal schooling has an unprecedented monopoly on the issuing and control of these credentials that lead to so many aspects of adult life.

Our stories lead us to appreciate how these ideas about mass schooling have formed a broad globalizing process making schooling a pervasive and powerful institution. As we have just described, the schooling-as-a-national-enterprise perspective tends not to appreciate the complex institutional nature of education, or its ability to reach across national borders as easily as the ideas behind modern capitalism and democratic government have spread worldwide. A big part of this underlying subplot is what is happening to the institution of mass education, more than what is happening educationally in anyone nation, or even type of nation.

Education is an institution, like modern health care or the family, that may take on differing forms from nation to nation and even from region to region within a nation, but that at a deeper level is strongly affixed to global norms and rules about what education is and how schools should operate. If one turns a blind eye toward the image of schooling as a world institution, one is easily led astray in interpreting trends in schools, particularly cross-national trends that appear to differ so much from our individual experience (chiefly with a particular nation's schooling).

The trends . . . are essentially meaningless without the aid of this institutional perspective. For example, why is it that in all the TIMSS nations the educational background of parents has

a large impact on school achievement even though school quality has been on the increase over the past three decades? Why have gender differences in eighth grade mathematics almost vanished across so many national school systems? Why do teachers from diverse nations have similar core beliefs about the role of teaching and the role of the student? Why have so many national administrations of schooling produced a paradoxical mix of centralized and decentralized operating procedures for managing schools? The answers to these questions . . . are found in understanding the consequences of the deepening of institutional ideas about mass schooling and how nations respond to this institutional force.

Certainly not all nations are alike; nor do they experience global institutional forces in exactly the same way. Patterns of cross-national differences within overall trends help us detect the larger institutional picture, but without the notion of a world institution these trends are little more than cross-national curiosities, like so many unexplained relics from a nineteenth-century travel adventure.

We admit that it is easier to say “institutional perspective” than it is to communicate exactly what that means. In part this is because institutions themselves are simultaneously so fundamental to our behavior and so powerful in constructing how we make sense of our daily world that they are hard to observe. All of us are part of institutions, within them more than we are outside observing them. Historians have long known that time offers a useful perspective on institutions, and to a degree we use that perspective here. Also, cross-national difference, or a perspective from multiple places, is a useful technique to observe institutions. If we hold the social world like a prism at just at the right angle to the light, we can see something of its institutional structure underneath; cross-national analyses help make that happen.

Institutions are the building blocks of human society at any time or place. By *institution* we do not mean a specific place with bricks and mortar, as in the vernacular sense that a particular mental hospital is an institution. Instead we mean a

set of rules for behavior and social roles to be played in a particular sector of life. Institution is more process than entity, more cognitive than physical, powerful in its control of human behavior through the production of shared meaning in all realms of human existence. The social world is a world of social institutions providing meanings and values about how to think and act in the everyday world. Individuals and collectives—formal organizations, informal groups, and the individual human—obtain realities through social institutions. From an institutional perspective, the very essence of social change is institutional change (see Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974). In terms of schooling as an institution, we borrow an analogy from educational historians Larry Cuban and David Tyack: the institutionalness of education constitutes the “grammar” of how things work in schools.

Our point here is that to a large extent the grammar of schooling is global. This means that much of the grammar of schools and the ideas behind it are reproduced and reinforced at a global level. Every individual school is still influenced by local, regional, and national factors, but the basic image of a school—what it is and what it should do—is commonly defined in the same way globally. Consequently, the organization of national school systems (French, German, American, and so on) is now influenced by transnational forces that are beyond the control of national policy makers, politicians, and educators themselves yet appear to be part of their everyday world. We do not mean to say that the United Nations or other powerful multinational agencies overtly force nations to do and think in the same way about schooling. Rather, widespread understanding repeatedly communicated across nations, resulting in common acceptance of ideas, leads to standardization and similar meanings, all happening in a soft, almost imperceptible, taken-for-granted way.

As a global institution, schooling has developed powerful world values and beliefs about children, learning, teaching, and the administration of schools. Over a thirty-year research program with colleagues, institutional theorist

and comparative sociologist John Meyer has convincingly established a strong case for thinking about schooling as a product of a world culture that renders education as a resilient and powerful institution in modern society (see, as examples, Baker, 1999; Fuller & Rubinson, 1992; Meyer, 1977; Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). They have shown that mass schooling takes similar forms throughout the world, and that there are common beliefs in what schooling can and should do for society. This process, they argue, has to a large degree been driven by a dynamic world culture.

By *world culture*, we do not mean a culture that is void, ersatz, or not historical. Institutionalists see a dynamic world culture that (for better or worse) evolved out of Western ideals of rationality and purposeful action (Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974). Rationality as a pervasive cultural product (some would say even a hegemonic product) of the historical rise of the West serves to bureaucratize, marketize, individuate, and homogenize the institutions of the world (Finnemore, 1996; Scott & Meyer, 1994; Thomas, Ramirez, Boli, & Meyer, 1987). Homogenization produces consistent norms of behavior across a set of modern institutions, thus tying institutions such as the modern nation state and formal education together in a tight political sphere. Rationality, along with its offshoots of marketization, individualization, bureaucratization, and homogenization, plays the tune that all modern global institutions march to, but it is itself a cultural product and acts as such throughout the social system.

All this is not to suggest that local and national cultures do not have influence in schooling; they do. Perhaps a better way to think of culture is in terms of a *dynamic mix of cultures*, as discussed in comparative, anthropological studies. Global institutions can traverse and shape local, regional, or national versions of particular areas of human life such as education. Thinking from the perspective of wide-open dynamics of culture, national cultures—if they exist at all—have only vague boundaries. Culture is far too dynamic to stay purely national, yet subglobal cultures do mix with global ones (see LeTendre,

2000; Spindler, 1974; Spindler & Spindler, 1990; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

Culture is a continuous transforming process, often shaped by economic, political, or social change (see Spindler & Spindler, 1990). From this perspective, schools do not simply transmit culture; they are themselves cultural products not contained within national borders. In Louise Spindler's important book on culture and society, *Culture, Change, and Modernization*, she writes:

Culture . . . refers to shared designs for living. It is not the people or things or behaviors themselves. Culture can be equated with the *shared models* people carry in their minds for perceiving, relating to, and interpreting the world around them. . . . Sociocultural systems therefore include customary, agreed upon, *institutionalized solutions* which influence most individuals to behave in a predictable manner most of the time, but never all of the time. [1977, pp. 4–5; emphasis added]

One of the major consequences of a dynamic cultural model is that world cultures are easily imagined, as are global or transnational institutional solutions applied to common human problems across nations (Boli & Thomas, 1999).

An institution heavily shaped by a world culture of schooling more accurately depicts the cross-national trends we observe here than a vision of many national cultures of schooling operating independently. Further, such a perspective offers a rich description of how organizations such as schools and institutional ideas interact to produce consequences for the people participating in them. This also offers us a way to think about what will change in schooling in the future, and this leads us to the last of our subplots, educational change.

SUBPLOT THREE: EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IS INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Institutions by their very nature impart deep meaning to our everyday world; hence they are resistant to change. When we go to a hospital, we expect things to run in pretty much the same way

the last time we were there. If we were to experience a completely different organization each time we had to rely on a hospital for our health care, most of us would be extremely upset. The same is true for schools. Change does occur, but most of us expect that basic patterns of interaction have not changed all that much from when we were in school. But the schooling and the political discussions surrounding it, in most nations, are full of rhetoric about change.

In fact, institutions do change, and institutional theorists have recognized this for some time. They tend to see two main types of force that make for institutional change: those outside the institution itself and those working from within. Outside forces tend to be large and progress over a long historical period. They also interact between institutions over time. Forces from within an institution also make change, often in much shorter time. The stories here about cross-national trends lead us to think about change in both ways. In terms of the former, a number of our tales are about how school and family as institutions interact and create a situation for substantial change in both. Internal institutional change of mass schooling is also evident in other tales, and in fact we end up seeing far more of it than change from the outside.

There are primarily two types of internal force at work that have brought change and will likely continue to do so in the near future. First is the force of standardization and universalism, meaning that organizations and individuals within a particular institution tend to become more similar over time and place. The pioneering works of sociologists of neoinstitutionalism show that there are strong global tendencies toward homogeneity within the education sector. . . .

The second type of endogenous change in institutions occurs through the process of institutionalization itself. In other words, as a particular institutional pattern deepens and spreads, it creates wider consequences that in turn have an impact on the original pattern. We sense this kind of process is at play in a number of our stories. For example, the deepening link between school credentials from mass schooling and the labor

market has created in recent times increased pressure on families to seek help outside school for children, which in turn has an impact on the way schools themselves are doing things. . . .

Mass schooling is the predominant model of education in the world today. It pervades every part of people's lives in modern society and creates a culture of education unparalleled in human existence. Although nations have made, and will continue to make, their own modifications to the model, mass education chiefly develops as a world institution. But it is far from static or monolithic; global forces dynamically interact with national ones and schooling often changes unpredictably. This is the image of institutional change that we take to . . . cross-national trends in schooling.

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THE CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM

An Institutional Perspective

ELIZABETH H. McENEANEY AND JOHN W. MEYER

Global expansion of education results in “expanded universal citizenry” and similar concerns across educational systems regarding inequality and effects of teaching, hidden curricula, practices resulting in reproduction of classes, and other similar issues. In this reading Elizabeth McEneaney and John Meyer compare a stratification perspective that emphasizes the allocation of individuals in society to that of an institutionalist perspective that focuses more on standardization of curriculum at the global level. They use the latter to describe five dimensions of curricular change. In doing so, they develop an argument that connects the curriculum in the world’s classrooms to “world-level” change.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does it mean to take a stratification or an institutionalist perspective in understanding curriculum?
2. How are these two perspectives similar to or different from the perspectives described in the reading by David Baker and Gerald LeTendre?
3. What do these five dimensions of curricular change mean in terms of curriculum in the classrooms with which you are most familiar?

The educational system is foundational in contemporary society, providing the basic substantive content thought to be necessary for

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society as it is, and for society as it is to become in a future imagined community (Anderson, 1991). Schooled education is supposed to provide the cultural content required for a very wide and increasing variety of modern roles. And it provides the most legitimated substantive basis for allocation of people into roles running from the occupational and economic, the political and organizational, and even personal and familial relationships. For all of these types of roles, socialization and training through education are understood to provide the underlying cultural content.

Two broad aspects of education are involved. The one that has received predominant attention in the research literature highlights the allocational function of education, with subsequent implications for inequalities in curricular content. The other aspect stresses how mass educational systems are involved in a very different type of fundamental social change—the construction of participatory and equal individual persons as the primary social unit in society. Far from educational sorting and stratifying, this second function is built on the principle of an expanded universal citizenry, regardless of a student's social status. This function of education has many implications for curricular content; these are, to some degree, in tension with the demands on the curriculum to respond to schooling's allocational role. . . .

ALLOCATION IN A DIFFERENTIATED SOCIAL WORLD

Current work in the sociology of education gives surprisingly little attention to the substantive content of the curriculum. In this section, and in the following one, we explain why this follows from the dominant intellectual perspectives. Then we turn to alternate perspectives that suggest a refocusing of research efforts on the analysis of the curriculum.

The view exerting the most leverage on sociological research on the curriculum is that as modern society becomes increasingly differentiated,

education plays the central part in allocating individuals into the differentiated social roles involved. Attention has gone to the stratificational side and to the awareness that education is the crucial factor in producing stratified outcomes (e.g., Arum & Shavit, 1995; Blau & Duncan, 1967; Caspi, Wright, Moffett, & Silva, 1998; Shanahan, Elder, & Miech, 1997). The focus has not been on the actual cultural content built into education but on the way variations in schooled content are mechanisms in social allocation. Thus Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) saw French education as producing and selecting people in terms of quite arbitrary cultural capital; Collins (1979 and elsewhere) supposed that the content and values involved were (perhaps somewhat less arbitrarily) those of dominant groups; Apple (1990) saw the culture involved as reinforcing a system of economic dominance.

Thus curriculum, in the contemporary sociology of education, refers to two phenomena little related to substantive content. First, to those concerned with inequalities in achievement and attainment, it refers to educational tracking. The idea is that curricular tracks are variably and unequally available to students of different social status, gender, or ethnicity, and that participation in these different tracks affects a variety of desired outcomes. Studies focusing on tracking take an interest in the substantive curriculum mainly when variations in it seem clearly related to prior or subsequent social stratification. They do not, for instance, attend to what is studied in mathematics courses: they attend to whether variation in gender is related to variation in the number or to hierarchical levels of the courses that are taken.

Second, curriculum means a hidden curriculum. The social arrangements of school and classroom are thought to communicate cultural content. Some ideas here stress the universalized participation involved in the expectations communicated (Dreeben, 1968; Parsons, 1962). More often, attention goes again to the stratification system: variations in students' status produce variation in the implicit knowledge built

into their instruction, or they produce exclusion from higher expectations and opportunities. Another focus of attention is that the implicit knowledge carried in the system is consistent only with the arbitrary culture of higher status groups, so that lower status students are disadvantaged. It turns out then, that students acquire a kind of membership in society—a membership that may sharply differ for those being trained to command and those being trained to obey. The substantive content of the knowledge involved is less important than the roles being acquired—and the research tradition stresses status variation in these roles.

BEYOND THE CONCERN WITH STRATIFICATION

The research inattention to curricular content arises not because sociologists think the matter unimportant, but because they tend to see it as obvious. In this, they share in a common modern culture in which the importance of education—and the main lines of the curriculum—are highly institutionalized social and individual goods.

Both mass and elite education have expanded enormously in the modern period, with increasingly taken-for-granted assumptions that these structures are central ingredients of both individual and societal development. The social scientific baseline theory involved is functional: education is necessary for appropriate socioeconomic and technological development (while perhaps preserving existing class, gender and ethnic/racial hierarchies), and its content is driven by the functional exigencies of that project. Mass education produces a population suited for participation in this industrial, capitalist order: elite education produces the leading and specialist components. From this point of view, the details of an educational system's curricular content follow straightforwardly from social structures or characteristics in the real and particular society at hand. Curricular timetables, textbooks, and other materials are the end products of power struggles of varying intensity to define the "one

best way" of meeting national (or in some cases subnational) needs. Case studies focus on the more spectacular conflicts (Carnochan, 1993; Larson, 1989), far less on the end products of these conflicts. In an earlier period in which the institutionalized dominance of education was less well established, social theorists like Durkheim (1922/1956) felt it necessary to argue the matter, spelling out a story of the necessary content of modern education. Now it is mostly established.

This means that in both the common culture and in sociological discourse, attention goes not to the main and now obvious aspects of the curriculum, but to the margins where social uncertainty and conflict appear. So both the public and the sociologists attend to more peripheral issues, that are paradoxically associated with more intense conflict than core aspects of the curriculum. Are women and minorities adequately represented in history and literature? What is the place of detailed sex education? Which strategies for reading instruction are best? Is prayer appropriate, or instruction in the Bible? How much effort, and what kind, should go into writing training? Should parents be required to pay in order for their child to participate in so-called extracurricular activities? The main outlines—the investments of time and instruction in national language, mathematics, science, social science, the arts, and physical education—are little analyzed.

The lack of attention to curricular content in these areas is surprising given that student outcomes and achievement are increasingly subject to intensive international comparison (most recently, for example, in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study [Beatty, 1997]). The actual content of these tests receives virtually no attention, just as the content of classroom instructional materials and practice and curricular benchmarks and standards escape analysis in themselves. In such matters, if a modern sociologist has some information, it is because the sociologist has children in school—the research literature has little to say.

The taken-for-granted quality of the curriculum accounts for the peculiarly deflected modern

sociological critique of it noted previously. The sociologists imagine that the functionally natural curriculum may be distorted by forces of power and interest, and/or by inertial tradition. Theories are about these possible distortions, not the main structure itself.

One set of the conflict theories suggests that the curriculum may be used to reproduce arbitrary stratificational hierarchies. Thus functionally useless knowledge—linked to the tastes of higher status groups—is used to perpetuate class distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Alternately, dominant ethnic, cultural, or gender forces may use the educational system to reinforce their dominance (Collins, 1979; Frazier & Sadker, 1973) and gain advantages in educational selection.

In a second set of critical (but more functional) theories, such processes may be reinforced by tracking systems differentially training children from different classes (e.g., Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Giroux, 1981), or by giving differential access to the important knowledge. The knowledge is seen as functional, but tracks and variations in hidden curricula may transmit it in differential and unfair ways, reproducing class structures. This line of argument is highly developed in British curricular research (Bernstein, 1990; Goodson, 1987, 1992) and other countries where track differences have been extreme (e.g., Broaded, 1997, on Taiwan). But many studies also examine carefully the somewhat more muted versions in the United States (e.g., Gamoran, 1992; Hallinan, 1987; Oakes, 1985). A variation on the theme of tracking is the considerable attention given to differential access to opportunities to learn (e.g., Stevenson, Schiller, & Schneider, 1994). Scholarly attention to the stratificational effects of the hidden curriculum is also widespread (Anyon, 1980; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Gillborn, 1992; Weisz & Kanpol, 1990; Willis, 1981).

Third, in more extreme critical theories, the whole curricular structure may be distorted in hegemonic reinforcement of a whole social structure that is itself dominated by class interest and power. The curriculum may reinforce, not

modernity but tradition or dominance, lending the weight of legitimacy to what should be seen as illicit past or present hegemony (Apple, 1990; Bacchus, 1996; Freire, 1970). The view here is that education should be functional for a more progressive society, but is in fact a celebration of the asymmetrical power built into the present society as a whole, and turns this power into legitimated authority. These studies, as well as those highlighting the hidden curriculum, have been critiqued primarily on a methodological basis by Ladwig (1996).

AN INSTITUTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE CURRICULUM

We turn now to a conception of education, and the curriculum, as an institutionalized system building a broad cultural base or model of modern society that emphasizes expanded and universal participation. As opposed to approaches aiming to explain variation, institutionalist theories seek to explain isomorphism or standardization of social phenomena, often as it occurs at the global level. Recent institutionalist perspectives on education question a fundamental, yet taken for granted, theory that societal development is generated solely and in an aggregated fashion through the development of individuals who have appropriate training, attitudes, and levels of productivity. Based on such an understanding, reformers routinely point to the inadequate level of some aspect of societal development and propose changes in state-sponsored development of individual persons (e.g., formal mass education). Yet, the presumed links in the long causal chain theoretically leading to societal development have not been established empirically (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). Institutional views of education emphasize the normative, ideological basis for this theorized prescription for development, and therefore, turn their attention to the proliferation of organizational forms and cultural models that conform to the values implicit in this taken-for-granted theory of societal development. Resonance with these values may be enough to

sustain change, aside from actual effects on children, workers, or societies. Such a perspective has been used to account for dramatic increases in mass educational enrollments that appear to be decoupled from material conditions within nation-states (Meyer, Ramirez, et al., 1992), and can be usefully applied to analysis of the change and diffusion of curricular forms as well.

Two shifts in perspective from those discussed in the previous section are involved. First, attention is given to the obvious fact that expanded modern educational systems try to organize many years of the lives of all persons in society around the learning of a common standardized broad culture. Educational systems allocate status, to be sure, but first they create a huge common base of knowledge and culture, the analysis of which is certainly important. Second, they do this not in terms of the functional particulars of local or even national actual social and power systems, but of sweeping and surprisingly universal models of society. The models involved tend to conform to visions of society more than to current realities, and to visions that are now worldwide in character (Meyer, Kamens, et al., 1992). They deserve closer study.

From an institutional view, the content of the curriculum is ripe for careful analysis. This vision of the role of education supposes that the modern system and its goals of imagined communities rest on a broad culture creating and emphasizing shared knowledge and values. Education provides the locus for these. Beyond the role of schooling in stratification, the focus is on the construction of shared cultural understandings—the building of the assumptions taken for granted in modern theory and policy. This line of thought parallels some critical theorists' interests in hegemony, as opposed to more naked exertions of power and influence.

A most central social status in the modern system and in its imagination is one on which all are to be equal, and all are to be participants: citizenship, personhood, human being. The great modern culture is to be built into all persons through universalized mass education (including, increasingly, secondary education and

modern mass university instruction). All are to be citizen-persons, and all are to be expanded participants in great modern order. Thus, from this second view, modern mass educational systems are fundamentally engaged in a project of constructing individuals who understand themselves and others as having interests and the capacity to act rationally on them.

One clear manifestation of this role is that the curriculum is increasingly organized around choice. Electives are built into the primary level curriculum, while university-level programs are organized around distribution requirements insuring adequate breadth of knowledge while preserving student choice. The differentiation and elaboration of the modern curriculum is therefore not always tightly related to the vertical stratification system. Instead, institutional critiques suggest a lateral differentiation of the curriculum to accommodate the participation of newly constituted individuals on a massive scale. Mainstream sociological critiques of the curriculum are correct in their concern that schooling fails to empower students from all social groups. What the institutional critique emphasizes, however, is the degree to which modern curricular content already takes a participatory form and style, perhaps decoupled from structural changes that widen actual opportunities for students upon completion of their formal schooling. The educational system has been under sustained and highly legitimated pressures for reform from progressive and democratic critics for several centuries, and to a considerable extent the curriculum incorporates their vision.

Institutionalist studies of the curriculum also refocus attention on the main outlines of the curriculum, with a new perspective on the functionalist assumptions taken for granted in both the common culture and the sociological criticisms of the curriculum as deflected by power, interest, and forces of inequalitarian traditions. They start from the obviously highly cultural and highly institutionalized character of the modern society, which is in fact as much a cultural model as any social praxis (Thomas, Meyer, Ramirez, & Boli, 1987). And they start from the fact that education

itself is also an abstracted cultural model, and part of the model of modernity. Useful implications follow, many of which have been followed up in empirical research.

First, education and the curriculum are constructed out of models of modernity and its educational requirements, rather than solely out of socioeconomic modernity itself. Immediate interests or functional requirements are often poor predictors of education and curricula, which are greatly affected by the political-cultural dominance of ideological or cultural models. Both educational expansion (Meyer, Ramirez, et al., 1992) and curricular structures (Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer, & Wong, 1991) are little predicted by economic development or complexity, or by variations in local structures of power and interest. They have cultural roots in institutional ideologies (themselves functional theories). General models of modernity are highly developed, rationalized, and professionalized in the modern system; specific models of education and curricula are also highly articulated as pictures of human and social development, and are carried by rationalized and professionalized structures.

Second, the cultural models involved tend to be very widespread around the world, so that educational forms and curricular structures evolve and change in rather isomorphic ways worldwide. Thus, educational expansion, in terms of entitlements and enrollments, has been a worldwide process (Meyer, Ramirez, et al., 1992), as have curricular development and change (Benavot et al., 1991). Nations around the world are aligning themselves in terms of the inclusion of, and time commitments to, various school subjects.

Third, curricular change is often better predicted by an educational system's linkages to evolving models in world society than by any local pressures of function and interest. Expansion goes on in extremely poor countries at least as rapidly as in the core; curricular modernization may also flow rapidly to the Third World—perhaps even more rapidly given the weak standing of local interests and traditions. For example, innovations in science education,

such as those in the spirit of Science, Technology, and Society (STS) reforms find expression in primary textbooks earlier in many developing countries than in such core countries as the United States, Germany, and France. In both science and mathematics, developing countries pay particular and early attention to establishing the personal relevance of the curricular content (McEneaney, 1998). . . .

DIMENSIONS OF CURRICULAR CHANGE

The ideas suggest that if we want to explain curricular change over time, we should look at world-level change, since models (more than local social and economic structures) of education and of modern society evolve at the world level (Meyer et al., 1997). We should also consider how general models of modern society and of education are changing, over and above immediate local constellations of power, interest, and function. In general, curricular content develops in a way that deemphasizes the sacred qualities of school knowledge. Instead, the curriculum highlights a picture of society as thoroughly manageable and rationalized, composed of agentic individuals, a society which is global in scope. The natural environment is also constructed in the modern curriculum as lawful and controllable. Understandings about expertise change. Experts and expert knowledge are still prized (indeed, often thought to be central to national development), but increasingly, curricular materials portray all students as being potential experts. Some general themes follow:

Expanded Rationalization of Society

Throughout the twentieth century, and especially in the last fifty years, models of society and social development have been greatly elaborated. Many more domains are thinkable and discussable in modern terms, and are understood to require social management. Economies are rationalized and conceptualized, and such issues as unemployment, capital investment rates,

scientific and technical development, and labor quality are routine public responsibilities. Political life is similarly elaborated and analyzed, as are many dimensions of social life. So matters of family life (spousal and child abuse, child reading, family poverty and breakup, and reproduction control) come under public scrutiny as do all sorts of issues about social inequality. Recent proposals, for example, would mandate instruction regarding the issue of domestic violence (Melear, 1995; Reuben, 1996). Specialized curricula in higher education routinely reflect such issues. Two examples are the rise in the Social Problems course as a typical introduction to sociology and the proliferation and breadth of Public Policy programs in American universities. Topics of these kinds also show up in mass education; in history that incorporates social elements more than political ones, in literatures that touch on many issues previously private (e.g., mental health, sexuality), in scientific and social scientific analyses. In this sense, for example, the more systemic orientation of contemporary German secondary school history textbooks—with their focus on conditions producing industrialization, capitalism, and welfare states as opposed to the “great man approach”—epitomizes modernity (Berghahn & Schissler, 1987).

Expanded Construction of the Individual

Contemporary models of society, especially in the post-War period of dominant liberalism put increasingly elaborated models of the individual citizen, human, and person at the center of society. This person is now a rich and complex entity, whose economic, political, and social choices and capacities are conceived to be the motor of social development, and whose human rights are foundational. This produces three broad effects on curricula.

First, the content of the curriculum increasingly focuses on the rights and capacities of the individual. History of the polity and state give way to social studies of individuals in society (S.-Y. Wong, 1991); scientific instruction

and literary tastes emphasize individual choices, rights, and standing (see Frank, Meyer, & Miyahara, 1995, on psychology); art and music emphasize individual expression more than collective traditions; and so on. These changes appear in mass education, but also in more specialized elite training systems.

Second, there is an attempt to universalize participation in the expanded curriculum. For instance, worldwide movements stress the expansion of mass education—as in the Education for All Movement (Chabbott, 1996)—and the more complete incorporation of females, racial and ethnic and regional minorities, and lower status groups (United Nations Children’s Fund, 1992). Ideas that lower status groups should only be trained for limited roles in society are in ill repute: the effort is to bring the expanded curriculum to each and every child. Hence, educational systems around the world embrace literacy in a widening range of subject areas—more fundamentally as a metaphor than as a specified set of skills (McEneaney & Wong, 1997). Challenges to this model are viewed as heresy.

This trend is apparent not only in discourse at the policy level. Curricular materials themselves become vastly more participatory in character. Elementary science and mathematics textbooks from around the world greatly expand depiction of people over time, including females and racial/ethnic minorities. The participation exhibits a universality in that this increasing frequency of depictions of ordinary people far outstrips depictions of famous scientists and mathematicians (McEneaney, 1998). Similar shifts in emphasis are found in social studies curricular outlines. Topics highlighting the centrality of the abstracted individual increase (e.g., Individual and his/her environment) as do requirements involving field trips or experiments (McEneaney & Wong, 1997).

Third, there are sustained efforts to recognize the interests and developmental needs of the child—now conceived as a person—in the educational process. It is an important consideration—over and above social functional needs—to find ways to interest and involve the student, and to

organize curricula to be relevant to the student as a developing person. In art and literature, canons are weakened, and efforts are made to find materials that appeal to the students (Bryson, 1998). Science, mathematics, and social science curricula are redesigned to make sense to the student more than to the traditional authority structure. Owl excrement thus becomes a worthy object of scientific investigation in one primary science textbook recently approved for California public schools. By the middle of the twentieth century, arithmetic textbooks from many countries had become adorned with characters sporting smiles and engaging in slapstick in ways that appear to have precious little relation to the mathematical ideas presented. Later, these interest enhancement devices become more integrated in the overall structure of the textbooks, but the aim remains constant (McEneaney, 1998). Language itself changes from more high cultural forms to democratized ones, and great efforts are made to edit the language to be appropriate to the development of the target students. An extreme example is the proposal to recognize Ebonics in the Oakland, California, public schools, but so are the elaborate attempts to fill basal readers with age appropriate vocabulary. Grammar, of course, is de-emphasized and instruction in Latin, primarily viewed as a means to impart the structure of language, has virtually disappeared because it is ill-suited to the expressive requirements of the modern curriculum. All these changes attempt to emphasize the active participation and interest of the student.

Thus, great drifting changes appear in the curriculum. At the secondary level, classical curricula tend to disappear, replaced by comprehensive ones (Kamens & Cha, 1992). In primary education, progressive traditions tend to dominate in many areas (McEneaney, 1998; S. Wong, 1991; S.-Y. Wong, 1991). Although the change may have originated at lower levels, it is apparent now at higher levels. At the university level, enormous curricular expansion occurs. Worldwide, the mean number of academic departments and faculties in universities has increased dramatically since the 1960s (World List, 1969; World List,

1995). Gender studies becomes requisite in a growing number of American universities, though the particular conceptualization of gender varies dramatically across instructors and across departments within any particular institution (Christopher, 1995). Formal internship programs, intended to be hands-on, proliferate, as do leadership development programs (Golde & McEneaney, 1998). Such programs often offer college credit. Even modern management training programs have this flavor—de-emphasizing specific technical knowledge in favor of rationalizing broader areas of work life in a non-technical way (e.g., managing stress, morale, communication). Hence, although shifts in the curriculum reflecting an expanded construction of the individual originated at the primary school level, the changes are now apparent at the tertiary level and beyond.

Expanded Rationalization of the Natural Environment

The model of the modern society locates this society in increasingly complex relations with an increasingly rationalized natural environment. The physical, social, psychological, and moral context of society is scientized, and science becomes a generalized umbrella of understanding—a mentality appropriate and necessary for every member of society. The long-term expansion of science instruction continues (Benavot et al., 1991), and the topics included in science expand, now including all sorts of social and psychological material (McEneaney, 1998). The *Sachunterricht* (literally “object instruction”) style of primary school science in German-speaking countries is a good example; making no firm distinction between theorizing about the natural and social environment, the portrayal is of an analyzable, but highly interrelated world. In one fourth grade textbook, for example, the physics of bicycles is followed rather seamlessly by a discussion of transportation as a human need and traffic congestion as a social problem (Herbert et al., 1993). It is not simply a case of science curricula appropriating social

arenas—civics instruction, too, broadens to include consideration of citizenship in relation to environmental issues and the natural world (Rauner, 1998). The student must learn that everything in the wider environment can and should be analyzed scientifically, and that individual and social relations with this environment extend to all sorts of domains of activity (from garbage to natural resources to human sexuality).

Globalization: Transcending the National State

The model of the modern society increasingly locates this society in a global context, economically, politically, socially, and culturally. Emphasis on national autonomy, autarky, and primordial tradition is weakened. Thus, the curriculum must be globalized, to create a broader understanding. History and social studies emphasize transnational elements (Frank et al., 2000), and civics instruction dramatically shifted in the 1980s and 1990s to a model of the “post-national citizen” of the world (Rauner, 1998). Science is applicable everywhere (now less overtly linked to the notion of progress in textbooks, its utility is merely assumed); art and literature incorporate more global and eclectic materials. Albarea (1997), for example, argued in support of music instruction as an “intercultural” dimension of lifelong education, suggesting that educating “multimusal” individuals might be a basis on which to develop a “pluralist European identity.” Foreign languages and cultures must be incorporated (on language, see Cha, 1991).

Glocalization (Robertson, 1992)

Modern society models increasingly step back from the picture of national unity around the state as the core entity. Society now includes legitimated diversity, all to be seen in a universalistic context. As a result, local and regional cultures and histories have become more relevant, and society is seen as composed of many different groups (women, ethnic minorities, religious groups, age groups), whose conditions and

interests and cultures have standing. History, literature, art, and language all broaden, and the curriculum should include materials relevant to a society now seen as more diverse. Thus, the French state, having devoted itself for centuries to the unification of national culture and the extirpation of local ones, now provides instruction in eight different regional language/cultural groups. Although this might seem to contradict Cha’s (1991) study that documents the worldwide decline of curricular emphasis on local languages, admitting a degree of localism is understood, in the modern curriculum, as insuring personal relevance through individual expressiveness.

Broadening, then, walks a fine line between emphasis on the transnational/universal and homage to the particular/local. Across subject areas, the incorporation of local elements has a programmatic and formulaic feel: enough to satisfy “relevance” criteria, yet not so much as to undercut the notion that the knowledge has universal standing. As such, arithmetic textbooks of the 1980s and 1990s from a diverse range of countries include a few pages celebrating the symmetry and geometry of locally-produced art, often folk art. This nearly obligatory bow to the local does not, however, disrupt the overall flow of instruction, since it is typically sprinkled throughout the book, rather than organized into a chapter, and quite frequently serving as decoration, lacking direct links to classroom activities or exercises.

In a similar vein, multiculturalism has nearly hegemonic standing in American classrooms, though the treatment is usually highly eclectic. Drew (1997, p. 298) criticizes this “cultural tourism” noting that “students are free to travel, to observe, [but also] to remain removed from and unaffected by the material conditions . . . represented” in multicultural readers. More generally, then, it is clearly true that this lateral expansion of the curriculum need not include a deepening political or even emotional commitment to the issues at hand. What the curriculum requires is far more subtle: a commitment to a particular view of self in environment, of individuals imbued with choices and capacities in a rationalized, lawful world. . . .

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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION PROCESSES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

ALAN C. KERCKHOFF

All societies need schools to prepare students to participate in productive roles, yet what schools prepare students to do differs across societies. This transition from school-to-work affects students' future position in the social stratification system of their society. Alan C. Kerckhoff explores differences in the entry into the labor force in several European countries and the United States; most successful are the systems that have trajectories for students to follow during the school-to-work transition. For instance, some countries make student entry into the wider social world a smooth transition with apprenticeships leading to jobs and clear trajectories for entry into the economic system. Other countries provide minimal transition.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are some examples of international differences in school-to-work transitions discussed by Kerckhoff?
2. What are examples of school-to-work transitions in your country?
3. What is it about the German system that Kerckhoff feels makes the transition to work smoother than in the United States system?
4. Is there a model that countries can follow to facilitate the transition?

This article reviews recent research and theorizing that have been concerned with the

relationship between education and social stratification processes in advanced societies and suggests some directions in which future work could take social scientists to build on this foundation. Social stratification is a term that is used to describe both a condition and a process. Social stratification as a condition refers to the fact that members of a population have characteristics that differentiate them into levels or strata. Social stratification as a process refers to the ways in which members of a population become stratified. Most of the literature linking education and social stratification has viewed education as a major contributor to the process that differentiates the society's population into strata. Young people pass through a society's educational institutions and obtain varied educational credentials. These credentials have lasting effects on their adult lives. In particular, occupational attainment depends heavily on educational attainment, and occupational attainment is the primary dimension of social stratification in advanced societies.

A society's educational institutions can be described as its "sorting machine" (Spring, 1976) because they are a major part of the society's institutional arrangements that serve to stratify its population. Educational institutions sort students into stratified levels of educational attainment, certified by socially recognized educational credentials. Each new generation passes through the society's educational institutions and emerges as a stratified student population whose adult prospects vary significantly according to the credentials they obtain in those institutions. It is difficult to compare societies' distributions of educational attainments, however, because the credentials awarded by the societies' institutions are so different. Americans refer to high school graduation as an important level of educational attainment, but the British do not graduate from high school. Instead, a variety of attainments are possible during secondary school that have different levels of recognition in British society.

Educational attainment is different from other types of attainments used in social stratification research. Advanced societies all have highly comparable distributions of occupations, and

there are well-established standard measures of occupational prestige and status (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996). But advanced societies' educational credentials (what I refer to as their indigenous credentials) are defined in different ways.¹

Besides these differences in educational credentials, differences in the organization of the educational systems of advanced societies also lead to variations in the processes by which these adult outcomes are produced. Not all "sorting machines" work in the same way. Not only do they sort their students into different indigenous credential categories, but the ways in which these credentials are produced and affect adult outcomes also differ in important ways.

Just within the past decade, many informative comparative studies have shown the great significance of the variations in educational systems in societies that are, in most other respects, very much alike. I review some of the more salient results from this body of research in the next section with particular focus on the different ways that educational systems distribute each new generation into adult strata defined in terms of occupational positions. In later sections, I focus on some of the more pressing questions this recent research has brought to light and suggest directions in which future research and theorizing can profitably take us.

DIMENSIONS OF SYSTEM VARIATION

Our understanding of the differences among educational systems has been increased by efforts to define dimensions that differentiate them. Three dimensions are generally emphasized: stratification, standardization, and vocational specificity. Combinations of these dimensions are thought to determine the educational systems' "capacity to structure" the flow of young people out of educational institutions and into adult strata that are defined by occupational positions. To help emphasize the importance of the three dimensions of educational systems, I refer throughout to four major societies' educational systems: those of France, Germany, Great Britain, and the

United States.² These four systems are remarkably varied on the three dimensions, and they differ greatly in the ways they “structure” the flow of students into adulthood.

Stratification

Stratification refers to the degree to which systems have clearly differentiated kinds of schools whose curricula are defined as “higher” and “lower.” The term most often refers to difference among secondary schools. The German system’s sorting of secondary school students into the *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, and *Gymnasium* is a clear example of a stratified system. The British differentiation among Secondary Modern, Comprehensive, and Grammar schools is similar, although the Comprehensive school is not so much a separate part of a stratified system as a merging of the traditional Secondary Modern and Grammar schools.

Neither the French nor the American system is as stratified as the German and British systems. The American system has nothing comparable to the others’ stratified secondary schools. The French system had been nearly as highly stratified as the German system until the 1970s, but major changes have occurred since then (Lewis, 1985) that have sharply reduced its degree of stratification. There are types of French secondary schools that specialize in general or technical studies, but they all award the *baccalauréat*.

In a stratified system, the program offerings in the types of secondary schools are associated with different degrees of access to opportunities for additional, more advanced schooling. So, the term stratification refers to both the kinds of programs offered and their links to future opportunities (Allmendinger, 1989). That is clearly the case in the German system. The successful *Gymnasium* student obtains the *Abitur*, a certificate entitling him or her to attend a university. The successful *Realschule* student may qualify to attend an advanced vocational school (*Fachoberschule*), but *Hauptschule* students have few later options.

The British system gives students at Grammar schools and most Comprehensive schools the opportunity to study for A-level examinations that are a prerequisite to attending a university. Most Secondary Modern schools do not offer that program of study. Although the French school system is divided into two types of secondary schools, both award the *baccalauréat*, and a student with a *baccalauréat* from either of them has access to higher education. Those with a general (rather than a technical) secondary school background are more often successful in higher education, however (Goux & Maurin, 1998).

The American educational system has an even lower degree of stratification than has any of these European systems. This lower stratification is reflected in the fact that virtually all secondary schools offer essentially the same curricula and award the same general credential: the high school diploma. In contrast, most European secondary schools award an array of credentials that reflect their varied program offerings. American students who finish secondary school but do not receive any postsecondary schooling all have the same credential, but German and British students without postsecondary schooling have a variety of credentials. And those varied credentials have significant effects on the students’ access to jobs.

In summary, then, the German system is the most stratified of the four. The British system is somewhat stratified, and the French and American systems have little stratification.

Standardization

Standardization refers to “the degree to which the quality of education meets the same standards nationwide. Variables such as teachers’ training, school budgets, curricula, and the uniformity of school-leaving examinations are relevant” (Allmendinger, 1989, p. 233). Standardization is generally higher the more the system is controlled by the central government.³ Of the four systems discussed here, the French is by far the most standardized. The Ministry of National Education oversees teacher training, provides the means to evaluate both teachers and

students, and sets out the specifics of the national curricula.

There is less standardization in Germany than in France because the 16 states (Länder) are the main sources of financial support for education and have primary responsibility for organizing the educational programs. However, the Länder cooperate both with each other and with the federal government in ways that help to standardize programs. The local British districts have even more autonomy than those in Germany, although both funding and credential standards are more influenced by the national government and national certification agencies than is the case in the United States. The strong insistence on local control of education in the United States ensures that there is a low level of standardization.

In summary, then, standardization is the greatest in France, although it is a close second in Germany. Standardization is lower in Great Britain than in either France or Germany, and it is by far the lowest in the United States.

Vocational Specificity

Educational systems vary in the extent to which they offer curricula that are designed to prepare students for particular vocations and award credentials that are vocationally specific. The German system is the most extreme case of vocational specificity. The great majority of German students enter what is known as "the dual system" during their midteens (Müller, Steinmann, & Ell, 1998). The dual system is an apprenticeship system that combines work experience in regular firms with schooling that is designed to improve students' occupation specific skills. Students who successfully complete a program are awarded credentials that certify their ability to perform the duties of that occupation. The training is highly specific to preparation for 498 occupations (Mortimer & Krüger, 2000). Successful completion may also open access to opportunities for postsecondary schooling.

The British system provides opportunities for secondary school students to take specialized examinations that certify skills that may be of

interest to potential employers, but these credentials are generally less occupation specific than are the credentials the German students obtain in the dual system. Greater occupational specificity is associated with the postsecondary courses that British students take in colleges of further education or training centers. The credentials awarded for completing these courses are comparable to the certificates that some American students obtain from technical institutes or community colleges, but the British credentials are nationally standardized and are obtained by a much larger proportion of students than in the United States.

The French system is closest to the American in this respect. There is a division in secondary school between the general and technical tracks, and once students leave the general track, they do not return. However, the curricula in the technical track have few direct applications to positions in the labor force, and students in both tracks have access to postsecondary schooling (Goux & Maurin, 1998). Most specific job skills are learned by French workers on the job, and the training does not as often lead to nationally recognized credentials as does the training in programs in either Great Britain or Germany.

Highly stratified educational systems tend to award more vocationally specific credentials (Müller & Shavit, 1998). In fact, part of the reason for the stratification of the secondary schools in systems, such as Germany's, is to begin to identify groups of students who can be prepared to enter general divisions of the occupational hierarchy.

CAPACITY TO STRUCTURE

In a landmark volume, Maurice, Sellier, and Silvestre (1986) contrasted the ways in which the French and German educational systems affected the distribution of young people into the labor force. They referred to the German system's much greater "capacity to structure" that distribution. In the terms I used earlier, they pointed to the German system's greater efficiency as a "sorting machine." Once students had passed through the German educational system, especially the

dual apprenticeship system, their future locations in the adult labor force were highly predictable, much more predictable than the locations of French students.

Of the dimensions of educational systems just reviewed, Maurice et al. (1986) emphasized stratification and vocational specificity as the reasons for the sharp German–French contrast they described. The German students were systematically sorted by the stratified secondary schools and the dual system into progressively more occupation-specific channels, whereas the French students generally obtained credentials that were primarily differentiated by attainment levels with little direct relevance to labor force locations. Thus, French students with any particular credential could end up in a variety of occupations.

Part of the value of Maurice et al.'s (1986) analysis is the emphasis on what happens to students after they leave the two educational systems, especially how they become established in the labor force. That is a core sociological question for those who are concerned with the role of education in the stratification process. Maurice et al. showed how German students more than fit smoothly into stable labor force locations and experience relatively orderly careers. In contrast, French students more often experience a period of “turbulence” during which they may move in and out of the labor force and change jobs with some frequency. Thus, the transition from school to work is different in the two societies, and the difference can be traced to the organization of the two educational systems and the credentials they award.

Using Maurice et al.'s (1986) analysis as a reference point and remembering the earlier discussion of the three dimensions of educational systems, one can estimate the British and American educational systems' capacity to structure the flow of students from school into the force. Clearly, the American system is similar to the French in this respect. The American credentials are also general, and students with the same credential can end up in wide variety of occupations. If anything, the American system has even less capacity to structure the flow of students

into the labor force than the French system does because the credentials that French students obtain are highly standardized. Although the French credentials are not vocationally specific, employers at least know their general value on a national scale. Most American students obtain only general credentials (a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree) that seldom have vocational meaning, and they obtain them from educational institutions that are among the least standardized in the world.

The British system awards more differentiated credentials than either the French or American systems. Many British postsecondary vocational credentials are awarded by industry-based organizations (City and Guilds, Royal Society of Arts, Joint Industry Board), and they have direct vocational relevance. Credentials from both the British and the German systems direct their recipients toward positions in the labor force.

A special feature of the British system is relevant here, however. A large proportion of British students leave secondary school early (at age 16 or 17) before they obtain occupationally relevant credentials. Whatever vocationally relevant credentials they have as adults are obtained after they enter the labor force, usually from part-time courses in colleges of further education or training centers. A relatively strong association between British workers' credentials and the jobs the workers hold evolves during the early years in the labor force, but the association results from a different process than in Germany. Thus, the British system does have the capacity to structure the flow of students into the labor force because it awards credentials that have some occupational specificity, but the process through which that capacity becomes manifest is not the same as in the German system. I return to this difference in the next section.

Stratification, standardization, and vocational specificity are all valuable conceptual tools that help to differentiate educational systems in advanced societies, and they serve to show how the systems vary in their capacity to structure students' entry into the societies' stratification systems. However, I suggest another dimension

that also differentiates these educational systems that has important effects on students' patterns of educational attainments and entry into the labor force but that has received almost no systematic attention in the literature. I refer to the degree to which the systems provide opportunities for students to choose among alternative paths to educational attainment.

STUDENTS' CHOICE

The contrast between the ways in which German and British students obtain their vocational credentials provides an example of the importance of choice in educational attainment. Both the German and British systems award a range of occupationally relevant credentials. However, the German system more actively sorts students into increasingly differentiated groups and directs them along established routes leading to a set of occupationally relevant credentials, whereas the British system makes greater allowance for students' initiative in obtaining them. This contrast suggests that another dimension on which educational systems vary is the importance of students' choice in the process of educational stratification.

One of the earliest and most influential analyses of the role of educational systems in the stratification process implied the distinction between the structure of systems and students' choice, although it was not stated in those terms. Turners' (1960) analysis of the British and American secondary school systems referred to them as providing "sponsored and contest" channels of mobility. By "sponsored mobility," Turner meant the British system's formal separation of students into two stratified kinds of schools at age 11. A minority were enrolled in Grammar schools that provided an enriched curriculum that fostered their academic and overall social success. The majority attended Secondary Modern schools that offered a more basic curriculum. In contrast, Turner noted, the essentially unstratified American high schools provided a continuing open contest among students who

have equal access to educational opportunities. In the terms used here, the British system more actively imposed a structure, while the American system provided more room for choice.

The British system has changed in two important ways since Turner's analysis. First, the Comprehensive school has become the most common type of secondary school (although some Grammar schools and Secondary Modern schools still exist). Comprehensive schools have diverse curricula that serve a full range of students, much like American high schools. Second, a much more elaborate postsecondary system has evolved that includes universities, polytechnics, colleges of further education, and training centers. University attendance is still highly restricted and requires students to complete demanding secondary school programs, but the colleges of further education and training centers offer courses that lead to an array of technical credentials. Even students who leave secondary school early can obtain more advanced credentials on a part-time basis after they enter the labor force.

The current British system is thus much less a system of sponsored mobility than it used to be. It provides many more alternative channels to educational attainment at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. British students now obtain a much wider variety of educational credentials than were recognized in 1960, and they have greater freedom of choice in seeking to obtain them. Whereas in 1960 it was reasonable to make the sharp sponsored-contest distinction that Turner made, it is a less appropriate distinction today.

Yet, important differences still exist between the American and British systems. One of the most obvious is reflected in their secondary school credentials. The American high school diploma is an all-or-nothing credential: No other credential can be obtained during secondary school. In sharp contrast, British secondary schools provide levels of examinations (CSEs, O-levels, A-levels) in different substantive areas that have meaning to prospective employers.

There is a similarly sharp contrast at the postsecondary level. Only a small proportion of

American students obtain technical postsecondary credentials, and those credentials are not nationally standardized.⁴ For American high school graduates, the postsecondary choice tends to be college or nothing. Many fewer British than American students attend universities, but many Britons attend colleges of further education and training centers. Young Americans' educational credentials are largely "high school diploma only" and "bachelor's degree only,"⁵ whereas young Britons have a wide array of credentials. American students make choices within secondary or postsecondary schools, but these choices lead to a restricted set of credentials.

Despite the contrast between the British and American systems, however, they are both strikingly different from the German system. The clearly stratified German secondary schools and the tightly structured dual apprenticeship system appear to be the epitome of a well-designed and effective sorting machine that moves students through highly structured channels and provides few opportunities for changes of direction. The German and British systems are similar in that both offer a much wider array of educational credentials than does the American system. But the German system differs from both the British and American systems in providing fewer opportunities for students to make choices as they pass through school.

These comparisons among the American, British, and German systems suggest that in using the structure-choice comparison in analyzing educational systems, it is not a simple matter of a system providing structure or choice. The British and American systems both offer students greater freedom to make choices, but the British system offers more alternatives to choose from. The British and German systems have more complex structures and offer a wider array of credentials, but the German system offers students fewer opportunities to make choices as they move through secondary and postsecondary education.

The clearest index of an educational system's allowance for choice is the flexibility of the linkages between structural locations at successive stages of attainment. There are more such linkages

in the complex British and German systems than in the simpler American and French systems. However, Germany's system has less flexibility than the other systems because the pathways leading to levels of educational attainment are more restricted. Where students are located in the structure at each stage limits their possible locations at the next stage. Attending the Gymnasium and obtaining the Abitur are prerequisites to attending a university. Realschule students can qualify for attendance at an advanced vocational school (Fachoberschule), but Hauptschule students cannot. And which apprenticeships are available to students depends on the type of secondary school they attended (Heinz, 1999).

The British system has some of these same features. For instance, one must pass A-level secondary school examinations to be admitted to a university, and passing O-level examinations is a prerequisite to taking A-level examinations. Few of these kinds of restricted linkages are found for other kinds of British postsecondary schooling, however. France and the United States are even more flexible. All American high school graduates and all French holders of the baccalauréat can attend universities, and there are few restrictions on the use of the available American pathways to postsecondary vocational certification.

This comparison indicates that the four societies' educational sorting machines differ in two important ways that affect the role of choice in the system. First, they differ in the variety of differentiated units in the systems and in the diversity of credentials they award that have direct relevance to adult levels in the society's stratification system. That is, they differ in the number of structural locations through which students pass. More important, they differ in the flexibility of the linkages between structural locations at different stages in students' passage through the system. The German and British systems both have complex structures and offer a large variety of credentials, but the British system is much more flexible than is the German. With this review of dimensions of educational systems as a background, I now shift the discussion to

the ways in which these dimensions affect the education–occupation association in the four societies.

ASSESSING THE EDUCATION–OCCUPATION ASSOCIATION

Comparative analyses of the contributions of educational systems to the social stratification process have conventionally focused on some measure of educational attainment (defined in terms of the societies' indigenous credentials or a standard set of categories) and some measure of occupational position (defined in terms of class, status, or prestige). Shavit and Müller's (1998) edited volume is an excellent example of such comparative analyses, carried out in 13 societies. In each society, specialists in social stratification research conducted parallel analyses of the transition from school to work.

The strength of the education–occupation association varies in the 13 societies studied, and some of that variation is due to differences in stratification, standardization, and vocational specificity. However, differences in the forms of analysis used in the 13 societies show how difficult this kind of comparative research is. The difficulties can be made salient by considering two questions: What is a first job? and When does education end?

What Is a First Job?

This question is especially relevant whenever the German system is compared with others. The great majority of young Germans enter the so-called dual system, which involves a combination of on-the-job experience and schooling designed to prepare students to carry out the duties of a particular occupation. In most scholarly analyses, the dual system is considered to be part of the German educational system. Thus, apprenticed Germans' "first jobs" are defined as the first jobs students obtain after they complete their apprenticeships, even though they have a great deal of work experience before they obtain those jobs.

That definition of "first job" cannot be used in the other societies discussed here because large

proportions of students in those societies enter their first jobs before they obtain specific job skills. This is the case either because the educational systems provide little occupation-specific training or certification (as in France and the United States) or because most students obtain their occupation-specific training certification after they enter the labor force (as in Great Britain). The unique German definition of a first job naturally produces a stronger education–first job association in Germany than elsewhere.

When Does Education End?

Much of the discussion of the education–first job association implicitly assumes that there is a onetime transition from school to work: Students leave fulltime school and enter full-time work. That is a particularly flawed assumption in societies in which individuals commonly obtain schooling and additional credentials after they enter the labor force.

Among the four societies discussed here, obtaining new credentials through part-time schooling after labor force entry is especially common in Great Britain. It is so partly because so many young Britons leave school and enter the labor force at early ages and partly because they can obtain a wide range of vocationally relevant credentials on a part-time basis while they are employed. Among the four societies, a return to full-time schooling after initial entry into the labor force is most common in the United States. Arum and Hout (1998) reported that about one-fifth of their American sample left school, entered the labor force, returned to school, and reentered the labor force at least once by age 26. These societal differences present problems when making intersocietal comparisons of the education–first job association.

The contributors to Shavit and Müller's volume dealt with these questions in different ways.⁶ In their British analysis, for instance, Heath and Cheung (1998) defined the first job as the job obtained after an individual first leaves full-time schooling. In contrast, in Arum and Hout's (1998) American analysis, the first job was defined as the job obtained after an individual leaves full-time

schooling for the last time. And Müller et al. (1998) followed scholarly convention and defined their German sample's first jobs as those obtained after they completed their apprenticeships. All three of these different definitions of completing education and entering a first job are defensible, but they affect comparisons of the education-first job association in these societies.

Allmendinger (1989) recognized the difficulty presented by the apprenticeship period in Germany and referred to it as a "transition period" between full-time schooling and full-time work. I suggest that it would increase our understanding of the role of education in the social stratification process if we included the idea of a "transition period" in all comparative research. It is important to see that the transition from school to work is a process, not an event, and that the process varies across societies. Differences in systems become manifest during the transition period. In what follows, I consider how a careful examination of the transition period can help clarify the varied effects of educational systems on stratification processes.

THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Following Allmendinger's (1989) lead, one could define the beginning of the transition period as the time a student first leaves full-time school and enters the labor force (ignoring vacation or other short-term jobs). This definition could easily be applied in the four societies discussed here and in most other advanced, societies. For German apprentices, that time is as early as age 15 or 16, but for those who attend a university, it is later. For most Britons, it is at an early age (16 or 17), but for those who complete the sixth form of secondary school and for those who enter higher education, it is later. The beginning of the transition period also varies for both American and French students, depending on their levels of educational attainment.

It is much more difficult to define the end of the transition period in such a way that it can be consistently applied both within and among societies. Allmendinger's definition implies that

there is a onetime change from a mix of schooling and work to a full-time commitment to work. Evidence presented here shows that that is not the case for many people in Great Britain and the United States. It is also not the case for many people in other societies.

I suggest that, at least tentatively, the transition period in advanced societies should be defined more simply and uniformly in terms of an age span. All advanced societies specify a compulsory period of schooling, and the minimum leaving age in most of them is 16. Also, in almost all advanced societies in recent years, most people complete their schooling and enter the labor force by age 25. I suggest, then, that we can learn a great deal about the effect of education on social stratification processes if we study what occurs in school and in the labor force between the ages of 16 and 25. This definition of the transition period has the advantage of examining the same life-course period for all cases in all societies, rather than adjusting the definition to fit different societies or educational levels.

What happens between those ages clearly varies a great deal both within and among societies. Within all societies, some leave school at the beginning of the transition period, and others remain in school during most or all of it. Most leave school during the early part of that period, however, and spend a significant part of the period in the labor force.

What happens after people leave full-time school also varies both within and among societies. In most societies, those who leave full-time school the earliest are the least likely to return for additional schooling (Arum & Hout, 1998; Bynner & Fogelman, 1993) and are the most likely to experience unstable employment. The analyses in Shavit and Müller's (1998) volume show a consistent tendency for the risk of unemployment during the early years in the labor force to decrease as the level of educational attainment increases. Unemployment between leaving school and entering a first job is also more common in France and Great Britain than in Germany (Brauns, Gangl, & Scherer, 1999). This is another result of the predictability of first-job placement in the German apprenticeship system.

Initial job placements also vary in other ways. A common feature of jobs obtained by young people in France is that they are specifically defined as temporary (referred to as involving "short-term contracts"). The lower the worker's educational attainment, the more likely he or she will enter an early job of this type or one that is part time (Goux & Maurin, 1998). Temporary and part time jobs are becoming increasingly common in all advanced societies (Kalleberg, 1996), and the lower the workers' educational attainments, the more likely the workers are to have such jobs. These changes have led some analysts to see an increasing polarization of the labor force in advanced societies into a relatively small elite group of highly skilled workers and a larger group of disadvantaged workers (Coffield, 1999). Whatever the validity of this view it serves to remind us that the education-occupation association depends as much on the nature of the labor force as on the educational systems that prepare students to enter it.

What are the ramifications of systematically including a transition period in the analysis of the role education plays in the stratification process? When the differences in the educational systems' stratification, standardization, and vocational specificity; their capacity to structure; and their tolerance of choice are considered together, it suggests that students in the four societies follow different pathways as they pass through the transition period and into adult positions in the labor force. I refer to these pathways as "trajectories," and I define a trajectory as a set of linked locations in a society's differentiated educational and labor force structures. I use the term in much the same way that the term career line has been used previously in the analysis of labor force pathways (Spenner, Otto, & Call, 1982).

SOME EVIDENCE OF DIFFERENCES IN TRAJECTORIES

Estimates of the trajectories in these four societies can be deduced from characteristics of the educational systems and patterns of early labor force experiences. However, there are few

empirical analyses of the flows of young people through the educational systems and into the labor force. We do not have adequate information to chart these trajectories, but we should seek to obtain it. I present some fragments of the kinds of information that are needed. These fragments provide useful evidence, but they also show how much more needs to be done.⁷

The primary bases on which educational trajectories in advanced societies can be differentiated are age and type of education. At what ages do people first leave school? What kinds of educational programs have they engaged in by the time they leave? Do some combine school and work? If they return to school, what kinds of schooling do they return to, and at what age? When we attempt to link educational trajectories with the labor force, the picture becomes complex, and the available data are less adequate. In what follows, I review some limited evidence of the variety of trajectories that can be observed within and among societies. The available evidence is only suggestive of what more adequate evidence could tell us.

School-Leaving Age as a Division Point

Students are allowed to leave school at age 16 in France, Great Britain, and the United States (most states), but the proportion of students who leave at that time varies greatly. In a comparison of British and American cohorts, my colleagues and I (Kerckhoff, Haney, & Glennie, in press) found that between the ages of 16 and 18, 13.8 percent of the Americans left secondary school, compared to 69.6 percent of the British.⁸ About half the British "dropouts" were in postsecondary training programs at age 18, but they were no longer in secondary school. Few French students leave secondary school at the minimum leaving age of 16; only about one-fourth leave before they at least try to obtain the baccalauréat, normally completed by age 18 (Goux & Mourin, 1998).

The German pattern is different from the other three. Compulsory education lasts until age 18. However, there is a division at about age 15 into the various programs that lead to higher

education (via the Gymnasium), the dual apprenticeship system, or basic vocational schools. At least two-thirds enter apprenticeships in the dual system (Heinz, 1999). If entering an apprenticeship in Germany is viewed as leaving full-time school, then two-thirds of the German students leave full-time school at about the same time that about two-thirds of the British students do. What happens after that, however, is markedly different in the two societies.

Most of those in the German dual system actually stay in that system continually past age 18, which is quite different from the pattern in Great Britain, where a combination of school and work is more likely to involve young workers taking part-time courses. Much depends on how one defines the combined activities. For instance in their comparison of school and work patterns in Germany and the United States, Büchtemann, Schupp, and Soloff (1994) treated apprentices as having left school but as having jobs. They thus concluded that many more American than German "school leavers" are employed a year after they leave school. Hence, it is apparent that, even by age 16 or 18, educational trajectories are highly varied both within and among societies. They are even more varied by older ages.

Continuing Into Postsecondary Education

Americans are by far the most likely to complete secondary school and move directly into higher education. In my and my colleagues' comparison of Great Britain and the United States (Kerckhoff et al., in press), we found that 43.4 percent of the Americans had entered colleges or universities by age 22, but only 9.5 percent of the Britons had entered higher education by age 23. However, 51.9 percent of the British students had taken courses in colleges of further education or training centers, compared with 25.6 percent of the Americans who had attended vocational schools or community colleges.

Because so many German students take part in apprenticeship programs, only about one-fourth enter universities or polytechnical college

(Heinz, 1999). However, even some of those who take apprenticeships later go on to universities (Büchtemann et al., 1994). Postsecondary education has been undergoing a great deal of reorganization in France recently, but it is estimated that about one-fourth of French students engage in some kind of postsecondary education (Brauns & Steinmann, 1997).

Education After Entering the Labor Force

Among these four societies, part-time schooling after labor force entry is most common in Great Britain, and returning to school full time after labor force entry is most common in the United States. This variation in rates of return to school suggests that more Americans and Britons than French or Germans have some kinds of educational experiences at relatively late ages. That appears to be the case, but there is also a sharp British-American contrast. In my and my colleagues' comparison of British and American educational trajectories (Kerckhoff et al., in press), 33.3 percent of the Americans attended some kind of educational institution between ages 22 and 28, but only 17.6 percent of the Britons did so between ages 23 and 28. Even more striking, 21.6 percent of the Americans attended colleges or universities during that period, compared with only 3.3 percent of the Britons. Most Britons' courses were taken at training centers or colleges of further education.

Employment Patterns in the Early Years

Early employment is much more stable in Germany than in the other three societies. Young Germans change jobs least often soon after they first enter the labor force, and even when they do change jobs, they are less likely to change occupations. In addition, job changing during the early years less often involves periods of unemployment in Germany (Brauns et al., 1999; Büchtemann et al., 1994).

In all the respects discussed here, the trajectories in the four societies are diverse. Many

British students leave secondary school early, but few do so in the other societies. Some kind of postsecondary schooling is more common in Great Britain and the United States, but British and American students engage in different kinds of postsecondary schooling. Americans are the most likely to reenter full-time school after they enter the labor force. Germans are the least likely to change jobs in the early years after they enter the labor force. If we had more adequate comparative longitudinal data for the transition period, one would find that the most prominent trajectories would certainly be quite different in these four societies.

STRUCTURES, CHOICES, AND TRAJECTORIES

The limited evidence about trajectories just reviewed leaves unspecified the processes through which the steps in the trajectories occur. The earlier discussion of the systems suggests that the British and American trajectories are more influenced by students' choices, whereas the German trajectories are more influenced by forces within the German educational system that sort students into increasingly diverse but restricted trajectories. Relatively speaking, that is probably true, but recent detailed descriptions of some aspects of the processes in Germany and the United States suggest that some of these deductions about trajectories may be oversimplified.

The overviews of the systems suggest that German students are selected to attend one of three kinds of secondary school and that most of them are then selected into occupation-specific apprenticeships that move them into particular kinds of jobs. Mortimer and Krüger (2000) described how young Germans enter apprenticeships, and their description involves a mixture of system restrictions and students' choice. German secondary school students twice enter a six-week training program for an occupation of their choice. Many change their minds about their initial choice and choose another occupation the second time. Many are also unhappy with their second choice. Students submit apprenticeship

applications during their last six months in secondary school. Some apply for dozens of different positions. A rigorous testing and interview period follows, and many students end up in different apprenticeships than they originally said they wished to enter. Many of the changes are due to rejection, but some are due to students changing their minds about what they want.

Heinz (1999) provided another image of a mix of system restrictions and students' choices in Germany. Studying samples of graduates of selected apprenticeship fields in two German cities, he found that five years after they completed their apprenticeships, the graduates were more scattered than would be expected, given the standard view of the German educational system. About one-fifth of the original sample had returned to school. It may be noteworthy, however, that the great majority of them had been in white-collar apprenticeships. Completing the apprenticeships may have given them sufficient future job security to permit them to invest in the more difficult university option.⁹ Of those who were employed, nearly one-third were in a different occupation than the one they had prepared for during their apprenticeship.¹⁰ There thus seems to be more flexibility in the German system than many discussions imply.

Recent research has also suggested a more mixed picture in the United States than the comparisons suggest. American high schools are not quite as "open" and unstructured as they are purported to be. It is true that, over the past 30 years, formal tracking has generally disappeared in American high schools,¹¹ the variety of courses available has sharply increased, and students take many combinations of courses. However, there is more order in students' course sequences than these changes seem to suggest, and the pattern of courses taken affects students' later lives. Lucas's (1999) review of the historical decline of formal tracking and analysis of recent patterns of course taking showed that the kinds of courses taken have continuity across the high school years and in different subjects (such as mathematics, English, and science). Lucas argued that the combinations of courses can be viewed as "tracks" despite the system's tolerance for students' course selection. He noted that several

methods of defining track location in the 11th and 12th grades are significantly linked to academic achievement and college entry.

Other American research has also found more order than may be expected. Kerckhoff and Glennie (1999) used the same data that Lucas used to demonstrate that curricular linkages in mathematics, science, and foreign languages in the 9th through the 12th grade serve to separate students into stratified course-defined educational career lines across the period from age 16 to 28.¹² They showed that as students proceed along these career lines, the differences in their academic achievement increase. That is, there is a cumulative dispersing effect of the curriculum-based career lines. Arum and Hout (1998) also found that high school tracks are significantly associated with American students' later labor market placements.¹³

These German and American findings add some fine-grained texture to the broad picture obtained from considering the structural features of the educational systems. They suggest that both systems provide structure and both allow for some choice by students, even though the balance between those two influences differs. They show that the structure of systems does not preclude choice, but they also show that patterned trajectories can emerge even within less structured systems. Regularity can be found even when no formal structure requires it. Locations in trajectories can be generated by informal social definition and processes as well as by institutional structural constraints.

These regularities that are not institutionally imposed remind us that important processes occur within educational institutions that are not wholly determined by the formal institutional structures. Students relate to each other and families influence students' school experiences, creating informal clusters of like-minded students. In James Coleman's terms (see Schneider, 2000), functional communities evolve within which educational norms emerge. Where educational systems permit students' choices, one can expect that there will be some consistent patterns of choices that have normative force and lead to differentiated educational attainment trajectories. The very existence of alternatives to choose

from and the lack of structural constraints should increase the likelihood that functional communities will evolve and normative influences will emerge.¹⁴

As additional analyses become available for these and other societies, it should be possible to chart with greater confidence the trajectories that young people follow through the transition period into positions in the labor force. The additional analyses should also make it possible to assess the degree to which the trajectories can be attributed to the systems' structural features, to patterns of individual choices, and to normative influences of functional communities. Undoubtedly, structure, choice, and normative influences affect the observed trajectories in all societies, but the nature, extent, and timing of their effects vary. Research that is designed to identify these contributions will increase our understanding of the role of education in the process of social stratification.

OVERVIEW

I have reviewed a recent body of literature that has presented a multidimensional picture of the role of educational institutions in the social stratification processes in advanced societies. Because these societies have such varied educational systems that award different kinds of credentials, the processes by which young people become sorted into categories of educational attainment differ. The three dimensions on which these educational systems are usually differentiated are stratification, standardization, and the degree of vocational specificity of the credentials they award. The combination of stratification and vocational specificity determines the degree to which the systems have "the capacity to structure" the flow of students into the labor force. I added another dimension of system differentiation to these three: the extent to which students have opportunities to make choices.

These differences in the educational systems shape the interface between the systems and the societies' labor forces. To understand the role of educational institutions in these societies' stratification processes, it is essential to examine

carefully what Allmendinger (1989) referred to as the transition period. The construction of the education–occupation association largely occurs during that period. Only after examining the transition period in many societies can we derive an adequate comparative picture of the role of education in the process of stratification and clearly conceptualize the education–occupation association.

Charting the passage of young people through the transition period in differently structured systems involves identifying the trajectories that students follow as they move through school and become established in the labor force. Mapping these trajectories more clearly is the primary challenge in this area of inquiry in the foreseeable future. The literature on structural variations of educational systems has provided a framework within which to conduct that mapping, but it is a broad framework that requires further specification. The further specification will necessarily take into account informal social processes as well as system structures. The locations that constitute the stages in trajectories can be generated by consistent patterns of students' choices and be imposed by structural constraints.

In specifying the trajectories, it will be important to maintain a balance between recognizing their diversity in all societies and maintaining a focus on regularities. To some extent, each person's pathway through school and into the labor force is unique. We need to look for patterned pathways that differentiate societies' methods of sorting young people into the stratified labor force.

NOTES

1. The diversity of educational credentials has led to the development of standardized classification schemes that can be used in multisocietal record keeping and research. The two most common schemes are the International Standard Classification of Education and the scheme developed at the University of Mannheim as part of a project called "Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations." See Kerckhoff and Dylan (1999) for a discussion of these two schemes and some of the difficulties faced when using them.

2. The literature on the education-stratification association provides useful information on many advanced societies. Most of this literature has dealt with European and North American educational systems, but Asian systems have also been studied, especially those of Japan and Taiwan. Because of space limitations and the special features of the Asian systems, I have narrowed my focus more than might be ideal. A comparative analysis of the Japanese system is presented by Ishida (1993), and the Taiwanese system is described by Tsai (1998).

3. As is discussed later in the article, regularities are also found in systems that are not highly standardized. That is why we must move the discussion beyond noting the significance of institutional structure, however important it may be.

4. It is likely that technical postsecondary credentials are more important in the lives of young Americans than is normally assumed. Although they are neither emphasized in most studies of American education nor recognized through national standards, they are obtained by many Americans, and many provide access to highly desirable jobs (Kerckhoff & Bell, 1998).

5. In terms of the usually recorded levels of educational attainment, about 87 percent of young Americans graduate from high school or obtain a GED. About 33 percent go no further, about 8 percent obtain an associate's degree, and about 25 percent obtain a bachelor's or higher degree. The rest, about one-fifth of the total, have "some college" (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). In effect, these are college dropouts with no formal credential beyond a high school diploma. The college-or-nothing choice leaves many American students with nothing to show for their postsecondary efforts.

6. It was not possible in several societies to obtain data that included the levels of the respondents' first full-time jobs, although that was the goal. Thus, some analyses are based on data from relatively young workers about their current, rather than their first, jobs.

7. Once attention is shifted from the general nature of the educational systems and their interface with the labor force to the specifics of young people's experiences, including the trajectories they follow during the transition period, it is necessary to recognize the many ways in which gender becomes a salient variable. Women's and men's trajectories differ in all four societies being discussed. Gender differences are probably greater in Germany than in the other societies, and fewer German women enter and remain in the labor force full time (Scherer, 1999). It would exceed space

limitations to attempt to deal with gender differences here, although detailed research of the type I recommend will have to take them into account.

8. The British data referred to here come from the National Child Development Study, which followed a birth cohort from 1958 until they were 33 years old in 1991; these people were in secondary school in the mid-1970s. Bynner (1999) reported that by the 1990s, many more British students were staying in secondary school in an attempt to obtain useful qualifications before they entered the labor market. Changes in the educational systems and/or the labor markets in all four of these societies may have altered the trajectories referred to here.

9. Some German scholars with whom I have discussed these matters observed that a significant (but unknown) proportion of Gymnasium students who qualify for admission to universities first complete apprenticeships and then enter universities. Some employers even encourage this pattern, assuming they can rehired these skilled university graduates for managerial positions.

10. It is difficult to interpret Heinz's (1999) findings regarding changes in occupations with confidence because Heinz did not report the actual occupations of those he classified as having changed occupations.

11. Turner's (1960) contrast between American and British secondary schools stressed the greater stratification of British schools. However, at the time he wrote about that contrast, there was more explicit internal tracking in American high schools than there is today.

12. These career lines are based on locations in the educational system in the 10th grade, 12th grade, 4 years later, and 10 years later. The 10th and 12th-grade locations are defined by the sets of courses taken. There are three locations in the 10th grade, four in the 12th grade, four at 4 years later, and four at 10 years later. There are thus $3 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 192$ possible career lines. Four career lines account for 29.2 percent of the cases, 13 career lines account for 52.5 percent of the cases, and 26 career lines account for 72.1 percent of the cases.

13. Arum and Hout (1998) based their classification of high school tracks on the respondents' own statements. Such self-reports have been criticized as being highly fallible indicators of students' actual curricular locations in the high school structure (Lucas, 1999). However, it is impressive that even such a fallible measure predicts labor force outcomes.

14. These comments refer to the process by which norms can be generated within a school. Broad societal norms undoubtedly also affect the trajectories,

however. One societal-level normative pattern we observed is reflected in the finding that British women are nearly twice as likely as British men to leave school before age 18 (Kerckhoff et al., 1999).

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THE CASE FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION FOR THE WORLD'S POOREST BOYS AND GIRLS

GENE B. SPERLING

Sometimes what seem to be simple obstacles keep poor girls and boys from attending school. The benefits of schooling, especially for girls, are well documented, yet many children do not attend school because they cannot afford school supplies or clothes or transportation, and families need them for labor. Sperling assesses the problems and discusses those practices that are most effective in getting poor children to attend school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are the barriers to poor children attending school?
2. In what ways is schooling advantageous for poor children?

3. What works to help increase girls' enrollment?
4. How are issues for poor children's educations tied to globalization and health problems such as AIDS?

One of the silent killers attacking the developing world is the lack of quality basic education for large numbers of the poorest children in the world's poorest countries—particularly girls. Yet unlike many of the world's most grievous ailments, this is a disease with a known cure. We know what tools are needed and what models are proven to work. We also know that the cost of that cure—perhaps \$7.5 billion to \$10 billion per year—is minuscule compared with the enormous benefits such education

would bring for health, economics, women's empowerment, and basic human dignity.

An estimated 110 million children—60% of them girls—between the ages of 6 and 11 will not see the inside of a classroom this year. Another 150 million are likely to drop out before completing primary school.

More than half of all girls in sub-Saharan Africa do not complete primary school, and only 17% are enrolled in secondary school.¹ Rates in rural areas are even worse. For instance, a 1996 study in Niger found that only 12% of girls in rural areas were enrolled in primary school, compared with 83% of girls in the capital.²

The situation can be even worse for vulnerable children. In developing nations, those with disabilities and those affected by AIDS face even greater obstacles to education, while orphaned children are less likely to be enrolled in school than their peers who live with at least one parent. Only 6% of children in refugee camps are enrolled in secondary education, and opportunities for internally displaced children are even more limited.³

Access is only part of the story. The other crucial factor is quality. As highlighted by *Education for All: The Quality Imperative*, the 2005 Global Monitoring Report by UNESCO, too many children leave school without mastering a basic set of skills. Ensuring a decent quality of education is an essential component of reform.⁴

STRONG EVIDENCE

The good news is documented in *What Works in Girls' Education*, a 2004 Council on Foreign Relations report that I co-authored with Barbara Herz, and is reinforced in a Mother's Day 2005 report by Save the Children: we have extremely strong evidence both on the high returns on girls' education and on what works to get girls in school.⁵ What is striking is the breadth of benefits derived from educating girls—not only economic benefits in terms of higher wages, greater agricultural productivity, and faster economic growth, but also health benefits, HIV prevention, and women's empowerment.

Two 1999 World Bank studies found that closing the education gender gap in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa would have led to faster economic growth between 1960 and 1992, while increasing the share of women with a secondary education can yield growth in per-capita income.⁶ Another 63-country study attributed 43% of the decline in malnutrition achieved between 1970 and 1995 to more productive farming as a result of increased female education.⁷

Even more impressive are the gains to health that come from educating girls. An extra year of female education can reduce infant mortality by 5% to 10%.⁸ In Africa, children of mothers who receive five years of primary education are 40% less likely to die before age 5 than are children of uneducated mothers.⁹ Across both Africa and Southeast Asia, mothers who have a basic education are 50% more likely than uneducated mothers to immunize their children.¹⁰

Education has also proven to be one of the most powerful tools to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. A recent study in rural Uganda found that, in comparison with young people with no education, those with some secondary education were three times less likely to be HIV-positive, and those with some primary schooling were about half as likely to be HIV-positive.¹¹ In Kenya, a study of 17-year-old girls found that those in secondary school were almost four times as likely to be sexually inactive as those who had dropped out after primary school.¹² In Swaziland, a 2003 study found that more than 70% of in-school youths were not sexually active, while nearly 70% of out-of-school youths were sexually active.¹³ And school-based AIDS education programs have been shown to reduce early sexual activity and high-risk behavior.¹⁴ According to the Global Campaign for Education, seven million cases of AIDS might be prevented over the next 10 years if all children completed basic education.

WHAT WORKS

In making progress on girls' education, there are three things to keep in mind.

First, while sending girls to school may be dearly beneficial both for the girls themselves and for their countries, in most poor nations it is the parents who make the ultimate choice on schooling, and for them this calculation may not seem so clear. Rightly or wrongly, such extremely impoverished parents often feel they need their girls' labor for extra income or, more frequently just to help with the grueling requirements of life, such as the long hours spent collecting water or firewood or caring for the younger children in the family.

The good news is, when you reduce the cost and increase the benefits of sending girls to school, most parents will choose a better future for their children. It is critical to develop and widely implement policies that work to align the temporary interests of parents with the long-term well-being of their girls and their societies.

The simplest and most basic strategy to reduce costs for parents is to eliminate the per-child school fees that are still charged in many developing countries. We know this strategy works because countries that have reduced or eliminated school fees have seen enrollment skyrocket overnight. In Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, enrollment increased dramatically in the very first year after fees were abolished: from 3.4 million to 5.7 million students in Uganda in 1996; from 5.9 million to 7.2 million in Kenya in 2003; and from 1.5 million to 3 million in Tanzania in 2002.

Beyond eliminating fees, even modest additional incentives to parents have made a huge difference. Scholarships and conditional cash transfers have been shown to lift attendance of both girls and boys in countries such as Bangladesh, Mexico, and Brazil. School-based health and nutrition programs have also proven successful. In Kenya, for instance, school meals were found to raise attendance by 30% and to boost scores.¹⁵

Reducing the distance children must travel to school is also critical because it both cuts down on the time children must spend away from home and alleviates parental concerns for the safety of their children, especially their girls, as they walk to and from school. Policies that both

build parental trust and make schools more girl-friendly—such as hiring more female teachers, forming parental committees, and providing latrine facilities for girls—have all been shown to increase girls' enrollment.

Second, while it is crucial that countries make an extra effort and institute special initiatives to target girls' education, these endeavors will work only in the context of a broader focus on *universal* basic education for all children. Though the educational gaps for girls are especially large, the problems for boys—particularly poor, rural boys—are also dramatic. Furthermore, efforts to get girls into schools will never be successful unless there is a decent quality of education—respectable class sizes, trained teachers, quality instructional materials—for both girls and boys.

Third, while the impetus for all major education reforms must come from the local and national levels of countries themselves, it is critical that there be a global compact that pairs a commitment from developing countries to institute necessary reforms with a clear contingent commitment from donors to provide resources to countries that fulfill their part of the compact.¹⁶ This is especially critical because the major cost for poor countries seeking universal basic education is the recurring cost of teachers' salaries.

The key to such a compact is certainty. Donors must feel certain that there is a commitment to good governance, careful monitoring, and national ownership of any plan to expand basic education. Leaders of developing countries, on the other hand, must have the certainty that, if they are willing to take on the enormous task of mobilizing political will and resources to seek universal basic education, then donors will live up to their part of the compact by providing the substantial funds needed to fill their financing gap.

This was the promise of the Dakar meeting hosted by UNESCO in 2000, where more than 180 nations—including the United States—committed to the simple yet profound goal (which later became a Millennium Development Goal) of achieving universal basic education by 2015. The global compact on education that emerged from Dakar required developing countries to

demonstrate a real commitment to the goal of universal basic education by developing their own national education plans—based on political will, domestic resource mobilization, and accountability—while rich countries pledged that “no country seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in its achievement of universal primary school completion by 2015 due to lack of resources.”¹⁷

Instilling confidence that donors will live up to their pledge is particularly important in light of the multiple crises facing most poor countries and the reality that many of the economic benefits of achieving universal basic education will not be realized until after current leaders have left office. When the leaders of a poor nation consider taking on such a challenge even though the political payoff may flow to their successors, it is essential that the global community at least make it clear that those leaders will not be left without the resources to succeed.

In the five years since Dakar, there has been some progress on these promises. The world established the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), a new global financing mechanism designed to direct coordinated funding to low-income countries that have developed quality national education plans. As of July 2005, 16 countries had been endorsed by FTI, and an estimated 44 others could be ready over the next two years.

FTI represents an important step toward a certain and viable global compact on education. Unfortunately, donors' contributions have to date been far short of what is required. As the World Economic Forum's Global Governance Initiative reported, donors in 2004 delivered less than 10% of what is needed annually to achieve universal primary education.¹⁸ The global community will ultimately need to provide another \$7.5 billion to \$10 billion annually, above the pathetic \$2 billion that is now provided in external assistance for basic education.

While reform must always emanate from the local communities and national governments of poor nations, it would be inexcusable if educational and political leaders in developing nations were discouraged from taking bold steps to provide all of their children a free and quality

basic education simply because they lacked confidence that donor nations would hold up their end of the global bargain.

NOTES

1. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: *Education for All: The Leap to Equality* (Paris: UNESCO, 2003).

2. *Niger Poverty Assessment: A Resilient People in a Harsh Environment* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1996).

3. *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies* (New York: Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2004), p. iii.

4. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005: *Education for All: The Quality Imperative* (Paris: UNESCO, 2004).

5. Gene Sperling and Barbara Herz, *What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004); and *State of the World's Mothers 2005: The Power and Promise of Girls' Education* (Westport, Conn.: Save the Children, 2005).

6. Stephan Klasen, “Does Gender Inequality Reduce Growth and Development? Evidence from Cross-Country Regressions,” Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, Working Paper No. 7, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1999; and David Dollar and Roberta Gatti, “Gender Inequality, Income, and Growth: Are Good Times Good for Women?” Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, Working Paper No. 1, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1999.

7. Lisa C. Smith and Lawrence Haddad, “Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries: A Cross-Country Analysis,” Discussion Paper 60, IFPRI Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, Washington, D.C., 1999.

8. Paul T. Schultz, “Returns to Women's Schooling,” in Elizabeth King and M. Anne Hill, eds., *Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits, and Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

9. Lawrence H. Summers, *Investing in All the People: Educating Women in Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1994).

10. Anastasia Gage, Elisabeth Sommerfelt, and Andrea Piani, “Household Structure and Childhood Immunization in Niger and Nigeria,” *Demography*, vol. 34, 1997, pp. 295–309.

11. Damien De Walque, "How Does Educational Attainment Affect the Risk of Being Infected with HIV/AIDS? Evidence from a General Population Cohort in Rural Uganda," World Bank Development Group Working Paper, Washington, D.C., 2004.

12. *Education and HIV Prevention* (New York: UNICEF, 2002), citing data from Kenya Demographic and Health Survey.

13. Alan Whiteside et al., *What Is Driving the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Swaziland?* (Durban, South Africa: Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division, University of Natal, 2003).

14. Douglas Kirby et al., "School-Based Programs to Reduce Risk Behaviors: A Review of Effectiveness," *Public Health Reports*, vol. 109, 1994, pp. 339–61.

15. Christel Vermeersch, "School Means, Educational Achievement, and School Competition:

Evidence from a Randomized Experiment," unpublished paper, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 2002.

16. For further discussion of such a global compact on education, see Gene Sperling, "Toward Universal Education: Making a Promise, and Keeping It," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2001, pp. 7–13; idem, "Toward a Global Compact on Universal Education," testimony before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, 14 May 2003; and Gene Sperling and Rekha Balu, "Designing a Global Compact on Education," *Finance & Development*, June 2005, pp. 38–41.

17. *The Dakar Framework for Action* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000), p. 9.

18. *Global Governance Initiative Annual Report 2005* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2005).

WHAT DOES GLOBALIZATION MEAN FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE?

A Comparative Approach

MARTIN CARNOY AND DIANA RHOTEN

Theories of educational change have shifted over time. Today theorists take for granted that economic and social change nationally and globally affect education systems. However, globalization is forcing a new look at what effect worldwide changes in political and economic systems are having on educational systems and providing a new framework for viewing educational systems around the world. Carnoy and Rhoten discuss the importance of globalization in understanding today's national educational systems.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does globalization mean for educational change?

2. How does an understanding of globalization help us understand trends in educational systems?
3. What effect are globalized information networks having on schools?
4. How is globalization affecting stratification in countries around the world?

Linking economic and social change to changes in how societies transmit knowledge is a relatively new approach to studying education. Before the 1950s, comparative education focused mainly on the philosophical and cultural origins of national educational systems. This approach saw educational change as rooted in new educational philosophies or theories—new conceptions of what knowledge should be

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transmitted and of organizing knowledge transmission—usually promulgated by individual visionaries. In the 1960s and 1970s, a rash of historical studies challenged this view. They situated educational reform in economic and social change. Some of them went further, using approaches based in political economy, world systems theory, and theories of neocolonialism and underdevelopment to show that economic imperatives on a global scale were a major force in shaping education world-wide.¹ Others interpreted such change through an institutional lens, arguing that the convergence toward accepted models of modernity has resulted in a process of educational isomorphism within and across countries.²

Today, the notion that economic and social change affect educational structures and content is old hat. Comparative education has incorporated these models, and many studies have tied educational reform to economic and social change at an international level. Nevertheless, the current phenomenon of globalization provides a new empirical challenge as much as it does a new theoretical frame for comparative education. Globalization is a force reorganizing the world's economy, and the main resources for that economy are increasingly knowledge and information. If knowledge and information, usually transmitted and shaped by national and local institutions, are fundamental to the development of the global economy, and the global economy, in turn, shapes the nature of educational opportunities and institutions, how should we draw the directional arrows in our analysis? To complicate the situation further, global economics and ideology are increasingly intertwined in international institutions that promulgate particular strategies for educational change. To what degree does educational change represent regional, national, or local responses to global economic restructuring, and to what degree do these changes represent international agencies' intentions regarding these responses?

One point is fairly clear. If knowledge is fundamental to globalization, globalization should also have a profound impact on the transmission of knowledge. Some have argued that this has not occurred, casting doubt on the capacity of

globalization to permeate knowledge production and transmission influenced by local culture.³ It is true that education appears to have changed little at the classroom level in most countries—even in those nations most involved in the global economy and the information age. Beyond computers being occasionally used in classrooms, teaching methods and national curricula remain largely intact. Even one of the most important educational reforms associated with globalization, the decentralization of educational administration and finance, seems to have little or no effect on educational delivery in classrooms, despite its implementation.

However, this is a very narrow interpretation of the effects of globalization on education. The combination of economic restructuring in the world economy and the powerful ideological conceptions of how educational delivery needs to be changed, spread by international institutions as a consequence of the globalization process, is having a significant impact on educational systems worldwide. We need to ask how this larger ideological package—which includes, but is not limited to, decentralization and privatization, choice and accountability, testing and assessment—affects education. The way knowledge is delivered in the classroom is an important aspect of knowledge production, and the classroom seems largely untouched. But the classroom is only one part of the knowledge production process, and even it is being subtly but ultimately transformed by the forces of globalization. In assessing globalization's true relationship to educational change, we need to know how globalization and its ideological packaging affect the overall delivery of schooling, from transnational paradigms, to national policies, to local practices.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE STATE

At the heart of the relationship between globalization and education in the current historical conjuncture is the relationship between the globalized political economy and the nation-state. Is the power of the national state diminished by globalization?

Yes and no. Yes, because increasing global economic competition makes the nation-state focus on economic policies that improve global competitiveness at the expense of policies that stabilize the current configuration of the domestic political economy and/or possibly social cohesion.⁴ Yes, because the nation-state is compelled to make the national economy attractive for the mass of capital that moves globally in the "space of flows," and that may mean a shift of public spending and monetary policy from measures that favor workers and consumers to those benefiting financial interests. Globalization forces nation-states to focus more on acting as economic growth promoters for their national economies than as protectors of the national identity or a nationalist project. Consequently, the project of the nation-state tends to become largely limited to enhancing increases in aggregate material gain measured nationally by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Trade Organization (WTO) and much less to promoting equal treatment experienced nationally by various ethnic groups living within a country's boundaries. Increasingly, the state shifts power up to regional organizations or down to local governments and is less and less able to equalize the interests of various identities represented in the nation-state. It pushes the problems of ethnic conflict to the local level and increasingly limits its responsibility to develop the economic environment in which individuals can increase their material well-being. This produces new social divisions within the nation-state, new social networks across nation-states, and new social movements against the nation-state.

Some analysts go so far as to argue that the globalized nation-state will become "virtual." It no longer will focus on amassing production capacity but, rather, will invest in its people and determine overall economic strategy.⁵ The virtual nation-state is the site of production, and it encourages and stimulates investments from at home and abroad that expand production activities. But it realizes that for the national economy to prosper, its production does not have to take place at home; rather, it specializes in research and development, design, network, entertainment, and communication software, and in financial services. The role of the state

is to negotiate for its own corporations' investments abroad and to attract foreign investment domestically. The state is a negotiating entity, using its diplomatic and commercial skills to enhance payoffs to the nation's resources.

But no, the power of the nation-state may not be diminished by globalization because ultimately nation-states still influence the territorial and temporal space in which capital has to invest and where most people acquire their capacity to operate globally. Peter Evans's argument is that to maximize profits and protect their returns, especially from intellectual capital, globalized firms and globalized finance capital need efficient state apparatuses with well-developed civil societies that provide growing markets, stable political conditions, and steady public investment in human capital. Evans points to the results of Dani Rodrik's 1996 work as evidence that the link between diffusion of the international economy and an evaporation of the nation-state is neither as direct nor as desirable as orthodox neoliberals have argued. Rodrik's extensive analysis of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and developing countries shows that, in fact, there exists a positive rather than a negative connection between the institutional capacity of a nation's state and the country's degree of compatibility with globalization. Research in the 1980s and early 1990s also showed that well-organized interventionist state bureaucracies in Asia's newly industrialized countries (NICs) were an essential element in their rapid economic growth.⁶ Although the interventionist state's role has been irrevocably changed by the current crisis in Asia, international and local investment capital still require coherent state regulatory and other policies to restore confidence. And beyond the view that state bureaucracies are a necessary element in regulating and protecting firm assets, it is likely that societies with strong national identities and group cohesiveness provide the kind of stability where financial risk can be accurately assessed, where productivity can be raised with new team-based production innovations, and where educational institutions work reasonably well.

The social costs of weak states may be much higher than supposed by those most committed to getting the state off the people's back. Some

analysts have called this underlying context for social and economic interaction “social capital.”⁷ Others have focused on trust.⁸ Even the World Bank, a global financial institution, has rediscovered the nation-state as important to social capital.⁹ A well-organized, efficient state apparatus regulating the rules of the game and implementing coherent economic and social policies attracts capital and high-skilled labor. Inefficient states drive them away.

GLOBALIZATION AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Elsewhere, Carnoy argues in more detail the five ways in which globalization is having a major impact on education.¹⁰ In financial terms, most governments are under pressure to reduce the growth of public spending on education and to find other sources of funding for the expected expansion of their educational systems.

In labor market terms, governments are simultaneously under pressure to attract foreign capital, and this means providing a ready supply of skilled labor. This translates into pressure to increase the average level of education in the labor force. The payoff to higher levels of education is rising worldwide as a result of the shifts of economic production to knowledge-intensive products and processes, as well as because governments implement policies that increase income inequality. As relative incomes for higher-educated labor rise, the demand for university education increases, pushing governments to expand their higher education, and, correspondingly, to increase the number of secondary school graduates ready to attend postsecondary schools. In countries that were previously resistant to providing equal access to education for young women, the need for more highly educated low-cost labor tends to expand women's educational opportunities. All these pressures conflict with reforms that attempt to reduce public spending on education.

In educational terms, the quality of national educational systems is increasingly being compared internationally. This has placed increased

emphasis on math and science curriculum, standards, and testing, and on meeting standards by changing the way education is delivered. Testing and standards are part of a broader effort to increase accountability by measuring knowledge production and using such measures to assess education workers (teachers) and managers.

Information technology is gradually being introduced into educational systems, partly to try to expand the quantity of education at lower cost through distance education and partly to deliver higher-quality education (at higher cost) through computer-assisted instruction and the use of the Internet. Although almost all countries are at the very beginning of using such new technology, its future use in education cannot be underestimated, particularly because of its ability to link students in the smallest towns of every country with the rest of the world.

Globalized information networks mean transformation of world culture. But globalization also means that many groups feel marginalized by the market values of this new culture. Such groups struggle against the globalized economy by asserting cultural values that may themselves be global (e.g., traditional fundamentalist religion, on the one hand, and postmodern environmentalism and feminism, on the other) but are, at the same time, profoundly antimarket. This constitutes a new kind of struggle over the meaning and value of knowledge.

Which of these changes are introduced and particularly how they are introduced depends on regional, national, and even local social, economic, and political conditions that mediate the implementation of responses to global pressures for reform. Elsewhere, Rhoten shows how national interpretations of educational reform (which themselves are conditioned responses to globalized economic and social change) are differentially interpreted and implemented at the local level in three Latin American countries.¹¹ This analysis illustrates how these interpretations and implementations depend heavily on capacities and structures developed over long periods of time.

Thus, educational changes in response to globalization share certain defining parameters but still vary greatly across regions, nations, and

localities. The other side of that variation is an almost obvious inference: policies prescribed by the same paradigm but applied in different contexts produce different practices—so different in some cases that it is difficult to imagine that they were the result of the same policy. By ignoring differences in contextual capacity and culture at the national, regional, and local levels, globalization has resulted in some unintended and unexpected consequences for educational practice that in some cases have contributed to the deterioration of quality even when the objective has been improvement.

NOTES

1. See, e.g., P. Altbach, "Servitude of the Mind? Education, Dependency and Neo-Colonialism," in his *University Reform: Comparative Perspectives for the Seventies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1974); R. Arno, "Comparative Education and World Systems Analysis," *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 1 (February 1980): 48–62; N. T. Assié-Lumumba and T. Lumumba-Kasongo, "The State, Economic Crisis, and Educational Reform in Côte d'Ivoire," in *Understanding Educational Reform in Global Context: Economy, Ideology, and the State*, ed. M. Ginsburg (New York: Garland, 1991); Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: McKay, 1974).

2. See, e.g., W. Cummings, "The Institutions of Education: Compare, Compare, Compare!" *Comparative Education Review* 43, no. 4 (November 1999): 413–37; P. DiMaggio and W. Powell, "Introduction," in their *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); F. Ramirez and J. Meyer, "The World Institutionalization of Education," in *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education*, ed. J. Schriewer (New York: Lang, 2000).

3. See, e.g., N. McGinn, "The Impact of Globalization on National Education Systems," *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* 28, no. 1 (March 1997): 41–54.

4. M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

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PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Education in an International Context

Various tests are used to compare academic achievement across countries. Using an academic database, search on "INTERNATIONAL" and "TEST RESULTS" and "EDUCATION" to find a listing of test results across countries. How do students from the United States compare with those of other countries?

Using the Web, look up at least two colleges or universities from three countries in different regions of the world. Compare the criteria for admission, focus of the curricula, methods for funding education, and format for instruction in these three different countries.

Interview a student or person from another country. Ask them about the structure of educational systems in their country and how well their educational system prepares them for their entry into the workforce.

PART X

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND CHANGE

We examined various parts of education throughout this book. Many of these readings pointed to places in which change and reform are desirable. In Part X, we conclude by focusing on the “whole” education system and look at the possibility of change. These four readings include historical analyses of change and reforms as well as recommendations for the future.

Why even discuss change in education? Institutions in society are stable clusters of norms and values. As such, the tendency is for education to remain “as is” rather than to change rapidly. The first reading in this part, by David Tyack and Larry Cuban, examines attempts at educational change in the United States. In studying the history of change in schools, they find that not all changes are rejected, but most are. Many changes from the past that survived are all too familiar and form the basis of what we consider to be “real schools” today. One example is the graded school, which began in 1860, and the school calendar, which is based on harvesting schedules and made perfect sense when we were an agricultural economy (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Although it is easy to see why certain practices exist, it can be at times baffling to try to understand why change is so difficult. In the first reading, they describe four attempts at change and suggest paths for educational reform today.

Interestingly, Tyack and Cuban’s reading suggests that teachers should be given more say in educational reform efforts. Ingersoll and Perda, and Dworkin in Part II, noted that issues of authority and control over one’s work continues to be contested territory for teachers. Not surprisingly, the history of educational reform in this country has not typically included teachers in school reform efforts.

A brief review of school reform in the United States since the 1980s helps us to understand the patterns of these efforts at change. No Child Left Behind is the most recent of a series of reform strategies. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education began what some called the first wave of reform in 1983. This report called for tightening requirements for students and qualifications for teachers. This was followed by calls from the National Governors’ Association for school restructuring including school-based management and school choice. When these efforts did not produce results by the late 1980s, the National Governors’ Association defined goals for American schools. These goals called for systemic reform at all levels of education using both top-down and bottom-up strategies for implementation, including outcome-based

education (Dougherty & Hall, 1997). The next wave of reform was initiated in 1989 with the specification of eight goals that were set for the year 2000. Goals 2000 focused on outcomes such as higher graduation rates and improved performance, including higher achievement in mathematics and science. Not surprising, these goals were accompanied by a focus on evaluation and assessment. The year 2000 arrived, and clearly these goals had not been reached. The current focus on educational standards and testing, discussed in the second reading by Thomas Rohlen, is a natural outgrowth of these reform efforts and is specified clearly in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Rohlen compares current educational reforms in the United States to the structure of the Japanese educational system. Although some progress has been made with NCLB, it will be interesting to watch the responses of politicians and educators and to follow the next wave of educational reform as it emerges.

All too often we get caught up on issues within schools and forget why these became issues in the first place. The reading by Richard Rothstein in Part VII considers the attempts to improve academic achievement for all children from the perspective of the factors schools can't control—the burdens of living in poverty. In the third reading, Jean Anyon proposes a different function for schools than those discussed in Part I and a different way to address these additional barriers to achievement—that of using schools to generate social change in communities. Following the lead of postmodern critical theorists such as Paulo Friere and Henry Giroux discussed by Alan Sadovnik in Part I, she proposes that schools use their resources to teach and mobilize the community to exact social change.

We close this book with a classic piece by Ivan Illich which proposes an entirely different system of schooling and challenges the need for what Mary H. Metz called “real school” in Part III. In this classic piece, published in 1971, Illich does not propose educational reform; rather he calls for radical changes in the way we “do” education. . . . Illich argues for abolishing traditional schooling and replacing it with an entirely elective system in which individuals can learn whenever they wish from whomever they wish. Although his proposals may not stand a chance of implementation in the near or even far future, it is useful in raising questions about what we are really trying to accomplish in our schools.

We, of course, are only providing a brief glimpse into the area about which many studies and reports proposing educational reform have been written. As you read this chapter, recall the Open Systems Model in the Introduction to the book. Think about how all these elements of the Open Systems Model facilitate as well as inhibit change. We hope these four readings stoke your creative juices and provide a framework for you look at the “parts” of the educational system and envision the future of education in new and productive ways.

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TINKERING TOWARD UTOPIA

A Century of Public School Reform

DAVID TYACK AND LARRY CUBAN

In these excerpts from their book of the same title, David Tyack and Larry Cuban look at failed school reforms and provide some suggestions for approaching change in the future. Their book examines the history of educational change in this country. In this reading, they consider four reforms, sponsored primarily by noneducators: adopting businesslike practices, contracting with outside organizations for the purpose of improving performance, using technology to improve education, and restructuring the salary schedule to motivate teachers. They describe a history of efforts at reform in these areas and provide their own explanations for why these reforms have failed, as well as suggestions for change.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why weren't reformers from outside the educational system effective in implementing reform in schools?
2. Why do teachers resist reforms? How do Tyack and Cuban's conclusions fit with what you read about teachers in Part II?
3. What recommendations do they make for future change in schools?
4. How are these effects different from or similar to the attempts at reform described in Part VII?
5. What changes might technology bring to "real schools"?

In this chapter we explore some examples of how outsiders tried to reinvent schooling by importing into schools complex new techniques of management and budgeting developed by business and government during the 1960s and early 1970s; by contracting instruction to innovators who claimed that private corporations could do a better job of teaching the basics than the public schools—and make a profit in the process;¹ by employing technology to transform instruction; and by basing incentives and career paths in teaching on competition and hierarchy.

The results of these attempts differed by reforms, but in the main, they had little lasting impact on public schools.

It is easy to trace the early trajectory of shooting star reforms, for there is a rich paper trail of such reforms in the advocacy stage, when people make grandiose claims for them. It is harder to discover why reforms fade, for when they do, strategic silence often ensues. Since success is often equated with survival, few people have bothered to chronicle transitory innovations. The volume of articles in the popular and professional press on transitory break-the-mold reforms has risen rapidly, then fallen as precipitously.²

Why were the start-from-scratch innovations proposed by outsiders mostly short-lived? Innovators outside the schools who wanted to reinvent education were often skilled in publicity and the politics of promising and claimed to use the latest models of rational planning. But they rarely factored into their plans a sophisticated understanding of the school as an institution or insight into the culture of teachers. They tended to treat “schools as though they were made of silly putty,” easily molded, whereas good schools are more like healthy plants, needing good soil and careful tending over long periods of time. Outsiders who tried to reinvent schooling rarely understood the everyday lives of teachers, their practices, beliefs, and sources of frustration and satisfaction. The hope that a few demonstration lighthouse schools would become models to transform entire school systems rarely became reality; instead, they were more likely to become boutique schools isolated from the mainstream.³

THE BUSINESS OF SCHOOLING

Like their predecessors in the Progressive era, the business-oriented reformers of the 1960s and 1970s had ready-made technocratic solutions to educational problems. Sometimes they had products in search of markets. Many of them thought the current administrators of schools were incompetent as planners and unaccountable for results. One approach to reform was to transform the management of schools by adopting new managing and budgeting techniques such as Management by Objectives, the Program Planning and Budgeting System, and Zero Based Budgeting. Another was to treat public schools as a marketplace of instructional services in which corporations could compete in teaching children by using the latest technologies of instruction and behavioral engineering, such as teaching machines and extrinsic rewards for learning. Business methods of planning and budgeting, competition, and incentives, aided by new technologies—these could transform antiquated public schools into centers of efficient learning.⁴

Managing Education

In the early decades of the twentieth century . . . business and professional elites increasingly controlled the school boards of cities. In their attempt to counter criticisms that the schools were inefficient, superintendents and university education experts rushed to borrow language and concepts from business, and “businesslike” became almost synonymous with “scientific.”⁵

Ellwood P. Cubberley, for example, liked to propose the board of directors of a bank as the template for an effective school committee and the expert business manager as a model for the “scientific” superintendent of schools. He spoke of schools as “factories in which the raw materials (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life.” Aware of criticisms that schools wasted the public’s taxes, city school chiefs avidly calculated the cost effectiveness of everything from a lesson in Latin to the purchase of school desks.

They wrote detailed educational “objectives” and blueprints for instruction. Like efficiency experts in industry—the time-and-motion folk—they thought it possible for managers to plan tasks while workers (teachers, students) did the work.⁶

The language and imagery of business efficiency proved useful to superintendents who needed to please local elites, but much emulation of business was rhetorical and did not directly translate into classroom practices. Schools were not factories, and children were not passive raw materials. Like their students, teachers were active agents, not docile workers on a pedagogical assembly line. Once the schoolroom door was shut, most teachers retained considerable autonomy to instruct the children as they saw fit. The governance of education was not identical to the management of business, and school boards continued to be political agencies, however much they claimed to be “above politics.” When business leaders fell out of favor during the Great Depression, for a time so did much of the impulse to emulate the rhetoric of business.⁷

A demand for accountability and cost-effective management in public schools revived the cult of efficiency in education during the 1960s and 1970s. Reformers urged educators to reinvent educational management and budgeting by adopting techniques developed by corporations, the military-industrial complex, university budgeting experts, and government agencies. These technocratic reformers had ready-made rational solutions in search of problems, and the educational system seemed to them ripe for experiment.⁸

One such technique, Management by Objectives (MBO), stemmed from efforts to streamline business and industrial organizations. G. S. Odiorne defined MBO as “a system in which the first step of management is the clarification of corporate objectives and the breaking down of all subordinate activity into logical subdivisions that contribute to the major objectives.” The Program Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS) also had its origins in industry. It proposed collecting and analyzing data in such a way that the costs of programs—or their alternatives—could be linked to short- and long-term plans and

goals. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara adapted PPBS to program planning and budgeting in the Pentagon in 1961, and in 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson extended it to all government departments. Jimmy Carter discovered that Texas Instruments had developed Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) as a way of forcing each unit to justify its budget in terms of company objectives—starting from zero. Carter then used ZBB in governmental budgeting as governor of Georgia and President of the United States. In each case, the goals were to increase the rationality of planning, to relate budgeting and management to specific organizational objectives, and to use data in the service of control (though such power was supposedly exercised in a “neutral” way). All three techniques of management and budgeting were applied to education, but the most prevalent was PPBS.⁹

Scholars disagree about how effective these systems were even in businesses where there was a clear objective—profit—or in a government agency, the Department of Defense, that used it to procure weapons. Aaron Wildavsky called PPBS “tremendously inefficient,” saying the “inputs were huge and its policy output is tiny.” In 1971 the federal Office of Management and Budget dropped PPBS. President Carter’s first ZBB budget, in 1979, resulted in fewer program cuts than previous budgets in the 1970s, and the system met its demise when he was defeated in 1980. PPBS and ZBB cost a great deal of time and money, created new layers of bureaucracy, and heaped up piles of paper.¹⁰

Vulnerable to pressure from federal and state governments to become more accountable—especially when funding from those levels increased—school systems in many parts of the nation adopted PPBS. By 1970 about three-fourths of the states either had mandated or were considering requiring school districts to report in a program budget format. Their experience illustrates the problems of importing elaborate systems of accounting into educational governance and finance. In comparison with objectives at the Ford Motor Company or the Department of Defense, educational goals are

often diffuse, and organizing them is like herding cats. One district ended up with fifty-eight separate objectives just for mathematics in the primary grades. "Results" were hard to measure and quantify, and the methods of achieving these objectives were frequently unclear.¹¹

Many public school districts lacked staff with the analytic skills to gather and interpret the data used in PPBS. In any case, educators questioned whether such an expenditure of time, money, and paper was worthwhile, for it was unclear how it might improve instruction. While recognizing the need to demonstrate that children were learning and that money was well spent, teachers complained that "Mickey Mouse in triplicate"—their rendering of PPBS—was not the way to become accountable. In his ethnographic study of the implementation of PPBS in Oregon, Harry Wolcott argues that teachers regarded it as obtrusive and meaningless make-work rather than as a help in planning and accounting for their work.¹²

In 1966 California took its first steps to implement PPBS. Clothed in the trappings of expertise, PPBS appeared on the surface to be neutral and nonpolitical, but like Progressive era reforms, it centralized decision making. In California as elsewhere, education is intrinsically a value-laden and political enterprise. Many stakeholders who had traditionally negotiated and compromised in making school budgets felt excluded. Various citizens' groups, on the right as well as the left, attacked PPBS because they correctly perceived that planning involved basic moral and civic questions obscured by technocratic jargon. Thus it is not surprising that in 1972, responding to powerful opposition from both educators and lay citizens, the California State Board of Education dropped PPBS. PPBS manuals that had cost millions to create sat gathering dust in the state archives. Other states followed California's example, and before long PPBS and its kin dropped from sight.¹³

Contracting for Performance

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many policymakers outside the schools and some

educators inside them believed that business corporations could revolutionize the performance of low-achieving students. A number of large firms, several of them defense contractors, saw in the schools a vast potential market to cultivate as spending on the Vietnam War was decreasing. The federal government was adding about a billion dollars to state and local school budgets, and as former U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel quipped, "a billion dollars looking for a good, new way to be spent does not ordinarily turn the American businessman into a shrinking violet." For a time it seemed that the way to raise the achievement of low-achieving students was to contract out the teaching of basic skills to business corporations. This would assure efficiency and accountability.¹⁴

In Texarkana, Arkansas, in the fall of 1969, over a hundred pupils identified as potential drop-outs entered "Rapid Learning Centers" set up by Dorsett Educational Systems. In carpeted, newly painted rooms they went to pick up folders in which the teacher—called the "instructional manager"—had put the day's assignment and a record and filmstrip for each child. Then students plugged the software into a Dorsett teaching machine, put on the headset, and logged their time onto punch cards that were used to plan the next day's assignment. When they had correctly answered all the questions on the programmed lesson, they received ten Green Stamps. If they advanced a grade-level in reading or mathematics, they earned a transistor radio. The child who made the most progress for the year on achievement tests won the grand prize: a portable TV set. Diagnosis, prescription, achievement, reward—it was a learning system coupled with extrinsic rewards. The goal: to accelerate the learning of children who were falling behind in school—and to make a profit for Dorsett, which had created the system.¹⁵

Texarkana represented the dawn of a bright new day, some thought, when for-profit businesses would contract with school districts to use technology and scientific management of learning, well-laced with extrinsic incentives, to produce Results: higher student achievement in the

basic subjects. No results, no pay. The Behavioral Research Laboratories (BRL) took charge of a public school in Gary, Indiana, the Banneker School, in 1971. When a systems analyst with experience at Lockheed took over as “center manager” at Banneker, he asserted that there was basically no difference between schools and industry. “I view things analytically,” he said. “Keep out emotions . . . You don’t have to love the guy next to you on the assembly line to make the product. He puts in the bolts, you put in the nuts, and the product comes out.” A Gary teacher retorted: “There’s no way a man with that attitude can succeed in a school. No way.”¹⁶

The worlds of the technocrats and the teachers were, indeed, miles apart. BRL had developed programmed books and materials to teach reading and saw the chance to run its own learning system in a Gary public school as a way to shake up what the chairman of BRL’s board called the “mindless, inefficient, hideously mismanaged” public school system. There were, in name at least, no “teachers” at the Banneker School; instead, it employed a center manager, a learning director, five curriculum managers, fifteen assistant curriculum managers, and twenty learning supervisors in a hierarchy of responsibility and pay (the word “teacher” apparently had bad connotations for BRL). Just as students had done decades before in Gary’s “platoon system,” the students in the BRL school circulated from room to room—or rather from curriculum center to curriculum center—to work on different academic subjects and in fields such as art, music, and physical education.¹⁷

Some leaders of teachers’ organizations and educational policymakers protested that in Texarkana, Gary, and elsewhere the systems people had radically restricted the goals of schooling to drill and practice on the basic skills and performance on standardized tests. The tests themselves, some argued, were faulty measures of achievement. Gains in test scores might be only temporary results of the “Hawthorne effect” (the positive impact of attention), the fanfare about the project, and carpeted and air-conditioned rooms. Many teachers considered extrinsic

rewards to be inappropriate bribery for learning and questioned the effectiveness of “contingency management.” One teacher in Texarkana said, “I wonder if the children are really learning or just storing a little knowledge for long enough to get the reward.” Teachers complained that the prepackaging of learning robbed them of the chance to exercise their own professional knowledge and discretion, and some feared that “curriculum managers” and machines might threaten their jobs. But the most fundamental criticism, and one that led people to legally challenge the BRL-run school in Gary and to close it down, was that public districts were abdicating their role in shaping public policy in education when they delegated instruction to private agencies.¹⁸

Dorsett and BRL were only two of dozens of corporations, large and small, that regarded performance contracts as a way to make profit by teaching children who were lagging in academic achievement. These companies saw schooling as a vast new market that might take up the slack in defense contracts that were winding down along with the Vietnam War. Many school board members, government officials, and educational entrepreneurs were eager to give businesses a chance to raise levels of academic performance among these students. In 1970 President Nixon’s Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) sponsored a performance-contracting experiment in which thirty-one companies competed for performance contracts in eighteen selected school districts (this coincided with another OEO experiment with markets in education, a voucher plan).¹⁹

The six companies that won the contracts agreed to receive no payment if pupils did not make a year’s gain on standardized tests but stood to make a good profit if they did. In 1970 the federal government also subsidized twenty other performance contracts. In most cases, the companies relied on teaching machines and/or programmed materials, individual diagnosis and prescription of learning, and extrinsic incentives. The resulting trend, said two observers, was “not so much toward educational reform under the initiative of the public sector as it is . . . toward

marketing and sales with the private sector setting the terms. The public may find that in the majority of cases it is simply paying a higher price to put last year's product in this year's favorite package." The chair of the House Education Subcommittee, Representative Edith Green, worried about the funds flowing to defense contractors that were entering the education business: "It is accurate to say that anyone with a brainstorm can come to Washington and get financing from the Office of Education or the Office of Economic Opportunity."²⁰

Although Dorsett's instructional system in Texarkana became the model for most other performance contracts, in one respect it became a scandal to be avoided. One day the district's project director was visiting its Rapid Learning Centers to monitor the year-end test that would determine how well Dorsett had done its job. A boy mentioned to him that he had already seen one of the test items; it was about a visit to a submarine. The cat was out of the bag. It turned out that in their daily lessons just before the big examination the students had been studying items taken from the test. The centers were not just teaching to the test; they were teaching the test. The person responsible explained that Texarkana had assigned too many low-IQ students to the program and that the standard curriculum did not work well with them. Under pressure to show results and to make a profit for the company, she wove test items into the daily lessons.²¹

The Texarkana scandal moderated but did not halt enthusiasm for performance contracting. It made government agencies such as OEO and local districts more careful about getting independent audits, however, and these reports deflated the claims of the promoters. A study by the Rand Corporation in December 1971 reported that the experiment did speed up instructional change but that it focused narrowly on basic skills and introduced tricky problems of measurement and legal responsibility. The Rand researchers found a very mixed picture of test gains. The Battelle Memorial Institute, the agency charged with evaluating the OEO experiment, presented its findings in 1972. In comparing the experimental classes taught by the companies with similar groups taught in the

traditional manner, Battelle discovered that twice as many traditional classes scored better than the experimental classes in math and nine control classes did better in reading compared with six of the performance contracting groups. Overall, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The OEO discontinued its funding. By 1975, after further negative studies, *Education Daily* declared that "performance contracting has been pronounced dead."²²

As Myron Lieberman pointed out, the brief "experiment" was flawed as a scientific and practical enterprise. Thus it is not clear precisely what was being measured: performance contracting, incentive plans, differentiated staffing, new instructional technology, or what? But it did become clear that effective teaching of educationally disadvantaged children was no simple matter to be solved by business expertise, extrinsic incentives, and programmed instruction. And it was equally obvious that even with federal subsidies there were few rich lodes of profits for companies to mine in the serried hills of American public education. The hope for easy solutions to educational problems and profits from pedagogy did not disappear, however. New reformers, salespeople, and political allies would come again to promise that the private sector could succeed where the public "establishment" had allegedly failed.²³

Teaching by Machine

Many Americans relish technological solutions to the problems of learning. It has long been so. Hear the rhetoric of another era: "The inventor or introducer of the system deserves to be ranked among the best contributors to learning and science, if not among the greatest benefactors of mankind." The time was 1841. The "system" was the blackboard, which another salesman forty years later described as "the MIRROR reflecting the workings, character and quality of the individual mind." And so it went, as advocates of educational radio, film, television, and programmed learning predicted pedagogical Nirvanas that never materialized.²⁴

Worry as well as hope has fueled waves of enthusiasm for educational technology. Reformers have turned to machines when they were concerned about the competence of teachers, or the high cost of schooling, or some external threat to American security or prosperity that gave special urgency to education.

The people who promised educational moonshots through technology were an assorted lot. Not surprisingly, many were business people who wanted to market their wares to the schools. Some were scholars and academic entrepreneurs—psychologists, for example, who thought that programmed instruction would streamline pedagogy. Foundation officials seeking a quick impact on schooling sometimes saw the new media as a way around the briar patch impeding educational change. Some educational administrators who wanted their schools to be up to date embraced new technologies. A new specialist who had a vested interest as well as a faith in technology appeared in colleges, state departments of education, and school districts: the audiovisual expert.²⁵

In the top-down process of advocating and implementing technology, teachers were rarely consulted, though it was mainly their job to make it work in the classroom. A small minority of teachers welcomed media such as radio and films, believing that they would motivate their reluctant students and make their own instruction easier and more effective. Most, however, used the new devices minimally or not at all. As new forms of pedagogy by machine appeared, a familiar cycle of reform recurred: hyperbolic claims about how a new invention would transform education; then research showing that the technology was generally no more effective than traditional instruction and sometimes less; and finally, disappointment as reports came back from classrooms about the imperfections of the reform and as surveys showed that few teachers were using the tool.²⁶

Whom to blame? The obvious scapegoat was the teacher unwilling to climb onto the new bandwagon: Whatever the audiovisual reformers might have hoped, behind the classroom door teachers remained the key influence on instruction. By and large, they used the technologies that fit familiar routines and classroom procedures—in other

words, that helped them solve their problems of instruction. The rest they mostly ignored.²⁷

Many technical inventions have in fact made their way into classrooms and are now so familiar that few people even notice them. Consider these: the blackboard, of course; cheap paper, which replaced slates; books for each child made possible by sharp drops in production costs; paperbacks, which supplemented hardcover textbooks; globes and maps; ballpoint pens, which replaced the steel-nib pens that had replaced quill pens; and, though they were controversial, cheap hand-held calculators. More complex technologies have had much less impact on everyday teaching than the simple, durable, reliable improvements like the chalkboard that enhanced what teachers were already doing. Teachers have regularly used technologies to enhance their regular instruction but rarely to transform their teaching.²⁸

Advocates of film as a mode of instruction saw it as the very emblem of progressive pedagogy, for it promised to breathe visual reality into the spoken and printed word. But again the companies that wanted to sell technical solutions and the educators enjoined to use them tended to live in different worlds. One advocate of films reported that teachers “failed to make their problems articulate to the commercial producers,” while business people “failed to grasp or to study the nature of instruction and the complexity of educational institutions.” Many of the early “free” films were thinly disguised commercials for products and resented as such by teachers. Especially to blame for the cool reception teachers gave film was “the stupidity which has characterized the advertising, propaganda, and sales methods of companies” that claimed that moving pictures might supplant textbooks and even teachers.²⁹

The early projectors were expensive and required constant maintenance, and films themselves were costly and needed to be shared by many teachers. For these reasons, film was first used in large cities and wealthy suburbs. Most districts had no projectors; rural schools often lacked electricity. In 1936, after a decade of florid claims about educational motion pictures, a survey of 21,000 districts (9,000 replied) found that across

the nation there were only about 6,074 silent-film projectors and 458 sound-film projectors (it did not say how many of these were in good repair and actually in use). By 1954, when equipment was cheaper and more reliable, the National Education Association estimated that schools had one projector for every 415 students.³⁰

But even when districts had the necessary equipment and films, teachers used educational films sparingly, except for a small cadre of enthusiasts. A study of 175 elementary teachers in New Haven, Connecticut, discovered that teachers ordered about fifteen hundred films in one year, but two-thirds of the orders came from twenty-five mediaphiles. When researchers investigated obstacles to the use of moving pictures, they pinpointed the teachers' lack of skills, the cost of purchase and upkeep of the equipment, and the inability to find the right fit between films and class lessons.³¹

On its face, radio was a simpler medium to use than film. But again, lack of equipment originally limited diffusion of the reform. In the mid-1930s superintendents reported only about one radio per district. An expert on educational radio estimated in 1945 that only 5 percent of children heard radio regularly in their classrooms. When principals in Ohio were asked what were the blocks to greater use of radio, they listed lack of radios (50 percent), poor equipment or reception (30 percent), and lack of coordination of radio programs with the curriculum. But advocates of radio education instead blamed teachers' "indifference and lethargy, even antagonism, toward this revolutionary means of communication."³²

Television was going to be different, said reformers. In the 1950s, when the Ford Foundation entered the arena of electronic teaching with its subsidies and publicity, the campaign for instructional television gained momentum. Soon an airplane was circling over the Midwest beaming down programs to six states. Hagerstown, Maryland, developed a model system of closed-circuit television that promised a richer curriculum at less cost. By 1961 the Ford Foundation had spent \$20 million for classroom television, and the next year Congress appropriated another \$32 million for that purpose.³³

Despite unprecedented public attention and enthusiastic promotion, instructional television made slow headway. A survey of public schools in 1961 found only 1.65 TV sets per district. In the mid-1960s, as federal dollars flowed into the schools, districts that had been too poor to buy adequate audiovisual equipment were able for the first time to acquire television sets along with many other kinds of machines and software. But the machines often sat idle in closets. In the 1970s teachers reported that they showed TV programs only 2 to 4 percent of classroom time. A decade after classroom television was introduced with a flourish, a fervent advocate lamented: "If something happened tomorrow to wipe out all instructional television, America's schools and colleges would hardly know it was gone."³⁴

The history of film, radio, and television in the public schools shows a common pattern. Initially, nonteachers who pushed teaching by machine made extravagant claims. When a minority of teachers responded enthusiastically, technophiles were pleased. But this rarely happened, for electronic learning was marginal to most instruction in classrooms. How might this historically dominant pattern be interpreted?

Explanations abound. Disappointed reformers complained that teachers were laggard and fearful if not incompetent. Teachers gave other reasons. They pointed to problems with hardware: there was not enough, or it was broken or complicated, or it took too much time to arrange for its use. They criticized the content of the films or television and radio programs as inappropriate to the curriculum, as not fitting the class schedule, or as of poor quality. Top-down implementation provoked many teachers to dig in their heels or simply to put technology in the closet.³⁵

But perhaps the most fundamental block to transforming schooling through machines has been the nature of the classroom as a work setting and the ways in which teachers define their tasks. We have suggested that the regularities of institutional structure and of teacher-centered pedagogy and discipline are the result of generations of teachers' experience in responding to the imperatives of their occupation: maintaining order and seeing that students learn the standard

curriculum. Teachers have been willing, even eager, to adopt innovations such as chalkboards or overhead projectors that help them do their regular work more efficiently and that are simple, durable, flexible, and responsive to the way they define their tasks. But they have often regarded teaching by machines as extraneous to their central mission.³⁶

Will teaching and learning by personal computers suffer the same fate of hyperbolic claims by advocates and then marginalization in schools? Certainly there has been plenty of hyperbole about the educational uses of computers, but computers are different in important ways from the other machines and media we have examined.

Computers are tools that are sweeping across workplaces as diverse as offices, stores, airlines, steel plants, hospitals, and the military. Increasingly, families use computers at home for a variety of tasks. Citizens have put pressure on schools to familiarize the young with the uses of this powerful new tool, believing that if they do not, the next generation will be handicapped in getting jobs in an age of information. No public urgency compelled such attention to the media previously used in schools.

As a result of this public concern, computers have spread far more rapidly in schools than did any earlier forms of electronic hardware. From 1984 to 1992 over a billion dollars was spent on equipping schools with computers. A few statistics suggest the broad outlines of a rapidly changing picture:

In 1981, only 18 percent of schools had computers, but by 1993, 99 percent had them.

In 1981, only 16 percent of schools used computers for instructional purposes. By 1993, 98 percent reported that they did so.

The number of students per computer decreased from 125 in 1981 to 14 in 1993.³⁷

Although substantial progress has been made in installing computers in schools and in convincing the public that facility in using them is vital to students' success in school and jobs, there are serious social inequalities in the use of computers in schools. Students from high-income families have

far more access to computers and to sophisticated uses of them than do students from low-income families. Black students use them less than whites, females less than males, and pupils whose native language is not English less than those who are proficient in English. Charles Pillar, who investigated use of computers in schools for the magazine *Macworld*, lamented "the creation of the technological underclass in America's public schools." He observed that "computer-based education in poor schools is in deep trouble. Inner-city and rural school districts rarely have the skills or funds to maintain their machines. These districts lack the training and social support to use computers effectively. In most cases, computers simply perpetuate a two-tier system of education for rich and poor."³⁸

Simply having access to computers and learning to use them as tools is only part of the story of the educational use of computers. To what degree are they actually employed as sophisticated teachers' aides and integrated into instruction? A study reveals that when students do use computers (and not all do), they spend only a little more than an hour per week on the machines. What students do on computers varies greatly. Eleventh-grade students, for example, mostly go to computer laboratories to learn about computers and seldom use them in their academic subjects. Low-income students are more likely to do drill and practice on computers than to use them for problem solving and complex thinking. Excellent software for classroom learning is scarce; typically it lags far behind the capacity of the hardware. Computers can communicate efficiently and enhance learning, but often what humans place in them is pedestrian.³⁹

A significant minority of teachers have welcomed computers as an aid to learning and incorporated them in imaginative ways in their classrooms. These serious users, like colleagues in earlier generations who welcomed film, radio, and television, are outnumbered by those who are content to have students leave their classes to go to the computer lab down the hall. The overall picture that emerges after over a decade of advocates' claims and public urgency is that computers play a marginal role in regular

instruction in public schools. A one-line summary of the situation to date might be: computers meet classroom; classroom wins.⁴⁰

The educational potential of the computer is already apparent, but the jury is out on how soon and how extensively the computer will be incorporated in everyday instruction. Computers are by far the most powerful teaching and learning machines to enter the classroom. Students and teachers can interact with computers in ways impossible with film, radio, and television. Depending on the software, preschoolers through graduate students can write and edit, learn languages, have a machine "tutor" in algebra, retrieve a great variety of information from electronic disks or distant libraries, receive E-mail from students a continent away, prepare multimedia reports, and use state-of-the-art technology in drafting, auto mechanics, and office work. In special education, computers help blind, deaf, and multiply-disabled students read, write, and communicate in ways that heretofore were unavailable. These various uses of the computer, valuable in themselves, will still require the integration and sense-making that a good teacher can provide. And whether teachers will embrace this new technology depends in good part on the ability of technologically minded reformers to understand the realities of the classroom and to enlist teachers as collaborators rather than regarding them as obstacles to progress.⁴¹

THE BUSINESS OF TEACHING

Like the application of technology, systems analysis, and performance contracting to public education, attempts to model the occupation of teaching on business practices have sometimes ignored the rewards that teachers find most important in their classrooms and in their daily relationships with each other. Outsiders' campaigns to create competition among teachers for merit pay and to erect career ladders for them have rarely succeeded, for they have been out of alignment with the values and practices of teachers.⁴²

From time to time, foundation officials, business leaders, school board members, media commentators, university professors, legislators, governors, and other reformers have concluded that existing incentives and career paths in teaching made no sense. Salaries did not reflect performance. Teachers were not equally competent, they thought, and career trajectories were too flat in teaching. Policy talk about merit pay and differentiated staffing has been especially frequent in periods when business efficiency was a popular theme and competitive market solutions were in favor. Treating schools as if they were open-market institutions and teachers as if they were employees in competitive organizations has made sense to outsiders, but teachers have often questioned the assumptions underlying this model and opposed it passively or actively.⁴³

Merit pay and hierarchical career ladders contradicted a reform that teachers themselves fought to install in schools from World War I forward: a single salary schedule for all public school teachers, elementary and secondary, male and female. While supporting salaries calibrated to training and years of experience, teachers opposed "class distinctions" in pay based on position or sex and endorsed "the fundamental intrinsic equality of all good teaching." To ensure that all teachers were, in fact, professionals, they worked to require special training and certification as prerequisites for employment in teaching.⁴⁴

The history of teaching as an occupation suggests why the values and perceptions of teachers are different from those of the outsiders who wanted to restructure the profession. In the nineteenth century in small school districts, hiring took place in a more or less open labor market: local school boards basically could hire whomever they wished at whatever was the going wage, for standards of training and certification were low or nonexistent. Most teachers then were not even graduates of secondary schools. Farmers on school committees selected teachers rather the way they would choose a hired hand or a servant to help in the house. Teachers' salaries differed widely from place to

place and even in the same one-room school in summer and winter.⁴⁵

From the point of view of those who believe in an open labor market as a guarantee of merit, this was an efficient system. In theory, at least, school boards hired the person who would provide the best service for the least money. In practice, educators complained, committee members were apt to hire inept teachers for extraneous reasons—they might be relatives, or be in debt to a school board member, or be members of the dominant church, or be full of a manly bluster thought to be suitably cowing to the older boys in their classes. Male teachers almost always earned more than did females, though there was growing evidence that women taught at least as well as men.⁴⁶

In large cities, the structure of the labor market in teaching was quite different from that in the countryside. Although there was plenty of nepotism and corruption in the selection of teachers, urban systems were much more bureaucratized. Individual teachers generally did not bargain with lay boards in determining their salaries; instead, most districts published regular salary schedules. These scales explicitly paid men more than women and secondary teachers more than elementary ones.⁴⁷

Reformers in teacher associations disliked both the open-market system of hiring teachers in the countryside and the invidious distinctions in pay in cities. They wanted the same pay for elementary and secondary teachers and for women and men. They also wanted to restrict the labor market by requiring professional training and certification. They hoped thereby to raise the quality of instruction and to increase the inadequate pay of teachers. In the early twentieth century, this notion of professional training and state certification rapidly gained ground.

Especially after the women's suffrage amendment in 1920, the NEA's Department of Classroom Teachers lobbied state legislatures and local school boards to adopt single salary schedules that paid women and men and elementary and secondary teachers the same. By 1930 ten states had adopted equal-pay laws, and a single salary scale had spread to many cities across

the nation. In such places, differential pay depended not on sex or type of school but on years of service and extent of professional preparation. All teachers who made teaching a long-term career and obtained the necessary education could in time receive the top salary.⁴⁸

Educators applauded the fact that well-trained and experienced elementary teachers did not have to move to high schools to receive top pay. Teaching was equally challenging at all levels, they believed. They also found that equal pay improved morale and eliminated or decreased what they called "class distinctions" between secondary and primary teachers. The adoption of single salary scales "throughout the nation," wrote a Seattle principal, "would be a democratizing influence which would make itself felt for the great good of the youth of the Nation; for the work of grade and high-school teachers is so intimately related that close cooperation between them is very necessary."⁴⁹

But the practice of single salary schedules simply did not make sense to many people. At the very time when organized teachers were attempting to create more uniform compensation, in the opening decades of the twentieth century, elite school board members and some superintendents were seeking to make teacher evaluations "scientific" and to link those ratings to salary increases.

How do you motivate large numbers of teachers to perform beyond the minimum expectation? How do you get more teachers to excel when they work in isolated classrooms where inspection is infrequent? These basic questions facing school boards and superintendents led many of them to emulate business by creating the earliest merit-pay programs, which would allegedly pay teachers according to performance. From the beginning, however, the rating of teachers was controversial. "We all agree that one teacher differs from another in merit," wrote a superintendent in 1921, "and yet few practical schoolmen have made the attempt [to rate and pay them by merit], and most of those who have done so have lived to repent of their rashness."⁵⁰

Susan Moore Johnson has commented that each time merit pay became an "educational

vogue . . . it was considered a novel reform.” The present-day call for differentiating the roles and rewards of teachers is only the latest episode in a long history of attempts by outsiders to attract and retain the most gifted instructors, to create meritocratic standards of performance and pay, and to erect hierarchies among teachers. In recent years, many states have passed laws mandating merit pay, career ladders, and other measures to differentiate the functions and rewards of teachers.⁵¹

Both in the past and in the present, teachers have mostly resisted such reforms. They have not trusted the ability and fairness of administrators charged with assessing “merit.” They have typically regarded merit pay not as an incentive but as a bother, as a threat to professional comity, and as irrelevant to the chief intrinsic rewards they experienced—seeing their pupils grow intellectually and socially.⁵²

One instance of open conflict erupted when the school board in Kalamazoo, Michigan, decided to reward teachers differently in 1974. The *American School Board Journal* trumpeted the Kalamazoo plan as the end to lockstep pay and unaccountable staff. “Take it from Kalamazoo,” the *Journal* said: “A comprehensive, performance-based system of evaluation and accountability can work.” This judgment was premature. The merit scheme, in which “nearly everyone evaluated everyone else,” choked on paperwork and provoked frustration, not superior performance. The administrators joined the United Automobile Workers union to fight merit pay, and the teachers’ union managed to recall six of the seven board members who had supported differential compensation. But repeated experiences like this one in Kalamazoo did not prevent reformers from proposing merit pay again and again.⁵³

The history of performance-based salary plans has been a merry-go-round. In the main, districts that initially embraced merit pay dropped it after a brief trial; only a small number of districts continued to use merit pay for decades. In the 1950s merit pay became a fashionable idea, and by the 1960s about 10 percent of districts had adopted some version of payment by performance. By the

early 1970s interest had again declined: just over 5 percent of districts said they had merit pay. A 1978 national survey found 115 districts (4 percent of those with more than three hundred students) with provisions for payment by performance, and many of these did not in fact pay teachers differentially. When two researchers went back to those districts five years later they found only 47 still using performance-based compensation. These districts tended to be small, to have fairly homogeneous student populations, and to employ merit pay in inconspicuous ways. Although there was another resurgence of interest in merit pay in the 1980s, in the mid-1980s more than 99 percent of teachers were paid on a uniform salary schedule.⁵⁴

In 1986 Richard Murnane and David K. Cohen described six districts where merit pay had been in existence for more than five years. In these schools, merit pay was a voluntary addition to the established salary, earned by extra work outside the classroom, and seldom amounted to a large bonus. Teachers helped to shape the rules of the plan. Murnane and Cohen argue that what kept these plans going was precisely that these districts avoided making problematic distinctions between teachers based on their classroom performance. Instead, they used the plan to provide chances for teachers to earn extra money by engaging in school-related activities, such as revamping curriculum or evaluation of students’ work.⁵⁵

Why have so few schemes to pay teachers for their performance stuck? Murnane and Cohen argue that merit pay seldom works if its intent is to get teachers to excel, for little agreement exists among administrators and teachers about just what effective teaching is and how to measure it. In part, the complexity of the teaching act foils merit pay. Internal strife erupts over administrators’ judgments when some teachers win “outstanding” marks and others only “average” grades.

Outsiders who pushed merit pay and career ladders often misperceived what in fact motivates teachers to do a better job. Susan Moore Johnson, who actually did ask teachers about incentives and disincentives, found that teachers had good reasons for their opposition to merit pay:

Promoting competition among colleagues would reduce rather than increase the productivity of schools because teachers would conceal their best ideas and pursue their own interests rather than the general good. Moreover, performance bonuses might perversely reward teachers for success with able students while discouraging efforts with those who progress more slowly. Finally, teachers resented policymakers' efforts to entice them with the prospects of one-time bonuses for a select few when many teachers held second jobs just to meet basic living expenses. By seeking to provide recognition for exemplary teachers, potentially at the expense of many others, the reforms threatened egalitarian norms that the profession supports.⁵⁶

Teachers are not afraid of evaluation, she insists: "they perform before exacting critics [their students] every day." What they dislike is being pitted in competition with each other or judged according to arbitrary standards by people whom they do not particularly trust. The "egalitarian norms" shared by most teachers contradict the premises of merit pay and hierarchy of the sort represented in career ladders.⁵⁷

Obviously, teachers care deeply about receiving adequate salaries—they rarely do—and appreciate public recognition and status, but they and the public have quite different perceptions of their sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. When polled in 1981 about what bothered teachers the most, the general public listed poor discipline first and salaries second; teachers listed unfavorable public attitudes toward education first and salaries fourth. Over the years, many studies have shown that teachers value most highly the intrinsic rewards of the occupation that come from seeing their pupils develop and that they treasure praise from students, parents, and colleagues. In 1975 Dan Lortie found that in Dade County, Florida, teachers reported that the biggest extrinsic reward they received (37 percent) was "Respect from others" and the biggest psychic reward (an overwhelming 86 percent) was "Knowing that I have 'reached' students and that they have learned." Johnson found a similar pattern in the 1980s among the teachers she interviewed,

though such rewards of respect and praise were all too infrequent.⁵⁸

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

We suggest that reformers take a broader view of the aims that should guide public education and focus on ways to improve education from the inside out rather than the top down.

The concepts of progress and decline that have dominated discourse about educational reform distort the actual development of the educational enterprise over time. The ahistorical nature of most current reform arguments results in both a magnification of present defects in relation to the past and an understatement of the difficulty of changing the system. Policy talk about the schools has moved in cycles of gloomy assessments of education and overconfident solutions, producing incoherent guidance in actual reform practice. Hyperbole has often produced public cynicism and skepticism among teachers.

The typical rational and instrumental assumptions of educational reformers fail to give due weight to the resilience of schools as institutions. This institutional structure probably has more influence on the implementation of policy than policy has on institutional practice. The grammar of schooling is the result of previous reforms that had, and continue to have, powerful political constituencies and a strong foundation in the social expectations about schooling held both by educators and by the general public. To bring about improvement at the heart of education—classroom instruction, shaped by that grammar—has proven to be the most difficult kind of reform, and it will result in the future more from internal changes created by the knowledge and expertise of teachers than from the decisions of external policymakers.

Better schooling will result in the future—as it has in the past and does now—chiefly from the steady, reflective efforts of the practitioners who work in schools and from the contributions of the parents and citizens who support (while they criticize) public education. This might seem to be just common sense. But in planning reforms in recent

years, policy elites have often bypassed teachers and discounted their knowledge of what schools are like today. Consider the section "Who Does What?" in former President Bush's education program, *America 2000*: it lists federal and state officials, the business community, and parents as key actors, while relegating teachers to one among many groups active "at the community level."⁵⁹

To the degree that teachers are out of the policy loop in designing and adopting school reforms, it is not surprising if they drag their feet in implementing them. Teachers do not have a monopoly on educational wisdom, but their first-hand perspectives on schools and their responsibility for carrying out official policies argues for their centrality in school reform efforts. As "street-level bureaucrats," teachers typically have sufficient discretion, once the classroom doors close, to make decisions about pupils that add up over time to de facto policies about instruction, whatever the official regulations. In any case, then, teachers will make their imprint on educational policy as it becomes translated into practice.⁶⁰

Reform of instruction by remote control has rarely worked well. Some reformers have believed that teachers were so deeply mired in ruts that it was necessary to devise "teacher-proof" instruction (through technology, for example). The notion of teacher-proof instruction, however, is as foolish as student-proof learning. Educators have often responded to flurries of reforms imposed from the outside—often inconsistent in philosophy and program—by hunkering down and reassuring themselves that this, too, shall pass. We have explored some institutional reasons for this reaction. The hold of traditional practices on teachers and students is strong, often with good reason, and the public tends to share traditional cultural beliefs about what constitutes a "real school."

Reforms should be designed to be hybridized, adapted by educators working together to take advantage of their knowledge of their own diverse students and communities and supporting each another in new ways of teaching. It is especially important to engage the understanding and support of parents and the public when

reforms challenge cultural beliefs about what a "real school" should be and do.⁶¹

Reform of education needs to be anchored in a realistic understanding of the institutional character of schools, but this alone is not enough. School reform is also a prime arena for debating the shape of the future of the society. Such debate is a broad civic and moral enterprise in which all citizens are stake-holders. In recent years, however, discourse about the purposes of education has been impoverished by linking it insistently to the wealth of nations. The underlying rationale of most recent reforms—to use schooling as an instrument of international economic competitiveness—is not new, but its dominance in policy talk is unprecedented.

NOTES

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WIDER CONTEXTS AND FUTURE ISSUES

National Standards and School Reform in Japan and the United States

THOMAS P. ROHLEN

Thomas P. Rohlen brings together conclusions from some of the articles in a book edited by Gary DeCoker, entitled *National Standards and School Reform in Japan and the United States*, to consider future issues for the educational system in the United States. In this excerpt, Rohlen compares current standards-based reforms in the American educational system to the Japanese system. He looks historically at the Japanese educational system and also considers critiques of that system. This excerpt summarizes considerable research on the educational systems of both countries as it examines both standards-based education and the hierarchical structures of education in the two countries. It is particularly valuable because the American educational system and achievement therein has been compared to that of Japan for some time.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. In what ways is the educational system in the United States less hierarchical than that of Japan?
2. What features of the Japanese educational system contribute to higher achievement in that country?
3. Explain why Rohlen believes that standards-based testing will be effective in the United States?

AMERICAN EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE JAPANESE EXAMPLE

Currently there is strong interest in establishing and raising educational standards in the United States. Presumably, what appears to work so well in Japan to maintain high average levels of

achievement (with smaller standard deviations in test results) could provide instructive insight for Americans seeking the same ends. Perhaps. But first we need to take another look at the American system. If in the past we have erroneously stereotyped the Japanese approach as centralized and hierarchical, we also have some rethinking to do about the nature of reform in the American system.

What is clear to the point of almost being a truism is that in its origins, and still very largely today, the American system is one that rests squarely on the assumption of local school board autonomy. The centralized qualities that have developed in our system are relatively recent developments that have arisen separately in each state and in an ad hoc fashion at the national level, resulting eventually in the creation of the U.S. Department of Education, which is given the task of administering a hodgepodge of congressionally mandated and largely peripheral programs. The U.S. Department of Education is hardly even comparable to the MOE (Ministry of Education in Japan). Nothing is more indicative of this state of affairs, to my way of thinking, than the fact that private textbook publishers in the United States occupy a more central ground in the shaping of instruction nationally than does any single government organization.

The nature of our educational system has built into it another kind of autonomy as well. The American teacher in his or her classroom has a degree of autonomy that is inconceivable to a Japanese teacher used to fitting in and working in highly interactive peer situations. . . . American teachers generally decide for themselves how they will use the textbooks, what supplemental materials they will introduce, at what pace they will proceed, what they will cover, and how they will conduct instruction. Lee and Zusho (2002) confirm this fundamental difference, reported by a generation of comparative studies of the two systems.

It should come as no surprise that in the American educational system the degree of disconnection on both the vertical and horizontal dimensions is much greater than in Japan, and, as

a result, the organizational fabric of the American system seems weak and unwieldy by comparison. The fact that there are regular calls from the political right for the elimination of the Department of Education is but one illustration of this condition. The complex and confusing process of state and local textbook adoption is another. That we cannot find common ground on which to establish standards in even mathematics is also telling. In fact, we have entered the 21st century with what is essentially an early 19th-century system, one that grew unplanned and largely from the bottom up. Our system predates the rise in Japan and Europe and elsewhere of the state-centered constructions arising as part of the ideology of the strong nation state. Japan's basic system was developed in the 1880s as part of a powerful nation-building agenda.

The fit between our locally funded and locally controlled system and American social reality is curious and quite different from that in Japan. It is deeply allied with cultural and political forces here that have an enclave mentality, protecting various kinds of class, regional, and religious differences from outside forces representing something like the national common denominator. Wealthy and middle-class suburbs, religious sects, and agricultural communities, for example, believe they find protection in this highly diffuse system. One result is the perpetuation of a degree of socioeconomic and cultural diversity unimaginable in Japan. The current level of residential mobility in the United States, on the other hand, puts our system in a very different light. Most Americans are not being educated today in a single local system. Rather, the typical educational career is one that embraces at least several, if not many, school districts. Nor are local investments in education likely to pay off in reliable human capital pools, given the way we Americans move around. Whether we are considering textbooks or standards or teaching methods, local authority appears sadly anachronistic in this light. Geographically mobile parents, strongly interested in their children's schools, are a common aspect of the educational landscape in both Japan and the United States today, yet the choices

offered by the two systems are not the same. In the United States, without a national system in terms of budgetary equity, standards, or regulatory authority, parents struggle to find viable levers to effect broad reforms. In other words, opinion polls and electoral rhetoric may imply that our public concern is with education as a “national” problem, but the essential nature of our institutional arrangements makes centralized solutions exceedingly difficult.

Our efforts to reform education appear to follow two quite different paths, neither of which is at all like what we find in Japan. On the one hand, we are experimenting with standards and testing as something new and forceful that works top-down and across the board, and on the other, we continue at that local level to experiment in a massive way with every kind of initiative that holds out some kind of promise of improvement. Because of the disconnected nature of our system, we have few convenient institutions in the middle that might connect the two kinds of efforts.

This explains, I think, why when we seek to raise average achievement or raise the level of poorly performing districts and schools, we end up relying heavily on what are basically very coercive methods. We do not typically define these as coercive, but when compared with the Japanese approach they certainly have such a character. Take the many cases of legal intrusion into school system management as one example. Whether mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court, some state court, or a lower federal court, these intrusions have little or no real teacher input; almost intentionally ignore the realities of school and classroom; and force change primarily with threats of dismissal and closure. Also typical of this approach is close, aggressive, and often naïve supervision by the courts. The will of the courts, and their impatience, becomes central to reform once it is determined that the law is being broken. That judges could decide educational policy is unthinkable in the Japanese context.

A second common form of top-down intervention in the American case is the effort to legislate systemwide improvements by establishing

universal standards coupled to standardized tests and other mechanisms of measurement and enforcement. Again, this kind of leverage can be found at all levels from the local to the national, and again without any clearly coordinated teacher input or consensus. Standards without tests have no teeth, obviously, and even tests without penalties are a weak form of coercion. Naturally, then, the movement to leverage average achievement by these means seeks to tie such things as graduation requirements, teacher pay, tenure, and other incentives and punishments to test results. The problems with this approach are so well known as to require no more than a brief list of its major defects: teaching to the test, debasing content, perpetual political disagreement on standards, issues of equity, ideological squabbling, the absence of critical skill development, widespread teacher resistance, and so forth. As with the case of legal intrusion from above, the time frames mandated tend to be too short for concerted reform, the consultation with teachers tends to be minimal, and the unintended consequences turn out to be quite large. . . . The middle ground where goals and means are adjusted and where teachers collectively join in the process of improvement and change hardly exists. One reason is that the institutions of consultation between national policy discussions and school-level change, so central to the Japanese approach, are absent. Instead, we delegate such communications to scholars, academic and professional journals, schools of education, district training sessions, and the like, areas very weakly developed in the Japanese system.

What have been the results of the American movement to establish a standards-based approach? Compared with Japanese students, American students certainly take more standardized tests annually. This may be surprising, but between testing at various grade levels and practicing to take such tests (not to mention teaching-to-the-test activities), American students are increasingly focused on tests imposed from outside the district. Eventually this will result in improved test scores, but probably will not lessen inequality or

significantly improve general levels of skills or knowledge. The critical tests in Japan, those governing entrance to high school and university, cluster at the secondary level. These put enormous muscle behind the textbooks and the curriculum, as DeCoker (2002) shows, and they also give a prominent role to private tutoring schools. Russell (2002) illustrates how these are organized to fill the gap between the national guidelines and the competitive realities of the much condemned university entrance exams. Japanese secondary students are also thrust into practice test taking in a major way by the prospect of entrance exams. And, no doubt about it, entrance exams have all of the flaws just mentioned in regard to American standardized tests. The differences are, first, when the exams occur in the developmental process, and, second, that in Japan students are individually differentiated and ranked by their efforts (LeTendre, 2002; DeCoker, 2002), whereas in the American case the teacher and the school are likely to be punished for low results. The one emphasizes positive motivations; the other, negative ones. The Japanese approach makes students accountable; the American one makes teachers accountable. It is not surprising that in the United States the standards movement is often pushed most strongly by persons who harbor suspicions about teachers' qualifications and commitment. Furthermore, in Japan, it is the more talented and socioeconomically better off two-thirds of the population that are most affected by the entrance exam system, whereas in the United States, the effort to raise standards targets the lowest-performing one-third of the population. Most of our coercive efforts are aimed at the districts, schools, and teachers working with low-income, ethnic, rural, and disadvantaged students.

Standards per se are not the essence of our problem. Of course, there will be controversies when standards are first imposed, especially for easily politicized matters of language and social studies. Far more critical is the problem that any system designed to enforce standards contradicts the historic nature of American education. The attempt to establish strict accountability, furthermore, confronts some of the most basic

organizational realities of education anywhere. Schools are limited instruments of social change, and accountability is a highly flawed concept when judgments are made simply on the basis of testing. Teachers, furthermore, are not motivated primarily by monetary or other easily manipulated incentives. Nor can accurate calculations be made of the appropriate time frames and support requirements needed to effect the levels of change intended.

Having arrived at a point in the United States where we as a nation have identified our greatest educational failures and acknowledged that they are intolerable, we still rely heavily in the policy realm on very crude top-down methods of change, ones that generally alienate most teachers and local administrators—the very people central to actually effecting the improvements needed. It is telling that Japanese high standards and high average achievement levels are not accomplished in the manner we have been inclined toward in public debate. Despite a few superficial similarities stemming from the fact that Japan is a centralized system, the fact remains that in Japan teachers and political policy meet in the middle. History has dealt us a notably poor hand when it comes to administrative approaches to reform. It is not that standards and tests are inherently bad, but that alone they are woefully inadequate.

The second path I identify as characteristic of American efforts to improve education is marked less by a desire to create systemwide change than simply to demonstrate that there are “better ways” to accomplish education. Thus we witness a constant flow of new experimental programs and initiatives, most at local levels, funded by an amazing variety of private and public sources of support. These are largely disconnected from one another and philosophically as heterogeneous as one can imagine. In the same district and even in the same school there can be conflicts among them, but typically a state of churn and flux prevails. At one extreme, we find home schooling becoming popular—the ultimate in American-style autonomy. Perhaps as many as a million children are currently schooled by their parents. Also reflective of

parental choice and the autonomy of private initiatives are the many kinds of "alternative" schools arising and disappearing on the educational landscape. If we include the full range of religious schools, charter schools, Montessori schools, Waldorf schools, cultural and language preservationist schools, and so forth, they number perhaps in the tens of thousands. The largest category of experimental schools, however, is comprised of public schools enrolled in one or more experimental programs. Who knows how large this category really is? It is unusual to visit an urban public school at any level that is not involved in an innovative program of some kind, whether in math teaching, values education, bilingual instruction, citizenship, community involvement, teacher collaboration, back-to-basics, sex education, abstinence education, drug education, or one of literally hundreds of other types of initiatives. Most of these efforts, we know, prove to be short-lived, so highly dependent are they on teacher enthusiasm, short-term funding, and extra effort. When the leadership changes, or the money goes away, or burnout arrives, or teachers transfer, the momentum typically wanes. Yet nothing about American education is more impressive to Japanese visitors than the lively innovation and teacher optimism exemplified by this vast array of local-level change efforts. Such diversified, exuberant, and uncoordinated innovation is unimaginable in Japan.

Seen in this light, voucher schemes, while generally discussed as systemwide and policy-driven initiatives, actually turn out to be an ingenious, if deceptive, mix of the two typical American approaches to reform. They are proposed by legislators and officials at the top, yet speak to the spirit of local autonomy and the promise of independent innovation. A major shift in the direction toward vouchers would greatly amplify our already massive inclination to piecemeal innovative diversity. While national standards and formal testing offer a highly specified if awkward and limited approach to reforming education, the "let a thousand flowers bloom" experimentalism path of vouchers is formless, but actually closer in spirit to what teachers and

many parents take education to be. Combining the two, as is now commonly proposed, speaks to both inclinations.

Whether, if such proposals were followed, we would get the best of both or the worst of both is the essential question. It is worth recalling that before the formation of the Meiji state in 1868, Japan, too, had an educational landscape of great diversity and little if any inclusive organization. It chose a centralized, nation-state-oriented path, which has been modified considerably, but not fundamentally changed (Hall, 1973; Lincicome, 1995). Interestingly, the voices in Japan calling for a reorientation of education cite the American example as the ideal. It seems, ironically, that the grass is readily seen as greener on the other side of the Pacific. . . .

Returning to the perspective granted us by this comparison, we can see that America's several paths to educational reform ignore the administrative middle ground. We have precious few noncoercive means of effectively coordinating instruction in the schools and classrooms across the nation. There are few national curricular guidelines of real merit, but many national laws regulating a host of peripheral trivial matters. Nor are our textbooks the product of consultative processes arising from interaction in the administrative middle. The erratic way they are received at the local level and used by teachers reflects this. We also lack plausible mechanisms for significant (as opposed to token) teacher participation in our larger reform processes. Our policymakers, like our textbook writers, rarely come from within the system. The trust in and respect for teachers is low. Public impatience and ideological polarities arising outside education tend to determine our policy agendas and, given the enormity of the task, almost guarantee that systemwide efforts will fail. We have been in a chronic state of "crisis" for decades with little to show for all the reform rhetoric and "new" and creative programs. Is this evidence that the absence of an institutional middle ground in American education is a fundamental flaw? The contrast with Japan . . . suggests precisely this.

The weakness of an institutional middle ground where adjustment and improvement efforts are routine and nationally coordinated certainly helps explain why our two kinds of responses, coercive and centripetal, tend toward the extremes of the range of administrative options set forth at the beginning of this discussion. Ironically, if both options continue to be popular, they are likely to become, in theory at least, increasingly interdependent. On the one hand, the heterogeneity of experimentalism will require a central core of standards if there is to be any framework legitimizing public expenditures. On the other hand, a system of standards and testing will have to discover reliable models of instruction and improvement to be dynamic. Perhaps this potential for interdependence is a key ingredient of a new design for American education.

Clearly, America is not Japan. The authors of chapters [in *National Standards and School Reform in Japan and the United States*] are properly reluctant to make recommendations or to claim that Japan has something to teach America. It is not hard to see in their accounts, however, an admiration for Japan's approach and accomplishments. Implicit is the message that when it comes to the challenge of organizing and moving a large national system of instruction toward improvements and high achievement, Japan is worth studying, since it appears to have learned a great deal from a century of experience. The only way this experience will be of value to American policymakers, however, is if they become concerned with our lack of a viable middle ground, whether at the national or the state level. That concern is not much in evidence at present.

Our two distinct American paths to change could take us to a place far more unlike Japan than where we currently are. Whether we are engaged in the accidental invention of a quite new system is anybody's guess at present.

Trends point, however, toward a circumstance in which public standards, standardized tests, and continued public funding form a kind of general context for a growing diversity of schools (increasingly private) and an accountability system that rests primarily on parental choice. Elements of this have been in place for a long time, but what is far from clear is whether this approach will actually address the hard core problems of the underperforming bottom third of the population any more effectively than the system we currently operate.

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RADICAL POSSIBILITIES

Putting Education at the Center

JEAN ANYON

In this excerpt from her book *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement*, Jean Anyon draws on her considerable research and knowledge of urban schools to propose using schools as the impetus and facilitators for social movements. She also draws on her history as an activist and a reformer. She argues that schools are perfectly situated to mobilize the community to address urban problems. Not only do schools know what problems plague urban areas, but schools also have the resources that can be used to energize the population to generate change.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. According to Anyon, what would urban schools have to do to facilitate social movements and social change?

2. How would Anyon's proposal change the relationship of schools to the community?
3. What effects, both direct and indirect, might Anyon's proposal have on student achievement in urban schools?

Why should we put education—and concerned educators—at the center of efforts to build a unified movement for social justice? Other analysts might place progressive labor unions, immigrant rights, activist church groups, or the national living wage campaign at the center. But I believe there are compelling reasons that urban education—and urban educators—ought to be a fulcrum of movement building.

A most important reason is the theoretical location of urban education. Urban schools are at the center of the maelstrom of constant crises that beset low-income neighborhoods. Education

is an institution whose basic problems are caused by, and whose basic problems reveal, the other crises in cities: poverty, joblessness and low-wages, and racial and class segregation. Therefore, a focus on urban education can expose the combined effects of public policies, and highlight not only poor schools but the entire nexus of constraints on urban families. A well-informed mobilization centering on education would challenge macroeconomic federal and regional policies and practices as part of an overall plan to improve local educational opportunity.

Moreover, even though education is not guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, it is often construed as a civil right, and can be located ideologically in the long and powerful tradition of civil rights struggle (Moses & Cobb, 2001, p. 1; see also <http://www.civilrights.org>). This legitimacy may lend movement building through education an acceptance that could affect public attitudes toward new policies regarding the need for jobs, decent wages, and affordable housing.

Further, many people involved in the movements described in *Radical Possibilities* live in low-income urban areas and have children in underfunded and underachieving city schools. Like other adults, they are often willing to bear substantial hardship without fighting back; but, as parent organizing in cities across America reveals, they will “go to the mat for their kids” (Leigh Dingerson, Center for Community Change, personal communication, Aug. 25, 2004). This willingness to fight for the rights of their children means that putting education at the center may be a good mobilizing tool with which to attract parents’ involvement in other issues as well.

Indeed, educators are in an excellent position to build a constituency for economic and educational change in urban communities. Teachers and principals have continual access to parents and urban youth. If they are respectful, caring, hard-working educators, trusted by students and parents, they have a unique opportunity to engage residents and youth in political conversations and activity.

A final reason to center movement building in education is that there is a rich tradition of

liberal/left advocacy to build on. I, like many others, entered teaching “to change the world” (Oakes & Lipton, 2002). There are teachers in every city today who teach a critical, thought-provoking curriculum, and who utilize the classroom to discuss issues their students face. Hundreds of scholarly books and articles have been written offering insight and inspiration to teachers who concern themselves with social justice. In addition, there exist widely read progressive publications like *Rethinking Schools*, proactive organizations like National Coalition of Educational Activists and Educators for Social Responsibility, and professional conferences that enrich critical teaching. There is possibility here, and great promise in the work of these educators. We can take this work further in our appropriation of the institution for radical purposes.

For all these reasons, I believe that those of us in education who have social justice as a goal can play a crucial role in movement building for economic and educational rights of the poor. We can do this in our daily lives, as we “cast down our buckets” where we are. We can commit to the radical possibilities in our everyday work in schools, despite the onslaught of institutional mandates. To assist in this effort, the present chapter supplements existing critical pedagogical work with strategies used by community and education organizers.

STUDENT SELF-ESTEEM AND POLITICIZATION

Social movement theorists argue that fear, despair, and negative valuations of self can be immobilizing, and may keep social actors who have cause to get involved in political contention from participating. Feelings of efficacy, righteous anger, and strength, on the other hand, are more likely to lead one to activism. A first step in movement building in urban schools, then, is to help students appreciate their own value, intelligence, and potential as political actors.

African American and Latino scholars write tellingly about the fears harbored by many students

of color that they fit the stereotypes White society has of them—that they are incapable of high academic achievement, not interested in education, and to blame for their lack of advancement. An important mechanism is that this “stereotype threat” can prevent students’ full engagement in academic work, as they fear failure and fulfillment of the stereotype. This is tragic in and of itself. But I want to point out that blaming oneself, rather than locating causes of failure in the wider structure of opportunities, has another consequence: It can also mitigate against a perceived need to change the system.

Theresa Perry argues that in order to undermine the ideology and practice of victim blaming, educators need to create a *counter narrative* to the story of failure and low intelligence of students of color. She notes that we could learn from successful all-Black schools in the antebellum South, where teachers emphasized the relation between education and freedom: “Freedom for literacy, and literacy for freedom” (2003, p. 92). Perry exhorts teachers to counter the damaging dominant social narrative by building an intentional classroom community spirit of education for “racial uplift, citizenship and leadership” (p. 93). In order to demonstrate to students that they are capable and worthy, “teachers must explicitly articulate, regularly ritualize, and pass on in formal public events the belief in minority students as scholars of high achievement and as of social value” (pp. 99, 100). A supportive and trusting environment provides “identity security” to students, who are then emotionally more ready to challenge the stereotypical myths.

As Lisa Delpit reminds us, however, we must also teach minority students the culture and knowledge held by powerful Whites and the middle and upper classes (Delpit, 1997). They need to understand this coded cultural capital and be able to parse it—just like affluent White students are taught to do (Anyon, 1980, 1981).

A healthy education of this sort would urge minority students toward a stance of *entitlement* regarding the responsibility of governments to provide equal opportunities; and this would encourage them to hold the system accountable.

Thus, a politically energizing education for African Americans must explicitly recognize and acknowledge with students that they and their families are *not* free—and that social change is necessary. This is one reason a history of both oppression and resistance is so important. Students who are knowledgeable about dominant forms of power and how this power affects them can better move from self-blame to informed efforts at change. Teachers and administrators who would assist students in this development could begin by working with the community of which the students are a vital part.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Teachers, administrators, and other professionals in urban public schools are not usually from the neighborhood. Their social class and often their race differentiate them from students, families, and other residents. In this sense, many of those who work to appropriate the educational institution for social justice are outsiders and bicultural brokers. They can contribute important resources and knowledge to that which students and families already possess. In education organizing across urban America, educators are increasingly playing a brokering, bridging role, as they join with parents and communities to combat policies that oppress.

When educators work with community residents as equals and as change agents to organize for better education, movement building is taking place; and as a not inconsequential outcome schools typically improve and student achievement increases. Research suggests that there are several reasons for this raised student achievement, including community pressure for more resources and district accountability, increased parental engagement, and improved staff development and pedagogy (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2002; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

I would like to highlight two other causes of the increased achievement. First, education organizing has been shown to lower the rate at which students move from one school to another

(mobility), sometimes by as much as 50%. Studies show that in schools where educators work closely with the community as partners in change, parents and students often report that they do not want to leave the school because of their involvement in and satisfaction with the activities (Hohn, 2003; Whalen, 2002).

Another reason for increased achievement in schools where parents and educators work together as change agents may be an increase in trust and respect between the parties. Tony Bryk and Barbara Schneider have demonstrated convincingly that trusting relationships in daily interactions in low-income urban schools are correlated with raised achievement over time (2002, pp. 98–99, 120).

Community and parent organizers regularly utilize several strategies that teachers and administrators might incorporate to work for change and build personal relationships and mutual trust. Teachers can involve parents and other residents in one-on-one conversations designed to identify their concerns, can hold meetings in parents' homes where groups of residents address these concerns, and can engage parents, other community members, and educators in "neighborhood walks"—during which participants tour the area around the school and reach a common understanding and vision of what changes are needed (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2002, p. 22).

School principals who work with the Industrial Areas Foundation say that "an angry parent is an opportunity"—an opening to organize the community for increased accountability of officials and politicians (IAF Principal Claudia Santamaria, Cambridge, MA Conference, February 20, 2004). A major strategy utilized by the IAF that educators could apply is what organizers call "accountability sessions"—meetings to which district and elected officials or candidates for office are invited and asked to give their opinions on 'important issues. Candidates are asked to respond to yes/no questions, without speeches. Local media are invited, and report on the official and candidate responses, thus providing a public record to which the officials can later be held accountable (Gold & Simon, 2004, p. 2).

Some education organizers also work with parent groups and teachers to monitor district and state programs and policies by carrying out research that identifies discrepancies between stated goals of district, city, or state policies and programs, and the actual experience of students and teachers. These can also be useful as the basis for calling officials to account (for examples, see the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access at <http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/>, the National Center for Schools and Communities at <http://www.ncscatfordham.org/pages/home.cfm>, and the Institute for Education and Social Policy at <http://www.steinhardt.nyu.edu/iesp/>).

ACQUIRING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING SKILLS

The foregoing strategies provide an introduction to working with parents and communities as partners for change. This section provides suggestions for organizing parents in extended issue campaigns.

Chicago-based Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform (Cahill, 1999) and the Institute for Education and Social Policy in New York (Zimmer & Mediratta, 2004) have prepared advice (based on many years of organizing experience) that is useful for educators interested in carrying out issue campaigns with community members.

A short summary follows:

1. Choose issues from the bottom up. Issues to pursue should come from parents, students, and other residents. Knock on doors in two-people teams (for example, one parent and one teacher or principal) to identify issues important to the community; and recruit people for home meetings to discuss the issues they feel are important and what to do about them. Visit area congregations to discuss local problems, and develop relationships with members and clergy. Systematic personal contact and the building of personal relationships are key to successful engagement of residents. Keep parents in forefront.

2. Begin to build a community constituency for long-range reform through immediate, specific, and winnable issues. Frame broad demands like “better schools” more specifically to attract particular constituencies: bilingual programs for Latino parents, and after school job training and placement for parents and high school students. Building a base among parents and community members will provide a force and legitimacy to the demands you will make. Because you also want to develop working relationships with other educators, it may be best to start with a neighborhood issue rather than one that directly targets problems in the school.

3. Locate key school and district personnel who can assist you in gathering data to document the problems you want to address. Work with local community-based organizations to see what system information they already have. Collaborate with them in writing and disseminating a report, if possible.

4. Develop a program of needed changes and present this to authorities. Plan demonstrations and other activities that attempt to obtain concessions, promises, and behavioral responses from those in power in the district and city (I would add that one should attempt coalitions of organizing groups across the city, region, and state).

5. Develop a plan for what to do when people in power ignore you, refer you to others, delay you, or try to placate you. Officials may try to discredit you. Or they may attempt to buy off your leaders, or propose a substitute that does not meet your needs. Some of the strategies you could consider when this happens may be cooperative, like setting up meetings; but some may be confrontational—like pickets, demonstrations, political theater, press conferences, etc.

6. Keep the pressure on administrators and officials by demonstrations and actions of various sorts. A “presence in the streets” is necessary to hold their attention and get results (Zimmer & Mediratta, 2004, p. 3).

I want to emphasize that, whenever possible, link educational issues to community issues regarding jobs, housing, transportation, and investment. Education organizing by itself can improve schools in low-income areas to the point that housing values rise, businesses increasingly invest in the neighborhood, and low-income residents are pushed out by higher rents. This creep of gentrification is occurring on two blocks in Chicago’s Logan Square area, in part because of the success of education organizing by LSNA. In response, LSNA has intensified its lobbying at the state level for housing reform (Halsband, 2003; Hohn, 2003). Gentrification resulting from education organizing and improved local schools is a reminder that without other public policy changes (in this case, housing policies to maintain low-income housing or policies providing better-paying jobs); successful school reform in low-income urban neighborhoods can have unfortunate, unintended consequences for residents.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN MAINSTREAM SCHOOL REFORMERS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND EDUCATION ORGANIZERS

One way to increase the breadth and depth of school reform is for mainstream school reformers to collaborate with those working to provide resident services and neighborhood development. The following two project descriptions are examples of how vital the synergy could be if curricular and pedagogical reforms were coupled with financial and social support of students outside of school.

In Washington, DC, Othello Poulard and the Center for Community Change created such a system of outside student support. With foundation funding, they provided extensive programs for 8th through 12th graders living in five local housing projects. Poulard and the Public Housing Graduates Demonstration program (PHG) built a system of daily after-school tutoring in each project building. They hired skilled, long-term tutors. Poullard provided emotional support and guidance with trained neighborhood residents serving as “Mighty Moms” or “Mighty Pops,”

hired as long-term mentors. These mentors kept an eye on the students and helped them with personal problems. “Big Brothers” and “Big Sisters” were provided and offered emotional and academic support. PHG exposed the students to colleges as well as middle-class culture, and trained them to use computers; the program provided computers for the students’ homes. PHG offered athletics, and taught the youth how to avoid pregnancy and deal with violence. They provided health care, and financial support. As in middle-class and affluent families, youth were paid an allowance. They received \$100 a month in 10th and 11th grade, and \$200 a month in 12th grade. To qualify for the allowance they had to participate in almost daily after-school activities, along with weekend college readiness sessions and field trips. They also had to produce journals and detailed time sheets. They lost money every time they did not fulfill requirements (Center for Community Change, 2001, pp. 1–4).

The results of this extensive support system were extremely encouraging. Whereas before the program, only 40% of the public housing students who entered the 8th grade ever graduated from high school, 89.6% of PHG’s students graduated by the end of a three-year evaluation (compared to 63% of students who attended the same schools but who were not in the program). PHG participants had a significantly higher grade point average and higher test scores than a control group; 70% of PHG students applied to college or trade school; all were accepted and everyone who applied for financial aid received it. Over three years, only one 12th grader failed to graduate because of pregnancy or incarceration (*ibid.*, p. 5).

The second example is of school reformers linking with community developers to fight gentrification. The LEARN Charter school, serving a low-income population in a community in Chicago, partnered with a local community developer who helped revitalize the neighborhood by building over 1,600 affordable housing units and a major shopping center. Wanting to “keep people in the neighborhood,” the developer also became involved in a \$6.6 million project to build a major campus for the local public

school. As a testament to the increasing strength of the neighborhood, the city decided to invest millions of dollars to rebuild local transportation lines—which would increase residents’ access to jobs outside of the community (Halsband, 2003, p.37).

As important as these connections between school and community can be, educational reform groups do not typically work with community organizations to create or link to programs providing external student and family support. School reformers and community organizers, in fact, rarely talk to each other; they typically operate in different social circles. Most school reform groups are from university, funding, or government arenas, and community organizers are usually from the neighborhood or political activist spheres. There is little communication or cooperation.

Educational reformers and education organizers could teach each other important strategies, to the benefit of each. Organizers could teach school reformers about the power of public constituencies, about the power of an inflamed, informed community to demand and obtain programs from governments and school boards. For example, New Visions in New York City, a school reform group that obtained funding from Bill Gates and Soros Foundations to develop new small schools, was unfamiliar with existing community groups and parent organizing in the city. The New York City district had not informed parents in low-income neighborhoods that their high schools were about to be disbanded, and there was considerable community anger and resistance. Wisely, New Visions hired a doctoral student of mine, Madeline Perez (who has extensive experience organizing parents in Oakland, CA, and New York) to facilitate outreach and community meetings with residents in areas where new schools are to be developed. New Visions has also begun to develop relationships with strong faith-based organizations in New York City’s neighborhoods. This school reform group may find that the understanding and increased trust that accrues from such overtures will be crucial to the success of the new schools.

We know all too well that over the last few decades, traditional school reform in U.S. cities has shown considerably less success than hoped for. One important reason for disappointing results is that most urban school reforms are not successful in part because the community is not behind them, and often actively mistrusts them. Community organizing can create the political will to implement reforms. Indeed, success would most likely be assured if politicians and education reform groups were to work with community members to come to a consensus as to what changes are needed.

One way to reach this consensus is for school reformers and politicians to create proposals for change on the basis of recommendations made by community research. Such research typically documents inequities in a powerful, personal manner, and highlights inadequate provision for low-income students and schools. For example, in the mid-1990s, ACORN carried out and published three studies documenting that Black parents were not told about kindergarten gifted programs when they inquired of school personnel, while White parents were. These reports also demonstrated that the vast majority of students in New York City's three competitive high schools came from three White, middle-class districts, and that almost no low-income districts sent students to the special schools (Association for Community Reform Now, 1996). These powerful reports could have been the basis for meaningful, community-backed school reform if taken up by mainstream educational groups and politicians.

It is also the case that education organizers have much to learn from school reformers. As political activists, education organizers typically are not trained in education; however, they need to know more about curriculum and pedagogical best practice, how public schools work internally in order to know what classroom reforms to advocate for, and how to work with administrators once they get their attention. Community pressure is not always enough (Mediratta & Fruchter, 2004, p. 4). Moreover, in order to work with school boards, mayors, and state legislatures, community organizers must be knowledgeable about educational research, practice, and jargon.

In order to facilitate exchanges between networks of school reformers and organizers, the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), a national network of community-based organizations, held two multiday meetings of 100 educational researchers working on school reform issues and organizers from established community groups (Corbin, 2003, p. 3). The organizers learned from educational researchers about effective education practice, principles and tools for analyzing classrooms and schools, and ways that districts operate internally. Other such meetings need to be organized.

Any effort to create a social movement with potential to affect current policy and practice regarding urban schools and economic access must get concerned actors together, working in concert. Equity-seeking school reform networks and community activists advocating for school and neighborhood improvement are usually on the same side; they should acknowledge their commonalities and collaborate in the interest of increased opportunity and change.

Importantly, politically progressive classroom teachers are central here. They are in a position to work with both kinds of groups as they mentor youth activism.

CLASSROOMS AS MOVEMENT-BUILDING SPACES

Middle and high school teachers, in particular, can make a powerful contribution to movement-building by engaging students in civic activism. Both the civil rights movement and successful youth efforts to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 (legalized in 1971) demonstrate that activism by young people can make a huge impact on American society. The activities in this section provide teachers with strategies to assist urban youth in moving from self-blame or angry rebellion to well-informed political engagement.

But, you might respond, urban students are not interested in political activity. To that I reply that behavioral resistance to typical methods of teaching does not necessarily transfer to

alternative, more appealing methods. Moreover, I believe it is the case that most urban teens *want* an education—a high *quality* education. College readiness is the top priority of urban youth who are involved in organizing. A comprehensive assessment of 49 youth groups in 18 states found that the issues youth most frequently address have to do with education. Most (61%) want college preparation from their high school; the next issue is criminal and juvenile justice (49%), and then economic justice (18%) and immigrant rights (14%). Indeed, programs run by organizations in urban communities that promote teenage activism typically attract youth who are alienated from school. Teachers, then, may not find it difficult to interest students in political projects; and they may find that through such activities, students who are dropping out can be brought back in (Weiss, 2003; also Wheeler, 2003, available at <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org>).

Numerous benefits accrue to youth who work for increased opportunities in their communities. Studies have documented that civic activism by low-income students of color typically fosters teenagers' positive personal development, and improves their academic engagement and, therefore, achievement (see, for example, Benson & Leffert, 1998; Forum for Youth Investment, 2004; Ginwright & James, 2002; Hilley, 2004; Lewis-Charp, 2003; Zeldin & Price, 1995).

There are several other benefits as well. Organizing urban youth to work with others to improve their schools and neighborhoods gives teenagers *connections*, embedding them in constructive community networks. This connectedness is a worthy alternative to that offered by most street gangs.

In addition, by organizing others to work responsibly for social change, minority youth counter the view that they constitute a social "problem." Teens also are encouraged to understand how the poverty of their families and their peers arises from systemic rather than personal failings. And it provides them with the concrete lesson that they can bring about changes in society, giving them a foundation for pursuing this kind of activity as adults.

A final benefit to working with students on political projects that aim to achieve youth and family rights puts educators and students on the same "team," and increases trust between them, which, as we have seen, has been found to increase academic achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

An example of teachers organizing students demonstrates several of these positive outcomes. In 1995, youth at Gratz High School in Philadelphia started the first chapter of what became a citywide Student Union (PSU). The original impetus for organizing was students' complaints about inadequate textbooks and dirty bathrooms. When the students asked administrators why there were no new textbooks, they were told it was their fault because "students tear them up." When students complained about the bathrooms, they were told "students mess them up." Students' first reaction was to agree with school administrators that they were themselves to blame. However, with their adviser's help they were encouraged to ask themselves the following questions: "Why didn't they consider it their school and their property? Why did they deface their school as if they didn't respect it or own it? Why didn't they feel comfortable at school?" After years and years in a failing system, the students were frustrated and self-blaming. Their adviser assisted them as they got to work to advocate for improvements in the school.

Since 1995, many changes have resulted from PSU's activism in Philadelphia high schools, including new student governments, creation of school ombudsmen to stop the harassment and abuse by school security officers, a district-level student platform on planned school reforms, a rally of 2,450 students at City Hall, which helped to defeat planned privatization of Philadelphia high schools, new networks of organized students in multiple city schools, and a statewide campaign to increase school funding to the level of nearby affluent suburbs (American Youth Policy Forum, 2002, p. 103).

As shown in research studying the benefits of youth organizing in Los Angeles, many of the Philadelphia students who became involved as

activists and leaders had been on the verge of dropping out, but remained in school when it became clear that they had a voice. A number of teachers reported that these new youth leaders became academic “stars.” Teachers and administrators reported respect for students who organize (Hayasaki, 2003, p. 4).

The following classroom activities can develop in students many of the skills utilized by community organizers in their movement-building work. The activities begin with research in the neighborhood, and lead to the development of issue campaigns to bring about new policy.

Mapping Community Assets

Finding and documenting community resources that could be useful for making the neighborhood a better place to live and work is an important first step. The classic source for asset mapping is Kretzman and McNight (1997). These activist-scholars point out that a thorough map of community begins with an inventory of the “gifts, skills and capacities of the community’s residents . . . few of which are being mobilized for community-building purposes . . .” (p. 5).

In addition to identifying the gifts and skills of individuals, households, and families, student researchers will compile an inventory of formal and informal institutions. These include churches, ethnic and religious associations, tenants groups, political organizations, advocacy and activist groups, among others. Politicians and political parties should be included, as should local branches of corporations, the chambers of commerce, and other interest groups. Mapping should also include businesses such as banks and restaurants, and public institutions such as libraries, parks, community colleges, and other types of schools; and non-profit institutions such as hospitals and social service agencies. Physical characteristics, as well, are part of a community’s assets—vacant and occupied land and buildings and other infrastructure such as streets and transportation systems.

Students travel in pairs or small groups to catalogue these assets. Then, the class as a whole

raises important questions: How might the assets held by individuals, associations, institutions, and the physical environment be connected to each other? How might the community begin to imagine and institute new uses for these strengths? Mapping the environment means looking carefully at the political and cultural resources that can be mobilized to solve the particular problems faced by the community.

Teachers could focus the mapping on locating “opportunity structures” within the neighborhoods. These comprise an interrelated and interdependent web of systems (such as education and health care), markets (such as employment), and structures (such as transportation). Maps can be made of the locations of jobs and day care providers, the availability of transportation, and access to a variety of social services. Maps can reveal key demographic information such as poverty rates, race/ethnicity, age, language, employment status and rates, the cost of land development, who develops it, levels of criminal activity, school achievement levels, the price of housing, and the location of any job-training services. The spatial depiction of these systems provides a useful tool for students and teachers who want to identify impediments and assets related to solving problems that people in the community face.

Power Analysis

Asset mapping is not an end in itself. It should be the basis for a “power analysis.” Such an inquiry assesses the causes and solutions of current problems—whether these extend from the neighborhood and city to the metropolitan or federal levels.

A power analysis identifies a problem faced by students or other community residents and asks the following kinds of questions: Who is impacted by the problem? Who makes the decisions that affect the immediate situation? Who makes decisions that determine what those individuals or groups do and say? What kinds of informal influence or formal power do they have? What kinds of informal influence or

formal power do community residents have over the situation? Whose interests are affected by decisions that have been made? Who are potential allies in an attempt to solve the problem?

Upon completion and sharing of research reports, students and teachers should not end their involvement in the issue. Indeed, they are just beginning. Movement building requires an ongoing relationship with the community. Students should continue their engagement with community issues by using their research to assist in developing issue campaigns with residents.

Developing an Issue Campaign

As I will describe in more detail below, activities teachers utilize to develop skills of political analysis and activism in students typically involve well-regarded pedagogical strategies. The process involves techniques of *problem-solving*, *data collection and analysis*, and *reflective action* (taking some action to learn about and communicate findings through writing, graphing, etc., and reflection on what has been accomplished in order to continue) (Youth Organizing, 2002, p. 10).

One key to developing an issue campaign with students is to break the overall task—say, a campaign for immigrant students' rights—into manageable pieces, and to obtain a student to take responsibility for each piece (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 2001, p. 124). It is also a good idea to set up structures like committees with student leaders, to facilitate many youth having chances to develop skills. Have older teens teach younger ones. In some cases, college students help high school students plan issue campaigns.

After researching the problems, identifying the issues, sketching out demands, and beginning to educate the larger community, youth now further develop the campaign's power analysis, including researching targets of the campaign. They ask who is the person or group that has the power to give us what we want and what do they believe. How have they voted in the past? From where do they gain their strength—financial resources, advice, support? Where are they vulnerable? Who are their allies, and ours—and who

can we move? The answers to these questions, combined with the other analyses already done, should produce a short-term strategy, a long-term vision, and a final list of demands—all of which should be used to measure the group's success.

Teacher and students then develop their campaign action plan—including selecting tactics that will most effectively impact targets. Full debate is necessary to choose tactics, and the pros and cons of everything from taking one's demands to the target with an appointment, if possible, to civil disobedience, if necessary. Invite community-based organizations to become involved. If the issue has to do with education, invite both education organizers and school reform groups to join in.

During demonstrations and other activities that develop a political campaign, youth build strong communications and media skills. The details, responsibilities, and opportunities are enormous—organizing community forums and school assemblies, educating residents door-to-door, writing stories or creating media such as newsletters, CDs, and videos, educating and cooperating with journalists, organizing meetings with city officials, testifying at public hearings, and integrating cultural expression into outreach (through open microphones, spoken word, slap tags, etc.); all these develop student communication skills.

Even the rallies and marches that the class may undertake involve lots of duties: deciding when, where, and why to rally; getting speakers and helping them to develop effective messages; setting up a sound system; getting permits from police, sanitation, and the parks department; handling security and negotiating with police; training people as marshals, coordinating legal support if there's a chance of arrests; and coming up with chants and posters.

The group is writing constantly: producing research reports, newsletters, Web sites, curricula, petitions, education guides, scripts for popular education skits, grant proposals, speeches, dialogue for videos. And because the youth are writing for a public audience, they are more concerned about getting it right; they are learning

about the power of words well expressed. They learn math: They produce grant proposals and budgets, order supplies, fill vouchers, make requisitions, create estimates, enter data, crunch numbers, and prepare for reviews of their figures. And they practice critical thinking—learning to ask hard questions, make connections, and gather evidence. They learn tolerance for others while discovering and coming to appreciate their own identity and agency.

CONCLUSION

The consequence of my overall analysis for the ways we conceptualize education policy is fundamental. Governments and corporate elites depend on education to deflect the pain inflicted by the economy. That cover does not work any longer for larger percentages of the population. The discovery by urban students as early as the fifth grade (Anyon, 1997) that education does not “matter” has a chilling effect on motivation; rightly contextualized, however, this realization can ultimately be politically activating.

To be adequate to the task of relevant prescription—as well as political mobilization—education policy cannot remain closeted in schools, classrooms, and educational bureaucracies. It must join the world of communities, families, and students; it must advocate for them and emerge from their urgent realities. Policies for which we press would therefore take on a larger focus: Education funding reform would include the companion need for financing of neighborhood jobs and decent wages. Small schools would be created as an important part of the coordinated efforts at neighborhood revitalization for low-income residents. Lawsuits to racially integrate districts will acknowledge housing segregation as fundamental and target legal challenges appropriately.

Policies that set the standards schools must meet would identify the money, materials, teachers, courses, and neighborhood needs that should be fulfilled in order to provide opportunities to learn at high levels. Educational

accountability would be conceived as a public undertaking, centrally involving families, communities, and students, in consultation with district and government officials. And college would be understood as a continuation of government’s financial responsibility for public education, thus providing a material basis for motivation and effort on the part of K-12 students and educators.

In this new paradigm of educational policy, the political potential of pedagogy and curriculum would be realized. Critical pedagogy would take to the streets, offices, and courtrooms where social justice struggles play out. Curriculum could build toward and from these experiences. Vocational offerings in high school would link to living wage campaigns and employers who support them. And educational research would not be judged by its ostensible scientific objectivity, but at least in part by its ability to spark political consciousness and change—its “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1991).

In this approach to school reform, “policy alignment” does not refer to the fit between education mandates issued by various levels of government and bureaucracy. The fit we seek is between neighborhood, family, and student needs and the potential of education policies to contribute to their fulfillment.

This reorientation of education policy is unabashedly radical, and brings me to a final point. Whether one is born to radicalism or acquires it along the way, the premises on which it rests affirm the deeply rooted connections and disjunctures between democracy and capitalism. A radical frame provides the understanding that, for example, economic exclusion and educational under-achievement flow fundamentally from systemic causes, even in the face of what appears to be democratic process and individual failure. And a radical analysis points toward concrete, long-lasting solutions.

In 1967, at the height of the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King, Jr. argued that civil rights, poverty, and war are all part of the same problem. He preached that Americans need to fight these as part of the same struggle. But, he said, in

order to do that we must “recapture the revolutionary spirit” of freedom and equality which defines true democracy.

If those of us who are angry about injustice can recapture this revolutionary spirit of democracy, and if we can act on it together, then we may be able to create a force powerful enough to produce economic justice and real, long-term school reform in America’s cities.

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DESCHOOLING SOCIETY

IVAN ILLICH

It is appropriate to include in this final part a reading by one of the more creative educational reformers of the 20th century. In this excerpt from his book of the same title, Ivan Illich proposes a totally different educational system that does not rely on schooling as we know it. This book is a classic in educational literature, published in 1971, and provides an interesting way to rethink the function and structure of schools. Illich's idea of deschooling society provides a totally different approach to what we know as "real school." May this reading trigger your imagination and raise many questions as you consider changes in education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What parts of education does Illich find to be most harmful?
2. Describe the type of education Illich would like to see in society.

3. What do you know about schools as educational organizations from Part II and other readings in this book that would make Illich's reforms difficult to implement?

Equal educational opportunity is, indeed, both a desirable and a feasible goal, but to equate this with obligatory schooling is to confuse salvation with the Church. School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age. The nation-state has adopted it, drafting all citizens into a graded curriculum leading to sequential diplomas not unlike the initiation rituals and hieratic promotions of former times. The modern state has assumed the duty of enforcing the judgment of its educators through well-meant truant officers and job requirements, much as did the Spanish kings who enforced the judgments of their theologians through the conquistadors and the Inquisition.

Two centuries ago the United States led the world in a movement to disestablish the monopoly of a single church. Now we need the constitutional disestablishment of the monopoly of the school, and thereby of a system which legally combines prejudice with discrimination. The first article of a bill of rights for a modern, humanist society would correspond to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "The State shall make no law with respect to the establishment of education." There shall be no ritual obligatoriness for all.

To make this disestablishment effective, we need a law forbidding discrimination in hiring, voting, or admission to centers of learning based on previous attendance at some curriculum. This guarantee would not exclude performance tests of competence for a function or role, but would remove the present absurd discrimination in favor of the person who learns a given skill with the largest expenditure of public funds or—what is equally likely—has been able to obtain a diploma which has no relation to any useful skill or job. Only by protecting the citizen from being disqualified by anything in his career in school can a constitutional disestablishment of school become psychologically effective.

Neither learning nor justice is promoted by schooling because educators insist on packaging instruction with certification. Learning and the assignment of social roles are melted into schooling. Yet to learn means to acquire a new skill or insight, while promotion depends on an opinion which others have formed. Learning frequently is the result of instruction, but selection for a role or category in the job market increasingly depends on mere length of attendance.

Instruction is the choice of circumstances which facilitate learning. Roles are assigned by setting a curriculum of conditions which the candidate must meet if he is to make the grade. School links instruction—but not learning—to these roles. This is neither reasonable nor liberating. It is not reasonable because it does not link relevant qualities or competences to roles, but rather the process by which such qualities are supposed to be acquired. It is not liberating or educational because school reserves instruction

to those whose every step in learning fits previously approved measures of social control.

Curriculum has always been used to assign social rank. . . . However, instead of equalizing chances, the school system has monopolized their distribution.

To detach competence from curriculum, inquiries into a man's learning history must be made taboo, like inquiries into his political affiliation, church attendance, lineage, sex habits, or racial background. Laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of prior schooling must be enacted. Laws, of course, cannot stop prejudice against the unschooled—nor are they meant to force anyone to intermarry with an autodidact [a self-taught individual]—but they can discourage unjustified discrimination.

A second major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school only insofar as school, in a few rich countries, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives.

Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction. Normal children learn their first language casually, although faster if their parents pay attention to them. Most people who learn a second language well do so as a result of odd circumstances and not of sequential teaching. They go to live with their grandparents, they travel, or they fall in love with a foreigner. Fluency in reading is also more often than not a result of such extracurricular activities. Most people who read widely, and with pleasure, merely believe that they learned to do so in school; when challenged, they easily discard this illusion.

But the fact that a great deal of learning even now seems to happen casually and as a by-product of some other activity defined as work or leisure does not mean that planned learning does not benefit from planned instruction and that both do not stand in need of improvement. The strongly motivated student who is faced with the task of

acquiring a new and complex skill may benefit greatly from the discipline now associated with the old-fashioned schoolmaster who taught reading, Hebrew, catechism, or multiplication by rote. School has now made this kind of drill teaching rare and disreputable, yet there are many skills which a motivated student with normal aptitude can master in a matter of a few months if taught in this traditional way. This is as true of codes as of their encipherment; of second and third languages as of reading and writing; and equally of special languages such as algebra, computer programming, chemical analysis, or of manual skills like typing, watchmaking, plumbing, writing, TV repair; or for that matter dancing, driving, and diving.

In certain cases acceptance into a learning program aimed at a specific skill might presuppose competence in some other skill, but it should certainly not be made to depend upon the process by which such prerequisite skills were acquired. TV repair presupposes literacy and some math; diving, good swimming; and driving, very little of either.

At present schools pre-empt most educational funds. Drill instruction which costs less than comparable schooling is now a privilege of those rich enough to bypass the schools, and those whom either the army or big business sends through in-service training. In a program of progressive deschooling of U.S. education, at first the resources available for drill training would be limited. But ultimately there should be no obstacle for anyone at any time of his life to be able to choose instruction among hundreds of definable skills at public expense.

Right now educational credit good at any skill center could be provided in limited amounts for people of all ages, and not just to the poor. I envisage such credit in the form of an educational passport or an "edu-credit card" provided to each citizen at birth. In order to favor the poor, who probably would not use their yearly grants early in life, a provision could be made that interest accrued to later users of cumulated "entitlements." Such credits would permit most people to acquire the skills most in demand, at their

convenience, better, faster, cheaper, and with fewer undesirable side effects than in school.

Potential skill teachers are never scarce for long because, on the one hand, demand for a skill grows only with its performance within a community and, on the other, a man exercising a skill could also teach it. But, at present, those using skills which are in demand and do require a human teacher are discouraged from sharing these skills with others. This is done either by teachers who monopolize the licenses or by unions which protect their trade interests. Skill centers which would be judged by customers on their results, and not on the personnel they employ or the process they use, would open unsuspected working opportunities, frequently even for those who are now considered unemployable. Indeed, there is no reason why such skill centers should not be at the work place itself, with the employer and his work force supplying instruction as well as jobs to those who choose to use their educational credits in this way.

In 1956 there arose a need to teach Spanish quickly to several hundred teachers, social workers, and ministers from the New York Archdiocese so that they could communicate with Puerto Ricans. My friend Gerry Morris announced over a Spanish radio station that he needed native speakers from Harlem. Next day some two hundred teen-agers lined up in front of his office, and he selected four dozen of them—many of them school dropouts. He trained them in the use of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Spanish manual, designed for use by linguists with graduate training, and within a week his teachers were on their own—each in charge of four New Yorkers who wanted to speak the language. Within six months the mission was accomplished. Cardinal Spellman could claim that he had 127 parishes in which at least three staff members could communicate in Spanish. No school program could have matched these results.

Skill teachers are made scarce by the belief in the value of licenses. Certification constitutes a form of market manipulation and is plausible only to a schooled mind. Most teachers of arts and trades are less skillful, less inventive, and

less communicative than the best craftsmen and tradesmen. Most high-school teachers of Spanish or French do not speak the language as correctly as their pupils might after half a year of competent drills. Experiments conducted by Angel Quintero in Puerto Rico suggest that many young teen-agers, if given the proper incentives, programs, and access to tools, are better than most schoolteachers at introducing their peers to the scientific exploration of plants, stars, and matter, and to the discovery of how and why a motor or a radio functions.

Opportunities for skill-learning can be vastly multiplied if we open the "market." This depends on matching the right teacher with the right student when he is highly motivated in an intelligent program, without the constraint of curriculum.

Free and competing drill instruction is a subversive blasphemy to the orthodox educator. It dissociates the acquisition of skills from "humane" education, which schools package together, and thus it promotes unlicensed learning no less than unlicensed teaching for unpredictable purposes.

There is currently a proposal on record which seems at first to make a great deal of sense. It has been prepared by Christopher Jencks of the Center for the Study of Public Policy and is sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity. It proposes to put educational "entitlements" or tuition grants into the hands of parents and students for expenditure in the schools of their choice. Such individual entitlements could indeed be an important step in the right direction. We need a guarantee of the right of each citizen to an equal share of tax-derived educational resources, the right to verify this share, and the right to sue for it if denied. It is one form of a guarantee against regressive taxation.

The Jencks proposal, however, begins with the ominous statement that "conservatives, liberals, and radicals have all complained at one time or another that the American educational system gives professional educators too little incentive to provide high quality education to most children." The proposal condemns itself by proposing tuition grants which would have to be spent on schooling.

This is like giving a lame man a pair of crutches and stipulating that he use them only if the ends are tied together. As the proposal for tuition grants now stands, it plays into the hands not only of the professional educators but of racists, promoters of religious schools, and others whose interests are socially divisive. Above all, educational entitlements restricted to use within schools play into the hands of all those who want to continue to live in a society in which social advancement is tied not to proven knowledge but to the learning pedigree by which it is supposedly acquired. This discrimination in favor of schools which dominates Jencks's discussion on refinancing education could discredit one of the most critically needed principles for educational reform: the return of initiative and accountability for learning to the learner or his most immediate tutor.

The deschooling of society implies a recognition of the two-faced nature of learning. An insistence on skill drill alone could be a disaster; equal emphasis must be placed on other kinds of learning. But if schools are the wrong places for learning a skill, they are even worse places for getting an education. School does both tasks badly, partly because it does not distinguish between them. School is inefficient in skill instruction especially because it is curricular. In most schools a program which is meant to improve one skill is chained always to another irrelevant task. History is tied to advancement in math, and class attendance to the right to use the playground.

Schools are even less efficient in the arrangement of the circumstances which encourage the open-ended, exploratory use of acquired skills, for which I will reserve the term "liberal education." The main reason for this is that school is obligatory and becomes schooling for schooling's sake: an enforced stay in the company of teachers, which pays off in the doubtful privilege of more such company. Just as skill instruction must be freed from curricular restraints, so must liberal education be dissociated from obligatory attendance. Both skill-learning and education for inventive and creative behavior can be aided by institutional arrangement, but they are of a different, frequently opposed nature.

Most skills can be acquired and improved by drills, because skill implies the mastery of definable and predictable behavior. Skill instruction can rely, therefore, on the simulation of circumstances in which the skill will be used. Education in the exploratory and creative use of skills, however, cannot rely on drills. Education can be the outcome of instruction, though instruction of a kind fundamentally opposed to drill. It relies on the relationship between partners who already have some of the keys which give access to memories stored in and by the community. It relies on the critical intent of all those who use memories creatively. It relies on the surprise of the unexpected question which opens new doors for the inquirer and his partner.

The skill instructor relies on the arrangement of set circumstances which permit the learner to develop standard responses. The educational guide or master is concerned with helping matching partners to meet so that learning can take place. He matches individuals starting from their own, unresolved questions. At the most he helps the pupil to formulate his puzzlement since only a clear statement will give him the power to find his match, moved like him, at the moment, to explore the same issue in the same context.

Matching partners for educational purposes initially seems more difficult to imagine than finding skill instructors and partners for a game. One reason is the deep fear which school has implanted in us, a fear which makes us censorious. The unlicensed exchange of skills—even undesirable skills—is more predictable and therefore seems less dangerous than the unlimited opportunity for meeting among people who share an issue which for them, at the moment, is socially, intellectually, and emotionally important.

The Brazilian teacher Paulo Freire knows this from experience. He discovered that any adult can begin to read in a matter of forty hours if the first words he deciphers are charged with political meaning. Freire trains his teachers to move into a village and to discover the words which designate current important issues, such as the access to a well or the compound interest on the debts owed to the patron. In the evening the villagers meet for the discussion of these key

words. They begin to realize that each word stays on the blackboard even after its sound has faded. The letters continue to unlock reality and to make it manageable as a problem. I have frequently witnessed how discussants grow in social awareness and how they are impelled to take political action as fast as they learn to read. They seem to take reality into their hands as they write it down.

I remember the man who complained about the weight of pencils: they were difficult to handle because they did not weigh as much as a shovel; and I remember another who on his way to work stopped with his companions and wrote the word they were discussing with his hoe on the ground: "agua." Since 1962 my friend Freire has moved from exile to exile, mainly because he refuses to conduct his sessions around words which are preselected by approved educators, rather than those which his discussants bring to the class.

The educational matchmaking among people who have been successfully schooled is a different task. Those who do not need such assistance are a minority, even among the readers of serious journals. The majority cannot and should not be rallied for discussion around a slogan, a word, or a picture. But the idea remains the same: they should be able to meet around a problem chosen and defined by their own initiative. Creative, exploratory learning requires peers currently puzzled about the same terms or problems. Large universities make the futile attempt to match them by multiplying their courses, and they generally fail since they are bound to curriculum, course structure, and bureaucratic administration. In schools, including universities, most resources are spent to purchase the time and motivation of a limited number of people to take up predetermined problems in a ritually defined setting. The most radical alternative to school would be a network or service which gave each man the same opportunity to share his current concern with others motivated by the same concern.

Let me give, as an example of what I mean, a description of how an intellectual match might work in New York City. Each man, at any given moment and at a minimum price, could identify himself to a computer with his address and

telephone number, indicating the book, article, film, or recording on which he seeks a partner for discussion. Within days he could receive by mail the list of others who recently had taken the same initiative. This list would enable him by telephone to arrange for a meeting with persons who initially would be known exclusively by the fact that they requested a dialogue about the same subject.

Matching people according to their interest in a particular title is radically simple. It permits identification only on the basis of a mutual desire to discuss a statement recorded by a third person, and it leaves the initiative of arranging the meeting to the individual. Three objections are usually raised against this skeletal purity. I take them up not only to clarify the theory that I want to illustrate by my proposal—for they highlight the deep-seated resistance to deschooling education, to separating learning from social control—but also because they may help to suggest existing resources which are not now used for learning purposes.

The first objection is: Why cannot self-identification be based also on an idea or an issue? Certainly such subjective terms could also be used in a computer system. Political parties, churches, unions, clubs, neighborhood centers, and professional societies already organize their educational activities in this way and in effect they act as schools. They all match people in order to explore certain “themes”; and these are dealt with in courses, seminars, and curricula in which presumed “common interests” are prepackaged. Such theme-matching is by definition teacher-centered: it requires an authoritarian presence to define for the participants the starting point for their discussion.

By contrast, matching by the title of a book, film, etc., in its pure form leaves it to the author to define the special language, the terms, and the framework within which a given problem or fact is stated; and it enables those who accept this starting point to identify themselves to one another. For instance, matching people around the idea of “cultural revolution” usually leads either to confusion or to demagoguery. On the other hand, matching those interested in helping each other understand a specific article by Mao,

Marcuse, Freud, or Goodman stands in the great tradition of liberal learning from Plato’s *Dialogues*, which are built around presumed statements by Socrates, to Aquinas’s commentaries on Peter the Lombard. The idea of matching by title is thus radically different from the theory on which the “Great Books” clubs, for example, were built: instead of relying on the selection by some Chicago professors, any two partners can choose any book for further analysis.

The second objection asks: Why not let the identification of match seekers include information on age, background, world view, competence, experience, or other defining characteristics? Again, there is no reason why such discriminatory restrictions could not and should not be built into some of the many universities—with or without walls—which could use title-matching as their basic organizational device. I could conceive of a system designed to encourage meetings of interested persons at which the author of the book chosen would be present or represented; or a system which guaranteed the presence of a competent adviser; or one to which only students registered in a department or school had access; or one which permitted meetings only between people who defined their special approach to the title under discussion. Advantages for achieving specific goals of learning could be found for each of these restrictions. But I fear that, more often than not, the real reason for proposing such restrictions is contempt arising from the presumption that people are ignorant: educators want to avoid the ignorant meeting the ignorant around a text which they may not understand and which they read only because they are interested in it.

The third objection: Why not provide match seekers with incidental assistance that will facilitate their meetings—with space, schedules, screening, and protection? This is now done by schools with all the inefficiency characterizing large bureaucracies. If we left the initiative for meetings to the match seekers themselves, organizations which nobody now classifies as educational would probably do the job much better. I think of restaurant owners, publishers, telephone-answering services, department store

managers, and even commuter train executives who could promote their services by rendering them attractive for educational meetings.

At a first meeting in a coffee shop, say, the partners might establish their identities by placing the book under discussion next to their cups. People who took the initiative to arrange for such meetings would soon learn what items to quote to meet the people they sought. The risk that the self-chosen discussion with one or several strangers might lead to a loss of time, disappointment, or even unpleasantness is certainly smaller than the same risk taken by a college applicant. A computer-arranged meeting to discuss an article in a national magazine, held in a coffee shop off Fourth Avenue, would obligate none of the participants to stay in the company of his new acquaintances for longer than it took to drink a cup of coffee, nor would he have to meet any of them ever again. The chance that it would help to pierce the opaqueness of life in a modern city and further new friendship, self-chosen work, and critical reading is high. (The fact that a record of personal readings and meetings could be obtained thus by the FBI is undeniable; that this should still worry anybody in 1970 is only amusing to a free man, who willy-nilly contributes his share in order to drown snoopers in the irrelevancies they gather.)

Both the exchange of skills and matching of partners are based on the assumption that education for all means education by all. Not the draft into a specialized institution but only the mobilization of the whole population can lead to popular culture. The equal right of each man to exercise his competence to learn and to instruct is now pre-empted by certified teachers. The teachers' competence, in turn, is restricted to what may be done in school. And, further, work and leisure are alienated from each other as a result: the spectator and the worker alike are supposed to arrive at the work place all ready to fit into a routine prepared for them. Adaptation in the form of a product's design, instruction, and publicity shapes them for their role as much as formal education by schooling. A radical alternative to a schooled society requires not only new

formal mechanisms for the formal acquisition of skills and their educational use. A deschooled society implies a new approach to incidental or informal education.

Incidental education cannot any longer return to the forms which learning took in the village or the medieval town. Traditional society was more like a set of concentric circles of meaningful structures, while modern man must learn how to find meaning in many structures to which he is only marginally related. In the village, language and architecture and work and religion and family customs were consistent with one another, mutually explanatory and reinforcing. To grow into one implied a growth into the others. Even specialized apprenticeship was a by-product of specialized activities, such as shoemaking or the singing of psalms. If an apprentice never became a master or a scholar, he still contributed to making shoes or to making church services solemn. Education did not compete for time with either work or leisure. Almost all education was complex, lifelong, and unplanned.

Contemporary society is the result of conscious designs, and educational opportunities must be designed into them. Our reliance on specialized, full-time instruction through school will now decrease, and we must find more ways to learn and teach: the educational quality of all institutions must increase again. But this is a very ambiguous forecast. It could mean that men in the modern city will be increasingly the victims of an effective process of total instruction and manipulation once they are deprived of even the tenuous pretense of critical independence which liberal schools now provide for at least some of their pupils.

It could also mean that men will shield themselves less behind certificates acquired in school and thus gain in courage to "talk back" and thereby control and instruct the institutions in which they participate. To ensure the latter we must learn to estimate the social value of work and leisure by the educational give-and-take for which they offer opportunity. Effective participation in the politics of a street, a work place, the library, a news program, or a hospital is therefore

the best measuring stick to evaluate their level as educational institutions.

I recently spoke to a group of junior-high school students in the process of organizing a resistance movement to their obligatory draft into the next class. Their slogan was "participation—not simulation." They were disappointed that this was understood as a demand for less rather than for more education, and reminded me of the resistance which Karl Marx put up against a passage in the Gotha program which—one hundred years ago—wanted to outlaw child labor. He opposed the proposal in the interest of the education of the young, which could happen only at work. If the greatest fruit of man's labor should be the education he receives from it and the opportunity which work gives him to initiate the education of others, then the alienation of modern society in a pedagogical sense is even worse than its economic alienation.

The major obstacle on the way to a society that truly educates was well defined by a black friend of mine in Chicago, who told me that our imagination was "all schooled up." We permit the state to ascertain the universal educational deficiencies of its citizens and establish one specialized agency to treat them. We thus share in the delusion that we can distinguish between what is necessary education for others and what is not, just as former generations established laws which defined what was sacred and what was profane.

Durkheim recognized that this ability to divide social reality into two realms was the very essence of formal religion. There are, he reasoned, religions without the supernatural and

religions without gods, but none which does not subdivide the world into things and times and persons that are sacred and others that as a consequence are profane. Durkheim's insight can be applied to the sociology of education, for school is radically divisive in a similar way.

The very existence of obligatory schools divides any society into two realms: some time spans and processes and treatments and professions are "academic" or "pedagogic," and others are not. The power of school thus to divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes noneducational.

PROJECTS FOR CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Educational Reform and Change

Use an academic data base (with no restrictions to refereed journals) to look up "EDUCATIONAL REFORM." What are the reform efforts most cited in nonacademic journals? How do they differ from the reforms discussed in this book?

Using an academic data base (with no restrictions to refereed journals), to look up "NATIONAL STANDARDS" and "EDUCATION." What is the current discussion around national standards and how does it relate to the arguments made in the reading by Thomas Rohlen in this part?

Go to the Web sites listed in the Anyon reading and read about the school/community efforts underway to rebuild urban areas.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many people hang their hopes on the institution of education and the schools and classrooms within that institution. Ivan Illich, however, is not alone in his frustration with the educational systems in many countries.

Other individuals criticize components of the educational system; some also offer solutions. Governments wrestle with these problems and look for research that proposes reforms. David Tyack and Larry Cuban in Part X and the readings in Part VII only begin to describe the various reforms to educational systems that have been attempted. We can only speculate on what changes are in store in the future for educational systems.

The purpose of this book is not to propose solutions or reforms, although some of the readings do just that. Instead, we intended to provide readers with an overview of the theories, methods, and issues in sociology of education today. Sociologists provide a rather unique view of institutions, one that places institutions such as education, family, religion, and politics within a societal context. Although few sociologists set out with the goal of school reform, by raising questions about what is sometimes taken for granted, they can encourage critical analyses of

schools. Sociological studies can inform debates and provide scientific findings to guide policy-makers. Sociological researchers provide a unique perspective that can help those involved in decisions about our children's education to see schools in a new light.

Why haven't things changed? Many of the readings in this book point to reasons why things remain the same or, if changed, why schools still do not meet the needs of many students. We hope that, through the readings in this book, you have come to understand how complex educational systems are. We hope that you have come to understand that one person's sense of frustration can be another's sense of accomplishment. We hope that you now have a better sense of both the structure and the processes within schools and the many variations and permutations both structure and process take within educational systems. We hope that you now know that schools both mirror and reinforce existing social patterns in society. And, we hope you understand that schools do not exist in a vacuum, that educational systems respond to many external conditions, in addition to internal factors, in shaping how we educate young people.

APPENDIX

Web Resources for Continued Exploration of the Topics in This Book

RESEARCH LITERATURES

ERIC can be searched online to find research and reflections on a wide variety of educational topics: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>. When at this site, you can search the literature data base.

Jstor: <http://www.jstor.org/> (found at college and university libraries that subscribe). Jstor contains electronic versions of journal articles more than 5 years old in such journals as *Sociology of Education*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, and others.

National Library of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/NLE/>

Online journals and/or abstracts:

Anthropology and Education Quarterly:
<http://www.aaanet.org/cae/aeq.html/>

Chronicle of Higher Education:
<http://chronicle.com>

Education Week: <http://www.edweek.org/>

Educational Leadership: <http://www.ascd.org/>

Harvard Education Letter:
<http://www.edletter.org/>

Harvard Education Review:
<http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hepg/her.html/>

Phi Delta Kappan: <http://www.pdkintl.org/>

Rethinking Schools:
<http://www.rethinkingschools.org/>

Teachers College Record:
<http://www.tcrecord.org/>

FREE ONLINE NEWS SOURCES

Boston Globe: <http://www.boston.com/>

LA Times: <http://www.latimes.com/>

New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>

LIBRARIES

Library of Congress: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/homepage/lchp.html/>

New York Public Library: www.nypl.org/branch/iresources.html/

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Association of School Administrators:
<http://www.aasa.org/>

American Educational Research Association:
<http://www.aera.net/>

American Federation of Teachers: <http://www.aft.org/index.html/>

American Sociological Association (ASA): <http://www.asanet.org/>

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: <http://www.ascd.org/>

Council for Aid to Education: <http://www.cae.org/>
Council of Chief State School Officers: <http://www.ccsso.org/>
Council of Great City Schools: <http://www.cgcs.org/>
Education Commission of the States: <http://www.ecs.org/>
Institute for Educational Leadership: <http://www.iel.org/>
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: <http://www.nbpts.org/>
National Education Association: <http://www.nae.org/>
Sociology of Education Section, ASA: <http://www.asanet.org/> (go to sections, then Education)

RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS

Center for Social Organization of Schools: <http://web.jhu.edu/csos>
Consortium for Policy Research in Education: <http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/>
National Center for Research in Vocational Education: <http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/>
National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST): www.cse.ucla.edu/
Office of Educational Research and Improvement: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/index.html/>
Office of Postsecondary Education: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html/>
RAND Organization: <http://www.rand.org/>
U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/>
U.S. Department of Education Nation's Report Card: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
White House Briefing Room, Education: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/education.html/>

EDUCATIONAL REFORM ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION

Accelerated Schools Project: <http://www.acceleratedschools.net/>

Achieve, Inc. (an organization of governors and business leaders): <http://www.achieve.org/>
Annenberg Institute on Educational Reform: <http://www.annenberginstitute.org/>
American Youth Policy Form: www.aypf.org/
Center for Educational Reform: <http://www.edreform.com/>
Center on Reinventing Public Education: <http://www.crpe.org/>
Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships: <http://web.jhu.edu/csos/>
Coalition for Essential Schools: <http://www.essentialschools.org/>
Comer School Development Program: <http://www.med.yale.edu/comer/>
Edison Schools: <http://www.edisonproject.com/>
National Charter School Research Project: <http://crpe.org/ncsrp/about.shtml/>
The National Center for Fair & Open Testing: <http://www.fairtest.org/>
New American Schools Network (merged with American Institutes for Research): <http://www.air.org/>
Public Education Network: <http://www.publiceducation.org/>
Success for All Foundation: <http://www.successfulforall.net/>

HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES

American Association of College and Universities: <http://www.aacu.org/>
American Association of Community Colleges: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>
Association for the Study of Higher Education: <http://www.ashe.ws/>
Association for Institutional Research: <http://www.airweb.org/>
Center for International Higher Education: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/
Community College Research Center: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/>

Community College Web: <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc/>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education: <http://www.eriche.org/>

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/index.html>

Historically Black Colleges and Universities: <http://edonline.com/cq/hbcu/>

League for Innovation in the Community College: <http://www.league.org/>

The Learning Alliance for Higher Education: <http://www.irhe.upenn.edu/>

National Center for Postsecondary Improvement: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/>

National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, Links: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/links.shtml>

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education: <http://www.highereducation.org/>

Review of Higher Education: http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/review_of_higher_education/

Society for College and University Planning: <http://www.scup.org/>

Student Assessment Resources: <http://www.uncc.edu/stuaffairs/sar/>

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: <http://www.wiche.edu/>

INTERNATIONAL MATERIALS

Center for International Higher Education: <http://bc.edu/cihe/>

Education Around the World: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/int_edworld.html

International Bureau of Education: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/>

International Comparisons for the 1997 Digest of Educational Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/digest97/d970006.html>

International Education Links:

<http://www.tc.edu/academic/intl-transcultural/BartlettLinks.html>

International Sociological Association: <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>

Sociology in Switzerland, including online journals: <http://socio.ch/>

Swedish Social Science Data Service: <http://www.ssd.gu.se/enghome.html>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/>

DATA

General Social Survey (GSS) is available online, and simple analyses may be conducted online at: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/>

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES): <http://www.nces.ed.gov/>

NCES Encyclopedia of Education Statistics: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/annuals/>

NCES Surveys: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/surveys>

Roper Center for Public Policy Research: <http://www.ropercneter.unconn.edu/>

School Report Cards: Go to your State Education Web site and search from there

Social Science Data on the Net from University of California San Diego: <http://ssdc.ucsd.edu/>

U.S. Census Bureau, Home Page: <http://www.census.gov/>

U. S. Census State, County, and Community data: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>

U. S. Census Statistical Abstract of the U.S.: www.census.gov/compendia/statab/

The preceding information is an updated list of Internet Resources originally compiled by Caroline Hodges Persell and Floyd M. Hammack and published in *Teaching Sociology of Education* (Published by The American Sociological Association, 2001).

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