

university as we know it. The only way to avoid surrender is to create conditions for a cooperative university in solidarity with its own global role.

Notes

- 1 This chapter has been translated by Peter Lownds of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The first version of this text was presented in Brasilia, on April 5, 2004, in the context of the official calendar of debates about university reform organized by the Brazilian minister of education, Tarso Genro. A much larger version of this text was published in: Rhoads, R. and Torres, C.A. (eds) (2006) *The university, state and markets – the political economy of globalization in the Americas*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 2 A chapter in the book *Pela Mão de Alice* (1994) Oporto: Afrontamento.

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Part 3

Inequalities and resistances

The Indian middle classes and educational advantage

Family strategies and practices

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Introduction

Disadvantage based on structural location, cultural marginalisation and institutional neglect is one side of the story of educational inequality in India that has received considerable scholarly attention. There is another, however, that is rarely brought centre stage in research and policy discourse. That is of social class and educational advantage. Few would contest that the middle class(es)¹ have reaped the major benefits from 'modern'/formal education in India, if one goes by their predominance in higher education, especially in elite institutions of professional and technical education, and disproportionate representation in 'high status' professions. A section of the Indian 'middle classes' is emerging in the global arena as a key player in the new economy and especially in sectors such as information technology, medicine, engineering and IT in the USA, UK and other West European countries. Despite their privileged position in education, these social classes have received negligible research attention.

In this chapter, I look at the middle classes in India to understand the 'micro practices of social reproduction' of these groups in relation to educational and social advantage (Ball, 2003: 3). I keep in mind that the middle class(es) is not a homogenous group and comprises class fractions that are likely to have responded differently to social and cultural changes and educational opportunities, including the process of globalisation. Scholars caution against generalising about the middle classes based on the projected 'success' of global Indians (Fernandes, 2007), who represent only a fraction of the Indian middle classes. I use Bourdieu's (1986, 1992) framework of capitals – economic, social, cultural and symbolic, and their 'fungibility' or convertibility to understand processes that underlie social/educational advantage, and attempt to do so specifically within the Indian context. The focus of the chapter will be on family strategies and educational privilege. I bring in Drury's (1993: 10) notion of 'family sponsorship', a term he uses to capture the diverse ways by which the family discharges its responsibilities towards ensuring that younger members are successful in life and uses all its resources to this end. 'The privileges of the older generation – family income, caste, education, father's occupation – are used to give the young the competitive advantage of a good education.' Like Ball (2003), I move beyond rational choice and 'culturalist' explanations of

educational decision-making and look more closely at how choices and strategies are influenced by family and kin, social networks, identity and interests, within changing socio-economic contexts. I argue that the upper tiers of the middle classes have actively participated in the education system from a position of social and economic dominance that has allowed them to shape the system and define what 'good education' is, as well the desirable cultural resources for success. A relational view of social class suggests that it is important to see how educational practices of the upper/middle classes are linked to the changing practices of other middle-class fractions and the larger implications that emerge, especially in the era of globalisation. While using a socio-historical perspective, I locate this chapter in the period beginning around the mid 1980s, when economic reforms were being debated and subsequently implemented in India. It is also important to stress that globalisation is mediated through national systems, as well as local cultures and institutions that are historically rooted. This is true for India, where the historical experience of colonialism, the policies of the post-independence developmental state, the social structure, particularly the caste system of graded inequality, and plural cultures present diverse contexts where different social classes (and the castes, communities and genders that intersect with them) are reading and responding to globalisation through changing institutions in diverse ways.

Private schools and English education: constructing the 'good' in education

The key route to elite upper middle class status in India has been the exclusive English medium 'public' (private) schools, which followed in the tradition of the British public schools. These are among schools to which upper middle class Indians have always sent their children, thereby setting trends and laying down standards of the 'good' in education. They were among the first to access modern education and occupations in the colonial period and belonged to the socially privileged upper castes that had a literate tradition and were part of the colonial elite. Writing about the 'educated elite' in the mid 1970s, Kamat (1985: 192) refers to the 'super elite', who were products of the 'elitist channel of education of expensive English-medium schools and select prestigious institutions of higher learning'. They became technocrats, management personnel, bureaucrats and defence personnel, occupying 'strategic positions in the economy and state machine' as well as the 'best-paid professional positions' including in multinational organisations. He goes on to add that, 'Because of their crucial positions in the power structure, and their educational and social status, they also set the norm in social thinking and society life for the lesser educated elite below' (Kamat, 1985: 190-192). The privileged position of English-medium education in India can be seen in the fact that, even in the 1970s, the majority of the recruits to the prestigious Indian Administrative Service (IAS) had attended English-medium schools (Saxena, 1981: 19, cited in Potter, 1996: 233). The cultural capital that was sought in recruits and was in all probability emphasised in these institutions was 'pleasant manners, facility in English, an attractive appearance and dress (preferably English style) and an authoritative manner' (Taub, 1969: 38, cited in Potter, 1996: 233). Kumar (1987:35) concludes that 'the supply of elite civil servants is a "reproductive" process inasmuch as a few educational institutions account for a sizeable proportion of the total number recruited.'

The 'new rich', businessmen and farmers from the middle castes who had benefited from the early policies of the independent Indian state encouraging agriculture and industry, were quick to see the role of 'public schools' in linking economic, symbolic and social capital.

Upadhy's (1987) study of the *Kammas* (a rich peasant caste in the state of Andhra Pradesh) describes the strategies of families who had come into wealth with the 'green revolution' and looked to education for building cultural and social capital and raising their standing in society what Bourdieu calls 'reconversion strategies'. She says that they were keenly aware of the need to develop networks and to be accepted by those who were influential in government and business circles. 'To interact effectively in such social circles fluency in English and a good education . . . are necessary.' She goes on to observe that.

Wealthy rural families often send their sons to private boarding schools from a very young age because that is the only way they can receive a good English medium education and hence the necessary 'cultural capital' to move into the urban upper middle class by joining white-collar executive occupations, the professions, or starting their own business.

Further, that 'wealth alone does not confer social status' but that 'social status can be acquired with wealth by giving a large dowry in marriage of daughters, sending sons to private engineering colleges . . .', including the establishing of private colleges (Upadhy, 1987: 68-69). Kumar (1987: 36) also points to similar strategies for social mobility and political dominance by the emerging rural elite in other states (Maharashtra and Karnataka), where 'private institutions on the "public school" model and professional colleges for medical and engineering education on a capitation fee basis' were being established. These studies only briefly capture some of the complex social processes linked to the strategies of the new upper middle classes that informed the demand for, and the rapid spread of, private educational schools and colleges as early as the 1960s.

The middle class, 'regional elite', educated in the 'middle-grade regional-medium high schools' and colleges, is Kamat's second tier of 'educational elite' in the 1970s. These were primarily state run/state supported, but also included privately managed institutions that offered better-quality education in the vernacular (regional languages). Those who accessed these schools, according to Kamat, were the not-so-affluent upper castes, 'with a literate tradition', who had to make do with middle-/lower-level salaried jobs. The other section was the relatively better off, newly educated middle/economically dominant lower castes in the cities and rural areas (1985: 193). For them, education was a path to middle-class jobs and social status. There were also those who graduated from 'low-grade, regional medium institutions' and came mainly from lower class/castes and who sought to 'acquire a smattering of education, and ultimately a degree, in the hope of landing some kind of white collar job or the other' (Kamat, 1985: 193).

Thus, until the late 1970s, apart from the upper middle classes (old and newly emerging), the middle classes were still enrolling their children in state schools or state-supported, privately managed schools. The middle class flight from state schools, a clear trend visible in urban India since the 1980s, was followed by the increasing desertion of these schools by the lower middle class in the next decade or so. Today, state schools are largely dominated by children from the poor, belonging mainly to 'lower' castes and minorities. This trend, beginning in the early 1980s, was pronounced in the 1990s, the period when policies of liberalisation were implemented in India, leading to the downsizing of the public sector and the coming of the new economy and insecure futures. Private schools are increasingly common in cities, small towns and the rural areas in response to the growing demand for good quality education, especially in English medium.² Behind the significant shift in enrolment from government to private schools lies the largely undocumented story of diverse strategies of middle/lower middle class families as

they struggle and attempt to secure their children's future for a world very different from their own. In the section that follows, I discuss some of the strategies and practices of these families, especially in the changing context of globalisation.

Family strategies, educational aspirations and schooling

Family aspirations for education must be viewed in relation to their mobility strategies in the changing context of globalisation and the role that they see education (of specific kinds/qualities) playing in this process. Drury (1993: 8) notes that 'Folk theories of making it' (referred to by Ogbu, 1980) 'are crucial because they help to shape individual aspirations and family mobility strategies in general, and ideas about the value of education in particular'. The ways in which different fractions of the middle classes strategise, make choices and translate these into practice are likely to vary in relation to how they have engaged with the 'private' in education, as well as how they are able to mobilise economic, cultural and social resources. The following discussion is based on recent studies on different middle-class fractions based on research in specific sites in India.

Choosing the 'right' school

Waldrop's (2004) study 'among upper-caste, upper-middle class professional *Punjabis*' in metropolitan Delhi gives us a glimpse of what mobility strategies and 'choice' of schools mean for metropolitan upper middle class parents. The fathers were senior government officers, professionals or worked for 'big' Indian and foreign companies. Parents expected their children,

boys and girls alike to pass through college, and preferably go for a university degree in England or the US. Because their English medium primary education in India is often combined with higher education abroad, they are global (meaning Western) and secular in their outlook, and travel abroad occasionally.

(Waldrop, 2004: 205)

Scrase and Scrase (2009: 11) observe that, 'Increasingly, financial capital is being used to purchase an English-medium private education and to send a child abroad for university education, and so to build one's stock of cultural capital.'

All the parents in Waldrop's schools listed the same five prestigious private schools in the city as their 'first choices' of schools to enrol their children. While choosing a school, parents took into account the reputation of the school, including its philosophy, and the opinion of family and friends, including the 'old school tie' (Waldrop, 2004: 208). Waldrop's interviews with the principals of the five schools showed that the screening procedures adopted by the institutions factored in considerations that privilege upper middle class parents: preference was given to children of former students, as well as those who had siblings in the school. Schools were keen that parents were well educated, had at least a bachelor's degree and shared the values of the school. The knowledge of English was of course an important criterion for admission (Waldrop, 2004: 211–212). These are criteria that effectively exclude other middle-class fractions. Waldrop concludes that private schools are 'homogenous social arenas', which enable the building of social capital. 'Friendships form between children of the same elite class and, in India, where networking plays important economic and social roles, having gone to

one of the prestigious private schools turns out to be an enormous social advantage in life' (Waldrop, 2004: 223).

Drury's study (1993) is located in the industrial city of Kanpur in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. In the early 1980s, Kanpur had a rapidly changing educational landscape characterised by "educational upgrading": the flight from Parishad (state/municipal) schools into private unregulated schools among the lower middle class, and the intense competition for the better English medium schools among the more wealthy' (Drury, 1993: 58). Business-owning families whose lack of the requisite cultural capital may have been a major deterrent to their entry into private English-medium schools a few decades earlier (when noses were turned up at the 'new rich') find that they are able to convert economic capital into cultural and social capital. This is the section of the middle class that is increasingly and confidently entering old middle-class institutions, willing to engage private tutors and whatever it takes to provide cultural and other inputs that are required for school success and social status. They were giving their sons private English-medium education, not so much for the skills that it provided, but as a 'fall back option'. More importantly, they appeared to be evaluating the changing context of business and, consequently, the need to interact with administrative and other officials, as well as to exercise authority within their own firm. Drury notes that they were in fact looking at education as a long-term investment – out of character with what was traditionally expected of such families (Drury, 1993: 100–102).

'White collar' employees in the Kanpur study were a section of middle-class parents who realised that choosing a school was a critical decision that had long-term consequences for higher education and careers of their children. The most sought after schools were the English-medium schools, particularly the 'convent schools' run by missionaries. As these schools were limited in number, there was intense competition for school places. Parents were forced to use 'the full range of their material and social resources, deploying them within the legitimate admission channels of the schools, but also in temporary and informal channels of their own making' (Drury, 1993: 122). Drury observes that a result of the 'good schools scramble in Kanpur' was the 'rise of bribery, *jugarbazi* (using insider contacts) and other forms of backstage manoeuvring to gain admissions outside the normal channels' (Drury, 1993: 76–78).

Though some parents thought that the Hindi-medium schools were academically better, Drury says,

It was the English language itself that counted most for these parents, for its prestige value as well as its practical usefulness. This held equally true for those who knew some English themselves and for the upwardly mobile parent who did not.

Parents say, 'English is the most portable language . . . With English you can impress people' (Drury, 1993: 76). They explore every opportunity to give their children the knowledge of the English language that they believe gives a child a crucial edge in school entry and success. More common are efforts to enrol children in private pre-schools (an expanding but unregulated sector) that admit children as early as age three. Parents say that they send children to pre-schools to get them 'used to the idea of school' and, more importantly, 'to prepare boys and girls for the "entrance examinations" to the kindergartens or first grade of good private schools'. Children are taught to take interviews/entrance examinations. Drury says 'Exam culture' begins at age three (1993: 90–91).

Donner's study (2005) focuses on the strategies of middle-class families in the metropolis of Calcutta in the context of the downsizing of the public sector and aspirations for opportunities

in the new economy of IT-related industries that are yet to come to the city. Parents are well aware that professional careers and government service jobs that were the basis of their middle-class identity are no longer guaranteed for their children. Their generation was educated in regional-medium schools – ‘the reputed Bengali medium neighbourhood school’ that reinforced pride in the language and culture of the ‘*Bhadralok*’ (the ‘old’ Bengali middle-class/upper-caste elite). However, they have switched to English-medium schooling for their children and are influenced by ‘the powerful imagery of new global workplaces and competition’ in their efforts to give their children an edge (Donner, 2005: 123).

As their children are the first generation to go to English-medium schools, parents in Donner’s study have had to learn the ropes in getting their children into a ‘good school’ (vaguely identified as one that has a ‘good reputation’/is ‘English-medium’) and ensuring success (2005: 125). Apart from standing in queues to get admission forms and filling them up, there are interviews to be faced by children for which knowledge of English is definitely advantageous. Unfamiliar with English and the requirements of schools, parents look to English-medium pre-schools/nurseries to prepare children for school interviews that they would face at age four. Once children secure admission to these schools, parents need to be familiar with school rhythms that include tests, examinations and other activities. Additional tutoring in school subjects, computer classes and other privately paid for inputs are becoming an essential part of the curriculum of school students (Donner, 2005: 125–129). The secondary stage of education is strategised with higher education/training in ‘technology-oriented courses’ in mind. Donner observes that ‘parents judge successful secondary education largely in terms of the marks necessary to enter IT or science-related courses’ (Donner, 2005: 125–129). What is most interesting in Donner’s study is the manner in which family resources are mobilised towards children’s success in school. This is dwelt upon in the next section.

Families in Calcutta and another city in West Bengal who were part of Scrase and Scrase’s study (2009) were ‘lower-ranking professionals, administrators, sales and service personnel’ in the state and private sector. They are lower middle class (but upper and middle caste) families who have experienced downward mobility as a result of a number of factors and ‘exacerbated by neoliberal reforms’ (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 11–12). Not surprisingly, they are extremely anxious about their children’s future and see proficiency in English as crucial for mobility as well as for social status. The quotes of two of their respondents speak volumes about what the inability to speak English entails: ‘English is not only important in getting a better job, it is everywhere in social interaction. If you can’t speak it, then you are a nobody’, and ‘English is an international language. You feel humiliated if you can’t speak English. People think you are dumb’ (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 131).

Scrase and Scrase’s (2009) respondents differ from Donner’s in that, among the former, ‘Many had struggled through education to obtain secure employment in the public sector, but now they increasingly feel that they are being squeezed out’ (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 11). They appear to be less well educated and are financially more constrained, both of which are likely to make the educational pathways for their children far more difficult. Getting their children into the ‘right school’ is not an easy task, as there is need for familiarity with the English language as well as the increasingly complex school landscape. They feel that children must be first admitted in the ‘right pre-schools’ in order to be accepted by a good, regular English-medium school (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 64).

The private English-medium schools and the numerous language coaching schools and tutoring centres that Scrase and Scrase observe in different neighbourhoods (mentioned by Donner as well) are emerging in response to the growing demand for proficiency in English.

However, the doubtful quality of these unregulated, privately run courses has been a major issue (2009: 141). This is of particular concern as families reported that they were cutting back on various kinds of expense but not on their children’s education, which they felt was ‘necessary expense’ and one ‘least likely to be rationed. It remains a high priority, and so families frequently forgo “luxuries” in order to ensure their educational needs are maintained’ (2009: 64).

Benei’s (2005) study in the town of Kohlapur in the state of Maharashtra suggests that decision-making in education among the middle classes is mediated by tensions between socio-economic interests (usually seen as based on ‘rational choice’) and identity (linguistic in this case). Although English education has ‘traditionally’ been availed of by the upper castes/upper middle classes, it cannot be assumed that middle-class parents will easily abandon instruction in the regional medium just because of globalisation and the opportunities that that are open to those with schooling in the English medium. She links the ambivalence that many of her respondents show towards English-medium education to the place of Marathi language in the identity of being ‘Maharashtrian’, ‘regional patriotism’ and nationalism. Thus, for instance, some parents may prefer that their children are enrolled in the state-supported private network of institutions (seen to be of better quality than state schools), where Marathi is the medium of instruction and English a subject of study. However, they would have no problem in encouraging their children to acquire computer skills, which they see as important (Benei, 2005: 151–153).

On the other hand, business communities were guided more by strategic economic interests. Thus, for instance, agri-business families who had made inroads into the global market well before the 1990s were already sending their children to English-medium schools (Benei, 2005: 144). I have already referred to Upadhyaya’s (1987) study, which pointed to efforts by business families to convert economic capital into cultural and symbolic capital through elite private schooling. Benei also makes the point that, for minorities for whom socio-religious identity is dominant, the shift to English-medium instruction is far easier than for those for whom Marathi language is one of the defining elements of identity. It is here that strategic choices are being made by middle-class families. Lower castes and especially the Scheduled Castes (former ‘untouchable’ castes) see English-medium schools as the route to higher socio-economic status and an escape from stigmatised identities (Benei, 2005: 157). In Kanpur, there were lower middle class families who chose private Hindi-medium schools for their children. The reasons were pragmatic: lower costs than English-medium schools, better facilities than the municipal (*Parishad*) schools and so on. The child’s gender also influenced the choice of school medium where it was observed that, ‘sons should have English medium education if possible, but private Hindi or *Parishad* Schools are adequate for daughters’ (Drury, 1993: 79).

Parenting practices and advantaged mothers

Parenting practices and especially the role of the mother are also linked to the social advantage that middle classes gain in education. This already finds mention in scholarship in Western societies, but in India, women’s literacy and education have been emphasised, mainly in relation to improving children’s education and health status. However, the fact that the educated mother, the norm in middle-class families, brings with her specific advantages for children and is seen as an important ‘mobility’ strategy especially in the period of globalisation, has received little attention.

For Bengali middle-class families, women’s education was seen to have a crucial role in modernising the ‘domestic sphere’ as well as socialisation of children into the culture of the

Bhadralok in the colonial period. In the post-independence period, Donner observes that women's education received emphasis, not so much for careers and employment, but because of the role of the mother in the education and 'proper upbringing of children'. In the contemporary context of labour-market restructuring, she finds that education is seen as a 'precondition for marriage and motherhood', because in a 'more competitive and less regulated economy the schooling of children requires new parenting skills' (Donner, 2005: 121). This has become necessary with the new demands imposed on mothers by English-medium schools, to which many parents educated in the vernacular are now sending their children. Thus, we see that mothers plan their entire day around the school routine and requirements such as dropping their children to school (neighbourhood Bengali-medium schools are now no longer accessed), providing support for homework and organising private tutoring classes. Extracurricular activities such as computer classes and art and writing competitions are also planned, so as to give the children inputs that are seen as important for school success. Immediate and extended family support is mobilised, as women look to their mothers-in-law and mothers where possible for support. The older generation of women come in to help organise the home so that the daughter's/daughter-in-law's energies can be focused on school success. Donner suggests that, among educated upper middle class Bengali professionals who have migrated, shared parenting is likely to be used as a crucial resource for children's education (2005: 130–134).

Mothers educated in English medium, usually graduates themselves, as in the case of upper middle/middle class families, are obviously at a greater advantage compared with those families where women are less educated and have had instruction in the regional medium/vernacular. Drury says that 'Biography is a resource often overlooked in educational research. A person's own experience with school affects not only the information he or she brings to bear on school decisions as a parent, but basic values and standards' (1993: 61). Hence, Kanpur middle-class respondents are able to recall wives'/mothers' greater involvement in their own or their children's school work. Drury rightly observes that higher levels of education among women in middle-class families today (compared with a generation ago) give them 'greater educational advantages than ever before', as

mothers are now well qualified to act as academic coaches and not simply as disciplinarians, at least up to the high school level. They work regularly with the children in the first years of school, making sure that they learn the fundamentals of reading, writing and calculating. Though it can be a time-consuming task, few of these women work outside the home . . . Even those who do work there is usually the advantage of being able to afford domestic help full or part time.

(Drury, 1993: 85–86)

Donner also draws attention to cultural and familial expectations of even highly educated women professionals. 'With the arrival of children . . . the privileged upper middle-class graduates who secure positions in teaching or as professionals are expected to leave or take up more flexible, part-time employment' (Donner, 2005: 122).

The 'mothering' role also includes 'creation of a favourable environment for study at home' defined as 'giving the children peace of mind' (Donner, 2005: 130). This is what lower middle class mothers, who are 'generally less well educated' and 'often feel that they cannot contribute a lot to English-medium schooling', focus their energies upon. They try and facilitate their children's study at home. 'Provide them with special meals, encourage them and remind them of their duties and organise their leisure time for them' (2005: 130). There are greater anxieties

in such homes and this leads, as mentioned earlier, to the early search for pre-schools and language courses and the eventual spiral for private schools that such demands set in motion.

Thus, for business and other fractions of the middle class, the educated mother (with proficiency in English) is increasingly becoming critical for the 'appropriate parenting' that is being seen as necessary for school success. Drury (1993: 169) refers to the fact that the 'middle class [sic] are rapidly accumulating cultural capital in the form of values, standards and practical knowledge of the school system'. A key channel through which this capital is being circulated is what he calls the "'educational dowry'" of brides, as families take greater care to select young women who can provide a good educational environment in the home'.

The middle classes and educational advantage: some concerns

The foregoing discussion has highlighted the complex educational strategies that middle classes in India are adopting to give their children an advantage in school and better life chances. While the location of families as middle-class fractions influences how they perceive linkages between schools and the labour (and marriage) market, as well as their ability to translate strategies into concrete practices, their decisions are also mediated by the institutional context of educational provision, socio-economic interests and diverse identities. What has emerged from the available studies is that middle-class fractions are differently advantaged in relation to children's education. For instance, while 'mothers' work' is increasingly factored into school success, social and educational advantage is likely to vary among middle-class families, depending upon the level of the mother's education and her proficiency in English.

The privileging of English-medium education and other inputs accessed from private schools and related markets in building what is seen as the required stock of cultural capital for school success has been highlighted. Fernandes (2007: 91–100) also points to new credentialising strategies by lower fractions of the middle classes in their attempts at upward mobility in the new economy, which include trying to acquire elements of the corporate culture, and 'symbolic capital' (manners, taste and style) being projected by 'hegemonic representations' of the metropolitan upper middle classes. These strategies and practices of middle-class fractions have led to the rapid growth of the unregulated private sector in education, which is exploiting the aspirations, anxieties and often helplessness of families belonging to the lower tiers of these classes.

The majority of Indian children continue to access elementary education in state schools. However, as mentioned, these are schools to which the middle-class and, increasingly, lower middle class families no longer send their children. Kumar notes that,

The growth of private schools gradually siphoned off children of the better of sections of urban society from state schools, leaving them to look after the children of poorer parents, who lacked both the status and the means to exercise any kind of influence on the schools' functioning.

(Kumar, 1996: 61)

What is of concern is that sections of the poorer/working classes are today seeking 'quality education' for their children in English-medium schools, and that the unregulated private sector sees this as a business opportunity. Advocacy networks for 'school choice' and 'private for-profit schools' for the poor are also making their presence felt in India (see Nambissan and Ball, forthcoming).

Policy and research in relation to educational inequality in India have been largely about addressing disadvantage and exclusion in education experienced by Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, socio-religious minorities, the poor and girls. However, educational dominance and advantage have received little attention. This chapter has sought to highlight the powerful influence that the middle classes (old upper middle class and more recently the new rich) have on the education system, particularly through their hold over elite, private, English-medium schooling. Equally important is the middle-class advantage that comes with cultural, economic and social capital acquired by families over generations, as well as the impact that 'representations' of the seemingly 'merit'-based success of the elite in the new economy have on the rising aspirations and demands of lower fractions of the middle classes. We know very little about the Indian middle classes, but their practices significantly impact the larger educational system and, hence, merit serious and urgent study.

Notes

- 1 Who are the middle classes? The much debated size and characteristics of this social group are matters beyond the scope of this chapter. It would suffice to say here that these are intermediate social groups that comprise a range of 'white-collar salaried occupations' from elite managerial and professional positions to lower-level, white-collar jobs and include technicians as well as owners of small business. (For debate/research on the Indian middle classes see Deshpande (2003), Fernandes (2007), Sridharan (2004) etc.)
- 2 According to recent statistics, 72.2 per cent of elementary school (Grades I-VIII) enrolment is in state/government schools, and 27.6 per cent is in privately managed schools. Of the latter, 9.4 per cent is in schools run by private, aided (by the state) managements, while 18.2 per cent is in private, unaided schools (NUEPA, 2009: 1-2). There is a growing unregulated private-school sector, whose size is still to be estimated.

One of the main reasons for the shift from state-run to privately managed schools is the perception that the former provide education of poor quality. One of the key elements by which 'good quality' education is defined in popular perception is instruction in English. The policy in India has been to provide education in the regional medium in state schools and to bring in English as a subject of study around Grade V or later. More recently, some state governments have brought in the study of English in the early primary years in response to the growing demand for learning of the language.

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Equality and social justice

The university as a site of struggle

Kathleen Lynch, Margaret Crean and Marie Moran¹

Introduction

Despite the proclaimed allegiance of most countries to principles of equality enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights, inequality is a pervasive feature of the global order. Yet, it is important not to be overwhelmed by the scale of global injustice. In every country, there is resistance to power and privilege, with people working at many levels to create more equal societies.

In this chapter, we will summarise the reasons why we came to establish Equality Studies in University College Dublin (UCD) almost twenty years ago as one way of responding to injustices (for a more detailed discussion, see Lynch, 1995) and why, in 2005, we further institutionalised an academic space for this work by forming a School of Social Justice and a network of scholars from across the University, who are committed to research and teaching in social justice, to establish the Egalitarian World Initiative (EWI) network (www.ewi.ie). We begin by explaining why universities have a particular remit to challenge injustice and why it is important for them to retain that responsibility in a market-led era in higher education.

The public interest role of the university

Over the last decade, universities have been transformed increasingly into powerful consumer-oriented corporate networks, whose public interest values have been seriously challenged (Davies *et al.*, 2006; Rutherford, 2005). Commercialisation has been normalised and granted moral legitimacy (Giroux, 2002), and its operational values and purposes have been encoded in the systems of all types of university (Dill and Soo, 2005; Steier, 2003). Moreover, both the pace and intensity of commercialisation have been exacerbated (Bok, 2003; Henkel, 1997). Yet, universities are quintessentially public interest institutions (Harkavy, 2006).

This is not to deny that universities have often failed to honour their public interest inheritance. They have been embedded with professional interests, often doing little to challenge the evident social closure practices within powerful professional groups (Hanlon,

2000). In their internal operations, they have been both hierarchical and patriarchal (Morley, 1999; Reay, 2004; Saunderson, 2002). Certainly, it is hard to argue that universities were models of enlightened organisational practices, even prior to the endorsement of neo-liberal values. Although there have been critical voices in higher education, challenging its pedagogy and its exclusivity, it is also true that they have been minority voices, often working against the tide even in the pre-neo-liberal days. This has also been our own experience in trying to establish Equality Studies in UCD (Lynch, 1995).

Yet the university remains a site of social struggle; it is one of the few institutions in society where there is an opportunity for people to think critically and to document that critique in writing and in teaching. It is a space where one can exercise intellectual autonomy, no matter how circumscribed that might be in an age of market-led research funding. The freedom from necessity enjoyed by academics affords them the space to write and to teach, so there is a choice whether or not to use that freedom to act.

Why Equality Studies – the educational case

The setting up of Equality Studies (1990) and of the School of Social Justice (2005) was strongly influenced by the fact that, while many faculties and fields of scholarship address issues of equality and social justice, and there are some subjects that address specific group-related inequalities, including disability studies and Women's Studies, there are very few schools or centres that focus all their research and teaching on equality issues in a holistic way.

Clearly, working to promote equality is not a 'profession' in any traditional sense of that term, yet people within professions and occupations, who are fighting for social justice and equality, and especially those working in civil society organisations, but also in statutory and multilateral agencies, need research support and education. There was and is a need to create a scholarly space for equality activists. The university seemed an ideal place to do this, although there was, and still is, opposition to the ideal, first because some define the university as a place simply to educate the elite, while others see education about equality as peripheral to the education of a new generation of market-led professionals. The experience we have in Equality Studies shows, however, that the desire to create a better world for all of humanity is strong among university staff and students,² even though this is not culturally supported in an age of commercialised education.

Why Equality Studies – the academic case

Universities and higher education institutions are not neutral agents in the field of academic discourse. Like all educational institutions, they work either for 'domestication or for freedom' (Freire, 1972). They can indulge in banking education that controls and domesticates thinking in the practice of regurgitation and regulation, or they can engage in critical education that challenges both teacher and student to engage in praxis. Universities are also projects in the making, places in which academics can either become agents of history or docile subjects (Davies *et al.*, 2006).

With the postmodernist turn and the rise of neo-liberal politics, it seemed intellectually vagrant and academically suicidal to establish a Centre for Equality Studies in University College Dublin in the late 1980s. Yet it was precisely these challenges that inspired us to act.

The normative intent of the word 'equality' sat very uneasily with the relativism of postmodern thinking. It smacked of that old authoritarianism that was associated with the certainties of grand narratives and with colonising cultural and political relations. Marxism's rejection of the normative approach to the analysis of oppression was a further disincentive to engage with normative questions. In establishing Equality Studies, we were mindful of these debates and of the binaries between the empirical and the normative embedded in social scientific analysis. We did not see the two as separate spheres and made a conscious decision to marry positivist research traditions with normative analysis in both the teaching and research of the Centre (Baker *et al.*, 2004; Lynch, 1995).

While the scientific, including the sociological, must be distinguished from the political (Martinelli, 2008), there is a need to create spaces that allow more than professional sociology or policy sociology (or the professional and policy-led dimensions of any disciplines) to thrive. There is a need to make spaces for the subaltern within disciplines (Burawoy, 2005) and between disciplines. There must be a space for academic knowledge to learn from experiential knowledge, with its complex positive and normative dimensions, especially in the study of injustices.

Questioning the binary between positive/normative is also necessary because so much research in the social sciences and cognate areas, including law and education, is profoundly unitary in terms of the normative and the positive (Sayer, 2006). When scholars write of 'discrimination' in law, 'exploitation' in sociology or 'marginalisation' in education, they are not just describing a phenomenon, they are also naming it as undesirable because it undermines the well-being of particular groups of people. They are making a normative judgement, as well as an empirical statement, even if they do not explicitly name their normative position. Taking a 'critical' approach to scholarship promotes a particular normative position and set of values that make the very critique of oppression and, indeed, the enterprise of much academic work meaningful.

Even for those who do not subscribe to critical perspectives and lay claim to independence, the normative is encoded in every publication and every lecture. Although objectivity is vital for scientific analysis and for choosing the appropriate instruments for research investigation, there is an implicit normative dimension to the knowledge act because there is no view from nowhere.

In establishing Equality Studies, the goal was to do things differently in the university, not just by linking the positive and the normative, but by democratising the social relations of education and of research production and exchange. Inspired by the Freirean (1972) methods of dialogical teaching and learning, and by feminist and disability scholarship's challenge to employ emancipatory research methods (Harding, 1991; Oliver, 1992), we tried to open up new types of space for both doing research and for teaching (Baker *et al.*, 2004; Lynch, 1999).

The rise of neo-liberal policies internationally in the post-1990 era, and the emergence of the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' in Ireland made social justice and equality issues appear anachronistic in an era glorifying choice and consumption. It remains a struggle academically and politically to survive, as the market model of funding bears down on our actions and planning. Yet the reality is there is no security for those who resist power, and in that sense the Equality Studies Centre will always be open to attack. The lessons of survival and resistance need to be relearned as university regimes change. There is no possibility of standing still.

Equality Studies and social justice – keeping a place in the university

Apple (2007: 168) claims that 'If you want to interrupt the right, study what they themselves did'. Indeed, the setting up of Equality Studies, and of the School of Social Justice, was inspired

not only by a Gramscian-informed understanding of the role of culture and ideology in the realisation of change, and by the Freirean recognition of education's lack of neutrality, but also by lessons learned from the success of Thatcherism in the UK. One of the major achievements of the Thatcher era was that, not only did it change the terms of political discourse in the UK, but it also successfully institutionalised neo-liberal beliefs and values in law and public policy.

While writing and teaching are the tools of the academic who wants to act for global justice, there is a need, as Harkavy (2006: 7) has observed, for 'strategic organisational innovation'. There is a need to institutionalise ideals in the structures of organisations, not just in their language or written policies, no matter how essential the latter may be. One of the reasons inequalities are often difficult to challenge is because they are institutionalised in the categories of every day life (Tilly, 1998). By the same logic, if egalitarian changes are to be instituted, they need to be institutionalised in categories, positions, processes and systems that are built on egalitarian and social justice principles. And there is a need to promote the understanding of how to operationalise these principles over time. It was with the understanding that institutions tend to outlive their incumbents that we set out to institutionalise a physical and intellectual space to promote research and teaching on equality and social justice. While it was necessary to have programmes of education and research in the short term, in the medium to long term it was necessary to have institutional status.

Much of the struggle over the last twenty years has been about achieving institutional status and recognition. It began by creating spaces and titles that only got recognition after they were created: an 'Equality Studies Working Group' in 1986 and an Equality Studies Centre in 1990. The Centre was never given departmental status, despite repeated requests, but it was accepted as an operating academic unit within the Arts Faculty. However, it had to report annually on its achievements to the Academic Council, something not required of recognised departments, and it was and is in a constant state of struggle for funding.³

All centres were informed they would be abolished with restructuring in 2005; Equality Studies refused to accept this and insisted (using the market rhetoric of the new regime) that the Equality Studies Centre was a 'brand name' and necessary for survival. We were allowed to keep the name on our letter-head, on the Web and for advertising because of its market utility.⁴

Equality Studies led the movement to create the School of Social Justice in 2005, with the support of Women's Studies. Although the School of Social Justice is one of the thirty-five statutorily recognised schools within new structures of the University, this does not mean that Equality Studies and the School are institutionally unassailable. However, it is more difficult to disestablish a School and its units than a programme of studies, or an isolated Centre, not least because the School is listed in university statutes.

In realising change, there is a need to identify the interstices that Habermas noted, those places between spaces that allow for change and resistances to occur at different times. Times of transition within institutions are times that offer opportunities for resistance, for finding spaces to create new initiatives. While times of transition are also times of social closure, re-regulation and control, when those in power set out the terms of change and try to control its scope and impact, the transition itself creates instabilities. New orders are created, and spaces are opened up to establish new programmes and initiatives, if there are the resources to fight for these at the time. There is a very real sense in which these times of transition involve what Gramsci defined as 'wars of position'.

In establishing both Equality Studies in the late 1980s and the School of Social Justice and the EWI in the mid 2000s, we used the instability of transitions, in each case heralded by the

arrival of new executive presidents in UCD, to propose changes in courses, programmes and activities in the University.⁵ In all cases, the proposals were met with oppositions and counter-resistances, not necessarily from central management, who were less concerned with their ideologies than with their likelihood of success, but by colleagues in other departments and schools, who mounted resistance on ideological grounds (dislike of all things critical or socially engaged) or for fear that the programmes we offered might jeopardise their own subject or department. There is a lengthy correspondence in our files and emails on these challenges, but being willing to stay the course and having a clear vision as to our role and purpose proved to be crucial.

The mind is a site of struggle, and control of the mind is central to all campaigns (Castells, 2000). It is not surprising therefore that managing consciousness has been a deliberate project of powerful capitalist interests over the last thirty years, both inside and outside the academy (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey, 2005). While academics can exercise some influence (more than they think) from within the academy in framing minds and public consciousness, the media remain a hugely powerful, ideological force outside the university, with the capacity to either undermine or support critical thinking. The media is also a space over which academics generally have little control.

Throughout the development of Equality Studies, we were aware of the political reality that truth is increasingly what the media define as true. The media is a space that academics who think critically and differently have to engage with in order to survive. By 2005, when the most recent wave of changes occurred, and the university moved into restructuring along neo-liberal lines, there was a sustained attempt to force Equality Studies to integrate with (in our view to be subsumed by) bigger departments in the College of Human Sciences. At this time, we had a well-established reputation, not only for research and teaching but also for engaging with civil society and statutory agencies, both nationally and internationally. Our alumni and supporters included a number of well-known activists and commentators. Both the alumni and others who believed in our work lent their support to our position on a number of occasions, both privately and in public. An unsolicited opinion piece in the leading Irish broadsheet, *The Irish Times*, praising our work was the clearest example of this in September 2005. The opinion writer pointed out in his column that he had been asked to come out against Equality Studies by a staff member from UCD; this undermined those who opposed us internally, as they appeared 'disloyal' to the university by writing secretly to the press about internal UCD matters. There was some negative media analysis as well in more conservative newspapers, although not in 2005 at the time of most restructuring. *The Irish Daily Mail* (11 August 2008) (a UK subsidiary) had a full-page piece referring to Equality Studies, Women's Studies and Sociology as 'Queer Studies'. It tried to demonise the subjects by feeding into public homophobia about Queer Studies.

Even though we did not have to mount a media campaign to retain Equality Studies per se in 2005, we were prepared to do this. As almost all of us had been engaged on issues at different times in the national media, this not only gave us social capital through media networks, but symbolic capital within the university; we were known to be media aware. Moreover, closing down the only Equality Studies Centre in the country would not look good for the University (so the fear of bad press was a motive to allow us continue), and, as we were a small centre by UCD standards, we were not a major target for mergers by the new administration.

Challenges – disciplinary issues

Equality Studies experienced the same difficulties that Women's Studies, Disability Studies and all interdisciplinary fields experience: it was and is not seen to be 'pure' scholarship; it is tainted

by diversity⁶ and tolerated on the boundaries of the academy. Although there is recognition internationally of the central importance of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research (Nowotny *et al.*, 2001), there is little status attached to such new areas of scholarship in most established universities.⁷ Fields of study are indeed allowed to emerge, but the core activities of the university centre around 'established disciplines'. The history of our experience in this respect is salutary.

The established faculties of the university (which were assimilated into colleges in 2005) did not regard interdisciplinary programmes as 'pure' enough in academic terms to house them when they were first established, so Equality Studies (and other similar groups including Disability Studies) was faculty-homeless for several years, until an Interdisciplinary Faculty was established in 2003. In the autumn of 2004, a new president was appointed, and it was clear from the outset that he and his new 'team' were going to 'rationalise' (a euphemism for close down) a number of faculties and schools. Interdisciplinary Studies was closed, and Equality Studies was located within the College of Human Sciences. In all, over ninety departments in the University were reduced to thirty-five schools. There was considerable pressure on Equality Studies to join established departments at this time. Knowing that we would be minor players in large schools, we resisted this pressure and proposed to establish a School of Social Justice. This idea was accepted in principle after we made a strong written case to the president as to the importance of social justice in the history and future of the University and fought for the school at numerous boards. In addition, we used the University's own ideology to challenge our closure;⁸ it was an exercise in legitimation (Thompson, 1990). However, Women's Studies was the only centre that agreed to join the new School of Social Justice. The Disability Studies Centre joined Psychology, and the Development Studies Centre joined Politics, although we had asked them to join Social Justice.⁹ In each case, the titles of the new schools did not reflect the merger. Politics was renamed as the School of Politics and International Relations, and Psychology retained its name, with no mention of Disability Studies.

In the neo-liberal age, fear plays a major role in controlling and regulating academic staff (Boden and Epstein, 2006). Moreover, because academics are preoccupied on a daily basis with anxieties about productivity within an intense system of surveillance, they disavow their own docility (Davies *et al.*, 2006). And fear was a major reason why academic staff did not want to join Social Justice, not just because it was seen to be a school without an 'established' disciplinary centre, but because colleagues believed that such a school would be closed down in time. However, fear was not the only motivation. Some of those we invited to join us made it clear that they did not wish to be part of a school based on the principle of social justice. The division between the normative and the positive was a priority value in the minds of many colleagues; Equality Studies and Social Justice had broken a taboo by aligning the normative and the positive, and this continued to be unacceptable.¹⁰

Challenges – academic capitalism

Although academic life has always been highly individualised and driven by personal interests and ambitions, it was not always as driven by academic capitalism as it is currently (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Even not-for-profit higher education programmes have been forced to accommodate market activity in recent years. And under the globalised (and highly unscientific) league table regimes promoted by commercial interests, universities do not determine the conditions of their own appraisal (Marginson, 2006). Educational programmes that service low-income communities, or research that is of value at national level, do not feature on university

rankings. And as the experience of Cultural Studies in Birmingham (Rutherford, 2005) and multidisciplinary programmes and Women's Studies in many countries show, what is not counted can be closed. There is a serious threat to critical thought posed by marketised higher educational system (Webster, 2004); it is a challenge Equality Studies has to confront. However, history is there to be made; it is not pre-given. Being aware of the dangers and challenges facing the project is a key factor in survival and progression.

Facing up to regulation and counting

By definition, the Equality Studies Centre and the School of Social Justice have to be socially engaged. Their work has a public dimension in terms of research partnerships and in terms of researching with and educating those who work in social movements for social justice. Yet, if academic productivity is being measured by a narrowly construed bibliometric test, public service engagement is precluded. The devaluing of dialogue with persons and bodies other than academics effectively privatises learning among those who are paid-up members of the academic community, whether as students or academics. The lack of dialogue with publics, apart from one's peers, also forecloses the opportunity to have hypotheses tested or challenged from an experiential standpoint. It limits the opportunities for learning that occur when there is a dialogue between experiential and theoretical knowledge.

There is a strange irony in a narrowly framed peer review system focused on bibliometric measurement as it provides disincentives to challenge ill-informed absolutisms and orthodoxies. In effect, there is no incentive to publicly dissent or engage within the very institutions that are charged with the task of dissent and engagement. The reward system of academic life means that the 'good' academic is encouraged to become a locally silent academic in their own country, silent in the public sphere and silent by virtue of dialoguing only with academic peers outside one's own country. This silencing is also a product of the positive/normative split and the pressure on academics to eschew normative values if they are to demonstrate their credibility as legitimate scientists. Challenging the silencing is part of the struggle.

Conclusion

The intellectual independence of the university is always at risk, given its reliance on external funding. Yet the history of the university grants it the capability to reclaim its own independence (Delanty, 2001).

Rather than being bewildered and overwhelmed by neo-liberal rhetoric we need to re-engage and re-invent the university as a place of scholarly work, grounded in the principles of democracy and equality that are at the heart of the public education tradition (Harkavy, 2006). And we need to re-emerge from the careerism and docility that are so much a feature of the neo-liberal university to do this (Davies *et al.*, 2006). All of this means that we must reassess our position as critical intellectuals and face up to the limitations of the positive-normative divide (Sayer, 2006), especially in the analysis of injustices.

We must also allow space for the subaltern to emerge, both across and within disciplines, so that the professional aspects of disciplines do not blind us to the need for engagement with the most significant issues of our time (Burroway, 2004). Creating space in the university for scholarship on equality and social justice demands that we learn through dialogue with experiential knowledge holders. Those with experiential knowledge of injustice have much to

teach us as theorists and researchers, and through education and research the university can in turn re-resource activists. Engaging in a dialogue means democratising the social relations of teaching, learning and exchange. While the project is a long-term one, and the revolution is forever in process, it is worth the challenge.

Notes

- 1 This paper is really a collective effort. We would not have had the time to write it without the support and care of our colleagues in the Equality Studies Centre. Sincere thanks to John Baker, Sara Cantillon, Judy Walsh, Pauline Faughnan, Maureen Lyons, Elizabeth Hassell and Phyllis Murphy.
- 2 A call to colleagues in 2004 to create a university network committed to research and teaching on social justice led to a positive response from almost a hundred academics across all colleges of the university and the setting up of the EWI (www.ucd.ie/ewi). Since 2005, we have been offering undergraduate students across the University modules on various social justice themes, and all of these courses are well subscribed. We are planning to have a full undergraduate degree in Social Justice within the next 3–5 years.
- 3 While we are not as yet required to be entirely self-financing (although this is quite likely in the future, given marketisation) we are, and have been, subjected to constant financial monitoring. We have survived because our student intake has been good. One reason intake is good is because we do much of our teaching in the late afternoon and evening, to facilitate part-time Masters and PhD students. We also give a lot of attention to the quality of our teaching, engaging in regular dialogue with students. Our survival was also greatly enhanced by a bequest from a philanthropist, Atlantic Philanthropies, first in the late 1990s when they gave us funding to write *Equality: from theory to action* (Baker *et al.*, 2004), and secondly when they funded a chair in Equality Studies in 2003. This funding gave us legitimacy as well as money.
- 4 We had been quite successful in bringing in students and getting research funding; our marketability was part of our survival strategy.
- 5 We proposed new courses and programmes; first an M.Sc. and Graduate Diploma in Equality Studies, in the late 1980s and 1990, which naturally evolved to a Ph.D., a Certificate programme, in 1994, and most recently, in 2005, undergraduate optional courses available to all university students in Equality Studies, Women's Studies and Social Justice. We also established new structures (working groups in 1987, centres in 1990 and networks, the EWI in 2005).
- 6 There are 5.5 full-time permanent academics and researchers in Equality Studies, representing five different fields of study: economics, law, political philosophy, sociology and education. There is also a part-time permanent post held by the Outreach Co-ordinator and a range of Marie Curie Fellows, Researchers and Post-Doctoral Fellows whose positions are funded by research grants.
- 7 At a college meeting in spring 2008, the vice-president for research (who has a medical background) at UCD referred to the non-traditional subjects in the university as 'funny degrees'.
- 8 The UCD logo is '*Ad Astra Coelorum Féinne*', which means literally 'reaching for excellence (the stars) and working for the entire community'.
- 9 While a few individual staff from former centres and departments did want to join Social Justice, they were strongly encouraged by the university to accept the majority decision.
- 10 The place where this was forcibly articulated was at a meeting two colleagues and the first author were called to attend on 19 July 2005. The meeting was called on the pretext that it was to help us work out a framework for developing the EWI network within the College. It turned out to be an ad hoc meeting, chaired by the head of the College of Human Sciences and attended by three professors and some lecturers, all of whom made it clear they were opposed to the work in the EWI and the new School of Social Justice. We were informed that we were 'politicising the university' and 'bringing it into disrepute'. Those present had copies of letters in hand that they had sent to the senior management of the University, making formal complaints, but we were not allowed to see them.

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Educational organizations and gender in times of uncertainty

Jill Blackmore

In this chapter I identify and elaborate, from a feminist perspective, upon the theoretical shifts and key concepts that inform sociological analyses of gender and educational organizations.

Gender inequalities are embedded in the multi-dimensional structure of relationships between women and men, which, as the modern sociology of gender shows, operates at every level of experience, from economic arrangements, culture and the state to interpersonal relationships and individual emotions.

(Connell, 2005: 1801)

Even naming this a sociology of gender and organizations is problematic. Many sociologists consider gender as a key sociological concept, but not necessarily from a feminist perspective. Feminism is a multidisciplinary, transnational movement that 'focuses on the relationship between social movements, political action and social inequalities' (Arnot, 2002: 3) and on the everyday experiences of women and girls and how they translate into social and structural 'ruling relations' (Smith, 1988). Feminism takes on multiple trajectories and imperatives in different cultural contexts, although with familial resemblances, most particularly the shared objective of equality for women and girls. Education as a primary institution of individual and collective mobility and social change, but also social and economic reproduction, has long been a focus of feminist theory and activism. So a feminist sociology needs to address this complexity of feminist sociological 'encounters' with gender and organizations.

Gendering organizations

Within the field of sociology of education there are multiple perspectives about how gender is understood in relation to organizations, both informing but also informed by feminist theories and activism. Each perspective, itself a product of particular historical conditions, draws on particular notions of the relationships between structures, agency and social change.

Organizations as gender neutral

Sociologists regard education and the family as the primary socialization institutions. A dominant perspective embedded in sociology, characterized by large-scale statistical analyses, is that gender is a 'fixed category', one of multiple input or output factors such as class, race and ethnicity that can be 'controlled' statistically to determine their 'effects' in causal relationships; for example, controlling for class and race to measure the differential effects of gender on educational achievement. Within this frame, organizations such as schools and universities tend to be treated as culturally and gender neutral 'black boxes'. The pedagogical frame is developmental and psychological, premised upon the notion of the formation of the unitary individual who emerges fully formed. Power works through hierarchy and structures, and knowledge derives out of well-defined Enlightenment disciplines that privilege 'hard' science over the 'soft' humanities, with an implicit masculine/feminine binary.

Well into the twentieth century, organizations were seen to have functional relationships in relation to the wider economy and society, responding to external social, economic and political pressures. Human relations and marketing were marginal concerns of executives. Education remained a relatively distinctive field of policy, practice and professionalism, offering secure careers for men and later women. Schools and universities were viewed as discrete units, tightly or loosely coupled, respectively, to centralist and hierarchical government bureaucracies with a strong public service orientation. Wider socio-economic contexts tended to be either ignored or treated as backdrops. Class was equated to occupational status, and women's class was linked to a male relative. Within the reproductive framework of socialization into sex roles, the gender division of labour in educational organizations in which men lead and women teach is 'normalized' because it replicates the 'natural' gender division of labour within the family and society. Gender difference is either equated to biologically determined sex- and gender-specific psychological attributes, or gender is ignored altogether through the universalizing discourse of the neutered 'individual'. Such perspectives provide little capacity to understand social, organizational or gender change.

This notion of organizations as gender neutral meant gender emerged analytically as either an individual psychological attribute or a statistical variable explaining differential outcomes. It continues in much contemporary school effects, school improvement and school effectiveness literature. Gender neutrality is embedded in the corporate and human resource management literature of the new public administration, which penetrated public services during the 1990s, supported by human capital theory, which underpins contemporary education policy. Discourses of school choice and lifelong learning, for example, presume individuals are self-maximizing autonomous choosers, ignoring how 'human capital' is embodied and mobilized within unequal power relations (Leathwood and Francis, 2006). Women quickly find out in the workplace that they are less rewarded than men for equivalent if not greater educational achievement. Equal opportunity policies within this frame seek, through procedural justice, to gain for women and girls equal access to male-dominated organizations. The under-representation of women in leadership is treated as an issue of workplace planning and structural barriers, the lack of a pool of eligible women, or women's lack of skills or career aspirations. Upskilling women is the solution. The focus of this perspective is on problem solving from within the frame of the status quo of organizations, whether bureaucratic or corporate.

The sociocultural turn

The new sociology of education informed by and informing critical and feminist theory emerged from the social movements of the 1970s. Sociocultural perspectives argue that knowledge,

organizations and gender are socially constructed. Gender identity is therefore not physically or epistemologically predetermined, thus moving beyond the biological determinism of sex role and socialization theory. From this perspective, gender, as race in critical race theory, is no longer 'fixed', but is constitutive of identity, wider societal relations and organizational life (Ladson Billings, 2004). Organizational structures, knowledges and practices, are socially constructed in ways that, because of historical power inequalities, disadvantage most women and advantage most men. This shift from individual and structural factors to sociocultural accounts of organizations focuses on culture, collective identity, values and the symbolic. Notions of organizational culture inform change theory and explain why policies do not produce the effects intended. But culture within conventional educational administration is presumed to be unitary and homogenous, encapsulated in the notion of 'the way we do things around here', something that could be measured, created, manipulated and managed by leaders and aligned with organizational ends (Blackmore, 1999). Gender, race and other forms of difference are ignored, marginalized or to be assimilated.

Feminist sociocultural theories of organization arose out of the 1980s' politics of identity, when marginalized groups sought recognition. Schools and universities are seen to be sites of collective and individual identity formation and contested cultural meaning, with dominant and subjugated knowledges. Earlier critiques link patriarchy to capitalism and analysed how bureaucracies subjugated women's knowledge and experience. Feminist standpoint theory (Smith, 1988) continues to analyse, from the position of women, the unequal 'ruling relations' of power/knowledge/gender embedded in organizational practices, texts and structures, as indicated by who does what work, how it is valued and who gets rewarded. This analytical focus on the sociocultural explains the ongoing resistance of men *and* of organizational practices to gender equity reform, because gender works through the relationships, symbols, values and artefacts of organizational life. It explains the real and symbolic power of masculinist cultures and images of leadership and the ongoing endurance of particular notions of leadership (Blackmore, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1987). The notion of dominant, marginalized or subordinate subcultures explains why women feel excluded, for example, from leadership, but also recognizes that there are spaces of resistance to the dominant by subcultures of students, women and ethnic/linguistic minorities.

Sociocultural accounts focus on the social relations of gender explicated by Connell (1987), who argues that, in each site, there are patterns of social relations, structures and practices that are gendered and 'systematically important' to organizations.

Compact formal organizations like schools perhaps have particularly clear *gender regimes*, but others have them too. Diffuse institutions like markets, large and sprawling ones like the state, and informal milieux like street corner peer-group life also are structures in terms of gender and can be characterised by their gender regimes.

(Connell, 1987: 120)

Thus different masculinities and femininities are constituted in relation to each other – hegemonic masculinities (managerial, working class) maintain their hegemonic power in particular organizational contexts by positioning as weaker and lesser other masculinities (homosexual) and all femininities (emphasized, butch . . .). Hegemonic masculinities are mobilized, for example, around notions of the rational, unemotional and strong leader, while depicting women leaders as irrational, emotional and lacking in the capacity to make hard decisions. This institutionalized gender regime within schools and universities is reinforced by

the *gender order* of society and other institutional practices, including the family, religion and the state (Connell, 1987: 137–139).

Understanding organizations as contested cultures and products of the historical legacy of male heterosexual privilege provides more nuanced understandings about the failure of imposed organizational reforms, including gender equity. It explains how resistance to gender reform by many men and some women derives from their personal and collective investments in particular gender identities that provide a secure sense of self and that benefit from the existing gender regime. For example, men are usually advantaged in the workplace by women's part-time work in the caring professions and the devaluing of unpaid domestic labour. A sociocultural perspective recognizes that multiple versions of organizational life and subjugated knowledges exist that differ from the dominant corporate story and prescriptive gender scripts. Equity policies from this frame seek to make the cultures of educational organizations more inclusive, not only through greater representation of women but also by changing practices and values.

Postmodern organizational complexity and gender subjectivities

The context of educational organizations during the 1990s was one of rapid and radical change, restructuring, neo-liberal ideologies and a growing sense of precarious employment. The political and epistemological context was that of the politics of difference which highlighted the intersectionality of difference – gender, race, class and ethnicity – as Black feminists challenged White middle-class feminists' privileging of gender (Mirza, 1993). Post-structuralism posits the view that gender, as race and class, is part of a wider set of discursive relations that position individuals in particular ways within specific contexts. The self is here constituted as multiple subjectivities, in a constant state of being and becoming. Contradiction, dissonance and ambiguity are the norm both within oneself, but also within organizations and life in general. Notions of 'positionality' and 'subjectivity' foreground the complexity, for example, of being female, Black and an educational leader (Davies and Harré, 2000). The unitary developmental subject of modernist educational discourses is thus supplanted by forms of subjectivity that are fluid and hybrid, in a state of ongoing production through biography inflected by race, class, gender, culture and sexuality (McLeod and Yates, 2006).

Educational organizations are therefore seen to be part of a process of subjectification that provides both constraints and possibilities, as no outcomes are closed. Schools, universities and other educational organizations such as technical institutes and workplace training are sites where gender and other forms of difference are (re)constituted through multiple, often contradictory discourses (women are now equal but individual women do not feel that, girls' success and boys' underachievement) and texts (assessment, curriculum, promotion, equal opportunity policies) that mediate social relations (Skelton and Francis, 2004). Organizational life is seen to be open to flows of meaning, bringing a sense of ambiguity, ambivalence and uncertainty. How difference works in and through organizations is highly 'situated', with institutional and cross-sectoral differences. Gendered subjectivities are constantly remade through discourse that positions individuals differentially. Sometimes race, sometimes language and sometimes gender are foregrounded. Power works in organizations, from this perspective, in a decentred and diffuse manner through discourse, in ways that are both productive and oppressive of particular gendered subjectivities. Thus, women in leadership can feel simultaneously powerful and powerless. Post-structuralist perspectives see women and girls having agency owing to their capacity to mobilize particular discourses to their own benefit, while not ignoring their vulnerability and 'othering' due to wider power/knowledge relations. Here organizational change is depicted as

unpredictable, chaotic and multifaceted. It also means that individual and group narratives of organizational life are always partial, as is the corporate meta-narrative produced through policy, strategic plans and mission statements.

Post-structuralist analyses of organizations also highlight the discursive and performative aspects of organizational life arising in the context of devolved modes of governance, marketization and managerialism (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007). They explore how the 'performative' is reworking the social relations of gender to (re)produce new entrepreneurial, transnational masculinities and self-managing worker-identities (Connell, 2005). Critical perspectives focus on the multiple representation of the body and how organizations are sites of competing sexualities, thus critiquing organizational theory for its dominant (white) heterosexuality (Young and Sklar, 2003).

Gendered organizations thus do not 'exist' as such; rather they are performed moment by moment through the communicative practices of their members. While such performances usually do not unfold capriciously, but rather, follow well-established scripts, it is still only in the doing – the performing – that such scripts are produced, reproduced, resisted, and transformed.

(Ascraft and Mumby, 2004: 116)

Power is decentred and diffuse as it works through discourse. And feminists themselves can produce normative policy discourses that are counterproductive. For example, essentializing discourses about women's styles of leadership denies political, racial, ethnic or linguistic differences among women (Reay and Ball, 2000). Backlash discourses about recuperative masculinities meanwhile position women as advantaged (Lingard, 2003). Furthermore, studies of educational restructuring and organizational reform identify how embedded practices (redeployment, restructuring, outsourcing, downsizing) produce structural backlash (Blackmore, 1999). The message here is that 'gender inequalities can be subtle, elusive, and normalized via everyday practices such as networking and the construction of identities and opportunities' (Husu and Morley, 2000: 2).

Diversity and difference: hybridity and boundaryless organizations

Post-colonialism now troubles West-centric ways of thinking post 9/11. The global context is one of rapid flows of people, goods, ideas, money and images, producing greater cultural diversity in student populations, a diversity not represented in the dominant 'whiteness' of the education workforce and leadership. The context is of heightened uncertainty, high risk and low trust organizations, with schools and universities constantly restructuring to address market forces. Post-colonial theory views educational organizations within Western colonizing and settler nation-states (UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand) and post-colonial nation-states (e.g. India, Mexico) as sites reconstituting, through the processes of assimilation/internationalization/entrepreneurialism, neo-colonial relations in ways that simultaneously protect/reinvent/destroy traditional cultures. Neo-colonialism is also linked to the commodification of educational goods and services through the processes of westernization/internationalization, both desired and resisted in post-colonial states and by international students, such as the universalizing, seemingly neutral curriculum of the International Baccalaureate. Post-colonial theorists interrogate the Eurocentrism and whiteness embedded in organizational theory and promoted by transnational management experts in terms of theories of change, motivation

and values. They unpack the discourses that view non-Whites as 'the other' (Prasad and Prasad, 2002). Meanwhile, diasporic communities in Western nation-states seek to transplant/reinvent/negotiate traditional cultures locally, mobilizing through neo-liberal policies of privatization and school choice a trend towards institutionalizing difference (gender, class, religion, ethnicity) through schooling.

These processes of internationalization and entrepreneurialism are also gendered. On the one hand, sociologists focus on the hybridity of culture and cosmopolitan identities in the context of multiple organizational formations and public/private mixes, and in so doing frequently assume the gender-neutral subject (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000). On the other hand, women are seen to carry culture symbolically in their daily lives and transnationally, as well as within and between educational organizations (Mabokela, 2007). Protecting women is readily equated to protecting tradition and culture, as if gender and culture are fixed. Certainly, for many indigenous and ethnic minority women in White-dominated educational organizations, gender is less significant relative to race, ethnicity or religion (Oplaka and Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). Such women leading educational organizations are positioned within multiple contradictions: due to their lack of whiteness in White-dominated environments and the expectation that they represent traditional culture, or that they 'bridge' two cultures between White and 'the other', between school and community (Fitzgerald, 2006). Indigenous feminists point to how Western notions of leadership fail to address the mutuality of two-way learning or connectedness to land, and how organizational structures refuse to provide more than symbolic partnerships with community (Ah Nee-Benham, 2002; Battiste, 2005). Muslim feminists point to how religion and gender interplay to maintain traditional masculinities within diasporic communities, and highlight the complexities for women leaders in religious states, universities and schools where faith is central to education (Shah, 2006). For women in more traditional societies, gender dominates (Luke, 2001). For Western feminists, there is also a warning. The 'civilising overtones . . . selfless and disinterested project of Western (neo)colonialism' is seen to be about 'rescuing women from particular cultural practices' with an assumed moral and cultural superiority (Prasad and Prasad, 2002).

Post-colonialist approaches of organizations therefore unpack the intersecting and contradictory but changing social relations of religion, culture, gender, race and class and how they '(re)constitute the binaries of good/evil, black/white, active/passive, centre/margins, masculine/feminine, scientific/superstitious, and secular/religious' in patterned ways that produce gender inequality (Prasad, 2002: 124).

Gender is constitutive of organization; it is omnipresent, defining feature of collective human activity, regardless of whether the activity appears to be about gender . . . the gendering of organization involves a struggle over meaning, identity and difference . . . [and] such struggles reproduce social realities that privilege certain interests.

(Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004: xv)

Contemporary issues

Any analysis of educational organizations therefore needs to consider multiple dimensions to understand the interplay of the unequal social relations of power/knowledge that articulate through context, discourse and practice: the spatial (who gets to use what spaces), temporal (how time is used), material (distribution of resources), symbolic (representations of what is

valued), semiotic (language and vocabulary mobilized), cultural (narratives about who we are), aesthetic (what constitutes beauty) and the technological (who benefits). But a feminist analysis foregrounds particular issues in any organizational analysis, as indicated below.

Dualisms

Feminist perspectives explore how Enlightenment dualisms between mind/body, rational/emotional, active/passive, science/humanities and masculine/feminine continue to be reinvented in contemporary organizations through the changing social relations of gender, despite shifts in discourses and theories of gender and organizations. Organizations embody social relations, producing gendered, racialized and sexualized distinctions. The body and discourse are inseparable, as the body incorporates the rules of organizations, in terms of how individuals dress, relate, use space and time and mobilize particular gender subjectivities. Leadership foregrounds the body in terms of its sexuality, the performative aspects of organizations, as well as self-presentation. The imagery of the well-groomed (White heterosexual) male (and now female) leader who 'fits' the organizational image remains the norm against which all contenders are measured. The body is therefore central to any analysis of the disciplinary power of organizations over individuals (e.g. lesbian leaders) and populations (disabled), and how such power produces particular institutionalized and performative practices.

Furthermore, feminists have long rejected any emotional/rational distinction, arguing that leadership and teaching demand emotions such as compassion in order for decision-makers and professionals to be fully human and indeed rational. Critical management and feminist organizational theory views organizations as emotional arenas, where rapid and radical change produces the full range of emotions: grief, anger, greed, envy, frustration, fear and anxiety (Fineman, 2000). Mainstream educational theory no longer treats emotions as pathologies, feminized and something to be eradicated, having recognized the reliance in knowledge-based economies on 'human' capital and on individual and collective emotional investment(s) and social relations that oil productivity. Marketing and human relations are central executive areas of control. Emotional literacy or intelligence is now presented as another skill for leaders to acquire. Now, emotional labour and educators' passion for teaching and research are being depoliticized (Boler, 1999) and co-opted through discourses of quality by management for organizational ends (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007; Morley, 2003). But gendered emotion scripts prescribe who does what types of emotional management and how emotional displays such as crying or anger are judged differently.

Finally, educational organizations are also historically constructed around knowledge hierarchies that privilege particular versions of science over the humanities and the social, whether in school subjects or research (Brooks and MacKinnon, 2001). These gendered knowledge hierarchies continue to be reinvented through the disciplinary technologies of accountability that determine what counts, what gets counted, what gets taught and assessed, and who benefits (Morley 2003).

Context

Gender has largely been addressed in mainstream sociologies of education as an individual or group characteristic rather than as a primary organizing principle of society and the economy and the relations of ruling at the global, international, national, regional, local and institutional level. Context shapes both organizational and leadership possibilities. The nature and purpose

of education are fundamentally changing under the conditions of education capitalism; at the same time, wider structural relations of national economies and markets impact on the career possibilities and work conditions in gendered ways (Deem, 1996). In educational organizations, market discourses and practices now penetrate organizational structures, cultures and values, as well as priorities. Such contexts inform institutional discourses as leaders in middle management, many of them now women, mobilize discourses of survival to gain collegial consent, often becoming reluctantly complicit in the new work order. Responsiveness to international and local education markets requires significant institutional flexibility. Accumulating evidence is charting the feminization and casualization of academic and teachers' work arising from devolved systems of educational governance and deregulated international education markets (Brine, 1999).

These trends cannot be disentangled from how education professionalism is being redefined and judged through national and international professional-standards movements and escalating national and international accountability demands for comparison. The nature of educational organizations and leadership is also under revision. Discourses of lifelong learning have encouraged a seamlessness between educational sectors to facilitate smooth pathways for students. Educational organizations are part of a 'constellation of sites, spaces and opportunities for learning' (Arnot, 2002: 258), with multiple configurations locally (multi-site campuses and community and industry partnerships) and internationally (offshore campuses). So, as education as a field is increasingly subject to markets and the economy, the profession is losing autonomy. Global relations have shifted the locus of power upwards and outwards from educational organizations owing to externally driven demands for accountability and market forces.

Reconstituting the gender division of labour: public/private

The separation of public life (masculine domain) and the private lifeworld of family and community (female domain) was a premise of the modernist educational organization (David, 2003). Historically, teaching has been positioned as the naturalized extension of mothering and therefore women's work, with 'the importing through embodied social practice over time, of cultural metaphors of domesticity from a narrowly conceived private sphere into the apparently public world of work' (Acker and Dillabough, 2007: 298–299). Teaching is recognized as feminized, but not as White. This continues with institutionalizing policies exhorting parents (women) to be partners as quasi-literacy teachers, fundraisers or governors. Now self-managing schools and universities, public and private, seek to blur the public/private distinction in order to gain greater flexibility by transferring educational labour into the home through technologies or outsourcing educational work under contractualism. So, as educational organizations move into new public/private configurations, women are more vulnerable, as they are without the mobility and flexibility of their male counterparts.

Equity

Organizational texts (policies, mission statements, performance management protocols, performance indicators, curriculum, assessment) are gendered in terms of their implications for workplace arrangements (time at work, continuity of employment) and which discourses get privileged (efficiency or equity). Devolved governance in education has meant policy is now the means by which governments and executives steer from a distance. Policy is one link in the cycle of

performativity arising from the accountability regimes focusing on outcomes. Meanwhile, contemporary individualizing discourses of diversity that have supplanted equal opportunity weaken claims of historical group, structural and cultural, gender inequality (Bacchi, 2000).

Critical feminist policy sociologists (Marshall, 1997) identify multiple tensions around how equity policies will work. Equity practitioners in organizations still rely on the state and executives for equity policies to provide legitimation for their activities, raise expectations for changes in behaviour and offer a language for action. Already, backlash discourses cite the existence of equity policies to argue that women and girls have equality or are advantaged in education. Recognition of one form of disadvantage (class, race) does not necessarily flow over to equality of gender. Each form of disadvantage has different legacies (slavery, colonialism) and power relations. Gender equity cuts across racial, ethnic and class difference because it challenges personal and power relationships at work and in the home.

Contemporary dilemmas for feminists

Coming from a focus on gender leads to different assumptions, questions and conclusions, but also produces ongoing dilemmas for sociologists of gender and educational organizations.

Category problem

Gender continues to be a problematic sociological concept in terms of what it supplants, such as a focus on women and girls, and what it ignores, in terms of sexuality. The feminist dilemma with regard to category has been that focusing on women as a sociological concept and policy strategy has positioned women as having to change or to initiate change, while essentializing women as a group (Bacchi, 2000). It thus diverts policy and sociologists' attention away from how the social relations of gender are embedded in the structures, cultures, identities and power configurations in educational organizations, on how leadership is understood and practised, how context and culture shape organizational practices and in turn how organizations (re)constitute gender, class and race and identities. At the same time, the focus on the social relations of gender and/or gendered subjectivities means attention reverts back to men as the 'dominant' or to the individual in ways that ignore structural and cultural factors. Both facilitate the appropriation by mainstream theory of those aspects of feminist research and discourse that do not undermine its normative frame.

The politics of gender research

With the focus on text, discourse and the rejection of modernist meta-narratives, post-modernist accounts of organizations localize the politics of gender, focusing on the processes of reflexivity and individualization that can be readily appropriated by neo-liberal discourses of the gender-neutral individual (Bauman, 2005). Materialist accounts consider this refusal to universalize endangers the feminist political project of social justice (Unterhalter, 2006). Post-structuralism's focus on situated gendered subjectivities, like the socio-cultural focus on women and leadership, has diverted attention away from the structural: that is, the reconstitution of gender relations occurring through the restructuring of educational organizations during the 1990s due to neo-liberal reforms of marketization and managerialism (Brine, 1999; Blackmore and Sachs, 2007).

A number of issues for inquiry arise from the above:

- How are shifts in educational governance from the bureaucratic to the corporate and now the networked organization impacting on women's capacity and/or desire to be leaders, policy actors or practitioners?
- How are the social relations of gender being reconstituted through the structures, processes, practices and cross-cultural relations of the networked organization, locally, nationally and transnationally?
- Are the global policy communities of the OECD, World Bank, UNESCO new sites for mobile transnational masculinities, while women remain as leaders of the domestic (national and local) in a reconfigured gender division of labour?
- Are men benefiting more from new public/private configurations, such as innovation centres in new knowledge economies and internationalization (Metcalf and Slaughter, 2008)?
- How are neo-colonial masculinities in leadership – traditional and progressive – being reconstituted within different national contexts – religious nation-states, diasporic communities in Western nation-states?
- How to unpack and investigate the more 'subtle gender differentiation' that occurs in organizations and through discourses of individual choice and diversity?
- How to generalize across organizations owing to the complexities of articulation of gender, race, class and religion in specific institutional locations?
- As the role of the state changes with the emergence of regional politics and global policy communities, how will gender equity policy be mobilized, conceptualized and delivered in local educational organizations?
- What theoretical, ethical and methodological issues does this raise in terms of a feminist comparative sociology of organizations?

Conclusion

Discourses in Western societies are about post-feminism. Women and girls are disappearing as a sociological category of inequality in educational research and policy, with the focus on boys' underachievement and discourses of diversity. Yet women do not feel equal: either their progress into the executive level of organizations has stalled, or the locus of organizational power has moved beyond the organization. In developing nation-states, women and children are the losers owing to war, migration, unemployment, famine and global warming. Gender as a sociological category is increasingly complex in terms of how it relates to culture, context and educational organizations. So the question for feminist sociologists and policy activists is how to address this complexity of social and structural differentiation and patterned inequality.

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Bringing Bourdieu to 'widening participation' policies in higher education

A UK case analysis

Pat Thomson

This chapter examines an apparent 'policy failure'. It compares a statistically oriented policy narrative of increasing access to higher education with its representations in media. It then mobilizes the sociological approach of Pierre Bourdieu to sketch an alternative analysis of events. This analysis demonstrates how mobilizing Bourdieu's approach situates the case in a broad historical and social context, elaborates the connections between related events in different sectors of education, and makes clear what is at stake in polarized debates. And, while the context and data are drawn from the UK, and England in particular, this Bourdieuan framing suggests that, while the actual details of these events are specific in space/place/time, the 'logic of practice' at work is much more widely generalizable.

The case in point centres on struggles around access, entry and participation. Statistics on UK university entrance¹ are unequivocal: not only has the percentage of young people who go onto higher education (HE) remained relatively static, but those who gain entry are more often from middle-class and very wealthy families (Archer *et al.*, 2003; Galindo-Rueda *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the more elite universities have disproportionate numbers of already advantaged young people. Yet paradoxically, the percentage of young people getting 'good results' in school exams has increased.

In 1999, the UK government decided that 50 per cent of all young people would be enrolled in HE by 2010, an ambitious 11 per cent increase within a decade. This target was accompanied by a funding programme designed to help universities 'widen participation' by opening their doors to young people whose families did not have a tradition of university education. Named *Aimhigher*, the policy rhetorically designated the 'problem' of low participation to lack of aspiration among individual young people from homes assigned by government's statistics to 'lower socio-economic' categories (Thomas, 2001). The policy 'solution' was for universities to work together with schools with low participation rates to motivate students to become 'non-traditional' university entrants. The government also sought to increase the 'flow' into higher and further education by strongly encouraging schools to support the majority of young people to stay on until the end of formal schooling.

This agenda was only minimally successful. In 2008, official figures revealed that the HE participation rates among 17–30-year-olds had risen by just 0.6 per cent between 1999–2000

and 2006–2007, from 39.2 per cent to 39.8 per cent. The political opposition made much of this slow progress, suggesting that, at this rate, it would take to 2124 to achieve the stated target. Government ministers admitted the target was impossible, but argued that they never thought it was realistic and that their focus had recently shifted from the under 30s to the workforce as a whole.² Policy debates are now focused either on how to find the appropriate combination of carrots and sticks that will create further change, while moving away from the unreachable target (government), or blaming the very idea and the means by which it has been implemented (opposition).

Higher education access in the news

In the UK, summer is not just a time for holidays. It is also when exam results are anticipated and released, and, thus, there is typically more – and more polarized – public discussion about HE entry and the state of upper secondary education. Debates focus on both A levels, the 'gate-keeping qualifications' offered by schools, and the access and equity approaches taken by universities. I discuss each in turn, giving some examples of the kinds of media coverage that they warrant. These are taken from a corpus of UK print media reports collected between June and September 2008: items were selected because they are 'typical' of particular discursive positions (Thomas, 2006).

Debates about school qualifications

Media narratives suggest that concerns about school qualifications are extensive and include: the kinds of knowledge that are valued; 'problems' for universities in discriminating between the increasing number of young people with the same grades; and escalating efforts by schools – and young people themselves – to mark themselves out in the competition for university places and courses. This is somewhat different from the policy debate reported in the introduction. There are many 'takes' on these issues but three of the most prominent are:

1 Not everyone wants to go to university: In 2005 the government announced that it would introduce fourteen new vocational diplomas rather than replace A levels with a single new qualification that included both 'academic' and 'vocational' options.³ Since then, there has been speculation about whether universities would accept the new qualifications as valid preparation for HE entrance, and whether this meant the 'end' of the A level as the 'gold standard' of quality. In August 2008,⁴ the release of detailed government information about the new vocational diplomas brought accusations of vast exaggerations of the economic payoffs of undertaking vocational education (*Times Higher Education*, 7 August 2008) and a rejoinder from Education Secretary Ed Balls that A levels are 'not set in stone' (*Daily Telegraph*, 13 September 2008).

2 A levels are seriously flawed: At the same time, it was widely reported that increasing numbers of young people were achieving 'good' A levels, but this was not necessarily a cause for celebration. The *Education Guardian* (12 August 2008: 1) put it this way:

Since 2000, the proportion of A levels awarded an A grade in England has shot up from 17.8% to 25.3%. It's been asked before, but let's ask it again: does this mean today's pupils are better prepared for summer exams or cleverer than they used to be? Or do markers perhaps expect less than they did in the past and mark more generously?

Newspapers made much of the alleged increase in the numbers of 'A' grades awarded, with accounts varying from one in seven, to one in ten and even 3 per cent (*Times Higher Education*, 21 August 2008: 5). Concerns about grade inflation were directed to three subjects in particular – drama, sociology and media studies. There were suggestions that 'easy' marking in these subjects allowed students to gain higher scores than their peers in science, technology and mathematics: students undertaking these courses had an 'unfair' advantage in the competition for access to university places.

There were also numerous reports about marking. While there was nothing like the spectacular failure of Educational Testing Services, the contractor who failed to deliver accurate and timely test results for the basic skills tests administered to pupils in the compulsory years of schooling,⁵ there were reports that,

some schools now routinely query a large proportion of their results in the hope of pushing up grades. Marsha Elms, headteacher of Kendrick girl's school in Reading, says the problem is not just with A levels: there is increasing concern about exam marking in general. And with new vocational qualifications about to come on stream, she fears the quality of markers may deteriorate further. 'I think the system is so stretched that we are beginning to lose faith – we are increasingly asking for remarks,' she says. 'But I do also think its to do with the clientele, wanting rechecks as it becomes more difficult to get into the universities – people want Cs turned into Bs and Bs turned into As.'

(*Education Guardian*, 12 August 2008: 2)

While the formation of a new exams watchdog, OfQual, is intended to shore up trust in marking, the competition for places goes further than lack of faith in examinations.

3 Students and schools have lost faith in the system: Other news reports in the same period noted that many students are opting to take four rather than three A levels in the hope of getting an edge in the competition for elite university places and courses. But,

Geoff Parks, director of admissions at Cambridge said . . . that he hoped the introduction of the new A* grade from 2010 would reverse the trend and persuade more students to take three because the key discriminator would be quality rather than quantity.

(*The Times*, 15 August, 2008)

However, 150 UK schools announced that they would abandon A levels altogether in favour of a new Pre-U exam developed by Cambridge University (*THE* 31/7/2008, p. 5), while a US style aptitude test, proposed by government advisers as an alternative route for disadvantaged young people into university, was reported to 'favour white boys from grammar schools' (*Times Higher Education*, 18 September 2008: 5).

Debates about university access policies

All English universities are expected to achieve the widening participation targets. Media reports largely represent their problems in doing so as concerns about funding and administrative routines for HE entry. Among the most common stories are two that say:

- 1 Funding is the problem: The government recently announced that it would change funding arrangements, so that young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds would attract four times rather than twice the amount of HE funding. Universities with greater success in attracting such students welcomed the move as it would clearly direct more funding their way. But universities who were less successful countered, arguing that the funding ought to be on the basis of need, thus giving those with already large numbers of 'non-traditional' entrants less.
- 2 Universities won't do as they are told: At the same time, the intervention programme *Aimhigher*,⁶ which funds universities to work with schools and colleges, was critiqued for being directed to the wrong sector: some HE administrators argued that the money ought to go to disadvantaged schools to spend 'earlier' than the final year of schooling. Their argument – that better preparation in the middle years of schooling is the issue, not lack of motivation in the senior years – was not universally accepted (a two-page debate appeared in *Times Higher Education*, 24 July 2008: 6–7). Print media also carried reports that employers questioned the value of a HE degree because of concerns about marking variability across universities (*Times Higher Education*, 10 July 2008), and that many university students were finding it increasingly difficult to pay their way through university (*Times Higher Education*, 7 August 2008) and to accommodate the fees debt they accrued. Together, these reports hinted that some young people queried the point of a university education and would switch to the new vocational options.

The most vitriolic debates occurred around the failure of *Aimhigher* to achieve its policy goals. These centred on the actions of the most elite universities. The polarized debates can be seen in the two following newspaper columns.

Extract 1

Tom Kemp, admissions tutor at St John's College, Oxford, argued that elite universities are not biased.

As an admissions tutor I am perfectly aware that something is amiss in the huge imbalance between the proportion of students admitted to Oxford from the private schools and the proportion of the school population so educated . . . The simple starting fact is that Oxford wants the brightest, most academically committed kids as its undergraduates. It is completely immaterial to us what gender, colour, nationality they are, or what their family background, sexual orientation or anything else is . . . Given all such information we consider, and given the huge effort put into admissions (up to four interviews to about four times the number of candidates to the places available) no-one can reasonably accuse us of not working towards being fair to all, even if we have a good way to go.

(*Education Guardian*, 12 August 2008: 4)

Kemp argues that entry to elite universities must be on academic 'merit' and 'performance', and that while some compensations might be made, there are limits. To do too much would be unfair to those who have done well in their exams. By implication, Kemp sheets the problem home to schools: if they did a better job then more young people would be 'meritorious' and deserving of a place.

Extract 2

The *Observer* columnist Barbara Ellen suggests that elite universities are just not trying hard enough, and this, she suspects, is because they want to protect their 'elite' brand.

I suppose one has to be mature and resist the natural inclination of turning this into a 'Toffs versus Plebs' stand-off. A great shame, as in many ways it's asking for it. In 2008, are we meant to tug our forelocks and accept Cambridge professor Alison Richard opining: 'it's not our place to help the poor'? And with figures revealing that 40 percent of the Oxford and Cambridge intake is from fee paying schools, when the education private sector represents only 7 percent of the nation's children? It transpires that what Richard actually said was that educational institutions should not be turned into 'handmaidens of industry, implementers of the skills agenda, or indeed engines for promoting social justice'. Which seems to be a round about way of saying that dons are genuinely concerned about the shoehorning in of state students, with a less impressive record, at the expense of undermining the world-famous Oxbridge brand.⁷ All fair points, until you ask the question – whose universities are they anyway?

(*The Observer*, 14 September 2008: 11)

Ellen clearly suspects that arguments about merit are a cover-up for underhanded actions that preserve the advantages of those who are wealthy and can afford to send their children to private schools.

How are we to understand these representations of problems with higher education access?

This selection of news items shows a range of issues coalescing around who gets into which university and which course, and by what means. If we are to believe these press items, then policy failure and students' distress are not attributable to flawed policy per se, but rather to the behaviour of universities, particularly those that have greatest market share and prestige.

In the remainder of this chapter, I want to re-read HE access and participation with the help of a French social scientist, the late Pierre Bourdieu, and to argue that what is at stake is a question of social, political and cultural privilege, but this is *not* a question of individual people or institutions being mean, bloody-minded or insincere. Rather, it is a complex matter of the way that social systems work (Zipin, 1999). The argument that I make is intended to complement empirical studies that focus on the 'habitus' of those young people making choices about which university to attend – or not (e.g. Ball *et al.*, 2000; Reay *et al.*, 2005).

There are two important ideas that underpin the argument I will make about HE access. These are, first, the reproductive practices of education and, second, the hierarchies that exist within education. I will briefly signpost each idea in turn and then bring them to a re-reading of the HE debates presented in the first part of the chapter.

Education and the reproduction of privilege

Research has consistently demonstrated that educational success is correlated with greater wealth, levels of education and social status (Teese, 2000; Feinstein *et al.*, 2008).

Bourdieu argued that education systems were heavily implicated in this production and reproduction of social and economic privilege and disadvantage (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu *et al.*, 1995). He demonstrated that some children come from families where the kinds of knowledge and behaviour that count in schooling already exist in abundance and they are thus at an advantage from the very first time they enter the school gates. Not only do they already possess 'capitals' that are important to school success, but they also feel comfortable in the school setting and are easily able to do what is required. This does not mean that some children come from 'good homes' whereas others come from 'bad' ones with low aspirations. Nor does it mean that some schools are failing or inadequate. Rather, Bourdieu suggests that the game of schooling is deeply discriminatory: those children who arrive at school without the 'right stuff' are behind at the outset and remain so throughout their schooling.

Over time, the school pedagogies, curriculum and assessment practices exacerbate initial differences (Anyon, 1980; Haberman, 1991; Thomson, 2002). By the time children have reached the part of schooling where they must decide whether to aim for university, their decisions are nearly made by virtue of their schooling success, or lack of it. This is not a case of some young people being possessed of merit, but rather a case of schooling as a game that is heavily rigged in favour of particular kinds of children and young people. The 'achievement gap' is the result of deeply embedded and embodied structural inequalities.

It is important to recognize that Bourdieu's argument about the reproductive effects of education does not mean that all children from so-called 'deprived'/'disadvantaged' homes do badly at school and therefore none of them gets to university. Some of them do very well at school, just as some young people from privileged homes do very badly. But it is only a comparatively small number who do so. Bourdieu is frank about his own origins: he was a 'scholarship' boy, selected through the workings of the school system to become upwardly socially mobile. But he demonstrated through his academic work how in his case, and in that of others like him, 'sorting and selecting' who was educationally successful occurred in a myriad of ways, from the more obvious promotion, setting and grouping practices, through to the language of the curriculum, and the kinds of knowledge considered to be of most value (Bourdieu, 2008). Thus, his theorization of (re)production allows for both change and for continuity.

Educational hierarchies and educational and socio-economic status

There are distinctive hierarchies of distinction within education (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988; Naidoo, 2004) around:

- 1 Qualifications: Qualifications are not simply valued for their age-related level, with a senior school certificate more valued than a junior. It is also the symbolic value of the qualifications that matters, that is, the uses to which they can be put to in employment and social networks. What is most commonly known as 'academic' knowledge is valued over 'vocational knowledge'. Thus, university degrees are 'better' than FE diplomas. This is because these qualifications are necessary for higher-status (although not always better remunerated) jobs (see disciplines below). School qualifications that act as gatekeepers for HE entrance are generally seen as 'better' than some FE qualifications, as they constitute the pathway to HE and thus to higher-status positions more generally.
- 2 Institutions: The schools that parents have to pay for have most status, and, within that group, those that are oldest and can boast large numbers of important people among their

alumni. HE too is hierarchically arranged, with the newest universities considered to be of lesser status than those that are older. In the UK, Oxford/Cambridge epitomize the high-status HE institution: because of their age, they have a vast tranche of important alumni going back centuries, various markers of distinction (heritage buildings, green spaces, museums, benefactors, large research grants, high on the league tables that signify 'quality') and they attract and are able to select those with the highest school qualifications. An 'Oxbridge' degree is often seen as 'better' by employers than that of a very recent university (redbrick, more vocationally oriented, less research-driven).

- 3 'Academic' disciplines (see Ladwig, 1996): Science, technology and mathematics (STEM) are the disciplines that are deemed to matter most to 'progress', but other disciplines such as economics, law and management are 'vital' to the management of civil society and government. Law and medicine also retain status because of their historical connections with classical learning. Some arts and humanities subjects have cultural cachet but do not dominate policies within HE institutions or elsewhere: this privilege is now afforded to STEM. In general, what are seen as the more vocational subjects – such as education and nursing – are of lower status than the older professional subjects such as medicine. The 'new professions' struggle for status.⁸ The more recent branches of arts and humanities, such as drama, creative writing, cultural studies and media studies, are similarly low in the hierarchy and can be compared with new STEM subjects, such as nano and genetic sciences, which have acquired instant status (and large amounts of funding).

I will put these two concepts (the reproduction of hierarchies and the distinctions in HE) to work in re-reading the debates over HE access, which I will first put into a wider context.

Rising mass levels of education

Taking a long view shows that, over time, the mass level of education has been steadily rising. More and more people are staying at school for longer, and more and more people are entering HE and acquiring qualifications.⁹ These changes are connected, although not in a simple cause and effect relationship, with changes in the economy and politics. I will briefly sketch some key events in the UK (see Jones (2003) and Whitty (2002) for more).

In the post-war period there were significant changes in the ways in which the economy functioned. Innovations developed within HE STEM disciplines meant that many jobs could be done by machines, rather than by human labour. At the same time, more women entered the workforce, and there were increasingly fewer jobs for young people. The government deregulated the economy in support of companies seeking expanding markets, but many of them also sought cheap labour and taxation advantages – they moved offshore. These economic shifts caused large numbers of people to lose their jobs, particularly in manufacturing and associated industries. But jobs also disappeared in agriculture and in declining resource-based industries such as coal mining. New industries and jobs have had to be developed, and these have largely been in the services sector and in a range of new 'knowledge-based' areas. Many new jobs require higher levels of specialized education.

Successive UK governments have had no choice but to attempt to manage the consequences of these often-abrupt shifts within the globalized economy. Education policy has been perceived to have a major role to play (Lauder *et al.*, 2006). First of all, unemployed adults must be retrained. Second, the political creation of the European Union, combined with political

upheaval in other parts of the world and the relative ease of global travel, has meant large numbers of new families of migrants and refugees who must be educated, housed and employed. Third, the potential costs of unemployed young people not gainfully occupied must be addressed: the general social belief in education and training as a 'good thing' provides the rationalization for raising school leaving ages. And finally, in order to provide partial solutions to the social consequences of economic shifts, education, which historically had a role to play in the 'civilizing' and 'nation-building' of the British state, is required to focus on:

- citizenship – to create social cohesion;
- well-being – to ensure basic health and welfare; and
- generic 'knowledge-economy' skills – to create a well-prepared workforce.

As well, schools, FE and HE must generally increase participation – in part to take the pressure off the youth labour market, leaving jobs for older workers.

The changes and pressures I have very briefly indicated have not been smooth and continuous, but rather have occurred in lurches. There have been – and are – particular times when education must make relatively rapid adjustments. This is one such time.

Struggles over expanding higher education

In reality, schools have, over the last sixty year period, been continually asked to cater for ever larger numbers of more diverse young people, and for longer. At the same time, they have been asked by governments worried about the labour market and the economy to educate students to higher levels and in new areas. There are also more and more young people staying at school long enough to gain the kinds of qualification that might allow them to gain entry to HE. In turn, governments require both higher and further education to increase the range and types of course on offer. These changes can be summed up as some demand and a lot of pressure for HE to expand *and* diversify at the same time.

This expand-diversify duality creates instability within the field of education and creates the occasion for intensified struggles over possible new hierarchies and (re)distributions. As seen earlier in the chapter, it has been the occasion for intense debates at the borders of HE and schooling and within HE itself. These struggles are around managing:

- flow – how many people can gain a basic university qualification without the award losing status in comparison and competition with an expanding range of higher-level vocational qualifications, and
- position – which institutions and disciplines will retain their position, that is, remain at the top of the relevant hierarchy by virtue of being the most selective of 'quality' (Morley, 2003), taken to mean offering the qualifications that are of highest status.

These struggles have occurred within an increasingly internationally oriented and marketized HE system, which places greater pressure on places and on the management of the *appearance* of academic distinction (Sidhu, 2006).

In the UK expand-diversify setting, changes to the gate-keeping A levels have become a crucible for various people and institutions to act out the positional struggles that are taking place. Students seeking to gain advantage take more A levels than are required. Universities who have lost faith in the capacity of A levels to sort and select in their interests set their own

entrance exams and procedures. Institutions wary of having to take too many of the 'wrong sort' of young people argue that some disciplines (the newer, lower-status media studies and sociology for example) are 'easier' than STEM.

Paradoxically, widening participation policies both enhance and threaten the position of high-status universities. On the one hand, they must be seen to be accommodating, as elitism carries connotations that are no longer socially acceptable (as in Barbara Ellen's acerbic commentary earlier). On the other hand, they must maintain their elitism, as it is this that puts them at the 'top' of the HE tree. The rationale (doxa) that they adopt for this juggling act is one of merit (as in Tom Kemp's column). Students are said to advance through a neutral schooling system, regardless of their social, cultural or economic contexts. The ways in which schooling itself is implicated in the reproduction of privilege and of particular socio-economic groups are ignored. The qualification acts as an apparently neutral mechanism for sorting and selecting. And university interviews, where young people must perform as a particular kind of educated person, are argued to be 'additional effort' to be fair, rather than the exercise of additional selectivity, over and above that offered by the school qualification.

This rationale appears to be logical and natural, but, as Bourdieu suggests, what is at work is something profoundly social and structured (Bourdieu, 1990). The realities of (re)production are misrecognized.

Conclusion

The continued struggles over the (re)production of advantage are manifest in current struggles over HE entrance and the nature of the final school qualifications. Both government and media are powerful actors in the field of education, as are hierarchically organized universities and families and young people themselves. Their actions and words cannot be understood simply by looking at policy or by reading newspapers. Thinking about events through the lens of Bourdieu's sociology allows the phenomena to be understood not as a one-off or isolated series of events, but as part of a longer and wider struggle about the kind of education system, and world, we have – and that we want.

The media debates exemplified earlier are not predominantly moral debates about what is right. In essence, the widening participation debates are about the reproduction of relative positions and hierarchies. Differences over school qualifications cannot be separated from events in HE, as it is the nature of the gate-keeping afforded by the examinations that is at stake. An apparently 'scientific' argument about merit is mobilized, by the most powerful and highest-status agents, in order to bolster up traditional hierarchies and status and to justify greater selectivity. Self-interested arguments from new institutions and disciplines seeking to increase their standing and position focus on their importance in the new knowledge economy, even if they sometimes mount a case against elitism. The policies of government are also imbricated in these events: politicians too have significant interests and agendas. They seek to manage an economy, get (re)elected and to manage a rhetorical battle of 'spin'.

Reading these events with Bourdieu shows that inequitable differences are not produced by chance, but are a result of debates, contests and a myriad of actions and reactions. At some point, an uneasy and temporary settlement will be reached.

However, the outcomes of these struggles are not ruthlessly predetermined. While the history of this and similar struggles is strongly patterned by the need of various actors to preserve particular advantages, Bourdieu reminds us that the destiny effects of education do not

preclude change. The reproduction of privilege is not inexorable, and it is clear from the different histories of different countries that social and economic inequities are fewer in some places than in others.

And, in the UK, there are signs that, under concerted pressure, even the most elite universities are opening their doors a crack.

Notes

- 1 See the various datasets on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) website, available online at www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_datatables&Itemid=121 (accessed 20 September 2008).
- 2 'Labour concedes it won't deliver its 50% target on time', *Times Higher Education*. Available online at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=401455§ioncode=26 (accessed 12 July 2008).
- 3 A levels are public examinations whose aggregated scores are the basis for university entrance.
- 4 See <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas/> for the video version (accessed 3 November 2008).
- 5 See www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/education/article4538892.ece (accessed 13 September 2008).
- 6 See www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/DG_073697 (accessed 20 September 2008).
- 7 Oxbridge – an amalgamation of Oxford and Cambridge and common shorthand in the UK.
- 8 Lobbying for higher status, advocates for the field of education now make much of its integral connections with the knowledge economy, and those who are part of the 'cultural turn' in the arts and humanities argue the importance of the cultural industries to national economies and pervasiveness of multi-modal communication technologies.
- 9 But some qualifications no longer mean what they did. An ordinary degree is no longer 'worth' what it once was in terms of getting a job.

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The sociology of elite education

Agnès van Zanten

Research on elites (that is, on status groups that occupy dominant positions) is characterized by the lack of connection between studies that focus on elite recruitment and those that focus on the exercise of power by elites. As underlined by Giddens (1974), both types of approach are important and should complement each other in the analysis of mediations between the class structure, the organizational structure and the power structure in a given society. Giddens also insists on the need for recruitment studies to take account of two different dimensions: the types of channel that are privileged by elite groups to reproduce their social position, and the degree of social closure or openness of these channels to other groups (Parkin, 1974). This distinction is used to organize the present chapter, which focuses on a single channel that has come to play a crucial role in post-industrial societies, that is schools and, more precisely, upper-secondary and higher education institutions, and on their influence in three different national contexts: France, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the first section, the specific features of elite education are examined. The second section explores the extent and modes of institutional and social closure.

Socialization patterns in elite educational institutions

Elite schools as total institutions

Studies of elite education have underscored the common features of elite educational institutions that distinguish them from other institutions that look after young people from the same age cohorts. The interlocking character of these features allows elite institutions to be described as 'total institutions' that provide, through both formal and 'hidden' curricula, a strong secondary socialization model for students that will decisively influence their public and private adult life (Faguer, 1991). Two of the most visible ones are physical closure and small size, which contribute to distinctiveness as well as inclusiveness (Wakeford 1969). These two elements were important characteristics of boarding schools and of the most exclusive colleges in the UK and the US, until at least World War II. Because of the location of the French *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* in Paris and other big cities, physical closure was less marked, although most students,

especially those coming from distant towns and rural areas, were boarders. In the *grandes écoles* themselves, boarding was the rule.¹ By relocating outside Paris in recent decades, moreover, some of them, such as the *Ecole Polytechnique* or the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales* (HEC), have recreated to a certain extent the 'campus' atmosphere of their English and American counterparts, though on a much smaller scale. Internal cohesion has also been fostered and maintained over time in elite institutions by sophisticated rites marking entrance and departure, as well as important moments of the educational experience, by procedures concerning the allocation of boarding rooms and of various material tasks and by learning and social activities meant to develop a strong 'bonding' relationship among members and especially between 'established' students and new entrants, as well as between institutions and their alumni. These organizational forms have been strongly influenced by army and religious traditions and are frequently referred to through idiosyncratic terms that serve as social markers of membership.

Studies have also focused on the distinctive and exclusive character of the social culture prevailing in these institutions, notably on the prominent place occupied by sports and various games, some of which are practised only in elite boarding schools, and on the crucial socialization role played by fraternities, sororities, clubs and associations (Abraham, 2007; Cookson and Persell, 1985a). Elite institutions were also long characterized by a specific academic curriculum (Bernstein, 1977). This curriculum was distinctive in point of its content (with a key role attributed to Latin and the humanities and, in France, to mathematics), its pedagogy, which privileged individual modes of instruction (taking the form of 'tutorials' in British elite colleges or 'colles' in French *classes préparatoires*, i.e. individual work sessions and evaluations by older students and professors), and its evaluation modes (the creation of specific college entrance examinations in England and the US and of *concours* for access to the *grandes écoles* in France). Academic distinctiveness has also been reinforced by the gender, educational and social profile of professors in these institutions – in particular, those of public school masters and Oxbridge 'dons' in England (Walford, 1984).

Educating the upper class

These dimensions of elite education are the outcome of explicit and implicit choices made by teachers and administrators and show the relative autonomy that these educational institutions enjoy by virtue of their symbolic, cultural, social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1996). However, the ability of elite institutions to form their students is constrained by the expectations of dominant groups (Kamens, 1974). They work according to a social 'charter', that is a licence and mandate to produce specific educational subjects (Meyer, 1970), differing from those of institutions that cater to non-elite groups. This charter is subject to variations depending on the interests, values and ideas of the upper-class fractions that occupy or aspire to elite positions at a given time in each national context.

Although the expressive and moral dimensions mentioned above have been central elements of elite educational institutions in the three countries considered here, emphasis on sports and social life has been much more important in England than in France, owing to the prevalence of an educational model reflecting the aristocratic values and gentlemanly lifestyles of the nineteenth-century 'leisure class'. Elite schools were a key element in the dissemination of this model among other elite and middle-class groups during the first half of the twentieth century (Anderson, 2007). This model was also 'borrowed' by America's old money families when they sought to consolidate themselves and to build, through education in private preparatory schools and elite colleges, a 'class wall' separating old privileges from upstarts (Soares, 1999). On the

other hand, the academic culture of elite educational institutions has been more distinctive in England and France than in the US, reflecting a historically constructed, 'high-brow', aristocratic and bourgeois culture (Cookson and Persell, 1985b), but it places a greater emphasis on the mastery of intellectual knowledge and skills in France than in England.

The charters of elite educational institutions in each country are nevertheless subject to changing external pressures resulting from status group struggles (Karabel, 1984). Historical analysis of the most prestigious American colleges (Yale, Princeton, Harvard) shows the transition from an emphasis on the non-academic side of campus life, which helped students master the subtleties of the dominant status culture and accumulate contacts crucial for success in large organizations and the political field in the early decades of the twentieth century, to a more academically oriented curriculum in the 1960s and 1970s. These changes reflect the difficulty of providing a common social model for a larger and increasingly heterogeneous upper class, with diverging interests, values and ideas, and show the growing influence of its most culturally endowed fractions. The influence of these fractions on the academic culture and social atmosphere of elite secondary schools and higher education institutions was also visible at the same period in England, although it was exerted indirectly, through the mediating action of the state. In France, the emphasis on academic culture was more precocious and more radical, as the French Revolution replaced the aristocratic ideal of the '*honnête homme*' with a bourgeois model emphasizing scholastic merit.

Preparing for political and economic power positions

It thus appears that, although upper-class groups have always tried to frame the charter of elite institutions, this charter is also subject to variations according to more general economic, social and political factors that might lead interest and political groups acting on behalf of elites, but also reflecting contradictions and struggles among established and new status groups, to encourage elite institutions to act as 'guardians' of national cultural models and stratification patterns, or as agents of innovation and diffusion of new cultural or social ideals. The role of the state as political mediator between conflicting status groups' interests is particularly visible in France, because it was the state that created or restructured the most prestigious *grandes écoles* after the French Revolution. Designed to serve state needs (those of the army and various technical corps and later on of public administrations), the *grandes écoles*' mandate has been to produce individuals endowed with strong scientific competence and capable of synthesizing large quantities of information, but also interested in practical matters and able to take decisions (Thoenig, 1973). In Alvin Gouldner's (1979) terms, these schools were expected to train the 'technical intelligentsia' more than the 'humanistic intellectuals'. Their culture was from the onset strongly distinct from the non-utilitarian university culture traditionally oriented towards teaching, scholarship and research, although some institutions, especially the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, were clearly oriented towards the intellectual fractions of the upper class, whereas others, such as *l'Ecole Polytechnique*, have been characterized throughout their history by tensions between the divergent perspectives of scientists and engineers (Bourdieu, 1996; Belhoste *et al.*, 1994).

Strong state dependency has also influenced the non-academic activities and rites of these institutions, which were designed to instill respect for state hierarchies and loyalty to state institutions, at the same time that it has encouraged the development of 'organic links' between the *grandes écoles* and the state corps through recruitment processes directly linking valued positions in the most prestigious corps to class rank at graduation. However, since the 1970s,

private firms and economic status groups have in various ways exerted a growing and more direct pressure on French elite institutions. The oldest is the practice known as '*pantouflage*' – that is, the departure of civil servants trained in the traditional state *grandes écoles* for work in the private sector (Suleiman, 1978). This movement coincided with the creation and growth in the 1970s of privately funded *grandes écoles* with a strong market orientation. In the 1990s, the state-funded *grandes écoles* began to follow suit, offering a larger number of courses and activities meant to prepare students for direct access to jobs in private sector management and finance (Lazuech, 1999). At the same time, in what can be seen as a kind of compensation for decreasing material and symbolic returns of state investments in these special schools, many of them have in the last ten years re-emphasized their social and political responsibility, especially by taking a prominent role on debates and policies concerning widening participation in higher education (van Zanten, 2008).

In England, public schools, as well as Oxford and, to a lesser extent, Cambridge, have traditionally maintained what have been called 'incestuous links of privilege and power' with the British establishment (Scott, 1990) and direct connections to the state and the professions. In the US, 'prep' schools and elite private universities were also directly linked to economic and political elite groups through their recruitment, funding and access to elite positions. The general expectations from these groups and the organizations that they control have led to a strong focus on leadership, 'character' and self-discipline (Cookson and Persell, 1985a). Nevertheless, after World War II, elite institutions in England became strongly dependent on the state for funding. Although the initial effect of state funds was to redirect education away from action and business and towards research, in the 1980s, the state began to put pressure on universities to become key elements in the global knowledge economy, orienting research towards industrial needs, especially high technology, and students' career choices towards high-paying jobs in the private sector (Brown and Hesketh, 2004). This latter tendency is particularly evident in elite American universities, which are extremely dependent on private endowments for their growth, which in turn determines their capacity to occupy the top places in international rankings of leading research institutions and to play an important role in global economic networks.

Social and institutional closure

The conditions of admission

Elite institutions have always enjoyed a large autonomy in setting their own conditions for admission (Douglass, 2007). However, although the admission criteria that they have devised reflect, above all, internal compromises between administrators and teachers and responses to competitive external pressures from similar organizations, they are also conditioned by changes in the distribution of power among status groups in the broader society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Karabel, 2005; Karen, 1990). In France, the state's early creation of a system of highly competitive examinations, ranking students according to a one-dimensional scale of merit for access to elite 'special schools', gave professors a high degree of latitude in the choice of future members of the elite vis-à-vis families and social or economic constituencies, while simultaneously endowing elites with a strong belief in their individual and social legitimacy as members of a 'state nobility' (Bourdieu 1996; Young, 1994). At the same time, the present extremely 'balkanized' system of competitive examinations for entrance to the *grandes écoles* is

less the reflection of academic interests than a legacy of the powerful influence of the state corps that framed and have strongly controlled their functioning.

In the UK and in the US, the transition from 'ascriptive' criteria to an educational meritocracy was slower, and the notion of educational merit has been subjected to more diverse interpretations than in France. Entry at Oxford and Cambridge was, until World War II, based on a system of examinations in which merit was equated with the mastery of a traditional curriculum, though school and family connections also played an important role. The Oxbridge system of recruitment was formally realigned to that of other universities in the 1960s, following the increase in government funding and involvement. Nevertheless, recent investigation reveals the persistence of distinctive features. As in other universities, the results obtained by students in subject-specific, nationally standardized tests, that is GCSE grades (three A*, the highest grade, in the disciplines considered as the most relevant for the desired university subject are expected), and teachers' predictions of A level exam results (in 1983, 82.4 per cent of the Oxford entering class had top A level scores, the proportion has now reached almost 100 per cent) are the crucial elements in the first phase of admission. However, during the second phase, the various colleges take other elements into account. These are both meritocratic (results in specific language tests or qualities exhibited in the best two school essays and, more recently, as in the US, results on Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs)) and non-meritocratic, such as family and school background, which is assessed in closer examination of admission forms and interviews with tutors.²

Until the 1960s, students in the US mainly gained admission to four-year colleges by graduating with good grades from high school. However, elite private institutions, imitating Oxford and Cambridge, developed their own entry examinations in order to limit student numbers and increase their legitimacy. The SAT, introduced in the 1930s, progressively became an important component of the admission process, reinforcing the cognitive dimension of merit. However, when this system started to give a clear advantage to brilliant Jewish students, elite institutions and dominant groups once again reinforced the weight assigned to extra-academic criteria such as 'character' (determined on the basis of high school teacher recommendations), participation in extracurricular activities, autobiographical essays and interviews that could be used to legitimately exclude 'inassimilable' non-WASP students. Nevertheless, by the late 1950s, in an atmosphere of intense concern about 'talent loss', 'character' began to lose ground to the intellectually gifted applicant defined according to SAT scores, Grade Point Average (GPA) and class rank, as well as excellence in one or more extracurricular endeavours. A new turn was once again taken in the 1960s with the introduction of a new criterion: 'diversity'. Since its relationship to academic merit was not to be systematically defined, its adoption proved nevertheless highly controversial (Karabel, 2005; Soares, 2007).

Institutional routes

Institutional routes played an important role in the creation and consolidation of elite educational systems. The 'bonding' relationship between a small number of elite colleges and secondary schools was based on the 'chartering' process described above, that is on the monopolization of a mode of training and socialization required for admission to elite institutions of higher education, but also, especially in the US and the UK, on a 'bartering' process – that is, negotiations between school and college personnel concerning selection and admission (Persell and Cookson, 1985). However, this 'institutional sponsorship' was officially abandoned as the result of the expansion and of the increasing formal meritocratic dimension of educational systems (Turner, 1960). The most radical departure from this 'institutional sponsorship' has taken place

in the US, where elite colleges have developed admission policies that severely hamper the effectiveness of 'bridging strategies' from secondary school feeders, except for a limited number of prep schools that still hold a special status because of their historical relationships with Harvard, Princeton or Yale (Le Tendre *et al.*, 2006). The importance attached to academic merit – and, in particular, class rank – has simultaneously allowed elite colleges to recruit excellent undergraduate students nationwide and led 'star schools' (schools that are particularly successful in getting students admitted to elite universities) to maximize the chances of their best students at the expense of those who have excellent test scores and high GPA earned in rigorous courses, but are not at the top of their class (Attewell, 2001). Despite this relative disadvantage, students in these schools – many, but not all, private – still benefit not only from a stronger focus on academic achievement by teachers and parents than students in other schools, but also from specific Honours and Advanced Placement courses that act as a 'signal' for college admissions staff (Falsey and Heyns, 1984) and from their 'brokering' strategies, that is from strong financial investment in and commitment to activities favouring the college-linking process, such as college visits, assistance with college and financial aid applications, and contacts with college representatives on behalf of the students (Hill, 2008; McDonough, 1997).

Institutional routes and sponsorship have also been weakened in England, but not to the same extent: a strong link remains between private secondary schools and elite higher education institutions. Privately schooled students are twice as likely to go to elite universities than state-schooled students and, although outnumbered by the latter in admissions (44.5 per cent versus 46.8 per cent in 2007 at Oxford), they are significantly overrepresented in relation to their total number in secondary schools. This overrepresentation is even more striking when one considers their share of the applicant pool and percentage among successful applicants. Given the expansion of the state sector and the strong meritocratic character of the admission procedures in elite universities, this overrepresentation is due less to explicit 'chartering' and 'bartering' than in the past. It is nevertheless important to note that, as in the US, students from private schools benefit from higher levels of advice and support on careers in higher education by internal staff and outside agencies working with the schools (Reay *et al.*, 2005), and that those from the so-called Clarendon Public Schools, in particular, frequently receive 'special notification' during the second phase of admissions at Oxford. However, the competitive advantage of private schools rests now to a larger extent on higher levels of educational achievement. These are the consequence of severe academic selection procedures as well as of the implementation over the course of the 1980s and 1990s of an Assisted Places Scheme (abolished by New Labour in 1997), intended to help 'able children from modest backgrounds' to enter independent schools of high academic reputation, but also of more marked 'school effects' linked to the concentration of academically and socially advantaged students (Halsey, 1995; Power *et al.*, 2003).

In France, on the contrary, the role of the state in elite education has given a competitive advantage to state *lycées* in admissions, with the evidence showing no clear advantage for upper-class students from private sector schools in terms of educational careers (Tavan, 2004). There are no official routes, but huge differences between *lycées* concerning their capacity to get students admitted into these classes. This result is strongly linked to provision, as those '*prépas*' that are most successful in getting students admitted to the top *grandes écoles* are all located in a limited number of old and prestigious *lycées* in Paris and other big cities, giving an advantage to students schooled at those *lycées*. In addition to that 'location effect', there is also some evidence that widening participation in secondary education has encouraged professors and administrators in the more selective *classes préparatoires* to weigh the grades, class rank and professional evaluations

of candidates according to the supposed achievement level of their *lycée*.³ Being accepted in these selective *classes préparatoires* is a key step for students who want to follow up their studies in the top *grandes écoles*, as there is a strong 'chartering' effect, both formal (teaching content, methods and evaluation are strongly conditioned by the explicit requirements of the *concours* of these *grandes écoles*, while less selective *classes préparatoires* prepare for less-selective examinations) and informal (use of knowledge of implicit requirements based on information provided by alumni, examiners, professors and managers at the *grandes écoles*). Students attending prestigious *lycées* and *classes préparatoires* also benefit from personalized counselling and assistance with applications.

Social advantage and parental strategies

In the three countries considered here, upper-class families strongly supported the initial institutional pathways that excluded other groups from access to elite higher education institutions. Although they have been able to resist and adapt to the development of meritocratic policies by these institutions, thanks to the competitive advantages provided by private schooling and selective public schools, and although in the US affluent upper-class parents, especially former alumni, have been able, much more so than in England or France, to continue to buy entrance for their children – not only because they can pay for tuition but also because they provide 'legacies' that contribute to university budgets – as a group, they have had to renounce collective admission privileges and accept that only some of their children with excellent academic results might be among the 'chosen' (Karabel, 2005). Moreover, members of this group now compete with larger proportions of members of the middle class. However, the respective advantages of middle-class families with high levels of cultural capital and those families with high incomes still have to be assessed carefully with respect both to the strategies available for parents and to the selection and channelling process in each educational system (Kerchoff *et al.*, 1997). In France, the intellectual fractions of the middle class have traditionally been advantaged by the formal and strongly scholastic meritocratic procedures of access to the state *grandes écoles*. However, changes in the educational context have forced them to develop, through 'colonization' of local schools, new, informal institutional pathways to maintain their position (Raveaud and van Zanten, 2007). Their advantages are also challenged, however, because, as in the UK and the US, families with higher incomes are able successfully to transform economic capital into cultural capital through residential and school choice, private tuition and private preparations for tests and competitive examinations (Ball, 2003; Johnson, 2006; van Zanten, 2003).

Another, even more important question concerns the extent to which this renewed 'class meritocracy' has closed off opportunities for other social and ethnic groups. Although meritocracy was initially conceived as serving the interests of hard-working students from dominated groups who could benefit from scholarships to go to elite universities, there has been a growing recognition of the existence of important inequalities of access. In response to strong social pressures, in the 1960s, elite US institutions developed ambitious 'affirmative action' policies giving an edge to Black, Hispanic and Native American candidates. This involved accepting candidates from 'tagged' groups with SAT scores a bit lower than other candidates yet still within the thresholds established by each university, as well as taking into account their capacity to succeed under 'adverse circumstances'. Such measures were needed because, for reasons linked to their family background and secondary school careers in poor and underperforming schools, candidates from these groups could not compete on an equal, 'meritocratic' basis. They

nevertheless generated strong discontent, especially from the best-performing groups (Asians, in particular), in a context of 'college squeeze': a rise in the number of college-age students and a slow down of higher education expansion. In response to moves on the part of some states to make affirmative action illegal, some elite public universities (the University of Texas, the University of California) have adopted 'percentage plans' to recruit students from the largest possible number of high schools using class rank as the main indicator. While this measure has increased ethnic and social diversity in these universities, its success depends on the existence and maintenance of strong levels of segregation in high schools (Alon and Tienda, 2007). Elite private schools, on the other hand, count more on 'comprehensive reviews' of each proposal for achieving diversity. These reviews are more effective in detecting meritorious students from disadvantaged backgrounds without 'side effects', but they are very costly to implement.

In France efforts to increase social and ethnic diversity in elite higher education institutions have been much more modest. In 2001, Sciences Po developed a specific selection procedure for students from disadvantaged schools based on a specific academic exercise – a press summary – and interviews with a jury including scholars, administrators, public civil servants and managers from private firms (Sabbagh, 2002). Other less well-known institutions, such as the INSA (*Institut National des Sciences Appliquées*), have developed a selection procedure based, for half of the entrants, not on absolute results but on class rank. It is important to note that these two institutions recruit their students after the *lycée*, which allows them much more autonomy to set up original admission criteria than the *écoles*, which select their students after the *classes préparatoires*. They remain, in fact, isolated cases, and most institutions have only developed as elite universities in the UK outreach programmes providing information, assistance with the preparation of college applications and financial support for disadvantaged students. Although these programmes can be effective in limiting processes of self-exclusion due to institutional, cultural and economic factors when they are integrated into procedures including changes in the modes of selection, their impact seems limited when they are applied in isolation. It is also important to note that not all working-class and minority students are willing to submit to the cultural and social requirements of elite institutions, and that the kind of social capital they possess (strong bonding ties with members of their family and local community) not only constitutes a handicap for access but also prevents them profiting, to the same degree as middle- and upper-class students, from the social capital that these institutions provide (Allouch and van Zanten, 2008; Reay *et al.*, 2005).

Conclusion

This brief overview of elite education in the US, the UK and France has shown that, although elite institutions supported by established elite groups generally exhibit a strong reluctance to change, important transformations have taken place and are still at work in all three systems. The most important transformation, especially in the UK and US, took place after World War I, with the transition from an almost direct translation of social position into educational advantages, to the selection of talented individuals by educational institutions. Although this movement increased the autonomy and power of educational agents, it allowed only limited mobility opportunities for members of socially and ethnically dominated groups, as a new 'class meritocracy' emerged based on exclusionary processes exhibiting some differences between the three countries according to the relative importance of money, morals, manners or academic culture in class divisions (Lamont, 1992; Power *et al.*, 2003).

Also, although this article has mostly focused on changes in modes of social and institutional closure that have had significant consequences for educational and social inequalities, it is important to relate these to other changes linked to global transformations in the knowledge economy. These influences are creating new dividing lines between institutions, depending on their relationship to different economic sectors and their place in international networks and rankings, as well as between social groups, according to their capacity to integrate these new opportunities in their strategies of exclusion or usurpation (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Wagner, 2007). These new divisions and their concomitant class strategies require specific attention from sociology of education research.

Notes

- 1 The largest part of the French elite is not trained, as elsewhere, in universities but at the *grandes écoles*, which are distinct institutions of higher education. To prepare for the competitive examinations allowing access to these *écoles*, most students follow two- or three-year courses at *classes préparatoires*. Although these are more or less equivalent to undergraduate university studies, they are located in the *lycées*.
- 2 A. Allouch's personal communication based on ongoing Ph.D. research on English and French elite higher education institutions' admission procedures and outreach programmes.
- 3 Evidence on these processes is being collected and analysed in an ongoing project on elite education in France. For more details see van Zanten (2008).

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The dialogic sociology of the learning communities

Ramón Flecha

The role of egalitarian dialogue in transforming schools into learning communities

In Brazil, Chile and Spain, more than eighty schools have been transformed into learning communities through a process of making an egalitarian utopia real for thirty thousand children. This transformation process focuses on extending human rights to all children, without discriminating against anyone, and on building democratic schools (Apple and Beane, 2007), which includes providing the best possible education to every boy and every girl, especially to those who are traditionally the most excluded. The key to this transformation is egalitarian dialogue among all the actors involved. Contemporary sociological theories play a crucial role in building the conditions for this egalitarian dialogue, as described by relevant sociologists including Touraine and Wright.^{1,2}

The first phase of this transformation consists of organizing an open and egalitarian dialogue among all the citizens who have a relationship with the school: students, teachers, students' families, administrators, school volunteers, trade union representatives, NGOs. In addition, these communities always ask researchers and members of other already active learning communities to participate in this dialogue. The basis for clarifying the roles that researchers and community members play in egalitarian dialogue is the current conception that society functions 'simultaneously as systems and lifeworlds' (Habermas, 1987: 118), as structures and subjects.

That means that researchers, as members of academic structures, have an ethical and scientific obligation to contribute to this dialogue: they can bring to it the knowledge that the scientific community has developed on each educational issue, and the activities that have been most effective in overcoming school failure and improving experiences of living together. Therefore, this dialogue is egalitarian in the Habermasian sense: arguments are appreciated for their own intrinsic value (validity claims) and not because of the power position of those promoting them (power claims). Because this kind of communication is so complex and unusual, the learning communities project draws from a wide theoretical framework on speech and communicative acts, which is presented in the next section.

Egalitarian dialogue represents a move beyond both the functionalist and subjectivist perspectives, because it grants importance to all the individuals who participate in all the school

debates and decision-making processes. On the one hand, functionalism has served to legitimate a system in which educational structures determine the everyday situation in the classroom. Theories that consider only the structures do not need community dialogue: they are occupied with the analysis and decisions of academics and administrators. On the other hand, subjectivist perspectives (such as some projects in action research and participatory research) focus only on the subjects' contributions, without considering the knowledge that the educational structures have accumulated. The egalitarian dialogues that are held in learning communities integrate both the knowledge held by the scientific community and the experiences of the subjects; by considering the contributions of all parties, this more inclusive kind of community can reach agreements and make decisions that are more appropriate for all concerned.

Contrasting the researchers' scientific knowledge and the subjects' experiences, all the participants reach a mutual agreement about their own model of school. The participants can consider the best practices that research has assembled for overcoming school failure; they can discuss whether and how those findings are applicable to their own context, and whether to adapt them or try new approaches. They can also decide whether they want to go through the process of transforming themselves into a learning community. Once they conclude the process of decision-making, they notice that people start doing things differently in the school. In what follows, this transformation is illustrated through two examples that are also instances of egalitarian dialogue.

One result of this egalitarian dialogue in learning communities is that most of them decide, after discussion, to arrange their classrooms into *interactive groups* for as much time as possible. Interactive groups are small heterogeneous groups of students. In each group, there is one adult (a professional, a family member or a volunteer) who is responsible for encouraging interactions among students, so that everyone helps the others to complete all the planned activities. Thus egalitarian dialogue is present, not only during the community's debates on the main decisions regarding the school, but also in each and every learning space of the school.

Interactive groups are an example of deliberative democracy within the classroom: students from diverse backgrounds deliberate about their educational tasks, helping one another in a process that simultaneously generates solidarity and academic success. As Elster (1998) states, once people engage in deliberative democracy, they change their preferences through dialogue. A child whose goal was to be the first in his or her class shifts towards the goal of collaborating so that his or her peers can also succeed. Similar transformative processes are found among family members: those who previously wanted their children to be at the top of their class now want all the children in the classroom to succeed.

Additionally, interactive groups function better than earlier ways of organizing students and human resources, as they respond to the problems of mixture and streaming. When *mixture* (INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2006–2011) occurs, students in a heterogeneous group do not receive enough appropriate attention, because a single teacher cannot satisfactorily respond to all their diverse needs. They can get enough attention, however, when more adults are included, and they work to promote interactions among the students. Interactive groups are also an improvement on *streaming*, in which students are segregated by ability, thus missing the goal of high educational achievement for all.

A second example of educational practices that many learning communities have chosen and implemented through egalitarian dialogue is *family and community education*. This means that schools reach out to a wide range of family members and others in the community and extend educational opportunities to them. Such schools also stay open as many hours as possible throughout the week, and offer a coordinated blend of training and leisure activities. For instance,

many learning communities organize tutored libraries or dialogic literary gatherings, where parents and community members read classical literature. Egalitarian dialogue is at the centre of the *mixed committees*, where teachers, students, family members and other citizens use a process of deliberative democracy to implement the decisions they have made about the school. This process profoundly changes schools and the surrounding community.

The egalitarian dialogue makes it possible to offer all children a real utopia: academic success for everyone without discrimination. By engaging in this process, active citizens of the community reject the kind of research that promotes racism in education. For instance, the Spanish media reported one study that 'demonstrated' that when schools have more than three immigrants per classroom, the overall educational level declines (Izquierdo, 2005: 29). Later, the media rectified that incorrect statement: a major television news programme reported that, when schools that served mostly immigrants were transformed into learning communities, the academic level of all students improved. The programme showed an elementary school that had been transformed into a learning community: while the proportion of immigrant students had risen from 12 to 46 per cent, their achievement in the areas of language and reading had also risen significantly, from 17 to 85 per cent.³

Another similar example is found at the same school. Having been immersed in the mainstream public discourse, the English teacher believed that the arrival of immigrants from North Africa would lower the level of learning in the classrooms. Similarly, when some Muslim girls and mothers arrived wearing the hijab, the community generally believed that they would bring gender inequality back to Europe. When the school decided to transform itself into a learning community, however, the English teacher began to work in interactive groups in his class and he looked for volunteers in the neighbourhood. He found a Muslim mother wearing the veil, who was not highly literate and did not speak Spanish, but was fluent in English, having lived in Ireland for some years. When this Muslim mother started to volunteer in the English interactive groups, the teacher could see how the learning level of all students improved, along with the students' perception of Muslim women and gender equality. Transnational immigrants represent an important source of enrichment for European societies, so it is crucial that their talents be considered. For instance, many undocumented immigrants in Spain have higher levels of English knowledge than do Spaniards themselves.

Beyond the theory of communicative action: communicative acts

In the schools that have been transformed into learning communities, the dialogue occurs among all the citizens involved. It is not only a dialogue about pedagogical innovations between students and teachers in classrooms where other members of the community cannot step in. Instead, the dialogue is among people of very different status who may play quite different roles in schools and in society. Therefore, the main goal of this dialogue is not just to develop innovative teaching methods, but rather to move towards equality of results (beyond equal opportunity) by transforming schools, communities and society. Current sociological theories increasingly provide elements to develop descriptive analyses of those dialogues and offer normative criteria to make them more egalitarian.

As the social sciences and societies have turned dialogic, the analysis of dialogue has become a valued resource for either reproducing or transforming social reality. In turn, Jürgen Habermas (1984, 1987) built his theory of communicative action, taking John L. Austin's (1962) theory

of speech acts as a starting point. Overcoming the traditional barrier between language and the world, Austin developed pragmatic linguistics with his concepts of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts: 'The locutionary act has some meaning; the illocutionary act has a certain force in saying something; the perlocutionary act is the achieving of certain effects by saying something' (p. 121). For example, the utterance 'The administrator told us that "students learn more when they are organized in ability grouping"' is a locution, while 'We protested because most of the poor immigrants are placed in the lower ability groups' is an illocution for indicating a force (a protest), and 'The administrator discouraged us' is a perlocution because it includes the effect that this speech act had.

Habermas applies sociology to Austin's language theory by associating speech acts with actions. Because strategic action is oriented towards success, it is based on perlocutionary speech acts. Because communicative action is oriented to consensus, it is based on illocutionary speech acts. When a dialogue between a student, his/her teacher and his/her family members is a strategic action, at least one of them is using perlocutionary speech acts, oriented to succeed according to his or her power claims. Sometimes the expert teacher does not want to have the 'difficult' students in his/her classroom; s/he wants to see them moved to another classroom, often that of the newest teacher. He or she orients his/her conversation with the family members to convince them that this is good for the child. He or she may say, 'We want to put your daughter in the other classroom in order to accelerate her learning'. Because his/her goal is to get them to accept what he/she considers to be better for him/her, he/she uses perlocutionary acts based on power claims to hide his/her real intention. A mother may ask, 'Why are the "difficult children" who are excluded from regular classrooms almost always Roma, immigrant and poor children?' The teacher would then reinforce his/her opinion using a power claim based on his status, answering that he/she is the expert on education and the one who knows what is best for the children.

When a dialogue between a student, the teacher and a family member is a communicative action, they use illocutionary speech acts oriented to reach consensus about what will help the student to achieve the maximum of instrumental learning, values and emotional development. They will all say what they really think on the basis of validity claims, rather than power claims. For example, the expert teacher may explain to the family members that he/she finds it difficult to manage the classroom with so many different ability levels and with some students behaving badly. He/she even might propose putting the 'difficult ones' into a separate classroom with another teacher. Family members then can tell him/her that a citizens' assembly was analyzing the interactive groups at another school, which are one way of overcoming these difficulties without excluding any child. In communicative action, the teacher does not appeal to his/her status or use power claims; he/she only uses validity claims, as do the other members of the citizens' assembly.

In his theory of communicative action, Habermas (1984) elaborated on the work of John Searle (Searle and Soler, 2009). However, Searle criticized Habermas for not having understood the theories of both Austin and Searle as they apply to speech acts. We agree with this critique. Searle clarifies that Austin relates illocutionary speech acts to understanding, and Habermas wrongly includes in this notion of understanding an orientation to reaching consensus. According to Austin (1962), illocutionary speech acts allow the teacher and the family members to understand one another's positions, but this does not mean they are willing to reach consensus. As Habermas defines illocutionary speech acts, the teacher and the family members try to understand each other, but also aim to reach a consensus.

Although we agree with Searle that it is incorrect to attribute this normative dimension (reaching consensus) to Austin's illocutionary speech acts, we agree with Habermas that this dimension is important to the process of communication. We need the latter process, more than Austin's original concept, both to understand social actions today and to provide approaches to improve these actions. The Habermasian conception of illocutionary speech acts helps us to analyse the dialogues among all citizens about schools, as well as to provide perspectives for improving these dialogues in order to transform schools and educational systems today.

Post-structuralist critiques of Habermas have stated that he overlooks power. The theory of communicative action, however, differentiates between the use of power claims and validity claims. Foucault (1977) and Derrida (1967) consider that all relations are power based, including those that Habermas considers to be based on validity claims. Learning communities are not based on the thinking of these authors, because it is impossible to advance towards egalitarian educational transformations based on these post-structuralist stances. If all relations are based on power, why should we favour democratic schools that overcome segregation? And why should we work to transform authoritarian schools that segregate immigrants and poor students? Of course, Foucault and Derrida do not aim to provide a normative framework to help distinguish between what is democratic and egalitarian and what it is not. In fact, they have never pretended to do so.⁴

Still, it is true that Habermas has not developed elements that can be used to deeply analyse the power interactions that are present in communicative actions. His conception does not clarify that, in the real world, even the most dialogic relations include power interactions to some extent. When the experienced teacher talks to family members, even if his approach is totally dialogical, he cannot avoid the fact that he has a position of power in relation to poor students and families. Beyond Habermas' ideal conditions for communicative action, which are based on the speakers' intentions, egalitarian dialogue must consider those power interactions. Instead of being based on the ethics of intentions, learning communities are based on the Weberian ethics of responsibility, accounting for those interactions and therefore for the possible results of communication between teachers, students and family members. Those communities distinguish between dialogic relationships and power relationships. In dialogic relationships, dialogic interactions (not only validity claims) prevail over power interactions; in power relationships, power interactions (not only power claims) prevail over dialogic interactions.

In the learning communities, teachers, students, family members and other citizens have dialogic relationships. Their debates are grounded in arguments (dialogic interactions) and not in their unequal status in the social structures (power interactions); still, they are aware that those inequalities have an influence on their dialogues and on their consensus. In their dialogues they include the public awareness of this influence and the efforts they make to overcome it.

Another limitation of Austin's theory of speech acts for the present sociological analysis is that it implicitly reduces communication to speech. Communication is much more than words; it also includes looks, tones of voice, gestures and much more in the relationships among experienced teachers, family members and students. The theory of communicative acts, unlike the theory of speech acts, includes all those elements. Dialogic communicative acts are based, not only on arguments (words), but also on other elements of dialogic interactions, such as the practice of equally considering all the social actors who participate in them. Power communicative acts are based, not only on the words of those who place themselves in a superior category of knowledge and social structure, but also on elements such as their unequal and authoritarian attitudes.

The dialogic transformation of the school system

Through the egalitarian dialogue within the school context, citizens gain the strength to work to transform the school system. They gain this strength mainly from their arguments, which is the *force* that Austin attributes to the illocutionary speech acts and that learning communities attribute to the wider concept of illocutionary communicative acts.

These citizens bring into the public debate on education their practical and theoretical arguments in order to help overcome school failure and to improve everyone's experiences of living together. Of course, these public debates are based on dialogic communicative acts with dialogic interactions, but they also include many power interactions rooted in the school system and social structure. Policymakers and members of the upper and middle classes have many resources that allow them to impose their interests and objectives. However, in the public debate, it is the arguments that count the most. Thus, the learning communities have been built within a solid framework based on arguments that are not easy to dismiss publicly.

Learning communities succeed because they transform these public debates into dialogic communicative acts. They succeed because they place so much stress on arguments, so that the dialogic interactions have more force than the power interactions rooted in structuralist positions. Without public debates, it is possible for policymakers to impose their segregation policies on the most disadvantaged students in special classrooms. But when the learning community discusses the local children's school experiences, these policymakers must accept their arguments, especially if they reject these policies. These dialogic communicative acts demonstrate that the theories of reproduction are wrong when subjects challenge structures and transform them from their perspective as active citizens. These transformations resonate with what Wright (2008) calls *real utopias*.

Along similar lines, the collaboration between citizens and dialogic researchers has been very productive in social research. In the Framework Programs of Research (FPR) of the European Union, one instrument is commanding the most resources and high scientific recognition: the Integrated Projects. While the FPR have traditionally been dedicated to biochemistry, information technology and similar areas, for the first time an integrated project has been dedicated to analysing schooling: the INCLUD-ED. The European Union's purpose in launching these programmes was to generate new scientific knowledge that would better inform European policies. Thus, depending on their orientation, FPR projects have great potential to transform policies. In the social sciences, the programme's main objective is to promote social cohesion, which includes overcoming the social exclusion and inequalities that face the most disadvantaged groups. The final conference of the FPR project WORKALÓ (a transnational study about the Roma population in Europe) was held in the headquarters of the European Parliament. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were taking notes on the debates between researchers and subjects. A woman who introduced herself as an illiterate Roma grandmother presented the summary of the project's main conclusions (Beck-Gernsheim *et al.*, 2003). One of the MEPs who attended brought these conclusions to the European Parliament; there they were included in a resolution that was later approved unanimously (European Parliament Resolution, 2005).

Similar resolutions were also passed at the level of EU member states. For instance, the Spanish parliament unanimously approved a resolution to recognize the Roma as one of the people of Spain (Congreso de los Diputados, 2005). As a consequence of this decision, the Spanish State Council of the Roma was created, and the state committed to consulting with this council on any policy that affects the Roma. This recognition is seen as a historically crucial change that

has deeply transformed six centuries of relations between the Spanish state and the Roma. During the 1980s, some Roma warned about the potential negative consequences for their children, in terms of absenteeism and school failure, of the national school reform that was developed and finally approved in 1990.⁵ But the experts and the policymakers dismissed their statements. After the transformation generated by the WORKALÓ project, today the state is obligated to listen to these voices. Dialogic sociology, as found in the WORKALÓ project, made real the objective of *public sociology* (Burawoy, 2005), by moving beyond the academy and engaging with wider audiences.

Citizens participating in the learning communities are very diverse in terms of gender, social class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion etc., as well as their ideological and political stands. Some citizens argue that if policymakers change their decisions through dialogic communicative acts in public debates, it is owing to a real change of attitudes: they see politicians as now assuming they must look for the best education for all children, including the underprivileged. Others argue that policymakers have not changed their attitudes but instead feel pressured by the public debate. Even if this is the case, this change represents important benefits for the egalitarian transformation of the school system. Elster (1999) explains this situation as the 'civilizing force of hypocrisy: If we take account of equity effects as well as efficiency effects, arguing in public is probably a superior form of collective decision making' compared to bargaining in private. But of course, 'this is not a statement for which proof can be offered' (p. 402).

Today, European Union officials are mainly preoccupied with efficiency and equity in the school outcomes of different social groups. Because statistics such the results on the PISA examinations have had such a strong impact in the media, most of the public debate focuses on the limited and biased data this survey provides. Some teachers and authors opposed these statistics; they defended their students' poor performance on the tests as a form of resistance and radicalism. In the learning communities, family members and other citizens criticize these authors and teachers as self-labelled 'radicals': they say they oppose the efforts made to obtain equal educational outcomes for all the students, including the most disadvantaged ones (efficiency and equity), while sending their own children to college (equity without efficiency for some, unequal efficiency for their own).

The activities of learning communities are oriented towards an egalitarian reform of the school system and society. They consider a wide range of dimensions. These schools are struggling with gender-based violence, racism and war. Instead of discussing values and emotions, these schools take action by restructuring all their spaces and dynamics on the basis of solidarity and emotional development. This process is part of the egalitarian transformation towards overcoming the current unequal results on mathematics, language and science along the lines of class, gender and race. The professionals and families participating in these schools are very aware that, if poor children fail an exam in mathematics, that does not mean that their school is more radical. What makes a school radical and transformative is that everything is done in solidarity, including the teaching of mathematics.

Learning communities demonstrate that egalitarian transformation is possible; they are aware that some actions support positive progress towards this aim and some do not. The FPR INCLUD-ED project is focused on clarifying the transformative strategies and their transposition into EU member states and regional governmental policies. There are many examples of this kind of transformation; we offer two of them below.

Having seen the success of the transformative actions that INCLUD-ED selected in twenty-six Basque schools, the Basque Country government developed a plan to extend this work to

its entire school system. The minister of education said publicly that his dream is to transform the Basque Country into a learning community. This plan has not been developed by the Basque government itself, but through a very open and long dialogue among all kinds of citizen: trade union members, teachers, researchers, manual workers, members of social movements, families, students, women's organizations. This dialogue was conducted through illocutionary communicative acts.

A second example is found in the General Directorate of Education of the European Union, particularly in the cluster called 'Access and Social Inclusion in Lifelong Learning'. This body is composed of two representatives for each country: one from the government and one from the NGO sector. Members of the cluster have analysed the actions that INCLUD-ED selected, along with the theoretical developments and practical experiences of learning communities. They have done so by discussing them directly with the involved citizens in the communities. The cluster recommended that those activities be implemented in the various European member states.

Dialogic sociology has facilitated many of the transformations outlined here. These transformations are becoming relevant for many people, especially, but not only, the underprivileged. They are also important for those researchers who want to collaborate in a process of transforming the school systems and societies. In doing so, the authors in this approach are working along the lines of what Erik Wright (2008) calls the sociology of possibility and not of what he calls the sociology of impossibility. Just one day before this present chapter was completed, the European Union condemned segregated special classrooms for immigrants, arguing that they should not be separated from the rest of the children (Missé, 2009: 37). This resolution will transform the lives and the opportunities of many children. And this kind of transformation is the reason why an increasing number of sociologists are working on dialogic sociology.

Notes

- 1 'Sometimes, as Ramón Flecha here demonstrates, knowledge flows from the bottom up, when individuals with no degree or academic background "produce" and "invent" cultural analyses on the basis of their own experience, their thought, and the exchange with other inventors or their own culture' (Touraine, 2000).
- 2 'One site where this already occurs in some places is in education. In Barcelona, Spain, some public elementary schools have been turned into what they call "learning communities" in which the governance of the school is substantially shifted to parents, teachers and members of the community, and the function of the school shifts from narrowly teaching children to providing a broader range of learning activities for the community as a whole' (Wright, 2008: 20).
- 3 www.tv3.cat/videos/1009029/TN-migdia-2022009 (minute 31:22).
- 4 The learning communities project aims to transform schools by instituting dialogic relations instead of power relations. Learning communities represent a deep critique of the social and educational exclusion created by power and the lies associated with this exclusion. On the other hand, Foucault (1977) does not consider power to be negative in itself: 'We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals"' (p. 194). Along similar lines, Derrida (1967: 21) tries to deconstruct – to destroy – the signification of truth, while learning communities follow the opposite orientation, which Chomsky (1996: 56) describes: 'The responsibility of the writer as a moral agent is to try to bring the truth about matters of human significance to an audience that can do something about them.'

- 5 The school reform implemented at that time was LOGSE – Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo de España.

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The democratization of governance in the Citizen School project

Building a new notion of accountability in education

Luis Armando Gandin

Speaking at the World Social Forum in Belém, Brazil in January of 2009, David Harvey presented the concept of "the right to the city":

I have been working for some time on the idea of the Right to the City. I take it that Right to the City means the right of all of us to create cities that meet human needs, our needs. . . . The right to the city is not simply the right to what already exists in the city but the right to make the city into something radically different.

(Harvey, 2009: 5)

This concept summarizes what the experience of the Popular Administration (a coalition of leftist parties, led by the Workers Party) and its Citizen School project in Porto Alegre intended to create: rather than perpetuating the current narrow view of accountability in education, based on a market-centered worldview, the Popular Administration started implementing what Harvey describes. As Harvey says, people have a "right to construct different kinds of cities" and not only receive "crumbs from the rich man's table" (Harvey, 2009: 5). At the center of the Citizen School project was precisely the idea that the priority in public policy has to be, more than merely guaranteeing access to what the city already has to offer to its citizens (what, in the case of the *favela* dwellers, would certainly be already a step-up), changing the relationship between the communities and the state. The state has to be taught by the communities how to interact with them; the school has to change its structures and presuppositions and not simply demand students from the *favelas* to either adapt or leave, as traditional schools do. Being accountable to communities in this context is more than merely "doing what's best for the client"; it represents building up a relationship of commitment between state and communities; this is the kind of change in educational public policy that offers an alternative that is not only a distant reality but one that is being implemented in a large Brazilian city.

In previous publications (Gandin 2006, 2009a,b), I examined the experience of the Citizen School project implemented in the municipal schools of Porto Alegre. The conception of the Citizen School was implemented over a period of sixteen years (starting in 1989) by the Popular Administration, a coalition of leftist parties, led by the Workers Party. The Citizen School project

evolved as a program, defined collectively by the actors involved, of democratization of access to schools, knowledge, and governance. In this chapter I will concentrate my analysis on the democratization of governance promoted inside the schools, in the relationship between the Municipal Secretariat of Education (SMED) and the schools, and between communities and the schools.

The democratization of governance in Porto Alegre's municipal schools

In the context of the Citizen School project, democratizing governance involved the democratization of the relationships inside schools, between the school and the community, and between the school and the SMED. The democratization of governance implied the creation of an institutional design that could generate the empowered participation of teachers, staff, parents, and administrators in the undertaking of decisions about education in Porto Alegre, as well as a system of monitoring that guaranteed that the collectively agreed-upon decisions were being implemented. The democratization of governance also gave the culture of the community a central role in the educational and administrative spheres of the school and school system; both the state agencies and the communities had to learn together how to construct new mechanisms that represented the will of the communities.

The decision-making and monitoring processes in the educational system of Porto Alegre occur at various levels: for example, the establishment of a broad city policy for education and its constant evaluation; deliberation about how to invest the money allocated by the central administration to the school; and the creation of an educational model that builds mechanisms of inclusion to struggle against a society that marginalizes the impoverished students and denies them valuable knowledge.

The Constituent Assembly of Education (held in 1995) was a core element of this process of democratization. Gathering more than 500 delegates (in a process that started with meetings in every school and extended for more than a year) from the school communities, the Assembly formulated the broad policy directives implemented by the SMED (Silva, 1999). This alone marks a significant departure from the traditional model, in which decisions are handed down from above while implementation is left to the schools. Through their elected delegates, schools and their communities were actively involved in the construction of the educational policy in Porto Alegre. This is a unique aspect of the Citizen School project. Fung, who studied the Local Schools Councils in Chicago (1999) and classified them as highly positive, nevertheless suggests that "centralized interventions, themselves formulated through deliberation, would then further enhance the deliberative, participatory, and empowered character of otherwise isolated local actions" (Fung, 1999: 26). This combination, suggested by Fung as ideal, seems to be exactly what has been achieved in Porto Alegre.

Another important element to emphasize is that the experience in Porto Alegre has been serving as a viable alternative to the neo-liberal market-based solutions for management and monitoring of the quality of public schools in other parts of Brazil. Involvement of the parents and of the students in important decisions and active monitoring in the school (not merely peripheral decisions) gives them a real sense of what "public" means in public school. At the same time, because the SMED has been able to involve teachers actively in the transformations—as well as to help improve their qualifications and salaries—instead of merely blaming them and their unions for the problems in education (common practice in the neo-liberal driven

reforms), the Popular Administration has been able to include every segment of the schools in the collective project of constructing quality education in the impoverished neighborhoods where municipal schools are situated. Thus, instead of opting for a doctrine that merely treats parents as consumers of education (treated itself as a commodity), the Citizen School became an alternative that challenges this idea. Parents, students, teachers, staff, and administrators are responsible for working collectively, each contributing their knowledge and expertise, to create better education. In this way, the Citizen School has defined itself over and against the market logic that offers only competition and "exit" as solutions for parents.

The market logic, with "exit" as a solution to the problems of the disadvantaged groups in public schools, does not provide any mechanism for actively involving parents directly in improving the quality of the schools. As research has shown (Whitty *et al.*, 1998), "choice" schemes merely offer an individual option that does not contribute at all to the formation of networks of citizens interested in bettering, not only their schools, but also their communities. In the Citizen School, the active involvement of the community in the schools is a mechanism to guarantee the improved performance of the school and for holding teachers and administrators accountable to the parents and to the community. The school council, with its powers to deliberate, regulate, and monitor, together with the Constituent Assembly of Education, where principles were constructed, provides a mechanism that can generate schools that are open to assessment of quality by the community.

The Citizen School was a project for the excluded. Not only students, however, have been benefiting from the improved quality education they receive. Parents, students, and school staff, usually mere spectators of the processes of decision-making in the traditional school, are now part of the structure of governance inside the school council and bring their knowledge "to the table." In fact, the whole process challenges the cultural model that says that poor and "uneducated" people should not or cannot participate because they do not know how to do so.

It is true that lack of information can be a real deterrent for effective participation. The Popular Administration argued strongly that participation was a process that had to be nurtured; therefore, it launched, in the first years of the project, a program to provide training and information so that people could participate knowledgeably in the school councils and in other participatory structures such as the Participatory Budget (a mechanism that guarantees active popular participation and deliberation in the decision-making process for the allocation of resources for investment in the city; see Santos, 1998). Thus, the transfer of technical knowledge has been an important part of the process. In this sense, the Popular Administration and the SMED seem to have understood perfectly Offe's observation that the functional superiority of a new model of participation does not by itself solve all the problems involved in major democratic reforms (Offe, 1995: 125–126). The mechanisms of the Citizen School redefine the participants as subjects, as historical actors. Participants are not only implementing rules, but are part of an historical experiment of reconstructing the organization of the municipal state.

One problem that afflicts democratic governance structures such as the school councils is the possibility that participants who historically have held more power will continue to dominate them. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, given the experiences of similar experiments elsewhere. Some specific factors in the case of Porto Alegre, however, reduce the risk of this. First, the municipal schools are all situated in the most impoverished areas of Porto Alegre. Therefore, the classical examples of middle-class parents dominating the discussions (see McGrath and Kuriloff, 1999) are avoided because, as a rule, there are no middle-class parents in the regions where the schools are located. Two studies of the Participatory Budget (OP) in

Porto Alegre offer some indirect evidence (Abers, 1998; Santos, 1998), and one study offers direct empirical evidence (Baiocchi, 1999) that shows that there is no domination by powerful groups in the deliberative processes. In the OP, there is gender parity among the participants of the meetings, and the proportion of "less-educated" people corresponds to the city average (Baiocchi, 1999: 7). While it is true that there are more men and educated people speaking at the meetings, the research has also shown that the main factor determining who speaks is the number of years of participation. There is a learning curve that encourages people with more years of participation to speak. In fact "participation over time seems to increase participation parity" (Baiocchi, 1999: 10). This is a very encouraging conclusion, especially given the project's conscious pedagogical aims. Having said that, there are no data about the composition of the various mechanisms of the Citizen School itself, and therefore there is no evaluation of this potential problem in the schools of Porto Alegre.

The way financial resources are decentralized and transferred directly to the schools also brings about changes inside them. This requires principals, teachers, and the members of the school council to learn how to deal with public money. In contrast, the historical centralism of the educational system in Brazil instilled distrust and an inability to deal with the notion of public resources. The opportunity for those who take part in the Citizen School project is to learn, while doing it, how to create consensual democratic rules regarding how to allocate these public resources and how to create democratic ways of monitoring their use. In this sense it restores to the public the position that had been historically privatized by the interests of the dominant groups (Genro, 1999)—and it does so by including members of the community who recover their dignity by breaking with the dominant notion that, because they live in a *favela*, they are too miserable to be able to participate in a governance structure.

Baiocchi (1999), referring to the OP, says that there is a real empowerment of the poorer groups, because their demands now have a channel and their voices can be heard. This is also certainly true in the case of the Citizen School and its structures, as I showed above. In the Brazilian context, where citizenship has always represented merely a right to vote (actually a duty, because voting is compulsory in Brazil), the idea of being part of the real decisions concerning the life of the institution responsible for the education of their children is a tremendous achievement for those groups, something that organized social movements have been fighting for for decades. If we consider also the OP (and the close relation between the OP and the schools is itself a great democratic achievement), the consequences of the aggregated participation in essential spheres of their lives create a real change in the way impoverished communities organize themselves and relate to the state. Baiocchi (1999) shows how that participation in deliberative instances is not breaking down political interests into ever-smaller parochial issues, but promoting an increasingly active citizenry, attentive to the larger issues of the city and country. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that the Citizen School is helping to produce, together with the other initiatives of the Popular Administration, empowered citizens (all the segments of the school community), who not only deliberate about the best way of administering schools but have an active role in monitoring public institutions in order to generate effective state practices.

Yet another element of the democratization of governance is the radical democratization of the internal management of the schools. The election of principals was a long-time cause for teachers' unions in Brazil as part of the larger conception of democratic management. Direct elections for principals guarantee that the coordinator of the school is not a person chosen because she or he has a good relationship with the administration (something that happens in the majority of the public schools in Brazil). Any teacher can be a candidate, without needing

a special degree—an important step towards challenging the idea that only those with a degree in school administration can manage effectively. By questioning this premise, the Citizen School project shows that the process that is occurring in the education of the students—problematization of what counts as knowledge—is also occurring at the administrative level. Having said that, the SMED is aware of the difficulties of a principal's task and therefore offers periodic training to those who wish to be candidates.

The process of direct election of principals by the whole educational community produces great voter turnout. Every election, thousands of people vote in the elections for principals; communities are involved in the election process. This is also an important part of the democratic learning process of the communities, especially because it triggers a debate about the proposals for management of the school. Prospective principals campaign in the school and in the community, where they must offer a proposal for their term of office with the ideas that they want to implement if elected.

Furthermore, in contrast to the traditional schools where curriculum is selected and constructed outside the school and only "implemented" by teachers (the ever-present separation between conception and execution in schools, analyzed by Apple, 1988), in the Citizen School the entire curriculum is developed by teachers inside each school. This alone is already an innovative governance structure of the SMED, which does not conceive the curriculum in the secretariat but urges each school to engage in a creative process of collective construction of the school curriculum. As a result, a totally new structure is created, one related to the management of curriculum development inside the school. The steps taken by the schools to create their curriculum, which involve research in the communities, guarantee that there are democratic spaces and that it is not only teachers who participate in the process of the construction of the curriculum. Community leaders, social movements (formal and informal), key cultural leadership, and so on, through the statements collected in the participatory research, also contribute to the final product.

In this sense, the school has a high degree of autonomy. Autonomy has come to mean several different things, especially after the neo-liberal rearticulation of this term, so it is important to develop a precise understanding of the autonomy to construct curriculum. Warde talks about a progressive and democratic definition of autonomy. According to her,

School autonomy is the freedom to formulate and execute an educational project . . .

It is only feasible when the school is involved in a radically new political project about democracy and its top-down structures and relations are destroyed.

(Warde, 1992: 86)

This is the kind of autonomy that the municipal schools in Porto Alegre are constructing. By radically reconfiguring the "structures and relations," schools created spaces for the establishment of collective reasoning and the search for ever-better education, collectively developed by teachers. With the creation of spaces for critique and innovation, even if the administration were tempted to interfere in the schools, it would have to deal with this disposition for critique of top-down decisions and fixed structures. This is a significant indication of the success of the democratization of governance in the schools.

Finally, it is important to point out that, by building democratization of access to school, democratization of knowledge, and democratization of governance, the Citizen School project offers a concrete demonstration of its idea of citizenship. The project is producing citizens with access to quality education in schools where students construct knowledge in the dialogue

between high culture and popular knowledge, with neither treated as ultimately superior to the other. Furthermore, these are citizens who can concretely understand that the solution to their economic difficulties is not individual escape; who view solidarity as a worthy goal; who both value the collective and respect differences. These citizens are much more than mere consumers, a category that reduces participation in society to exchanges in the marketplace. This is the notion of citizenship that the Citizen School is helping to construct.

The Citizen School project was able to provide a new social imaginary for all those involved in the progressive transformation of schools. By constructing a new model in the educational system of Porto Alegre, the Popular Administration and the SMED provided more than a new political language for progressive teachers, parents, and teachers' unions: they actually gave them a concrete working example that shows that it is possible to build a counter-hegemonic alternative. The Citizen School project offers not just a discursive anchor for the supporters of a school that aims at fighting exclusion and commoditization in education: it provides a reality, an example of success, a viable way of forging a counter-hegemonic movement in education, an alternative to the mainstream notion of accountability. This project is a reference that can always be pointed to as a working case of the principles of social justice in education. In a time where progressive experiences are attacked (correctly in some cases, maliciously in others) for not delivering what they promised,¹ the Citizen School project symbolizes the possibility of constructing counter-hegemonic reforms. Rather than affecting only the municipal schools of Porto Alegre, the Citizen School has an impact in the imagination of all who struggle for an education that deals at the same time with a redistribution of public goods and recognition of differences.

Final remarks

Analyzing the conservative reforms in education prevalent around the world, Smyth (2001) claims that there is a possible alternative to these reforms that, in the name of devolution, give schools all the "responsibilities and no power" (p. 73). As he states, this alternative should be "dramatically different" from the market-driven models and

it is one in which schools are educationally vibrant places—where parents, teachers, students, and the community feel they are able to freely engage in discussion and debate about what is going on, why, and with what effect. There is also an absence of schools being bludgeoned into submission using crude and narrow economic agenda. There are genuine opportunities for dialogue, chances to understand one another's perspective outside coercion, and a greater tolerance, difference, and diversity in contrast to conformity and uniformity produced by some centrally determined market model.

(Smyth 2001: 83)

In this chapter, I have sought to examine the capacity of the Citizen School project to convert itself into an alternative to the market-driven models in education. To a great extent, Smyth's description of what an alternative could look like matches what I found in the Citizen School project.

In fact, in my research I encountered schools that truly are "vibrant places," where there is an environment of creativity, participation, and dialogue, not only among teachers and between teachers and students, but also in the communities where the schools are situated. Even the critique of some of the practices and measures of the SMED is, in fact, evidence of the fertile

terrain for discussion and dissent created inside the schools and of the effort that these schools make to search for better forms of constructing an education that really caters to the formerly excluded students.

The municipal schools in Porto Alegre are also clearly not subject to a "narrow economic agenda"; actually, they are explicit about their practices for avoiding this kind of subjection. In fact, the SMED acts as a protective shield, behind which schools can construct their curriculum and new ways to involve the communities in the educational process of the students, rather than responding to conservative attacks. The seriousness with which the SMED demands from the schools the precise implementation of what the educational laws mandate, the high priority it gives to creating schools that have excellent material conditions compared with the past, and the relatively high salaries it pays to its teachers, end up resulting in a great deal of legitimacy for its actions.

In the municipal schools of Porto Alegre, I have encountered teachers with a renewed hope in the possibility of constructing a radically different school from the one they attended. I witnessed teachers actively creating a curriculum for their school by interacting with the communities and meeting regularly at times especially allocated and institutionally guaranteed for dialogue about their methodology and their goals with the specific network of concepts they are developing with their students. Rather than being pressured for a kind of accountability that only looks at test results, these teachers are socially, politically, and culturally accountable. Quality in this context is not reduced to accumulation of information, nor even the ability to establish connections among concepts; it is also linked to the schools' capacity to generate a culturally embedded curriculum that engages students in creative thinking and, to a certain extent, in actions that could lead to social transformation in the future.

In fact, besides having the organizational aspects characterized by Smyth as central to any alternative project, the Citizen School has also challenged the dominant notion of what counts as valid knowledge. In the municipal schools, the curriculum creation is part of a larger process of questioning "official knowledge" and valuing the culture of the communities. In this sense, this is a project that is implementing the idea of a "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Drawing from Ladson-Billings' conceptualizations, Fletcher (2000) talks about the kind of work that this pedagogy should be doing in schools:

Instead of trying to convince students that the traditional curriculum will serve them, if only they can master it, a culturally relevant pedagogy offers students an active role in questioning the knowledge they encounter in school and attempts to give students a place to engage in their own critical reconstructions.

(p. 177)

This is exactly what the Citizen School seems to be doing. It is constructing what Ladson-Billings (1994) would call "bridges or a scaffolding" that can help students to "be where they need to be to participate fully and meaningfully in the construction of knowledge" (p. 96). The Citizen School project is trying to invert the traditional linear conception of knowledge in schools. The notion of building "bridges or scaffolding" breaks away from this linear rationale and interprets knowledge construction as a process that must start with the culture of the students, but not stop there. It has to build what Santos (1989) calls a "double epistemological rupture," an undertaking that creates dialogue between common sense and scientific knowledge and, in this dialogic process, problematizes both of them. The fact that this goal exists in the project and has been actively pursued is promising in terms of forging this double rupture.

Yet another important aspect of the Citizen School project that makes it an alternative to mainstream models of accountability in education is the fact that it is not a voluntaristic experience, nor an experience that is restricted to the space of schools. Zeichner (1991) insists that one of the great problems with reforms in education is the fact that they are not linked to efforts of larger transformation in society. He states,

advocating democratic educational projects without explicitly calling for general social reconstruction serves to strengthen the mistaken view—so successfully ingrained in the public consciousness in these times of conservative resurgence—that the schools are largely responsible for the whole host of rotten outcomes that confront so many of our children. Remaining silent on the need for broader social, economic, and political change only serves to create false expectations about what can be accomplished by educational reform alone. The position that I have supported here is that no school organizational plan or level of autonomy in school decision making for teachers or the community, by itself, will ever be sufficient for dealing with the institutional and structural inequalities in our society that underlie the educational problems in the schools.

(Zeichner, 1991: paragraph 42)

What the case of Porto Alegre offers is educational reform that addresses the complex problems of exclusion and access, the issue of what is valued as knowledge, and the lack of democratic structures inside schools in a close relation with the larger project of the Popular Administration in Porto Alegre, which aims at redistribution and recognition (Fraser, 1998). Schools have an essential role in this larger project, especially because they educate citizens who will be better prepared to demand more and better democratic structures and to participate in the ones that are already in place. Nevertheless, as Zeichner points out, schools alone cannot perform the necessary social and political transformation necessary to construct social justice.

If constructing new school structures and culture is not sufficient to perform the kinds of necessary larger transformation that Zeichner calls for, without these new structures and culture, schools actually act as barriers for this larger project. That is why it was so important to break away from structures and a culture that perpetuates exclusion. This is something that the Citizen School project, despite the difficulties, has managed to achieve, by, among other things, its conception of democratization of governance.

Note

- 1 Diane Ravitch published a long book in which she, from a rightist perspective, criticizes the left and the progressives for not accomplishing in education what they promised (Ravitch, 2000). For a critical review of the book see Apple (2001). In this review, Apple argues that, in the book, Ravitch "misconstrues or ignores many of the most powerful dynamics that actually create the conditions that led to or prevented school reform, and . . . stereotypes thousands of committed educators who have devoted their lives to schooling" (Apple, 2001: 332).

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Syncretism and hybridity

Schooling, language, and race and students from non-dominant communities¹

Kris D. Gutiérrez, Arshad Ali and Cecilia Henríquez

Race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now . . . The fact is . . . the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflect the complexities of race in this country that we've never really worked through—a part of our union we have yet to perfect. And if we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together and solve [the challenges that face America today].

(President Barack Obama, March 18, 2008, Philadelphia, PA; Scholars Roundtable)

The 2008 United States election exposed the ways racist ideologies and practices are deeply implicated in US history and made visible the ways in which class alone cannot explain the persistent inequities experienced by people from non-dominant communities.² President Obama's historic speech on race, motivated by persistent racialized attacks throughout the election, initiated an important discussion of race in the public sphere. Yet, despite attempts to address key issues of race, as in President Obama's speech, the language of race relations too often obfuscates the structural and historical basis of racial inequality (Steinberg, 2007). Similarly, the discourses of schooling in the US veil the fundamental structural basis of racial and class hierarchies and inequities.

This chapter uses the schooling experiences of non-dominant students in the US as a case of a globalized phenomenon in which the significant backslide towards greater economic and social inequality has heightened the educational disparities experienced by students from non-dominant communities. It focuses on the ways the theoretical concept and social constructs of race are implicitly and deeply connected to issues of culture and identity (Kubota and Lin, in press). Further, it explores how language and literacies have become proxies for race that serve as the means for institutionalizing curricular forms of segregation, marginalization, and othering. Finally, it highlights the need for a theoretical explanation of the ways race, language, and literacy constitute capital in schooling environments—and the need for a gendered and raced political economy that emanates from the standpoints of non-dominant communities (Luke, in press).

Finally, it challenges approaches that rely on a reductive and essentializing mono-cultural and monolingual lens to define students' linguistic repertoires and to design their educational futures.

"Racing-language"³

The relationship between language, race, and culture has long been a topic of interest across disciplines and fields, such as anthropology and linguistic anthropology (Alim, 2009; Boas, 1940; Zentella, 1997), sociology (Bernstein, 1975), sociolinguistics (Baugh, 1988, 1997; Harris and Rampton, 2003; Lee, 1993; Smitherman, 1977), and education (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2001). However, the asymmetrical relations between language and language speakers have not been sufficiently addressed or explored intersectionally with class and race differences (Urciuoli, 1995: 533). For example, Urciuoli (1995) has addressed how language/power asymmetries, such as those between Spanish and English, emerge when "people have to negotiate across power relations" (p. 535) and public institutions; this is particularly poignant in school contexts where "class and race differences that are mapped onto language are reproduced in the practices and performances that make up students' experiences" (Foley, 1990, as cited in Urciuoli, 1995: 537). To change the way we theorize and examine these relationships, linguistic anthropologists suggest that a serious effort must be put into theorizing race to understand how the practices of language are tied to linguistic and racial inequality (Alim, 2009)—what Alim calls "race-ing language"; with simultaneous attention to "linguaging race," that is, theorizing language to understand how race works.

Rethinking the constructs: syncretic and historicizing perspectives

These new theorizations notwithstanding, there has been insufficient attention to theorizing the relationship between race and language, and this has occurred across disciplinary boundaries, theoretical perspectives, and methods. Steinberg (2007), for example, has argued that sociology remains a "white sociology," even in discussions of racial inequality, where dominant perspectives and interests are maintained by focusing on the "victims" instead of those who perpetuate racial oppression and historical inequality. Steinberg proposes an inversion of normative practices so that the standpoints of those who are the object of racial oppression are privileged.

In the domain of education, researchers (Gutiérrez, 2006; Gutiérrez & Arzubiaga, 2008) petitioned scholars to examine how their own work helps to construct and sustain essentialist and deficit narratives of the educational potential of non-dominant students. The operant tasks of this project would center on locating the central constructs in researchers' work, naming the framework and field that give meaning to the constructs, as well as understanding their history of use vis-à-vis non-dominant communities. Identifying the ideological positions in the constructs and frameworks employed is fundamental to understanding whose interests have been served and how commonplace constructs such as "diverse," "at-risk," "limited-English-proficient," and "underachievement" have been naturalized in deficit discourses used to explain non-dominant students' performance in school (Rose, 1985).

Historically, language and naturalizing discourses of difference have not served the benign goal of identifying student needs, but rather have served as an insidious indicator of intelligence. The operant notion of culture here is based on its relation to genetics or deficit views that paint

the practices of cultural communities as homogeneous, unchanging, and deviant from dominant, thus normative, practices. Further, the tendency to focus on explorations of language, language use, and practices, absent of their context of use, essentializes and dehistoricizes students' "linguistic repertoires of practice" (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). In misrepresenting and undervaluing students' linguistic toolkits, empirical work can serve to further exacerbate students' marginalization (Alim, 2005).

The work of critical race theorists (Gotanda, 2004) has highlighted the importance of historicizing racializing practices to theorize, to "re-mediate," and design new pathways, possibilities, and educational projects for students from non-dominant communities. In his work, Gotanda (2004) used the notion of *white innocence* as the analytic standpoint from which he examined racial ideology in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the US Supreme Court decision that ostensibly outlawed overt racial segregation in American schools. In his analysis, Gotanda argued that the US Court was engaged in the ideological project of defending and maintaining *white innocence*. Here, the racialized notion of *white innocence* does not refer to the racial category of whiteness, but rather to the dominant subject-position that preserves racial subordination and the differential benefits for the *innocents* who retain their own dominant position.

The practical logic of white innocence

In the 1954 *Brown* decision—a touchstone case for educational civil rights in the US—the US Supreme Court stated that overturning previous cases allowing segregated schools was based on scientific evidence previously unknown to the Court. New empirical research provided the basis for the Court to declare that racial segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority" among Blacks (347 US 483, 494), a fact previously unsubstantiated, according to the Court. By explaining that empirical evidence was absent during previous court decisions on racial segregation, the court created the space for the absolution of its own role in preserving the nation's history of racist practices (Gotanda, 2004; Gutiérrez and Jaramillo, 2006) and the reversal of a well-established legal precedent. As a consequence, there was no compelling moral obligation to make fundamental structural change in the legacy of cultural, social, and institutional racism in the United States or for the "innocent" to acknowledge and challenge the underlying logic of the inhumanity and inequity that fuels racism (Santos, 1992).

Drawing on Gotanda's (2004) work, we use the race-conscience construct of 'white innocence', later elaborated in educational domains (Gutiérrez, 2006), to illustrate how the practices of racism and inequity that orient educational policies and their discourses have a prevailing logic of practice. As Luke (in press) has argued,

The practices of racism and marginalization have particular coherent *logics of practice*: explanatory schema, taxonomies, operating procedures, even sciences, that explain why, how and to what end particular tribes, communities and ethnicities count as less than fully human against an unmarked normative version of *Man*. But they also are characterised by degrees of volatility and unpredictability: human subjects tinker with, manipulate, bend and undermine rules in face-to-face exchanges.

(p. 6)

Racism, then, is embedded within discourses, institutional arrangements, and structures of educational systems and activity, which can then be enacted in face-to-face interaction. Thus, rather than being fixed and predetermined, racial and ethnic identities are (re)created through

continuous and repeated language use, and mediated by institutional practices and ideologies (Alim, 2009).

By extending the *white innocence* lens to the schooling of non-dominant students, we can begin to understand how educational institutions remain "innocent" through the use of "new" beginnings—i.e., new evidence, theories, methods, discourses, and policies that are detached from historical, moral, social, economic, and political ties to racialized practices and ideologies. Today, neoliberal educational reform efforts have reframed educational policies that threaten the possibility of a humanist agenda and a democratic education, and intellectual and social equity for large numbers of students. The principle mechanism has been to redesign the educational project using code words, phrases, and symbols that index racialized ideologies in ways that do not directly invoke race or racial/ethnic communities (Lipsitz, 1998). In doing so, the dominant subject-position is camouflaged as color-blind and becomes the uncontested baseline of educational reform.

Consider, for example, the organizing "sameness as fairness" principle at work in federal reforms such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. §1001), the largest educational reform in the history of the US (Crosland, 2004). The "sameness as fairness" principle orienting national educational policy flattens out differences that matter and employs an essentialism that makes it easier to mandate and monitor one-size-fits-all approaches, particularly in the delivery of language and literacy programs. Here, language becomes a proxy for race and ethnicity and serves as a tool for organizing schooling and sorting bodies without regard to the historical and present structures that gave rise to, and sustain, deeply rooted inequities. This form of essentialism, Luke (in press) argues, serves both "as a discourse strategy to massify, rule, and, in instances, eradicate whole communities and cultures" (Luke, in press: 17). For example, normalizing language has served as an object of the cultural wars in the US, especially around issues of immigration.

One strategy for leveling the community towards a "common culture" is to try to eradicate any vestiges of non-dominant communities' cultural past and the cultural artifacts that mediate everyday life; a form of erasure (Rampton, 1995a). Such practices are part of a larger process of "modernizing" non-western communities. In essence, through punishing speakers or prohibiting the use of non-dominant language, individuals and communities are "disciplined" into "appropriate" ways to engage and speak in "civilized" society (Heller, 2008). Thus, it is not only the use of English as the only acceptable form of speech, but a particular formation of English that precludes the use of non-dominant language repertoires. "Appropriate" or "true" English is not a reflection of sociocultural context, but rather a reflection of racialized economies of language.

Linguistic and social marginalization is predicated, in part, by essentialist views of cultural communities—views that assume that characteristics of cultural groups are located within individuals as "carriers" of culture. The tendency to conflate ethnicity, race, language preference, or national origin results in overly deterministic, static, weak, and uncomplicated understandings of both an individual's and a community's practices. Often, normative views of culture are employed in ways that appear benign, especially when they purport to focus on individual differences and indirectly on deficits in the individual and social groups. What is needed is a new language to talk and think about regularities across individuals' or cultural communities' ways of doing things; we also need to make progress in how we conceptualize regularities and variance observed in shared and dynamic practices of communities, as well as how participation in cultural practices contributes to individuals' learning and development, including their linguistic and social practices (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003).

Reductive notions of culture and cultural communities are indexed in discourses of educational success and failure of students from non-dominant communities. Couched in the rhetoric of progress, accountability, and higher standards, the reforms purport to address the achievement or “underachievement” of non-dominant youth by “fixing” the language practices of Latino and other immigrant youth. These seemingly compassionate policy actions work to homogenize and “smooth out” variation in society, thus, normalizing linguistically and culturally different students, their curricular practices, as well as the educators who must implement them (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2002).

Hybridity all the way down

The essentialism at work in language and literacy policies belies the hybridity of students' everyday lives, including their linguistic practices. Following Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), increased transnational migration, new diasporic communities, and an explosion of technologies have resulted in a variety of intercultural activities in which a wide range of linguistic practices become available to members of non-dominant communities. The resulting “linguistic bricolage” creates a complex link between language and identity; in some contexts, languages function as markers of national and ethnic identities, as forms of symbolic capital, or as markers of intercultural competence (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 23). In yet other contexts, such as the English-only and anti-bilingual education movements, language can become a means of social control (Gutiérrez, 2008b). These contexts become the sites of struggle over which immigrant students' language practices are negotiated and shaped. In constructing and mediating multilayered identities, non-dominant students and communities face a national context where citizenship and national identity fall prey to economic utility. In such contexts, these communities must “find new ways of constituting themselves as regional markets of producers and consumers” (Heller, 2008: 513).

Sociolinguists have elaborated the idea of the inherent hybridity in today's youth, particularly immigrant, ethnic, and diasporic communities. In advancing the notion of “language-crossing” (1995a), Rampton suggests that language and sociological research has largely ignored what he calls the new plural ethnicities (p. 1), focusing primarily on bilingual in-groups. In studies of the language practices of adolescent youth in London, Rampton (1997) found that “language-crossing” is, in part, artful performance, intersecting everyday and local practices and media representations in complex and unpredictable ways. “Language crossing” involves using a language different from one's own, in which the speaker moves across social and ethnic boundaries. At the same time, to focus exclusively on conversation among participants could result in a form of analytical parochialism absent of the multilingualisms currently at work in the intersections between the local and global.

With its eyes glued *only* to the properties of talk, research might end up waiving [*sic*] an antiquated banner of holistic coherence at precisely the moment when the crucial values became transition and hybridity.

(Rampton, 1997: 15)

This movement, however, is not without consequence, as the speaker has to negotiate issues related to boundary-crossing, identity, resistance, and even ridicule, for example. To understand how youth navigate such border-crossing events requires theorizing the role of language in

racialized schooling and learning practices, including the ways language-crossing opens up new learning and intercultural activity.

Sociolinguistics can play an important role in documenting the complexities involved in identity-negotiations that unfold in interaction, face-to-face, online, and across other media. Such forms of human activity cannot be reduced solely to statistical measures of social science, or even fully or accurately documented through interviews or questionnaires. Rampton (1997) suggests that sociolinguistics and similar methodological approaches are uniquely positioned to “illuminate the *innumerable* ways in which people are *incessantly* either reproducing, nuancing, or refusing established identities, and trying to create some space for new ones” (p. 11).

Linguistic communities, particularly immigrant communities, often have been studied with a focus on inter-group process, sustaining a reductive and essentialist analytical gaze on cultural communities (Hammers and Blanc, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002). From this perspective, the essential correlation is between language and identity and, hence, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) suggest that,

the monolingual and monocultural bias . . . conceives of individuals as members of homogeneous, uniform, and bounded ethnolinguistic communities and obscures hybrid identities and complex linguistic repertoires of bi- and multilinguals living in a contemporary global world.

(p. 5)

At the same time, extant theories of literacy often do not account for the multimodality of communication of the new media age and the complex and hybrid repertoires non-dominant students bring to schooling and learning experiences. “Language alone cannot give us meaning to the multimodally constituted message” (Kress, 2003: 35). As an example, long-term work with Latino, African-American, and Pacific Islander children in an after-school computer-mediated learning club in a port-of-entry elementary school in Los Angeles provides persistent evidence of the hybridity of language and social practices of the participants. In this setting “language-crossing” is a valued normative practice, and children consistently produce rich texts of high value and meaning to themselves and peers (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2001; Nixon and Gutiérrez, 2007). These literacy events often entail students writing and talking about media events, television programs, and music that are highly valued practices in popular culture, even cross-cultural programs.

Las Redes (Networks) is a multilingual, multicultural space where multi-literacies are privileged; yet, it is a space largely dominated by Latino children whose first or home language is Spanish and who participate in a range of media practices, from World Wrestling Entertainment to Spanish language programs. One particularly popular program among the young Latinas is a Spanish language tween television program, *Rebelde*, which features a famous group of young Mexican singers who play a group of students forming a pop band. The young girls at *Las Redes* had become obsessed fans, talking and writing about the beautiful stars, their fashion sense, and their music, often importing *Rebelde* pictures into their digital stories. The normative practice in this intercultural space involved the production of texts in Spanish and English, or other hybrid varieties.

And because Latina youth were over-represented in this setting, as they were in the school, their language and social practices were salient and highly valued by peers. And it should have come as no surprise to find that young African-American girls, who knew little to no Spanish nor watched Spanish-language television, wrote about and included Spanish words and digital

photos of *Rebelde* in their own productions as well (Nixon, 2008). Such language-crossing and intercultural activity were normative and often served as the basis for rich literacy production. At the same time, it also made visible the consequences of hegemonic language and cultural practices for under-represented groups and how race and gender are indexed and how identities are formed in recurring language practices (Alim, 2009). The ways racial and ethnic identities always intersect with class, gender, sexuality, (trans)national, and other social identities and are contested through language should highlight the need to focus attention on both (dis)identification and (dis)alignment among individuals and social groups. Further, the contradictions that emerge in schooling practices and among language groups should be the object of study and examination in multilingual and multicultural learning environments, including those attempting to promote democratic and robust forms of education.

The reality of the multiplicity and hybridity of the everyday lives of students from non-dominant communities and new theories promoting their understanding complicate traditional notions of race, racism, and cultural communities (Luke, in press). Historical racialized practices, Luke argues,

were premised on two essentialist beliefs: (1) that there were inextricable phenotypical, genetic and structural isomorphisms between race and one's intrinsic human characteristics, virtues and value, and; (2) that race, culture, identity, affiliation and nation could be assembled by the state in homologous and singular correspondence.

(Hall, 1993, as cited in Luke, in press, p. 17)

Ignoring the inherent hybridity in human activity has particular educational consequences for speakers of languages other than the dominant national language. Viewing students' language and literacy practices as static and bounded by culture belies the stable and improvisational nature of cultural practices. Today's students are much more adept in reading and talking about multimodal texts than conventional written texts. Their language and literacy practices are the product of the intercultural and hybrid practices of which they are a part. This hybridity can serve as a resource for expanding students' linguistic repertoires and for new learning if cultivated and not squelched.

Understanding the regularity and variance in an individual's sociohistorical life and the consequences of intercultural exchange can promote opportunities to engage students in literacy activities that build upon difference, rather than trying to ignore or eliminate it. However, the language practices of non-English speakers are rarely understood in social and institutional settings. Their linguistic toolkit has limited capital in reform pedagogies organized around autonomous forms of literacy (Street, 1984) delivered in English-only medium. Sociohistorical understandings of the language practices of non-English speakers could provide more accurate, robust, and useful descriptions of people's language practices, including their genesis and the sources of their mediation. From this perspective, educators and educational policymakers would focus less on students' linguistic "deficiencies" and instead would want to know more about students' history of involvement with language and literacy practices (Gutiérrez, 2008a).

The language practices of Latinos, and in this case Chicana/os, for example, exhibit the significant language contact they have experienced; their language practices the product of intercultural exchange (Santa Ana and Bayley, 2005). Sociolinguists (Santa Ana, personal communication, February 17, 2009) surmise that the linguistic features attributed to Chicano English in Los Angeles, California, actually originated as second-language learning features that

Euro-Americans made salient in the English/Spanish contact setting (p. 422). These stigmatized language markers were modified and reworked into some of the most distinctive elements of Chicano English phonology. As Santa Ana and Bayley's work has noted, this reworking reframed stigmatized linguistic features into a set of linguistic variables and discourse markers that instead affirmed ethnic solidarity,

In the sociological sphere, it can render precise the human processes by which ethnic communities reformulate linguistic features of out-group markers of stigma into in-group solidarity features.

(Santa Ana and Bayley, 2005: 432)

For example, in Los Angeles, California, between 1920 and the 1950s, Chicano English features, ridiculed and stigmatized by Anglo Angelinos, were actually part of a small set of phonological features of other second-language learner groups. These now salient features in Chicano English inverted the social valoration by using them to signal solidarity in the community, rather than avoiding their use because of their previous stigmatization (Santa Ana, personal communication, 2009).

In Canadian contexts for example, "ethnolinguistic difference has long been used to mask or legitimize class hierarchies" (Porter, 1965: 511). Historically, linguistic difference has served to maintain social hierarchy and dominance rather than valuing the sociocultural toolkit that individuals and cultural communities offer. Explanatory power based on linguistic difference engenders forms of "othering" and helps to sustain reductive and narrow views of students from non-dominant communities, their potential, and the expertise they bring to learning events. This focus necessarily centers on identifying and addressing the "deficits" in students' linguistic and literacy toolkit and gives support to one-size-fits all pedagogical approaches organized around weak forms of learning and marginalizing practices.

Developing powerful and syncretic literacies

The practices of nation, home, citizenship, that fundamentally undergird how we understand race, ethnicity, and culture are shifting in dramatic ways. With more than 125 million people living outside their country of origin, and another 2-4 million are added every year, traditional narrations of identity are necessarily challenged (Lipsitz, 2004). As Lipsitz (2004) has noted, "the new realities of our time have enacted a fundamental rupture in the relationships linking place, politics, and culture" (p. 3). This new world order requires an exploration of newer forms of public identities based on new iterations of social relations:

These new times also require new strategies, new tactics, new ideas and identities, although our old identities have not disappeared. We still speak about race, class, gender, nation, and sexuality, but in different ways. Identities never exist in isolation; they are always intersectional, relational, and mutually constitutive. New times do not so much create new identities as much as they give new accents to old intersections, resulting in new associations, affinities, and equations of power.

(Lipsitz, 2004: 7)

Another way to think about the language and literacy practices of non-dominant students, particularly new immigrant and diasporic communities, is to use the notion of syncretism to

make sense of their hybrid and heteroglossic character (Hill, 2001). From this perspective, syncretic linguistic practices are best understood as,

active and strategic efforts by speakers, who draw on their understandings of the historical associations of linguistic materials to control meaning and to produce new histories by variably suppressing and highlighting these histories through linguistic means.

(Hill, 2001: 243)

Hill's work (2003) has documented the ways speakers both obscure and highlight their histories in talk and interaction. For Hill, one strategic step in the analysis of syncretic practices involves the identification of "relevant oppositions" (p. 241). From a cultural historical theoretical perspective of learning and development (Engeström, 1987), these contradictions can serve as the engines of change in expansive forms of learning (Gutiérrez and Larson, 2007).

Parallel views have emerged in the study of literacy and in the design of educational interventions (Gutiérrez, 2008a). In work with high school students from migrant farmworker backgrounds, robust forms of academic literacies, termed sociocritical literacies, where diversity, variance, and hybridity provided additive value, were advanced. Through a syncretic approach to literacy development, the hybrid character of migrant students' social and linguistic practices, most of whom were Mexican immigrant or first-generation students, served as a resource in the development of powerful literacies (Crowther *et al.*, 2001) that far surpassed traditional instructional approaches. At the same time, a syncretic approach recognizes how intercultural exchange and the resulting "linguistic bricolage" both extend and suppress the practices of diasporic communities. This tension necessarily became an object of analysis and study in the curricular project with students and instructional staff.

In contrast to most approaches to academic literacy that dichotomize everyday and school-based literacy practices, the syncretic approach to literacy developed with migrant students brought together seemingly dissonant genres found in everyday and literary practices with academic genres and the conventions of academic writing to increase students' engagement with text, and new forms of discourse across reading and writing activity. Specifically, the strategy involved taking a language practice that was familiar in students' cultural communities and combining it with an academic genre to ground the everyday in new understandings and forms. For example, this syncretic approach integrated the *testimonio*—a cultural practice of testifying orally about one's life and witnessed by peers in an intimate and respectful community—and the extended definition, a writing genre essential to academic writing. Here, culturally familiar and valued forms of language and literacy were extended and elaborated with conventional writing tools, and academic literacy was made relevant, meaningful, and more authoritative with *testimonios* of migrant and immigrant life and accounts of border crossing. Using Spanish and English in various combinations, students produced powerful texts that were generalized subsequently to traditional literacy tasks and community organizing efforts. Such practices helped students develop insight into the organizational structures of written texts, including those most often employed in the academy, and provided a means to locate one's own experience in a sociohistorical context, both proximally and distally.

The cases of the complex linguistic and sociocultural practices of students from non-dominant communities presented in this chapter are intended to extend the ways we view the relationship of language, race/ethnicity, and culture in educational environments; to challenge reductive empirical and theoretical approaches that fail to capture the dynamism and hybridity of cultural communities and their cultural practices. Ignoring new understandings of the continually shifting

linguistic demands of cultural communities functions to preserve the *white innocence* that has been employed historically in studies of non-dominant communities and in the design of educational arrangements for students from non-dominant communities in the US and globally.

Notes

- 1 We wish to thank Christine O'Keefe, Sandra Naranjo, Jessica Robles, Janet Rocha, and Anne Vo for their editorial assistance.
- 2 The term 'non-dominant' is used here to refer to students who have been historically marginalized in educational processes and to more accurately capture the collective historical circumstance of these students and issues of power relations in schools and other institutions.
- 3 The term and concept of "racing-language" is attributed to H.S. Alim (2009), who uses the term to emphasize the relationship between race and language.

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33

Dilemmas of race-rememory buried alive

Popular education, nation, and diaspora in critical education

Grace Livingston

Because so much in public and scholarly life forbids us to take seriously the milieu of buried stimuli, it is often extremely hard to seek out both the stimulus and its galaxy and to recognize their value when they arrive.

(Toni Morrison, 1984: 185)

Critical knowing and remembering matters

Race and the hemispheric Americas remain intractably linked. In significant measure this is owing to the role and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and enslavement in the Americas as grounding, generative, and globalizing projects of the Western Modern project itself. Race thus lives as a social problematic of the political that carries loaded narratives about difference, disparity, and distance and thus has been pivotal in (re)inventing and (re)instituting the hierarchical geo-political, economic, and social relations that shape our living, knowing, and remembering. Regarding the US region of the hemisphere, Plummer (2005) speaks to dimensions of the knowledge-producing labors of race as routed through the logic of White supremacy, which I suggest persist even in the face of the much-heralded November 2008 election of Senator Barack Obama to the US presidency. Plummer argues that, "blackness has not been dissolved and . . . remains a flashpoint in this society. Blackness continues to represent, for immigrants and others, the lowest common denominator, the absolute floor from which the only way is up" (p. 113).

Commenting on this racial logic in another part of the hemisphere, the Caribbean, Nettleford (1994) takes note of "the tenaciously held perceptions among Caribbean people that there exists a seemingly impregnable and lasting nexus between race and skin-colour on the one hand, and the deprivations of power, influence, authority, legitimacy and status on the other" (pp. 14–15). For example, the twenty-first-century steady upsurge in skin-bleaching (Brown-Glaude, 2007; Charles, 2003; Tafari-Ama, 2006) in Jamaica, among predominantly poor and lower-income urban people between the mid teens and mid thirties, despite health risks and mortality rates, bears witness to the entangled and contested endurance of this supremacist racial logic.

However, such visceral forms of knowing race are subject to structures of silencing and a "beleaguered status" (Livingston, 2006: 24, 26), even as we shall see, on the critical educational terrain. Amidst this silencing, the role of race in relating knowing to remembering as an act of "re-remembering," "putting back together . . . what has been obscured, . . . forgotten, . . . [and] disappeared from view" (Scott, 1999: 80) does not relent. The racialized relationship between remembering or memory "as a social, political, and historical enterprise" (Said, 2000: 178) and the politics of knowledge production is the muse of this chapter. This relationship and its salience have been dramatized through several critical public and pedagogic moments or events in recent years that have had national, international, and Black diasporic traction and have also formed the social texts of formal classroom learning and teaching and that of other educational constituencies, including those of which I am part.

For example, this relationship was palpably at work in evoking the internationally broadcast, race-related memory, or what I call race-memory,¹ expressions of joy and disbelief, along with those of criticism, indignation, and dismay, which met Barack Obama's election as US president. This interaction between memory and knowledge also routed the historical race-memory undergirding the differential readings of "Americans of different races" (Harris-Lacewell, 2007: 28) regarding the US government's response to the breaking of the levees in New Orleans in the wake of hurricane Katrina in 2005, with "Black Americans [feeling] abandoned in their grief" (p. 41) and visited by the memory of another disaster, the 1927 Mississippi flood.

Critical events such as these serve as "primal scenes" for the "discovery" and performance of race-memory and the production of further "memory" "associations."² The focus of this chapter is on probing and problematizing the race-memory knowledge produced by the interplay of the logic of selectively visiting or remembering and forgetting particular moments or events, especially when such race-memory enacts a form of silencing on the political knowledge that race carries. In order to do this, I also engage a particular conceptual inflection of the term memory, called "rememory," and turn geopolitically to the Caribbean, specifically Jamaica. In this part of the Americas, I look at a critical educational practice within civil society, one that is linked to the project of nation formation. I examine the practice of popular education, one with which I worked for almost a decade, so as to gather and interrogate primal scenes of race-memory. In order to do this, I must say some crucial things about memory and rememory in general.

Connecting memory and rememory to critical education in the Caribbean

Rememory, arguably a signal infusion into the lexicon of the terms of critical inquiry into memory, has been made available to the multidisciplinary deliberations on memory by novelist and literary scholar Toni Morrison. It grows out of Morrison's own work which "depend[s] heavily on the ruse of memory" (Morrison, 1984: 386) as a "form of willed creation" (p. 385), "ignit[ing] some process of invention" (p. 386), and is particularly vital due to the untrustworthiness of mainstream "literature" and "sociology" as regards "the truth" of Black diaspora "cultural sources" (p. 386). Morrison's work with memory predated what is recognized as the "scholarly boom" (Klien, 2000: 127) in the turn to memory during the 1980s threshold of the crisis over what counts as historical knowledge, the distances between academic and popular historical knowledge, and methods of accessing and knowing the past.

Toni Morrison's approach to the two terms of memory and rememory emboldens them with discernable political and epistemological properties. Rememory, coined and demonstrated most fulsomely in Morrison's 1987 novel, *Beloved*, rivets her sense of the importance of memory as "dwell[ing] on the way" an event or any other social formation is recollected, "the way it appeared and why it appeared in that particular way" (Morrison, 1984: 385) on a new register. The rememory register is attentive and brings significance to the revisitation of a particular appearance or recollection and why it gets revisited and repeatedly so. This new register allows us to ask why a particular appearance or memory related to issues of race is repeatedly visited, operating then not only as a race-memory but as a race-rememory. The matter of what is at stake politically and epistemologically in this revisitation of race-memory or race-rememory surfaces as crucial. In a conversation between Sethe and Denver, mother and youngest daughter in *Beloved*, which takes place, like several encounters in the novel, in the haunting of Sethe's killing of her first daughter, Beloved, at two years old, so that she would not have to be sold away from her into enslavement, Sethe speaks of rememory in this way.

Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not . . . [T]he picture of it . . . stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world.
(pp. 35–36)

Turning to the Caribbean, specifically Jamaica, and diachronically to two significant ideological and institutional waves in the formation of popular education and new forms of Jamaican nationhood,³ I probe a particular historical rememory of race or a particular revisiting and "staying" of memory regarding race. This race-rememory is one that I argue enacts a specific form of silencing on the political knowledge that race carries, framed as a triumphalist and an exceptionalist relation to race, especially as it relates to the positioning and figuring of Blackness and Black life. The Caribbean, "the Other America" (Glissant, 1989a: 4), is an apt site for probing silencing dilemmas in patterns of race-rememory and the national, international, and diasporic forces that condition them. On one hand, the Caribbean persists in the commonsensical political imaginary, particularly, though not solely outside of its borders, as a territory of "Caribbean beaches waiting to be visited, invested in, and exploited" (Mignolo, 2005: 96). On another, it is simultaneously grounded as a signal part of the unsettling "'preface' to the American continent" (Glissant, 1989b: 561), a site of colonial "encounter" and "complicity" (p. 561) and "a product of [the] globalization" (Hall, 1997: 29) instantiated by the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, both as part of its "back end" (p. 29) and "leading edge" (p. 29).

Popular education—with its deliberate commitments to critical nation building through a community development ethos as a basis for "popular participation," "popular sovereignty," fostering "views alternative to those in the dominant State," "protest action," and reputation as a "lively, at times turbulent 'space'"⁴—serves as a vivid and sobering site on which to stage the paradoxes of race-rememory. While bearing important ideological distinctions, popular education of both waves, as it battled within twentieth-century post-(slave) emancipation, colonial and neo-colonial Modern Jamaica, has sought to bring and fashion the circumstances of the social fray as social texts for educational processes in the name of exploring socio-political possibilities. This proximity of the social and the educational is done in a way that brings educational sensibilities to incite and facilitate skill capacity development, social action, and political struggle through consciousness-raising activity across local communities and constituencies of interest.

In discussing the connections between race-rememory and popular education, I draw on particular moments or events related to both waves as primal scenes of race-memory and rememory, starting with the second wave—the wave of my involvement in the 1980s and 1990s. The second wave emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s through Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), called Development NGOs (DNGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), with an investment in shaping an anti-colonial, independent nation. The first wave arose in the 1930s through NGOs mostly known as Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), with a commitment to securing a decolonized nation. The moments or events related to both critical educational and nation practices to which I draw attention serve as "point[s] of entanglement" (Glissant, 1989a: 26) for critical educational practitioners, thinkers, and researchers, to which we "must return" (p. 26). Such a return is crucial because "our problems lay in wait for us" there (p. 25) concerning how race is remembered, especially accumulated recollection tendencies that effect a race-rememory pattern that inflicts modes of silencing on race. My interest is in uprooting historical and ideological moments or events and their national, international, and Black diasporic tugs, which serve as primal scenes and "buried stimuli" (Morrison 1984: 385) that I propose are attached to the production of the troubling form of race-rememory—a triumphalist and an exceptionalist relation to race. Further, I suggest that such scenes have been mis-recognized, "disremembered," "buried alive"⁵ and "unaccounted for"⁶ in critical educational and national practices.

Primal scenes of race-rememory trouble in critical education and nation

Jamaica 1994: recoiling from embattled Blackness

The instigating primal scene that served as a sign of trouble in race-rememory made its appearance in a moment of reflection on praxis in 1994. Around September 1994, there was a particular gust of tension in the air within one of the second-wave DNGOs and affiliated CBOs that had been working in both rural and urban Jamaica for, at the time, over thirty-five years. A 1994 follow-up evaluation (to one done in 1991) focused on the following program components: "animation, consciousness raising and skills training; economic and housing projects; and community organizing and mobilization" (Heron, 1994: i).⁷ Its completion was marked by a notably disturbing set of findings. The findings that sparked the climate of unease stated that 53 percent of the community respondents across CBOs in a particular parish⁸ in which the DNGO and CBOs worked said that the notion that "Black people can't run things" (p. 36) was as a significant contributing factor to the economic problems at the community and national levels. Only 33 percent were definitive that this was not a factor at all, with the responses of the remaining 14 percent placed in the category, "don't know" (p. 36).

"Run things" is a much beloved and used idiomatic phrase in modern urban Jamaican vernacular language, most often articulated as "a wi run things." It could be understood as the defiant capacity to formulate and execute a task exemplarily, with almost bravado expertise and style. The nuance of defiance in its meaning figures at a racially inflected decibel that denotes the will and ability to do better than expected and out-do in a context of structural and psychic odds set up by elite and supremacist power relations. "Black people can't run things" thus meant that respondents were indicating that this was not a faculty of Black people, or a dubious one at best. "[R]espondents were asked to give their opinion on the factors

which may or may not contribute to Jamaica's economic problems" (Heron, 1994: 36). This kind of inquiry was pursued, at least in part, to get a sense of what was happening and what issues were being "covered in the educational sessions" of popular education (p. 36).

The inquiry also served as a broader investigation of the key "indicators of social change in the community organizations."⁹ Many did raise and link factors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, national "corruption," "mis-management" and lack of (national) self-reliance.¹⁰ However, that such a significant number articulated and indexed "Black people can't run things" as a strong factor said that there was a relationship or an "attribut[ion]" being made between socio-economic problems of society and "their blackness."¹¹

As if to exacerbate the conditions of reception of this kind of finding, the evaluation also exposed that, in trying to ascertain the "social profile" of the communities under investigation, there was a notable resistance from some respondents when it came to placing their social identities in relation to race. While the process of getting responses about "gender," "occupation and employment," and "age" went relatively seamlessly, the process of getting racial "identity," "heritage," or "classification" responses from the 93 percent of the community group members who eventually affiliated or placed themselves as of "African descent," involved significant moments of "unwillingness" and "difficulty."¹² "It should be noted" the evaluation said, "that . . . Chinese and Indians who were covered in the survey were not reported as having a problem in acknowledging their racial identity" (Heron, 1994: 33).

This was the DNGO and related CBOs with which I was working at the time in community mobilization, popular education, and administrative roles. This 1994 moment has persisted in returning to me through the years as a primal scene for working through the politics of race-memory and race-rememory, as I have moved and worked across critical educational sites of learning-teaching, non-formal and formal. I recall that verbal and non-verbal expressions of disappointment and anger, and disavowal and disbelief were intense and marked the hesitant and spontaneous discussions and interactions that came in the wake of these findings from the evaluation. There was a sense of incredulity that "Black people can't run things" as a statement of an embattled and a shameful relation to Blackness could feature (still) so pronouncedly in the social belief systems and actions of Jamaicans, given that the nation was then over three decades into its formal independent status. Also, there was a sense that the prominence of such a belief system contradicted the influence of the radical political practice of "development-oriented,"¹³ second-wave popular education, with its conceptual and ideological frameworks including liberation theology, Marxism, or "some form of socialism to meet the manifestly oppressive conditions of the poorer classes in the country"¹⁴ and Freirian conscientization.¹⁵ This mood of incredulity concerning race and the figure of Blackness came into more pivotal focus, given that this conception was at work in and among social actors who were at the forefront of community mobilization work at the grassroots and were creative and resilient participants in popular education and consciousness raising processes in some of the most challenging circumstances, particularly in the traditional (slave) sugar plantation areas of Jamaica.

Emerging further as part of this mood came paths of questioning and commentary that made it more clear that there was a troubling silencing of the social problematic of race being wrestled over. The questioning and commentary amplified the tangle of possible Black diasporic, national, and international routes contouring the production of this silencing, particularly with regards to the triumphalist and exceptionalist relation to race. Perhaps the report from the evaluation merely gave a melodramatic¹⁶ representation or perverse sampling¹⁷ of a lingering relic and now aberration of modern Jamaican life, was the flavor of some conjectures. Black enslavement in the Americas ended (*de jure*) too long ago for "Black people can't run things" to be (still)

rearing its head this pronouncedly, was the tone of other interjections. After all, Jamaica has earned and worn the reputation as an imprimatur of exemplary and resilient "Black consciousness," which has influenced those beyond its shores. Such consciousness has been carried through the cherished Black diasporic race-memory agency of Jamaica's legendary slave rebellions; fierce-fighting and relatively autonomous Maroon communities; Crown colonial uprisings; national heroes, notably Paul Bogle, Sam Sharpe, and Nanny of the Maroons; cultural, spiritual, and ideological forces of Garveyism, Rastafari, Reggae; and a Jamaican inflection of democratic socialist state governance.¹⁸ Additionally, from the mood shaped by the evaluation report came versions of the ever so (in)famous and almost commonsensical sorts of assertion that surface often in Jamaican life, particularly in times of crisis, when social predicaments and antagonisms that spin from the axis of race and power come to the fore. Such assertions may be placed in this manner: "But after all, are we not a majority Black independent nation?" and, in tandem, the barely screened bravado and exceptionalist kind of utterance, "After all, this is or we are not the US."

This 1994 moment and the issues of race that give it weight have yet remained unremarkable, unnamed, and thus disremembered in the albeit small body of descriptive and analytic scholarly literature and published reports on Jamaican NGO mobilizational and educational work.¹⁹ In order to help make sense of this 1994 primal scene of race-memory, which enacts a simultaneous recoiling from a struggling and debased Blackness and preferential attachment to a triumphant and an exceptional one, I move to a buried stimulus found in an earlier critical moment within the breaking of second-wave popular education in 1968 to which this 1994 moment triggers attention. The 1968 moment, which played a key role in constituting the font of social texts conditioning the late 1960s emergence of the second wave yet still begs analysis as a "usable past"²⁰ in the production of the history of popular education, works as another primal scene of race-memory. It allows 1994 to be viewed as representing a particular pattern in the way race-memory is visited and renders the attachment to a triumphalist and an exceptionalist relation to race a significant dilemma of race-rememory.

Jamaica 1968: soiling special Blackness

Grounding this 1968 primal scene is the presence of Walter Rodney in Jamaica and his banning and denouncement as "*persona non grata*" (Gray, 1991: 157) by the government on October 15, 1968. In January 1968, Walter Rodney, an Afro-Guyanese, arrived in Jamaica to work as a lecturer in African history at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona campus, Jamaica, after teaching in Africa for approximately a year and a half and, prior to that, having pursued doctoral studies between 1963 and 1966 in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Rodney's coming to Jamaica was actually "a return," given that he was a student at the UWI, Mona, between 1960 and 1963. At the time of Rodney's second coming, the UWI was still deeply attached to the colonial impetus of the "university's civilising role"²¹ even amidst the momentum of national independence formalized in 1962. The University was a site where it was greeted as anomalous and revolutionary when a Black Jamaican faculty member referenced and differentiated his national identity in the midst of an academic presentation as being "one of those Jamaicans of the color of the black in flag [of independence]" (Brodber, 1997: 70).

Rodney not only set about to teach his assigned classes in African history. Within weeks of his arrival on the campus, he had begun to give public campus lectures on African civilization, committed to "filling the emotive and cognitive gap" (Lewis, 1998: 14) that he had recognized

in himself as an undergraduate and one that was particularly endemic to much of the formally schooled of the British colonies up until that time. Along with focusing on Africa's past, Rodney's talks were distinguished by tying a "reexamination of African history . . . directly to the scrutiny of the black experience in Jamaica" (Gray, 1991: 152) and "an appraisal of the current condition" (p. 152). Additionally, very soon after beginning the public campus lectures, Rodney moved to taking his lectures beyond the University to constituencies that would come to be key participants and sites of second-wave popular education work. He could be found "discussing aspects of African history in working-class districts in Kingston" (p. 152), notably, Western and Eastern Kingston, and "at workers' sports clubs and among the unemployed in the ghettos of West Kingston" (p. 152). Crucially, Rodney did recognize that, especially with respect to Rastafari, Garveyism, and Rudie or Rude-boy culture,²² he was not bringing in "brand new" (Sunshine, 1988: 59) ideas, noting Rastafari as "the leading force of [the] expression of Black consciousness" (p. 59) on the Jamaican terrain.

The growing critical, political, and educational momentum and alliances highlighted and generated by Rodney's type of activism and scholarship "frightened the daylights out of . . . the government" (Abrahams, 2000: 251), triggering the head of the Ministry of Home Affairs (now known as the Ministry of National Security) to declare "I have never come across a man who offers a greater threat to the security of this land than does Walter Rodney" (Lewis, 1998: 113). In mid August of 1968, the government "summoned the vice-chancellor of the university to protest Rodney's activities" (Gray, 1991: 157). However, their meeting did not end with "assurances that the university would put a stop to Rodney's activism" (p. 157). By mid October, still unable to build a secure legal case against Rodney, the government tried to press the University into withdrawing his contract in a specially convened "extra-ordinary meeting of the national cabinet" (p. 157). With these efforts yielding no definitive agreement from the University, the government seized the opportunity of Rodney being out of the country attending a Black writer's conference in Montreal, Canada, and prevented him from disembarking on his return to Jamaica, October 15, serving him, when his plane landed, with expulsion papers. In response, protests emerged.

Enacted in the then prime minister's commentary on the events surrounding Rodney's expulsion from Jamaica was a silencing on race matters within the nation in a way that expressed a triumphalist and an exceptionalist relation to race similar to the silencing relation in motion, yet buried alive, in the 1994 critical event in the life of popular education and primal scene of race-memory. Such an enactment of silencing was arguably not unaffected by the tugs of cold war circumstances that confronted newly de-colonizing, "less developed" countries with insinuations and coercions about alignments with one of the "great powers."²³ Consonant with the racialized signal sent by the government's banning, earlier in 1968, of publications related to Black diaspora activism coming out of the US, such as those by Stokely Carmichael, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X, and "The Crusader" by Robert Williams,²⁴ the prime minister's articulations placed matters at the nexus of race and power outside of the independent Jamaican experience.

The prime minister accused "people from other islands" (Gray, 1991: 161), "'foreigners' and 'non-Jamaicans' at the university, . . . [of] fomenting dissidence among 'our sons and daughters'" (p. 162). Prominent spokespersons for the labor union constituency—one that would become an important site and ally in second-wave popular education—represented and positioned this constituency as colluding in the production of this triumphalist and exceptionalist form of silencing race. The leader of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) pronounced:

People in the world have come to point at Jamaica as a leading example—as a small country where reason, law and order are fundamental to the country and our people, and where races work and live in harmony with ever increasing respect for each other.

(Gray, 1991: 54)

In racial silencing tandem, from the leader of National Workers Union (NWU) came the following words:

Ugly forces are rising in our country. All over the land people have begun to preach race hatred—colour against colour, race against race. Movements are being formed dedicated to the destruction of the very idea of inter-racial harmony. [They are] a dangerous throw back into the past.

(Gray, 1991: 56)

Importantly, Gray (1991) does not allow for the significance of political knowledge production of this critical 1968 moment, especially in relation to race, to pass by unnamed. Gray characterizes the knowledge produced in a way that uncovers conundrums of nation, diaspora, and the international that route the production of a triumphalist and an exceptionalist race-memory. He perceptively, if in too discretely nationalist terms, calls it "Jamaican Exceptionalism" (p. 54), a "defensive political ideology" (p. 54) formed out of the pressure of the "Rastafarian challenge" (p. 53) and as "a counter-ideology meant to stem challenges to class inequalities posed by expanding race consciousness, and . . . a means to secure the moral-ideological framework for the country's development strategy" (p. 54). It "sought to purge the antagonistic elements from the ideology of the urban unemployed by hailing the subordinate classes as exemplary racial neuters" and to "appeal to the overwhelming black population was that they were a special people in the world" (p. 82).

This 1968 primal scene, while undoubtedly significant, does not illustrate the primary momentum of the appearance and visitation of a triumphalist and an exceptionalist relation to race in modern Jamaica, as Gray's (1991) position on Jamaican exceptionalism as a "novel ideological invention, designed to address the dilemmas of the incipient independent state" (p. 54) suggests. Earlier critical moments during the first wave of popular education, which live hidden and unrelated, disclose stimuli producing this silencing relation that resonate with the national, diasporic, and international patterns shaping its 1968 and 1994 second-wave manifestations and thicken the basis for its consideration as a crucial, if buried, rememory matrix underwriting popular education and the modern Jamaican nation. Turning to this earlier history deepens my arguments about race-rememory.

Jamaica 1938: combustible Blackness staining show-window Blackness

At the time of the birth of the initiative that marks the emergence of the first wave of popular education, the Jamaica Welfare Limited (JWL), in June 1937, Jamaican life "very much reflected the island's two main historically formative experiences . . . chattel slavery and Crown Colony oligarchy" (Munroe, 1972: 1), "split into 'Black,' 'Brown' and 'White' sections" (p. 5) functioning as "a system of social and economic apartheid based on skin colour" (Bibbalsingh, 1970: 29). Also a time of "tremendous intellectual and social ferment" (Levy, 1995: 349), that very

year of the JWL's birth saw "the whole country rumbl[ing] with huge marches and strikes" (Williams, 1970: 446). Activities such as the "blocking of roads, cutting of telephone wires, breaking down of bridges, burning of [sugar] cane, destroying [of] banana trees and, on several occasions, the ambushing [of] armed police with nothing but sticks and stones" (Post, 1969: 376) were increasingly visible across the Crown Colony Jamaican landscape.

Less than a year later, in May 1938, rural and urban upheavals, significantly stirred by the strike actions of workers at "the largest sugar [plantation] estate in the country" (Sunshine, 1988: 38), reached to the scale and sound of rebellions that served as "a symbol of region-wide upheaval" (p. 38). "East and West, North and South, on Properties and Roads, Labour Demand[ed] More Pay" read the headlines of the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* (Brown, 1979: 93). "Street cleaners, power station workers, pumping station employees and municipal workers joined the throng of people who surged through the street. Traffic was halted, business places closed. Shops were invaded. Passing cars were stoned . . . the military moved in" (Sunshine, 1988: 39). "Police Fire To Drive Back Mob," "Sugar Workers Mown Down By Police Fire," "Labour Leader . . . Arrested and Held Without Bail," and "Another Hectic Day and Night in the City" reflect the tenor of additional newspaper headlines" (p. 39).

These events and the interpretation of them played a centripetal role in charting the ideological and institutional direction of the national decolonization commitment of first-wave popular education. As understood through the JWL's founding chairperson and prime mover, Norman Washington Manley, this vision of decolonization also connected with the nationalist and later Fabian socialist orientation of the People's National Party (PNP), launched after the rebellions with Manley's leadership. This vision carried tenets of "self government," "collectivisation," "egalitarianism,"²⁵ and "support[ing] the progressive forces of this country . . . to raise the living standard of life of the common people" (Nettleford, 1971a: 13) and was expressed through a program strategy of integrated community development. This strategy included such features as: establishing contacts with key people in the community; social surveys conducted with the help of local leaders in order to learn or verify demographic information and community priorities; identifying existing groups and leaders through house to house visits; strengthening and expanding existing village organizations; engaging indigenous culture; and developing local leadership (Francis, 1969; Girvan, 1993; Levy, 1995).

However, amidst this critical educational praxis, a silencing of race ensued that illustrated the deeper historical tracks of the problematic triumphalist and exceptionalist relation to race and how this problematic feeds a buried-alive dilemma of race-rememory. Rastafari, which was coming into being during the 1930s, along with some resurgence of Garveyite ideas and practices among rural and urban low-income groups who participated in the 1938 rebellions, did not form an integral part of the mobilizational and educational approaches deployed by the JWL. Though Garveyites and Rastafari were engaged in community education, organizing, and economic activity, the first wave did not turn to such social texts for their work of learning-teaching, consciousness raising, and building alliances. Even in the dimensions of the JWL's work that engaged in facilitating the expression of cultural-religious forms, the musical genres associated with such African-inspired spiritual and cultural ways of life as Pocomani and Revival Baptists were deflected. Rhythmic forms more closely resembling British Christian Protestant hymns were more often incorporated, as if in attempt to stay away from the deemed "vulgar"²⁶ and uncivilized bodily moves and vocal sounds of Black Jamaican life.²⁷

As found in the 1968 primal scene of race-memory during the emergence of the second wave of popular education, there was an emphasis in the first wave on interpellating Jamaicans as a people-in-common and a people apart, setting up the social problematic of race as belonging

to an unusable past, a past over which there had already been triumph and thus outside, and an interruption of a decolonization vision for the nation. Tantamount to missing from even the critical historiography of popular education is that while, for instance, Manley "understood the implications and indulged the Rastafarians in their quite valid demands for recognition and status" (Nettleford, 1971b: lxviii), his caution about them resembled a position that surfaced in the second wave. Manley was weary of "a recrudescence of race-consciousness in the assertive stance of groups like Rastafari and in the revival of UNIA [United Negro Improvement Association] enclaves against the persistent force of slave heritage *viz* the correlation of blackness with poverty and deprivation" (p. lxviii; italics in original).

Such a position was echoed in the lament of foundation JWL staff person, D.T.M. Girvan, who noted that with the rise of "Rastafarianism . . . [as] a national phenomenon" and also "race feeling and class antagonism," there was a "breakdown of national consensus and togetherness" (Girvan, 1993: 18). Additionally, casting race in a strident political position was viewed by Manley as precluding any "reconcil[iation] of black nationalism with plural democratic nationalism" (Nettleford, 1971b: lxvii), as race spoke to a "sectional identity" (p. lxvii). Matters of race and color were considered ones of "cultural identity" (p. lxvi), through which the core subjectivity of decolonized Jamaican nationhood could be articulated in exceptionalizing terms as an "African-European creolized fusion" (p. lxvi) capable of facilitating "the emergence of a class of colour indifferent persons" (p. lxx).

Further, in pursuit of unearthing the tracks of the triumphalist and exceptionalist race-rememory dilemma, such first-wave positions and practices regarding race may be understood as folding into and complicit with other silencing strategies coming from the international ground in the wake of the 1938 rebellions. Britain was "especially worried" (Johnson, 1977: 66), in the light of "possible repercussions of the strikes and disturbances" (p. 66), about the opinion of the US with regards to race relations in the British empire, and more so, the treatment of Black people who were viewed by "the white population of Jamaica" as "combustible blacks" (Bryan, 1991/2001: ix) capable of rendering the Jamaican colony "as volatile, potentially unstable, subject to incendiary and insurrectionary action" (p. ix). There was worry about the "American tendency to judge British colonial administration by the West Indian colonies" (Johnson, 1977: 66). The contents of a 1938 memo by a British cabinet member reveal the role of international entanglements in co-scripting an exceptionalist racial gaze on Jamaica that is reminiscent of that which faced the first wave:

One sees signs of a growing interest in the administration of these territories [the British colonies] on the part of Americans, reflected in the American magazines. The W. Indies, are to some extent, the British show-window for the USA. I am afraid it is not a very striking exhibit. For the moment, "the differentness" and the picturesque aspect, predominate; but criticism is already there; and it will I think grow.

(Johnson, 1977: 66)

Conclusion

The triumphalist and exceptionalist relation to race that inhabits the rememory logic of modern Jamaican life is pernicious, even as its harmful silencing lives buried in an often benign and normative bravado disposition. Such a silencing rememory habit continues to position Jamaican phenomenology at an exoticized distance from contemporary analyses of the layered brutalities

of race and power in the broader Americas; it obscures and misrecognizes the constitution of some of the challenges facing the nation, especially matters of the political that operate at the nexus of race and power; and it renders usable pasts irrelevant. Critical educational practice faces the imperative of helping to "generat[e] and sustain a public culture of memory" (Scott, 1999: 81) regarding this rememory dilemma and the buried stimuli complicit in its production and re-articulation.

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Notes

- 1 The idea of historical memory routes is developed and discussed in Grace Livingston (forthcoming) "Historical memory and the foundations of the critical categories of justice in education."
- 2 See Rushdy's (1990: 303) discussions.
- 3 See, for example, Girvan (1993), Hart (1993), and Nettleford (1971a, 1971b, 1989) for references to transforming Jamaican nationhood as building a "new" Jamaica.
- 4 See Baker (1983), Brown (2000: xii-xiii), and Levy (1994: 1-2, 2000: 101).
- 5 "Buried alive" is developed and discussed in Grace Livingston (under journal review) "Silencing habits: race-memory routes of the production of the political in critical educational research."
- 6 See Morrison (1987: 274) for the use of the terms "disremembered" and "unaccounted for."
- 7 These program areas under evaluation are also mentioned at different points throughout Heron (1994).
- 8 Jamaica is organized into fourteen main geographical spaces, known as parishes.
- 9 See Heron (1994: Chap. 4).
- 10 See Heron (1994: Chap. 4, 34-36), for instance.
- 11 See Heron (1994: 36).
- 12 See Heron (1994: 33-34) for the social profile terminology and broader discussion of findings.
- 13 See Levy (1994, 1995) for the ideological significance of a development orientation to popular education of the second wave, in contrast with the more "welfare" approach of first-wave work.
- 14 See Levy (2000: 102-103, 113) about the role of these ideological frameworks.
- 15 See Hope and Timmel (1984) for examples of the role of Freirian conscientization and also versions of Marxism and liberation theologies.
- 16 See Dash (1989) for the use of "melodrama" in a comment on race in the modern Caribbean. Dash's commentary for me is exemplary of a type of Caribbean thinking that tends to use such terms to deflect and deride harsh representations of racial problematics.
- 17 I adapt this phrase from Soyinka (1982: 10).
- 18 See for example Thomas's (2005) commentary on some of these features as constitutive of modern Jamaican Blackness.
- 19 For example, I think of this absence in Levy's (2000) contribution to investigations of Caribbean NGO work through his valuable study of the DNGO Social Action Centre that I have been discussing here.

- 20 See Hershatter's (1997: 34, 393) use of the notion of a "usable past" and the related idea of when pasts "enter into the historical record."
- 21 This notion appears throughout Mathurin-Mair (1969).
- 22 Rudie or Rude-boy refers to a cultural form and social disposition of protest that emerged among Black, urban, male life in western, central and eastern Kingston around the late 1950s and early 1960s. See, for example, Lewis (1997, 1998).
- 23 Mills (1989), for instance, places independence movements and other transitions happening in British colonies in the context of cold war pressures.
- 24 See, for instance, Abrahams (2000: Chap. 10) and Lewis (1998: 112-113) for discussion of these bannings.
- 25 These principles are discussed throughout Nettleford (1971a).
- 26 See Cooper's (1993) use of this term.
- 27 See Girvan (1993) and Hart (1993) for this tendency in the JWL's work.

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34

Momentum and melancholia

Women in higher education internationally

Louise Morley

The melancholia of missing women

Women have become highly visible as students, or consumers of higher education, while simultaneously remaining invisible or partially visible as leaders and knowledge producers. Hence, there is a curious two-step of recognition and misrecognition that threatens to confuse and confound debates on gender in the academy. Women's under-representation in leadership is international and multi-sectoral (Davidson and Burke, 2004). Some women have been allowed into higher education, embassy style, as micro-level representatives of a wider diverse community. However, women continue to be benchmarked in relation to masculinist norms, entering a matrix of declared and hidden rules. Organisational environments can create and regulate subjectivities and identities. Inclusion and exclusion both appear to produce dangers and opportunities. Women are simultaneously constructed as winners and losers. Winners because they are gaining access, as students, in significant numbers, but losers because of their lack of entitlement to leadership and prestigious disciplines. In this chapter, I will attempt to discuss these topics in a global context.

It would be easy to rehearse yet another pessimistic repertoire of challenges for gender equity in the academy. Gender and melancholy are often deeply connected (Butler, 2002), with a sense of loss, hurt and grief often underpinning studies of gender and power in higher education. Desire, as well as loss, needs to be considered. Indeed, writing on gender equality means that we have to refer to something that does not yet exist. The tendency therefore is to critique, rather than to engage in futurology. Questions about the desired morphology of the university of the future seem to be eclipsed by pressing concerns in the present. The melancholia, however, has been productive! There have been multiple questions about the obduracy of gender inequalities in the face of equality interventions, and recognition of how gender is formed and reformed in the spatial and temporal context of higher education. Studies have been conducted on gender (in)sensitive pedagogy (Sandler *et al.*, 1996; Welch, 2006); sexual harassment (Townsend and Geist, 2000); gendered curricula and subject choices (Lapping, 2005); gendered micropolitics (Morley, 1999); women's access (Kwesiga, 2002), and how differing spatial and temporal modalities impact on women's engagement with higher education (Moss, 2006).

Employment, representation and exclusion have been explored in relation to women's limited opportunities for promotion and professional development (Knights and Richards, 2003; Morley *et al.*, 2006); the under-representation of women in senior academic and administrative positions (Blackmore and Sachs, 2001; Husu, 2000), or in high-status disciplines (Bebbington, 2002), and prestigious institutions (Dyhouse, 2003). Women's relation to knowledge itself has been theorised in terms of the way in which gender structures relations of production and reproduction and is linked to knowledge construction, research opportunities and dissemination (Mama, 1996; Spivak, 1999; Stanley, 1997). Studies have revealed how liberal and strategic interventions for change, such as equality policies (Bagillhole, 2002; Deem *et al.*, 2005), and gender mainstreaming, are poorly conceptualised, understood and implemented (Charlesworth, 2005; Morley, 2007a). All reasons to be cheerful indeed, raising questions about what it takes to challenge the irrational mayhem of gender inequalities.

Marginson (2006) reminds us about global connectivities and how higher education is becoming a single, worldwide arrangement. Without wishing to advocate an economy of sameness for women in different national locations, it seems that some gender inequalities are also globalised (Morley *et al.*, 2005). For example, there is consistently low representation of women in positions of seniority in a range of countries in divergent cultural and geopolitical contexts (Brooks, 1997; Morley *et al.*, 2006; Singh, 2002, 2008). Curiously, in a culture of measurement and audit in higher education, women's representation in leadership is not always perceived as sufficiently important to measure, monitor or map. International data on gender equity among heads of universities are noticeably uneven. Since 1998, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has attempted to address this lack of data with five yearly analytical reports of data (Lund 1998; Singh, 2002, 2008). Its most recent publication (Singh, 2008) reports that in twenty-three of the thirty-five countries in the Commonwealth from which the ACU receives gender disaggregated data, *all* universities are led by men (Singh, 2008: 12). The organisation notes 'the depressing reality . . . of a still relatively stable hierarchical pyramid in which there are fewer and fewer women the higher up the ladder of seniority one looks' (Garland, 2008: 4). As Figure 34.1 on page 386 shows, women's participation in leadership of universities in the Commonwealth has remained stable over the past decade. Throughout this period, only one in ten vice chancellors or presidents of Commonwealth universities has been a woman (Singh, 2008: 12).

While patterns of representation among women have remained largely unchanged in leadership, women are faring slightly better in some academic positions (Singh, 2008). Women's participation as professors and associate professors has increased slightly since 1997, as Figure 34.1 shows. However, women still only comprise 15.3 per cent of professors, and 29.1 per cent of associate professors, readers and senior lecturers across the Commonwealth.

Among Commonwealth countries, women's participation in management and academic leadership tends to be higher than average in high-income countries such as Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Very few women are appointed as head of administration in South Asian or African Countries (Singh, 2008).

At this stage of the argument, it might seem as if patterns of gender and leadership directly map on to economic contexts, and that women's under-representation in senior positions in higher education correlates, or indeed is caused by, poverty and under-development. So, it is worth shifting the focus to another geopolitical area.

The European Union examines systematic evidence of gender imbalances among scientists and researchers and maps progress towards gender equity through the *She Figures* series launched in 2003 (European Commission, 2006). *She Figures 2006* provided gender disaggregated data

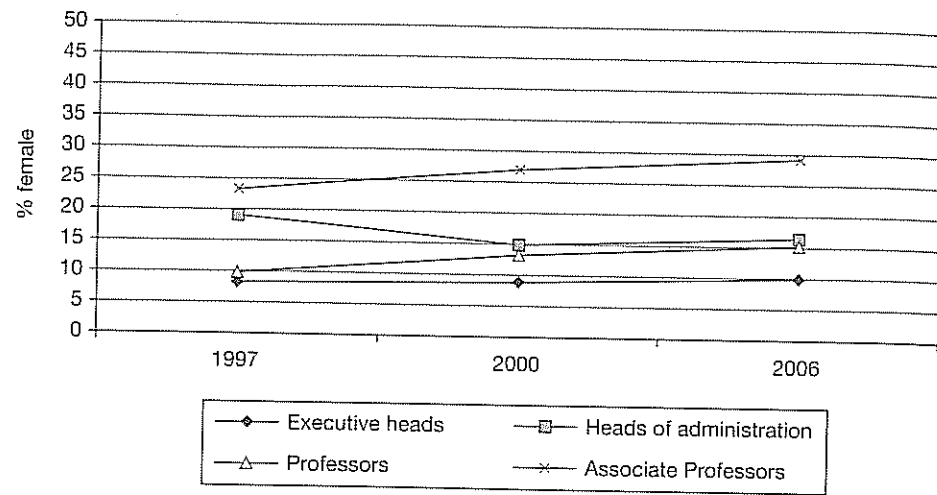


Figure 34.1 Whispers of change? Women's participation in the leadership^a of Commonwealth universities between 1997 and 2006.

Source: Singh, 2008: 45.

^a Executive heads defined as vice chancellors, presidents, rectors. Heads of administration defined as registrars, secretaries. Professors defined as full professors only. Associate professors defined as associate professors, readers, principal lecturers and senior lecturers.

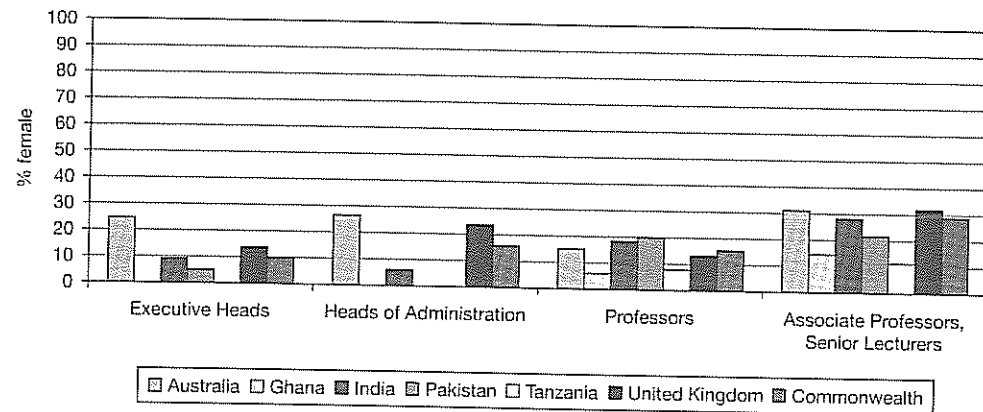


Figure 34.2 Women's participation in management and academic leadership in selected Commonwealth countries, 2006.

Source: Singh, 2008: 11-33.

for the twenty-five member states of the enlarged European Union and seven countries associated with the 6th Framework Programme, namely Bulgaria, Switzerland, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Romania and Turkey. The European Commission revealed that only 15 per cent of those at the highest academic grade (Grade A¹) in higher education in the European Union were women (European Commission, 2006). This can be seen in UK figures. In 2006/7, women

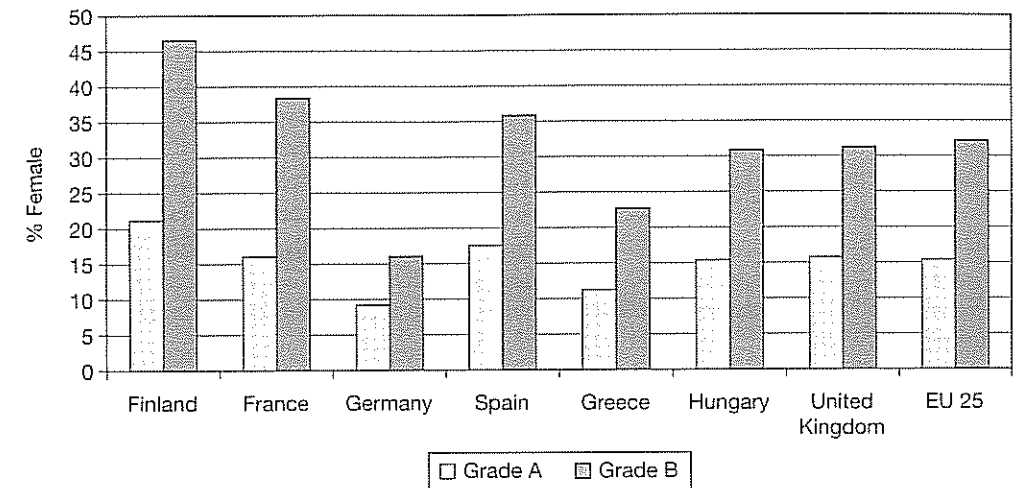


Figure 34.3 Proportion of female academic staff by grade^a in the European Union, 2004.

Source: European Commission, 2006: 57.

^a Grade A: highest grade or post at which research conducted, professor. Grade B: researchers not as senior as top position but more senior than newly qualified Ph.D. holder, e.g. associate professor, senior lecturer, senior researcher.

comprised 42.3 per cent of academics, but only 17.5 per cent of professors in higher education institutions in the UK (*Guardian*, 28 February 2008: 1).

The disappearance of women in the higher grades is evocative of Sen's construct of 'missing women' (Martin, 2008; Sen, 2003). Women disappear when power, resources and influence increase. So a question to consider is whether gendered opportunity structures only relate to women staff, as women students appear to be flourishing?

The momentum of women's increased participation

One major success is the increased numbers of women entering higher education as undergraduate students. If we consider that women were barred in the UK until the late nineteenth century (Dyhouse, 1995), this represents quantitative progress. Indeed, there is a morality to the whole widening participation debate that suggests that a democratising state intervention is promoting meritocratic equalisation and redistributing an unquestioned 'good' (Morley and Lugg, 2009). Whatever the sociopolitical drivers, it is worth noting that, in the UK in 1995, there were two and a half times more women in the system than in 1970-1971 (Abbott and Wallace, 1997). Participation rates for women in higher education have increased between 1999 and 2005 in all regions of the world, with a global gender parity index of 1.05, suggesting that there are now more undergraduate women than men in higher education (UNESCO, 2007:132). However, the increase in women's participation has been unevenly distributed across national and disciplinary boundaries. Women's participation rates are higher than those of men in North America and Europe, but lower in regions such as East Asia and the Pacific, South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Globally, women students are concentrated in non-science subjects. There is still a sense of what constitutes a gender-appropriate discipline in many high- and low-income countries, with worldwide concern about the under-representation of women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Men predominate in subjects related to engineering, manufacturing and construction, and maths and computer science (OECD, 2007). In many countries, two thirds to three quarters of graduates in the fields of health, welfare and education are women (UNESCO, 2006). Thus, women continue to be concentrated in subjects associated with low-wage sectors of the economy, in particular health and welfare, humanities, arts and education.

What do all these facts about women's increased participation or exclusion add up to in terms of how women experience the academy? I have conducted studies on the micropolitics of academic life and frequently find that the gendered relays of power that cause the most distress and discomfort are the everyday transactions and relations (Morley, 1999; 2006). Blending quantitative 'facts' with interview data helps to reveal both the scale and the lived complexities that structure women's participation in higher education, as students and staff. Focusing on everyday micro-level incidents can provide important information about more macro-focused challenges for gender equality. The personal is political, or to use more contemporary vocabulary, the self can become an object of reflexive knowledge (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Hey and Leathwood, 2007). The following sections will attempt to relate some of these concerns to a global feminist polity.

The feminisation hysteria

An equity paradox seems to have arisen. Instead of celebrating the fact that some women have succeeded in entering the academy in certain disciplinary and organisational locations, a moral panic over the feminisation of higher education has emerged. Happily, some Western feminist scholars are taking issue with populist beliefs that women are taking over the academy and that their newly found professional and economic independence is responsible for societal destabilisation and a crisis in masculinity (Evans, 2008; Leathwood and Read, 2008; Quinn, 2003). The feminisation debate itself is partial and exclusionary. First, it does not include consideration of leadership in higher education and only seems to relate to female participation at undergraduate level in some programmes and in some geopolitical regions. Second, it is debatable as to whether quantitative change has allowed more (or perversely less) discursive space for gender? Third, it fails to intersect gender with other structures of inequality, including social class; and, fourth, it silences advocacy for gender equality.

Issues of silence, voice and participation have long been a concern of feminist theorists (Gatenby and Humphries, 1999). Speaking as a woman can mean speaking as a gendered self that is often at odds with the putative ungendered or gender-neutral representations and assumptions of academia (Evans, 2008). However, voice is not just about women speaking, but about the inclusion of gender equality in policy, pedagogy and planning. In the UK, gender is a disqualified discourse in higher education policy. Quantitative change seems to imply to policymakers that gender is no longer an issue in a post-feminist era (Morley, 2007b). For example, the former minister for higher education in the UK – John Denham – made a speech about priorities for the next fifteen years, and these all relate to innovation and wealth creation, rather than to wealth distribution, inclusion and equalities. Gender equality was not mentioned once (Denham, 2008).

Transnational challenges

A criticism of much of the scholarship on academic women is that it focuses on the experiences and voices of socio-economically privileged white women in high-income countries (Twombly, 1999). Theorising links between differently located practices can produce a sense of the patterns and scale of gender challenges. I would like to draw, first, upon some research findings from Morley *et al.* (2006). This study explored gender equity in higher education in five Commonwealth countries. It aimed to go behind the statistics and explore women's everyday experiences of higher education in Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda. Identifying key sites of gender-differentiated experiences of the academy was a purpose of the research. The countries were selected for their varying national policies on gender equity and their commitment to international policies to end discrimination against women. There were 209 interviews held with students, academic staff and managers. Observation of classrooms and boardrooms was conducted, and statistics and policies were analysed. A noticeable finding was how gender inequalities appear to be globalised. While transnational feminism is problematic in terms of the diversity of women's oppressions (Mills and Ssewakiryanga, 2002), observations from women in low-income countries can sound remarkably similar to women's voices in the west.

In the study, a strong sense of a hidden curriculum emerged (Margolis, 2001). The overt and the hidden curricula are not mutually exclusive but form a complex mechanism of production and reproduction (Apple, 1980). The hidden curriculum is irrational and contradictory. Negative attitudes to women's academic abilities do not correlate with their actual achievements. One aspect of the hidden curriculum relates to the conjunction between gender and academic ability and authority. Studies have reported how discrimination against women can involve not taking them seriously and doubting their ability and motivation (Seymour and Hewitt, 1997). Discrimination due to perceived incompetence is based on descriptive gender stereotypes (Rudman and Glick, 2001). Difference is frequently expressed in terms of deficit and located within particular bodies rather than in the 'invisible values and assumptions structuring curriculum and pedagogy' (Abu El-Haj, 2003: 411).

Femaleness is repeatedly perceived as irreconcilable with intellectual authority (Shah, 2001). In many cultures, the higher-educated woman is in antagonistic relationship to other discursive practices. In Morley *et al.* (2006), there was widespread reporting of negating women's academic abilities and hostility from male students and staff, as a South African student illustrates:

I have also noticed how we've had maybe two or three female lecturers and how the guys in our class just do not listen to them, they do not respect them. And I mean these women are really good, they are brilliant, they know their stuff they worked hard they have their PhDs, but guys laugh at them, ridicule them.

In an observation evocative of Spender's early work in the UK (1982), and Brooks' early work in the USA (1982), the Sri Lankan team relate how their classroom observations revealed male students receiving more pedagogical attention:

Towards the end of the lecture when the lecturer was relating real-life examples to the theory he had been teaching, he mentioned a project the female student was involved in and briefly asked her a question related to it but he did not give her any time to answer, smiled and moved on to the next question very swiftly.

The Sri Lankan team also note how, generally, male students were invited to comment and question more than females. Consequently, male students became more confident, more assertive and relaxed than their female counterparts. This gendered interaction did not go unnoticed by students. A Sri Lankan student describes discriminatory behaviour from some male lecturers:

There are some who try to put the women down by asking a question and then laughing at us when we can't answer it, or ask something just to put us down.

The gendering of pedagogical interactions poses questions about the full meaning of the concept of women's participation.

Women students in Morley *et al.* (2006) were also perceived as impeded by internalised oppression, i.e. their interior worlds or psychic narratives that constantly played recordings of inferiority. Women's academic self-worth was often presented as fragile and unstable. A Ugandan student states:

The problem most girls have is lack of confidence.

A Sri Lankan policymaker in Morley *et al.* (2006) also attributed the low level of women in management to women's reluctance to apply for the posts:

Managerial posts are not held by women in large numbers. In universities, if you take generally speaking how many heads of departments are females . . . no not even 20 per cent are held by the females . . . That is because they don't come forward. That is the reason.

The problem with affective explanations and attributing problems to psychic narratives, such as lack of self-confidence, is that they suggest that women are in deficit and lacking the personal attributes to succeed. Cognitive, rather than organisational, restructuring is seen as the solution. Problems that are largely collective and social are individuated. It represents the privatisation of the public. The myth of meritocracy is reinforced. As Knights and Richards (2003: 218) suggest:

Meritocracy has the power to pass the responsibility for unequal outcomes back onto the individual and therefore to stigmatize the unsuccessful as incompetent or incapable.

The power relations that create structures and barriers and, indeed, that undermine women's confidence in their abilities, are overlooked. By offering very conventional indicators of professional success, it also marks out women as losers who prefer not to occupy managerial roles.

The gendering of academic ability has been a theme that has emerged in my recent study on widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania (Morley *et al.*, 2009).² This study utilises statistical data, life history interviews with 200 students and semi-structured interviews with 200 staff in two public and two private universities. It focuses on how gender and socio-economic status intersect and constrain or facilitate participation in higher education. The interview data so far suggest that any activity that is perceived as difficult is seen to be inappropriate for women. A Tanzanian female student describes how female students frequently believe that they need to be academically rescued by male students:

You know that for example this question is tough and only boys can tackle it . . . and a girl cannot, and we have to look for a boy, who we think can tackle it.

Success criteria for gender equality frequently relate to women's increased participation in male-dominated areas. It is almost if, by working and studying with men, there will be disidentification with the inferior world of women and a type of positive contagion of male values and behaviours. Success is constructed as crossing a gendered threshold to become more like a man, rather than removing the gendered code from the activity.

Hegemonic codes of femininity and masculinity continue to influence subject choice (Lapping, 2005). Women are constructed as poor choosers when it comes to academic disciplines. Their entry into 'non-traditional' disciplines is seen as a form of empowerment and, hence, a cause for celebration. In Tanzania especially, where affirmative action interventions have created access or pre-entry programmes for women to enter science, quantitative change is widely acknowledged as success. Women's academic identities are frequently constructed in terms of remediation or absence. A Tanzanian Dean of a Science Faculty discusses women's under-representation in high-status disciplines:

When it comes to gender, I think it's the girls who are not well represented particularly in some disciplines. Sciences is less than fifteen percent . . . When it comes to Physics, Mathematics, Geology there is huge imbalance between the girls and boys . . . In Mathematics it could be up to . . . you know between eighty and twenty percent. Even in Geology you know twenty percent girls, eighty percent boys.

Under-representation usually features in relation to certain high-status STEM subject areas. Men's under-representation in female-dominated disciplines is rarely mentioned in policy terms.

The question of what and where women are accessing can also be related to the type of higher education institution (HEI). In Ghana, women comprise 35 per cent of the overall university population (NCTE, 2006a,b), although they make up 41 per cent of the students in private higher education (NCTE, 2006b). In Tanzania, 33 per cent of the overall undergraduate population is female, with women comprising 38 per cent of students in private higher education (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MHEST), 2006). If rates of participation for women are higher in lower-status private higher education, this poses questions about core and periphery provision. Socially disadvantaged groups could be getting diverted into peripheral higher education, thus reinforcing stratification of the sector and social differentiation. In this analysis, widening participation in higher education can be conceptualised as a process of diversion, i.e. a rerouting of members of socially disadvantaged groups into lower-status institutions in order to reserve the higher-status universities for the elite (David, 2007). 'Buying an education becomes a substitute for getting an education' (Kenway *et al.*, 1993: 116).

Policy evaporation

An ongoing source of grief and melancholy for many feminist scholars is the way in which policy commitments to gender can evaporate during implementation (Goetz, 1997; Longwe, 1995). In the UK, gender is no longer included in higher education policy. Elsewhere, there are gender policies that fail to be implemented. In Ghana, an academic relates how gender remains at the level of policy text, with no strategic implementation plans:

They are all making any noises about tertiary education. All they said was they recommended 50–50 and that was it, that was it . . . The only one I can think of is with regard to women, it's a little bit more of lip service, if anything.

These observations about the implementation gap are evocative of findings from a UK-based study that I conducted with Rosemary Deem and Anwar Tlili (Deem *et al.*, 2005; Deem, 2008). The research involved six case studies of higher education institutions across England, Scotland and Wales. The project's aims included exploring staff experiences of equity issues and institutional equity policies. A central finding was that, although all six institutions studied had equal opportunities policies in place, not all the policies were comprehensive, completely up to date or easy to understand. Policies were often communicated to staff via email, which may not reach those with email overload or staff with no computer access at work. Some policies gave the impression of often having been reactively rather than proactively constructed and with an eye to compliance with legislation rather than empowerment of the work force and enhancement of their working conditions. Staff were wary of utilising grievance procedures for fear of recrimination and professional suicide. The policies were not integrated into strategic management, and there was little action planning or pro-activity. The problem of senior and middle management inactivity was observed by an academic trade union representative from one university, who felt that, for some, it was sufficient simply to note the numbers rather than take any action to rectify under-representation:

Now on sex equality last year there was a round of promotions to principal lecturer and, it was noted that I think the proportion of women who applied, as compared to the proportion of women employed, and the proportion of women I think, was one out of six appointees. And the personnel office simply in their report, noted the numbers. But we tried to push them to think about what might they do about it but they were quite content to just note the disparity between the number of women employed in the academic role and the outcome of this round.

Many of the staff that we interviewed frequently noted how policies existed at a textual level – often to meet the requirements of audit and funding bodies – rather than building momentum at the grassroots level of day-to-day work.

Conclusion

Women's exclusion from higher education is a historical injustice sometimes framed today in terms of a human rights violation. Today, women are participating, in increasing numbers, in higher education, in a range of national locations. Yet, women's academic identities are often forged in otherness, as strangers in opposition to (privileged) men's belonging and entitlement. This means that gender in higher education is often encoded in a range of formal and informal signs, practices and networks. The gender debates are full of contradictions. Quantitative targets to let more women into higher education can fail, or be meaningless, while femaleness continues to be socially constructed as second-class citizenship. Women are positioned as holding back as a consequence of low confidence and self-esteem, while simultaneously threatening to take over or feminise (and, hence, devalue) the sacred space of academe. A further contradiction between policy as text and as lived experience is a noticeable feature of gender architecture.

Policy interventions, including gender mainstreaming and gender equality, suggest that now gender sensitivity and strategic actions should be everywhere – including the curriculum, management and resourcing of academic life – yet informants in my studies report that it is nowhere!

Feminist scholars and researchers will continue to critique, theorise, audit and grieve power and privilege in higher education, as it is a major site of cultural practice, identity formation and symbolic control. Whereas the former UK minister for higher education (Denham, 2008) has a wish list for the next fifteen years that includes the expansion of technology, innovation and research-based wealth creation, we also need to build on the momentum of women's increased participation and imagine or re-imagine a different future.

Notes

- 1 Grade A as a marker of seniority corresponds to 'full professor' of the highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted (European Commission, 2006: 50).
- 2 For further information, see www.sussex.ac.uk/education/wideningparticipation.

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Sociology, social class and education

Diane Reay

Introduction

The relationship between the educational system and social class inequalities is one of the most fundamental issues in the sociology of education. Schools have been held up as both the means of achieving equality in society but also as centrally implicated in the reproduction of inequalities. So we are confronted with a conundrum. How is schooling to be understood in relation to social class? Is it a source of social mobility or even emancipation for the working classes or does it remain a means of controlling the lower orders and maintaining upper- and middle-class advantage? What is clear is that sociology has struggled to understand the complexities of, let alone provide solutions for, social class inequalities in education.

A variety of causes for educational inequalities, together with possible ways of addressing them, have been posited over the last seventy years. These can be divided into three main approaches. The first focuses on internal school factors, exemplified most recently in the school effectiveness and improvement movement (Hallinger and Heck, 1998). Enshrined in this internalist perspective is the view that schools can and do make a difference to social class inequalities, that a focus on improving practice at the micro level of school and classroom is enough. However, this approach, which was at its most popular in the 1990s, is on the wane, as increasingly research states that the effectiveness of schooling in addressing social class inequalities is relatively small. Olive Banks' conclusion in 1955, repeated in 1970 by Basil Bernstein, that schools have limited capacity to compensate for economic and social inequalities is being borne out in contemporary research across the globe (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007; Freeman-Moir and Scott, 2003; Gamoran, 2007; McLeod and Yates, 2006). Furthermore, the worrying tendency has been for such approaches, especially in their interpretation by media and politicians, to degenerate into blaming teachers, without any recognition of the impact of wider external influences. There remains a lack of consensus about the extent of the role schools play in social class inequalities. However, what is now generally agreed is that internal educational processes are not in themselves sufficient to explain class inequalities in education.

As Gamoran (2007) succinctly points out in relation to the US, differences in school performance are rooted in inequalities that lie outside the school, and, as long as wider social

inequalities persist, so will educational inequalities. More influential within sociology have been factors that are seen to be external to schooling, ranging from the labour market to working-class culture. However, here too a blame culture has often been in evidence. Within this externalist perspective, the working-class family is often positioned as the villain. With depressing frequency, the media, politicians and even academics have tended to focus on interpretations that view the working classes in terms of a range of cultural deficits that are then portrayed as the reasons for working-class underachievement. Most position the working classes as either victims or deficient in one way or another, and nearly all focus on the home as the locus of class practices.

In both the two approaches outlined above, states shift the blame for educational inequalities from themselves onto individual schools, parents and children (Apple, 2003). The third approach, which spans internal and external causes, concentrates on educational policy as key to remediating social class inequalities. However, here sociological understandings come up against the fluctuating presence of class in educational policy, a case of 'now you see it, now you don't'. Too often within political elites, a commonsense view of social class, namely that we are all classless now, is espoused. Across the globe, class inequalities become overlaid, and partially masked, by dominant discourses, for example of race in the US and rurality in China and Latin America. This other terminology works to bury class as a key marker of educational inequality. The consequence is that all too often social class does not count within education. So, in different countries at different times, in some policies but not in others, social class is recognised as a problem to be addressed in educational policy. Currently, the main discourse within education is one that uses the language of social exclusion, yet another way of avoiding social class. As a result, within educational policy the main division is seen to lie between deprived minorities on the one hand and a large mainstream on the other.

However, even when policymakers and politicians recognise the importance of social class in education, there is often contestation, primarily between policymakers and academics, as to whether educational policy can make a difference to social class inequalities in education. While politicians and policymakers are increasingly preoccupied with targeting policies to address class inequalities, research over the last half century indicates that 'in most places at most times, educational policy has contributed relatively little, if anything, to reducing social inequalities' (Paterson and Iannelli, 2007: 330). In fact, depressingly, much of the research evidence indicates that current policy initiatives are worsening rather than improving social class inequalities. So research focusing on policies that impact on internal aspects of schooling, such as assessment (Reay and Wiliam, 1999) and tracking, setting and streaming (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Kelly, 2007; Oakes, 1985), illustrate the ways in which school processes of testing, tracking and streaming result in inequitable outcomes for students that remain strongly related to social class. Similarly, research on marketisation and selection policies reveals polarised educational systems, with the high-achieving, well-resourced, popular schools with largely middle-class intakes at the top of school league tables, while less successful, unpopular schools with mainly working-class students are clustered at, or near, the bottom (Ball, 2003; Brantlinger, 2004).

In this brief overview, I have separated out these three approaches, but they are also to a degree overlapping. So some key educational policies such as No Child Left Behind in the US and Sure Start in the UK specifically target the working-class home and are premised on a cultural deficit view of working-class families, while there is a fuzziness between school level and wider systemic educational policies. In the next section I attempt to bridge internalist, externalist and policy-centred approaches through a focus on social class experiences of education that centres dimensions of the relationship that are often muted in contemporary

accounts. I want to argue that we cannot begin to make adequate sense of contemporary class relationships to schooling until we include notions of temporality, spatiality and relationality.

The past in the present: a brief history of social class in education

In relation to temporality, class relationships to education constitute a significant continuation of the past in the present (Teese *et al.*, 2007). Freeman-Moir and Scott's (2003: 10) retrospective analysis of the last half of the twentieth century concluded that, under the most favourable possible conditions, even the most liberal of capitalist societies still operated with educational systems that restricted access and achievement for working-class children in myriad ways. In relation to social class mobility, education across the globe is still about social reproduction and reinforcing the status quo. The reasons are of course partly economic: it remains a question of the level of resources, material as well as cultural, that families can bring to their relationship with schooling. But there remain issues of representation and othering that both feed into and are fed by social and economic inequalities. Any notion of education as liberatory has always been undermined by ruling elites' instrumental view of education as a form of control of the working classes.

A focus on temporality centres not only collective class trajectories but also family histories. The working classes bring to their experience of schooling family memories of educational subordination and marginalisation. Children negotiate schooling not only directly through their own experiences but also through the sedimented experiences of parents and even grandparents. Ruth Lupton's (2004) research in the UK and Annette Lareau's (2003) in the US found that working-class families' expectations of social mobility through education are often minimal, conditioned by their own experiences over several generations.

Specificities of historical time are also critical in understanding class relationships to education. Paul Willis's (1977) lads were leaving school in the late 1960s and early 1970s, at a time when there was a buoyant labour market with an abundance of male manual jobs in the UK. Their oppositional rejection of schooling was, in part, made possible by the opportunities awaiting them in the labour market. The American working-class young men in Lois Weis's (1990) *Working class without work* were dealing with very different economic conditions. Their more positive attitudes to schooling and desires for credentials were, in part, a response to the lack of working-class male jobs in the US economy of the 1980s. And economic conditions have also changed dramatically in the UK and much of Europe over the last forty years. While the working classes in the global South remain outsiders in education, across the global North (Connell, 2007), they often resemble Bourdieu's 'outcasts on the inside'. The current global economic recession and changing labour market demographics leave them trapped in schooling, and increasingly further and higher education, because there is no longer sufficient non-degree employment.

Middle-class relationships to education, while maintaining many common features with the past, have also evolved in response to an increasingly competitive globalised labour market (Ball, 2003; Raveaud and van Zanten, 2007). The middle classes have had to engage in more and more academic, practical and emotional work in order to ensure their social advantage (Lareau, 2003; Reay, 1998). Middle-class relationships to schooling, particularly in the inner cities, have become characterised by high levels of anxiety. Here, as with the working classes, relationships to education have changed along with economic conditions. In particular, the premium put

on educational credentials has grown as graduate jobs have diminished relative to the number of graduates.

While economic circumstances change, the negativity with which the working classes are viewed within education does not. It is this historical legacy of being the inferior 'other' within education that resonates in the present. Deference always has been, and still is, expected of the working classes (McDowell, 2007). In fact, what is surprising is that some of the working classes still make enormous efforts to succeed educationally in educational systems that hold little prospect of a positive academic outcome. The working classes across the globe continue to have access to relatively low levels of the kind of material, cultural and psychological resources that aid educational success. Most can neither afford the private tuition and the enriching cultural activities that many middle-class parents invest in for their children, nor do they have the same degree of confidence and sense of entitlement that the middle classes possess in their interactions with schooling. So the negative representations and othering that characterised the past continue in the present. This lack of positive images of the working classes contributes to them being disqualified and inadequately supported educationally. Just as the tendency has been to locate behavioural problems in minority ethnic rather than white students, so the working class across ethnicity has become the universal repository of educational failure. But educational success and failure are necessarily relational. Those who succeed do so at the expense of others' failure. In the next section I examine relationality and its contribution to class experiences of schooling.

Schooling: a classed culture of winners and losers

In place of 'the usual suspects', namely either working-class culture or 'failing' schools that invariably have predominantly working-class intakes as key to working-class failure, a focus on relational aspects of educational achievement reveals the crucial role of power within education. And, as Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) point out, educational failure becomes more prevalent as societies become more unequal. Under the new educational hegemony, we have all become personally responsible for our own educational success and social mobility. Within the highly individualised and competitive cultures that characterise the global North (Connell, 2007), large sections of the working classes are pathologised as unmotivated, unambitious and underachieving. The irony is that the rhetoric of social mobility and equal opportunities within education has increased in volume and intensity as both have become less possible in practice. The objective of many middle-class parents is to ensure that their children are educational winners, but not all children can be winners, and the provision of systems that cater for winners also helps reinforce the position of losers (Butler and Hamnett, 2007: 1166). We cannot all succeed academically. If we did, what counts now as educational success would lose its value. Neither is there any glimmer of recognition that the middle classes' intense and increasingly anxious preoccupation with educational achievement can be as damaging as working-class underachievement. Numerous studies indicate that one of the key lessons middle-class children learn is that failure is intolerable, unwanted and belongs somewhere else. We can glimpse this in what white middle-class Camilla says about class differences in her multi-ethnic London state secondary school:

I had everything that the working-class kids didn't have. You know everything that my mum and dad had given me and I was more intelligent than they were and there was more going for me than there was for them. And I think also because my mum and dad had achieved so much I think I probably felt quite second rate to them and being friends

with these people made me feel like the one you know who was achieving you know and was superior to them.

(Camilla)

Here we are presented with the pervasive middle-class sense of intellectual superiority. Camilla was part of the sample in an ESRC project on the white middle classes sending their children to urban comprehensives in England. In the 250 transcripts, there were 574 allusions to 'being bright', all references to white middle-class students and their friends. This monopolising of 'brightness' by the middle classes within schooling yet again positions the working classes across ethnicity as the 'lesser other' within educational systems.

I am going to draw briefly on a number of empirical research projects, in order to further highlight relationality and the ways in which students experience a zero sum game in which one child's educational success too often means another child's sense of educational failure. They also illustrate what I have called the psychosocial dimension of class in education (Reay, 2005, 2008). The two quotes below, both from working-class students, one in the US and the others in the UK, are infused with a potent sense of unfairness and unequal treatment:

Girl: What I don't like about my school is how they treat us like animals, like they cage us up and like they keep putting more gates and more locks and stuff though they expect us to act like humans.

(US quote from Fine *et al.*, 2007: 229)

And:

Martin: Teachers look down on you.

David: Yeah, like they think you're dumb.

David: We don't expect them to treat us like their own children? They're not. But we are still kids. I'd say to them 'you've got kids. You treat them with love but you don't need to love us. All you need to do is treat us like humans.

(UK quote from Reay, 2006: 297)

In both quotes we can see powerfully how the system of value that produces the middle classes as valuable, academic stars simultaneously generates a working class that is represented as incapable of having a self with value (Skeggs, 2004). While entitlement and access to resources for making a self with value are central to how the middle classes are formed within education, the consequence is too often a residualised, valueless working class. Class destinies in the twenty-first century remain tied to academic achievement. Furthermore, class has entered psychological categories as a way of socially regulating normativity and pathology within the educational field. However, although children expressed anxieties about school achievement across class differences, in the studies on which I am drawing it was not the white middle-class boys panicking about being exposed as no good through school tracking, testing and assessment procedures. Rather, it was the black and white working-class girls agonising that they would be 'a nothing' (Reay and Wiliam, 1999). Working-class students, such as the girl in Michelle Fine and her colleagues' study, and the two boys in my UK study with Madeleine Arnot (Reay, 2006), inhabit a psychic economy of class defined by fear, anxiety and unease, where failure looms large, and success is elusive, a space where they are positioned, and see themselves as losers in the intense competition that education has become.

Relationality raises issues not only pertaining to the relationships between classes but also of how different aspects of identity co-exist within class. At the most basic level, class is always gendered and raced. This is evident in the extent to which girls across class express higher levels of anxiety about educational performance than boys (Arnot *et al.*, 1999). Of course there are an array of intersectionalities that cross-cut class. Social classes are striated not only by gender, ethnicity, sexuality and (dis)ability but also by differing class fractions. Relations differ widely in terms of how different groupings within the same class position themselves and are positioned by others, and in terms of how their relationships to education have evolved. So to take one example, the white working class have a different relationship to education to many minority ethnic working-class groups. While the white working classes, as we have seen in the earlier section on temporality, often bring a collective memory of educational subordination and marginalization to schooling, some minority ethnic groups in the global North bring histories of educational achievement in their countries of origin, although migration has often brought economic impoverishment and downward mobility. Others, despite a lack of educational credentials, bring a strong conviction that a fresh start in a new educational system will provide crucial opportunities for educational advancement that were denied to their parents. Yet other ME groups, such as the African Caribbean in the UK, have, like their white working-class peers, learnt to live with educational failure, compounded, in their case, by racism. And these different ethnic groups are viewed very differently within the white middle-class imaginary, with the white working class regularly ethnicised as too white and labelled as white trash (Wray and Newitz, 1997), while some minority ethnic groups, such as the Chinese and Indians, are singled out as the acceptable face of working classness (Archer and Francis, 2006) – the so-called 'model minorities' (Leonardo, 2004).

Geographies of schooling: classed places and spaces

Finally we need to examine the extent to which place and space generate unequal classed relationships to schooling. Spatial protection and insulation have become a key strategy of the white middle classes in protecting their children, and their academic achievement, from classed others. For example, the private school system in the UK has historically been an effective mechanism for the affluent middle classes to separate their children off from polluting differences. But spatial separations are increasingly operating within a range of educational systems that criss-cross the globe (see, for example, Gulson (2007) in relation to the Australian educational system and Thrupp (2007) in relation to New Zealand). As Beverley Skeggs points out (2004: 15), in the twenty first century 'geographical referencing is one of the contemporary shorthand ways of speaking class'. This geographical referencing is particularly visible in schooling. The emergence of predominantly working-class schools as deprived, failing and disadvantaged and so needing either remediation or closing down has become a pervasive feature of educational debates, particularly in the US, Australia and the UK.

Recent research (Narodowski and Nores, 2002) provides many examples of educational specialisation as schools are represented as either 'good' or 'bad' places by the media, the general public and school students themselves. As Brantlinger (2004) points out in the US context, increased emphasis on parental choice and diversity of school provision has allowed middle-class parents and schools to choose one another, leaving the working classes stranded in an increasingly segregated system mediated in many cases by housing costs and the ability to move house.

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Interfaces between the sociology of education and the studies about youth in Brazil

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The birth of sociology in Brazil and the studies about education have clustered, since the mid twentieth century, around several centers of research, many of which were dismantled by the authoritarian regime of the 1960s. Part of that tradition, which will be examined in this text, refers to a heuristic and suggestive way of articulating the interfaces between the sociology of education and the studies on youth that must be considered these days. It is not a case, therefore, of carrying out an appraisal of the vast sociological production about education in Brazil developed in recent years, but of problematizing important perspectives that have been guiding the development of this discipline in this country.¹

In the 1950s, the budding sociological reflection, particularly that practiced in São Paulo under the guidance of Florestan Fernandes, considered that the specific domains of sociology—education, labor, culture, among others—should not imply excessive segmentation and specialization:

As in any science, the sociological methods can be applied to the investigation and explanation of any particular social phenomenon without, for that reason, making it necessary to admit the existence of a special discipline with its own object and problems! ... In other aspects the more or less free usage of such expressions facilitates the identification of the content of the contributions, thereby simplifying the relations of the author to the public. This seems to be sufficient to justify their usage, once the intention of indefinitely subdividing the fields of Sociology lacks logical sense.

(Fernandes, 1960: 29–30)

At that time, those guidelines were intended to understand the Brazilian society from the perspective of its historical singularity, an attitude that demanded a position of critical dialogue in the incorporation of the theories produced abroad. The sociologists of the so-called São Paulo School of Sociology were concerned with the issue of underdevelopment and consequently with questions related to development, but they defended a breakaway from the predominant dualist view that saw social change as part of a continuum that moved from underdevelopment to modernization. Thus, Brazil was seen as a *peculiar form of realization of the*

capitalist system where the economic vitality did not exclude, but rather associated with, the archaic elements of organization of the society and the persistent forms of inequality. The tensions were therefore not conceived as anomie, but as constitutive elements of society.

History and totality were the hallmarks of these theoretical–methodological guidelines, that is, it was necessary to understand the historical specificity of the Brazilian society in its multiple dimensions (political, economic, and cultural) (Bastos, 2002; Martins, 1998).

From this spectrum of orientations emerge the first works about the school institution, which takes center stage in the reflections of the sociology of education practiced in Brazil. However, these studies limited their concerns to the scenario of the recent processes of migration, industrialization, and urbanization, which brought to the school life a series of tensions that required analysis (Pereira, 1967, 1971, 1976).

At that time, an important text for research about the school, put forward in 1953 by Antonio Candido, already disclosed Durkheim's pedagogical illusion, which in its formulation defined the educational act as the unilateral action of the adult generation upon the immature, considered as a "clean slate" (Durkheim, 1970). It examined, and this may be the pioneering and most stimulating aspect of Candido's analyses, the conflictive potential and the tensions that were to exist in the relations between the adult generations and those under education, the latter offering resistance to the educational work carried out by the former.

Candido proposed study of the sociability inherent in the group of students and investigation of their expectations, which were not exhausted by the formal relationships predicted by the institution, and limited to the processes of teaching–learning. There is already at that point an analytical opening to the examination of aspects of school life that related to forms of student sociability that could be interfering with the life of the institution. He proposed an analytical perspective sufficiently open to less institutionalized and visible dimensions of school life, which were recovered by the sociology of education only after the 1970s, with the crises of explanations of purely structural slant within the context of theories about the school.²

The same theoretical and methodological inspiration—the historical singularity of Brazilian society and the totality of social processes—was present in the first studies about youths in Brazil. One of the central ideas of this perspective, which clearly produced a way of constructing the research problems, lay on the premise that, from the periphery and margins, one would better understand the movement of society as a whole, making it possible to inspect the principles that structure it (Bastos, 2002: 184). By situating youth as a social category, inspired by Karl Mannheim (Mannheim, 1968, 1973), Marialice Foracchi examined in her works the relative marginality of youngsters before the social structure and centers of power. Along these lines, her research positioned Brazilian university students as emerging actors in a dependent society who became protagonists of the political radicalism of the student movement of the 1960s (Foracchi, 1965, 1972).

The theme of juvenile radicalism was also investigated by Octavio Ianni in the 1960s, when he proposed the strong interrelation between the history of the capitalist regime and the history of the political awakening of the youth (Ianni, 1968). Thus, for these authors, the singularity of youth as a social category would contain the omissions, benefits, and tensions of a social configuration, because youth would represent the social category upon which "the crisis of the system falls in a particular way" (Foracchi, 1972).

Based on such framing of the historical problems and of the totality of the conditions that constitute the cultural and social specificities of Brazil, the interfaces between the sociology of education and youth are made clear, taking this theoretical–methodological assumption as a point of departure. These orientations refused an inadequate specialization of the sociological

studies that were then being initiated both in the sociology of education and in the sociology of youth.

In the 1970s, when graduate studies were being structured in Brazil, the sociology of education reappears, albeit with significant difficulties to establish itself as a field of study (Cunha, 1981, 1992, 1994; Gouveia, 1989). Several studies were already pointing out these limitations, because some of the dilemmas experienced by academic research were due to difficulties in understanding the singularities of Brazilian society and of its system of education, in addition to the lack of deeper discussion about the theoretical frameworks, often born abroad, which founded the investigations. At any rate, the research centered around the processes of school inequalities, although the sociology of education could cover an extremely wide field beyond the school format, for "the mechanisms through which a society transmits to its members the knowledges, the know-how, and the know-how-to-be that it regards as necessary to its reproduction are of infinite variety" (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten, 1992: 1).³

With the birth of the new sociology of education in England after the studies about curriculum and language developed by Michel Young (1971) and Basil Bernstein (1975) in the early 1970s, and with the theoretical diversification of the 1980s through the incorporation of interactionist and ethnographic perspectives, the interest in the school institution persists. However, the research and analyses shift to the processes internal to the institution, attempting to understand how the routines, practices, modes of teaching and learning, the selection of contents, and the interactions in the classroom between teachers and pupils constitute elements of control, establish power relations, and engender inequalities, not just related to social classes, but also of ethnical and gender origin (Zago *et al.*, 2003).

In Brazil, the emphases on the micro social situations favored by these researches renewed the sociological studies about the school, albeit with quite uneven results. The widening of theoretical frameworks also raised criticisms due to the clear difficulties in articulating the perspectives around a careful study of the school institution with the wider processes of a structural nature, as stated by Zaia Brandão in the field of educational research in Brazil (Brandão, 2002).

At any rate, the expanded theoretical arch and the new studies developed alongside the movement for the democratization of the country, reincorporating into the public debate the relevance of school education as a democratic right and the need to investigate and propose deep changes in school practices, thereby preventing the more perverse elements of the school system in what concerns the reproduction of inequalities.

The majority of studies about the school developed by the sociology of education in Brazil for some decades have not offered elements for the study of an important part of the school educational processes: the pupil. In its development, the sociological research about the school has increasingly been faced with the elements that constitute the school practices and in them the pupil's situation, obscured or absent in most analyses. In this period, an intense process of expansion of opportunities of access to schooling takes place, alongside the recognition of the crises in efficacy of the socializing action of the school institution, that is, aspects of the cultural and social domination and reproduction would be affected by the current school organization and its new public.⁴ Somehow, the students became a problem for the practices and processes of cultural and social reproduction, and demanded a new perspective in the field of research.⁵

In this way, the studies that constituted the school reality as an object of analysis gradually turned to the examination of the pupil, reinforcing that set of possibilities proposed by Candido in the 1950s. As observed by Duru-Bellat and Agnes van Zanten, the situation of being a pupil must be a problematic object of investigation in the context of the sociological study of the

school: one is not *born* a pupil; one *becomes* a pupil (1992). In order to consider such a perspective, at least three assumptions are needed: the dissociation between teaching and learning, which gives rise to the notion of school work to be carried out by children and youngsters; the recognition that this work by the pupil is not limited to respond to the explicit demands inscribed in the official programs and regulations, but to the implicit expectations of the institution and teachers. In this case, it is important to integrate the perceptions elaborated by the student in his/her extra-school socialization in the family and others spheres, with emphasis on the orientations that derive, not just from their social or ethnical origin, but from the fact of having been born male or female. Finally, the third assumption is “*the need to recognize that the pupil is also expression of a peculiar form of his/her insertion in the life cycle—the childhood and youth—specific categories endowed with relative autonomy in society and in the sociological literature*” (Duru-Bellat and Van Zanten, 1992: 179; our emphasis).

Around the investigation of the situation of the pupil (Perrenoud, 1994; Sacristan, 2005) and of the multiple agencies that constitute nowadays his/her process of socialization, some investigations are thus resumed about the youth in Brazil, particularly in the field of education. It aims therefore at thinking beyond the pupil, about the juvenile experience as a social condition built and rebuilt from vectors inscribed in social, gender, and ethnic-racial inequalities of contemporary society.

Partly owing to the loss of the monopoly of the process of educating new generations, as already observed, and also because of the internal characteristics of the current school systems, which are incapable of responding to the new challenges posed by their expansion, reflection about the school has been accompanied by a certain diagnostic of its crisis in which violence would be one of its main expressions (Sposito, 1998, 2001).⁶

The new public attending schools, mainly adolescents and youngsters, constitute an ever more autonomous universe of interactions within these, removed from the institutional references and bringing again in its specificity the need of a non-school perspective in the study of the school, what Barrère and Martuccelli (2000) call the non-school path. According to these authors, the autonomization of an adolescent sub-culture engenders for the pupils of mass education a reticence or opposition to the action of the normative school universe, which is itself in crisis. The school gradually ceases to be molded only by the criteria of adult sociability and witnesses the diffusion of the adolescent criteria of sociability, which demand a peculiar way of understanding and investigation (Barrère and Martuccelli, 2000: 256).

A consolidated idea in the studies of youth regards the fact that the modern juvenile condition would follow from the effects of the expansion of schooling and from the gradual withdrawal of children and youngsters from the world of labor, in such way that some authors state that “schooling creates youth” (Fanfani, 2006; Parsons, 1974). However, since the expansion of schooling in Brazil is recent, considering that in the last fifty years a significant fraction of the Brazilian youth remained outside school or had access only to the initial level of the school system, we should problematize some of these classical statements that attribute the modern constitution of youth to the school mediation. In other words, looking beyond the pupil, we need to understand that these agents experience today the juvenile condition in non-school spaces, and that they come into the institution with these practices and ways of life already consolidated, because they have sociability alternatives that they certainly want to preserve. Those who do not find, outside the school space, possibilities of rich interactions within their peer groups, either in leisure activities or in cultural consumption or production, share this symbolic universe filled with expectations, and thus hope to realize them as students. They certainly constitute these demands from the moment they leave childhood, because school is

not the only agency that offers them cultural models for the experience of being young. We cannot fail to consider that styles, habits, and ways of life are also shaped by other agencies, which brings us to the idea of the multiple socializing spaces or ways of life that inscribe interactions and practices that go beyond the school boundaries and family life; that is, they pose the challenge of understanding how a stage of life—youth—and the insertion of subjects into the social structure are articulated in unequal and heterogeneous societies such as the Brazilian one.

Knowledge of the sociability, of the forms of solidarity, and of its conflicts and practices has been the incipient object of a sociology of youth in Brazil fairly articulated to the studies of the sociology of education.

Despite constituting important interfaces with the sociology of education, the studies of youngsters in Brazil embrace theoretical sources that derive from contributions from other domains of sociology.

A first outlook is related to the importance of the constitution of a specific field that appears in the sociology of the life stages or cycles, conceived as socio-historical constructions, that is to say, the constitution of sociological studies of childhood, youth, and old age.

Under this perspective, not just the specificities of each moment, but also the relationships between generations—adults and youth—are again studied, and characterized more by a certain notion of crisis than by the traditional idea of generation conflict (Barrère and Martuccelli, 2000; Dubet, 1987).

Sirota points out that within the sociological studies about childhood there can be observed a movement that goes from a sociology of schooling towards a sociology of socialization, in an attempt of “de-schooling” the approach to the child (2006, 2001: 27).

The studies about youth in Brazil, although still under consolidation, have opened up paths for the understanding of the condition of youngsters beyond the school universe. By centering on the young subjects and their dilemmas in the outlines of a society, which until recent years had increased the levels of social inequality, and faced with profound changes the world of labor, the sociology of youth has also dedicated itself to examining the conditions of insertion and maintenance of youngsters in a labor market in sharp evolution, interacting with several of the studies that have occupied the fields of interest of sociology in the world of labor and unemployment (Corrochano, 2001, 2008; Guimarães, 2005; Nakano, 2004).

Incorporating the issue of the multiple spaces of the circulation of urban youngsters,⁷ several studies offer important clues for the understanding of the bonding elements of juvenile life through style groups and the so-called juvenile cultures (Abramo, 1994; Caiaffa, 1985; Carrano, 2002; Costa, 2003; Dayrell, 2005; Herschmann, 1997, 2000; Magnani and Mantese, 2007; Pais and Blass, 2004; Sposito, 1994; Tella, 2000; Vianna, 1987, 1997).

However, most of these studies have sought to break away from the classical models for the study of juvenile groups, which were anchored in the tradition of functionalism that privileged deviance and anomie as categories of analysis. A relative influence of the studies of the juvenile sub-cultures developed by the researchers of cultural studies from Birmingham, England, could be observed. The contributions from the sociology of the Portuguese youth made by José Machado Pais (1993, 2004) were also very important, as were the anthropological studies developed by Carles Feixa (1998, 2004), which examined this sociability based on the idea of juvenile cultures (somehow overcoming the assumption of sub-culture). More recently, the studies of urban anthropology conducted by José Guilherme Magnani (2007) about the juvenile circuits and trajectories in the city have also widened the perspective of analysis of the juvenile groups.

Similarly to the reflection carried out during the 1950s and 1960s, the research into youth in Brazil seeks to understand the outlines and practices that build youngsters as political actors. Some of the studies still devote their efforts to the analysis of the forms of student militancy, but have enlarged the spectrum of subjects investigated beyond the universe of higher education. Thus, the study of new formats and young collective actors that express new modalities of presence in the public sphere, both through cultural and artistic expressions and within movements that have marked the social struggles of the Brazilian society in the last years, as well as the movement of the agrarian society and the struggles of blacks against discrimination and racism has constituted an important challenge. The analysis of the presence of youngsters in collective actions draws from the theoretical tradition of the sociology of the social movement, of collective action, and of political participation (Sposito, 2000), preserving to some extent the perspectives of analysis that emerged in the 1950s.

The density of the field of studies about the youth under a sociological perspective resides in the challenge to articulate the analysis of the domains regarded as classical to sociology, namely, labor, culture, political action, and social movements. The studies of Brazilian youngsters in their diversity of modes of circulation, of practices, and of orientations derived from social, gender, and race conditions cannot be confined as a domain of analysis constituting a specialty refused in Brazil by the sociological tradition examined in this article.

The trajectories analyzed here illustrate a possible path for the interaction between the sociology of education and the studies about youth that reinforces theoretical–methodological orientations of the 1950s/1960s in Brazil. By seeking support in the sociological studies of the school institution within historical and cultural processes that constitute the singularities of Brazilian society, we reinforce the practice of sociology of education not restricted to a strictly school perspective of the domain of study. Inscribing the sociology of youth in the processes that give shape to contemporary Brazilian society, both from the point of view of the transformations of the world of labor, and under the optics of the sociology of collective action, social movements, and cultural practices, we rescue a theoretical–methodological point of view focused on the understanding of the singularities that constitute Brazil in its constant dialogue with international production. By examining the interfaces and specificities of this field of investigation, such a perspective refuses to inscribe the sociology of education or the sociology of youth into the segmented mode of the special sociologies. On the contrary, the basic assumption rests on the idea of a theoretical domain—the sociology—that tries to understand how the conflicts and tensions around the social reproduction, and the socialization and individualization processes take place from some privileged protagonists—the youngsters—in the condition of iceberg tips of contemporary social dilemmas (Melucci, 1997).

Notes

- 1 In another article—*Uma perspectiva não escolar no estudo sociológico da escola* [A non-school perspective in the sociological study of school]—I have analyzed the fruitfulness of that perspective for the analyses of social struggles somehow affected by the place that the school has acquired in contemporary society (Sposito, 2007).
- 2 The North American and European studies about the school establishments offer important contributions to the study of school life in its less visible and formalized aspects. An assessment of these orientations and their impacts on the sociology of education in Brazil can be found in the article by Leila Mafra (2003).

- 3 A promising example of inflexion in the field of sociological studies on education in Brazil can be seen in the studies about families and their relations to schooling developed since the 1990s by researchers such as Marialice Nogueira, Zaia Brandão, Nadir Zago, and Geraldo Romanelli, amongst others (Nogueira *et al.*, 2000).
- 4 Since the 1980s, an important group of sociological studies about education tried to understand the perverse consequences of the expansion of schooling out of precarious conditions, fostering an intense debate about the quality of the public education offered in Brazil. Education in conservative times has been the object of analysis in recent works that examined the neoliberal inclinations in educational policies (Haddad, 2008; Hypólito and Gandin, 2000).
- 5 When examining the emergence of the sociology of childhood, Sirota affirms that, in the context of the sociology of family or sociology of education, the child was a ghost character, almost invisible (Sirota, 2006). The same could be said about the young students in the works about school developed until recently within the context of the sociology of education in Brazil (Dayrell, 2002).
- 6 The studies conducted by François Dubet about the crisis of the socializing action of the school have inspired some of the works developed in Brazil about the relationships between youngsters and the school (Dubet, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002).
- 7 One of the fragilities of the research about youth in Brazil is the little emphasis given to the study of rural youngsters.

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Social class and schooling

Lois Weis

Researchers have long argued that school outcomes, whether achievement or attainment, are linked in large part to social class background (Coleman *et al.*, 1966; Gamoran, 2001, 2008; Gamoran and Long, 2007). In the United States, what is particularly stunning, perhaps, is that in spite of the massification of the US system of education during the twentieth century, differences by class have persisted at largely consistent levels. Campbell *et al.*, (2000), for example, suggest persistent relative class differences in achievement related outcomes (as linked to NAEP data over three decades), while Hout *et al.*, (1993) indicate that class differences in attainment have remained relatively constant over the course of the twentieth century.¹

Rafferty and Hout's (1993) theory of "maximally maintained inequality" helps explain such persistence. Under the theory of "maximally maintained inequality," as the privileged classes are generally better positioned to grasp new opportunities than their non-privileged counterparts, it is only when a level of attainment is saturated for the privileged group that members of the less privileged classes have the opportunity to catch up. Under conditions of massification, then, "maximally maintained inequality" demands that educational allocation must be understood "as an expanding pie: each group's piece of the pie becomes larger, but the relative differences among pieces are preserved" (Gamoran, 2008: 170). Lucas (2001) tweaks this theory by suggesting that, even as quantitative distinctions fade in access to the overall educational system, inequality will be "effectively maintained" through increased differentiation within particular strata (Gamoran, 2008; Shavit *et al.*, 2007), a phenomenon empirically documented in the US and elsewhere.

With careful attention to empirical trends, Gamoran (2001, 2008) predicts that educational outcomes as related to social class background will continue "largely unabated throughout the twenty-first century despite much rhetoric and a few policies directed against it" (2001: 135). While there is ample evidence to suggest that this is the case, such research fails to address the mechanisms through which parents and schools are actively linked to the reproduction of social class inequalities. Close attention to empirical work on such "enabling mechanisms" both allows us to chronicle the ways in which class is produced via the concrete, everyday practices of parents and schools, and simultaneously opens up possibilities for intervention.

Here I outline the ways in which parents and schools contribute actively to the reproduction of inequalities of social class; in other words, the ways in which parents and schools embody

class-related practices while simultaneously producing class-linked economic and social outcomes. While not intended to be a comprehensive review of the literature on this set of issues, I highlight work in three key areas: official knowledge and its distribution; valued parental capital and the ways in which such capital is linked to schools; and the production of youth social identities.² Although these issues must be explored in contexts other than first-wave industrialized nations, examples here are drawn largely from the US and UK. I will raise the question of class production in an increasingly globalized context at the end of the essay.

Social class has been defined in a variety of ways and, as Erik Olin Wright notes, "the concept of class is one of the most contested within sociology." (2008: 25). While class must be understood and theorized primarily in relation to the economy, we must additionally recognize that class rests fundamentally in the "lived" realm in that it organizes the social, cultural, and material world in exceptionally powerful ways. The books we read, or if we read at all; our travel destinations and mode of travel; the clothes we wear; the foods we eat; whether we have orthodontically straightened teeth; where (and if) our children go to school, with whom, and under what staff expectations and treatment; the "look" and "feel" of home- and school-based interventions if our children "fail"; where we feel most comfortable and with whom; where we live and the nature of our housing; and, specifically in the United States, whether we have health insurance and, if so, what kind and with what coverage, are all profoundly classed experiences, rooted not only in material realities but in culturally based expectations and practices. Given massive shifts in the global economy and accompanying neoliberal policies and practices, which produce deepening inequalities both within and between nations (Aron-Dine and Shapiro, 2006; Piketty and Saez, 2003; Reich, 1991, 2001), a recognition of the structuring effects of social class has never been more pressing.

This is not to deny the ongoing and partially independent effects of race in relation to the production of class, a point that is particularly salient in the United States, yet increasingly important in the UK, France, Germany, and Canada, where large immigrant populations of color have significantly altered the social and economic landscape. Rather it is to suggest that class is a *fundamental organizer* of social experience, both "objective" and subjective," an organizer that has been largely eclipsed over the past twenty years by other forms of social interrogation and analyses. As Cameron McCarthy (1990) reminds us, however, the experiences and subjectivities of racially subordinated groups cannot be read entirely off class. I now turn to research on three specific drivers of social class formation as linked to families and schools.

Official knowledge and its distribution

Spurred by calls in England in the 1970s for a "new sociology of education," scholars address questions related to what constitutes "official" knowledge and the ways in which such knowledge is differentially distributed through schools. The theoretical starting point for most of these analyses is articulated by Michael F.D. Young (1971), who argues that there is a "dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimate dominant categories, and the processes by which the availability of such categories to some groups enable them to assert power and control over others" (p. 31). Young (1971), Bernstein (1977), Anyon (1979), Bourdieu (1977), Apple (1979/2004), Whitty (1985) and others argue that the organization of knowledge, the forms of its transmission, and the assessment of its acquisition are factors in the production of class and class relations in advanced capitalist societies.

As Geoff Whitty (1985) makes clear, and as Weis *et al.* argue elsewhere (2006), mainstream sociologists often assume that the most important school-related question is that of “access” to a range of educational institutions—who has it; what blocks it; and what might encourage it. While not an unimportant set of questions, the assumption in most such research is that simple access to schooling will ameliorate the apparent handicaps associated with a working class and/or poor background. In sharp distinction to this research genre, scholars began to focus on the nature of knowledge itself and the ways in which “legitimate” knowledge works for some and not others. Young (1971), for example, discusses the ways in which particular kinds of knowledge are validated in the academy—knowledge that is “pure,” “general,” and “academic.” In contrast, knowledge that is “applied,” “specific,” and “vocational” is marginalized. Although this distinction is arbitrary, it powerfully serves to keep particular (elite and relatively elite) groups in control of the official school curriculum and, by extension, tightly linked occupational and economic outcomes (Weis *et al.*, 2006).

Important research has also been done on the ways in which knowledge is distributed across groups. Jean Anyon (1980, 1981) offers a compelling set of essays related to the ways in which knowledge is differentially distributed across student social class background in the US. Working-class students, for example, are offered knowledge as rote memorization and a series of structured tasks, while knowledge distributed to students in executive elite public (state-supported in the US parlance) schools is far more challenging. Students in these latter schools are socialized into an academic culture of excellence, while working-class students are socialized into a culture of rote memorization.

The school-based practice of tracking (placing low- and high-achieving students in instructional environments tailored to their current level of academic achievement) is heavily implicated in the reproduction of social class. Although the assumption is that all students benefit from such an arrangement, Sean Kelly (2008) argues that four decades of empirical research lead to the conclusion that “low-track classrooms do not offer as rich an educational environment as high-track classrooms” and that “high track students benefit the most from the practice of tracking,” with low-track students being left far behind (Kelly, 2008: 211). Significantly, track placement is a strong, independent predictor of college entrance patterns (Erigha and Carbonaro, 2006; Rosenbaum, 1976), with social class being a consistently strong and independent predictor of track placement (Kelly, 2004, 2008; Oakes, 1985).

Given massive changes in the global economy and accompanying class reconfiguration in countries all over the world, it is important to broaden research on the official curriculum (both nature of and distribution of), with particular attention to the ways in which certain groups are creating class through the instantiation of a newly forged (or re-affirmed) selective tradition, one that works to the benefit of some and not others. The hegemonic role of English as the language of science, technology, and the academy is key here, as some groups are better positioned to access and function in this now indisputable language of power. While some such work has been done over the years, we have remarkably little scholarship that tracks and theorizes social class in relation to schooling under new global conditions. In sum, then, we need to take seriously the emerging stratification map as related to contested notions of “official” knowledge and its distribution globally.

Valued parental capital

Large-scale studies attest to the importance of family background in children’s academic achievement, academic attainment (how far children go in school), occupational status and

income. Given this uniformly strong finding, it is important to probe what it is about the family and the family’s relationship to the school that produces outcomes of interest.

Engaging in extensive ethnographic work, and employing Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977, 1984) theoretical insights, Annette Lareau (1987) argues that middle-class parents, in contrast to working-class parents, have the cultural capital necessary to actualize positive ties with schools, in that they have more information about schooling, as well as the social capital to connect with other parents. More recently (2003), she turns her attention to class habitus, specifically the ethnographically informed cultural logic of child rearing, arguing that middle-class parents across race (African American and White in the United States) engage in a process of “concerted cultivation,” which results in a “robust sense of entitlement” among middle-class youth (2003: 2), a sense of entitlement that “plays an especially important role in institutional settings, where middle-class children learn to question adults and address them as relative equals” (p. 2). Working-class and poor children, in contrast, are raised under strictures more closely approximating the “accomplishment of natural growth” (p. 30). While working-class and poor parents may similarly love their children, “the cultural logic of child rearing at home is out of synch with the standards of institutions” (p. 3), wherein schools, for example, value child-rearing practices associated with concerted cultivation, suggestive of the fact that middle-class children, simply by virtue of parenting practices, will always have an edge in school.

Drawing on follow-up data, Lareau and Weininger (2008) find remarkably consistent behavior with regard to decisions about college choice:

Class-specific cultural orientations to child rearing retain their purchase on family behavior—at least in the area of relations to institutions—approximately ten years after the original data collection took place. Thus the behavior of middle class parents in managing their children’s high school career and transition into college can be viewed straightforwardly as an extension of the same “concerted cultivation” child rearing strategy they practiced earlier. Similarly, the propensity of working class and poor parents to assume that their children’s education is the responsibility of professional educators constitutes an extension of the “accomplishment of natural growth” approach.

(pp. 142–143)

Ellen Brantlinger (2003) further directs our attention to the role of parents in processes of class-based stratification. Her ethnographic study of professional middle-class parents suggests that members of the educated middle class generate bifurcated notions of students: those that win based upon merit and those that lose based upon their own deficiencies. More specifically, “losers,” students unfamiliar with the dominant, middle-class system of values and codes (appropriate language, ways of behaving, and so forth), are deemed culturally and intellectually deficient and therefore deserving of less; “winners,” on the other hand, those familiar with the moral, linguistic, and behavioral codes privy to the middle class, are both rewarded for their hard work and academic success, and discursively constructed as deserving of their privileged status. Brantlinger’s research suggests that middle-class parents actively maintain and simultaneously ideologically neutralize class-based stratification through schools.

Important work in the UK by Diane Reay indicates that, even when middle-class parents intentionally send their children to mixed urban state schools, thereby being seen as “acting against [class] self-interest educationally” (Reay, 2008: 88), they end up constructing themselves and their children as privileged in such multi-ethnic, working-class settings. Paralleling Brantlinger’s research, middle-class white parents increasingly work towards their own class

interest, as both parents and children begin to define themselves as morally and educationally superior to their working-class counterparts, although they send their children to working-class schools with the opposite intent. The intractable nature of class as acted upon and transmitted by parents is clearly apparent in this study.

Carol Vincent and Stephen Ball extend this discussion in their exploration of choices related to childcare and class practices in the UK (2006). Based on an intense ethnographic investigation of middle-class parenting choices and practices, Vincent and Ball indicate that, while such families are highly dependent upon the involvement of these women/mothers in careers and highly paid jobs as part of being middle class, they nevertheless practice "professional mothering," wherein they juggle intense work and family commitments in order to position their children for comparable adult class status. Such juggling lies firmly in the gendered realm, where

women's employment and mothering histories can be plotted on an "investment continuum," where women move between time-investments in their children or in their paid work, in most cases trying to manage the two to the detriment of neither, and being trailed by varying amounts of guilt, responsibility and anxiety.

(p. 164)

Adding a critically important gendered component to work in this area, Vincent and Ball's research extends the literature on the way class works through parenting choices, practices, and linkages to schools.

Active production of identities

In the above sections, I focus on the ways in which schools and families directly shape and produce class and class inequalities. This ignores the fact that students produce class on their own located, cultural level, albeit in relation to parents, communities, schools, and the economy. Paul Willis (1977) breaks important theoretical ground in this regard by focusing our attention on students themselves in the process of class production and reproduction. In his now classic *Learning to labour* (1977), Willis focuses on a group of working-class boys in the UK Midlands as they proceed through the last two years of secondary school and into the work force. Rather than passively accept the socialization messages embedded in the school, the "lads" actively differentiate themselves from the "ear'oles" (so named because they simply sit and listen) and school meanings in general, categorizing both as effeminate and unrelated to the "real" masculine world of work, thereby reproducing at their own cultural level key elements of social structure. As Willis notes, "The difficult thing to explain about how middle class kids get middle class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves" (p. 1). Breaking new theoretical ground, Willis probes the ways in which the semi-autonomous level of culture is implicated in the sustainment of social structure.

Taking up the challenge afforded by Willis, we have excellent studies of class (and class linked specifically to race) (re)production that theorize around the role of students as they engage processes of identity construction in school (Foley, 1990; Lee, 2005; Solomon, 1992; Weis, 1990; Wexler, 1992). Most such studies have, however, been done in the industrialized West, and it is important that we broaden our research to include studies of cultural production in a range of national contexts. In addition, while acting back on school meanings appears to

constitute a key element of identity work among specific groups of disenfranchised youth across national contexts, scholars have yet to address, in a sustained fashion, the consequences of such "resistance" over time, and in relation to new economic circumstances. While Willis suggests that working class student "resistance" is tied to class-linked labor market possibilities, while simultaneously limiting the intensification of demands for production on the shop floor, what we do not know is where such resistance "sits" as youth grow older, particularly in shifting economic times. Although this genre of study—and specifically the body of work known as "resistance theory"—offers a great deal with respect to what we know about students and schools, serving ultimately to invert understandings as to the absolute power of educational institutions and their ability to "name" others, we must theoretically situate such studies within massively changing economic context.

In *Class reunion* (Weis, 2004), a fifteen-year follow-up study of white working-class males and females who originally appear in *Working class without work* (Weis, 1990), I take up this challenge. Rather than growing up to be part of any kind of romantic collective that capitalizes upon and engages oppositional behavior within the walls of the factory, the (1985–1986) secondary school male resisters are, at the age of 30–31, almost uniformly bouncing between the homes of their mother and current girlfriend, earning very little money, and having no steady job to speak of. Given male wage-earning capacity under the former industrial economy, in earlier decades they would, in all likelihood, have begun and sustained a family of their own, cashing in on both the capital-labor accord and the secret guarantees of earning the family wage: sacrifice, reward, and dignity. Now in their early thirties, the high school "resisters" are almost uniformly marginally employed and bereft of collective, except that which is aimed at the consumption of alcohol, drugs, car races, dirt bikes, and the like. This suggests that the shift in the global economy demands that our entire notion of cultural resistance—what it is and where it deposits as youth grow up—must be challenged.

Kathleen Nolan and Jean Anyon (2004) affirm this point, arguing that oppositional identity as produced and enacted by black urban youth in high-poverty contexts "does not lead to the shop floor. Rather, in this postindustrial era of mass incarceration, oppositional behavior by working-class youth of color in educational institutions often leads them directly into the criminal justice system" (p. 133).

Conclusion

This essay traverses territory on social class and schooling. I argue that research strongly indicates that "official" knowledge and its distribution; parental capital and ways in which such capital is linked to schools; and youth located cultures/identities as produced inside educational institutions contribute in important ways to the reproduction of social class. Although this essay is based primarily on quantitative and qualitative research rooted in the United States, and, secondarily, the UK, issues highlighted here inevitably play out in a wide variety of countries, although in specific national and local parlance. A variety of jobs—whether those for working-class or middle-class individuals—are increasingly exported from highly industrialized countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan to places where multinational companies can hire both unskilled and highly skilled/well-educated laborers at lower pay and without benefits. In the US, for example, we are witnessing decreasing economic opportunities for the working class and poor who live in particular gender and racial/ethnic relational forms, as well as intensified and pressure-packed expectations directed towards the privileged. This evolving

set of international economic and human-resource relations affects the educational aspirations and apathies of younger generations in a variety of countries, wherein the push and pull dynamics of globalization (in the sense of pushing certain kinds of job outside the borders of first-wave industrialized nations, while simultaneously pulling such jobs to nations such as China and India) exert particular class-linked forms of pressure on schools, families, and youth.

In addition, the movement of peoples across national borders, including those who possess "flexible citizenship" by virtue of possession of high-status knowledge—for example, high-powered intellectuals, engineers and medical professionals who are seduced to work in economically powerful nations—bring new demands to school systems in economically powerful nations. By way of example, upper middle class Hong Kong Chinese parents in Vancouver have little use for what they see as the "soft" curriculum associated with North American schooling (Li, 2005). Given class-linked cultural and economic capital, such privileged world citizens are demanding more strongly framed knowledge and less of the "fluff" that they associate with Western, particularly North American, schooling, even though they currently reside in Canada. This scene is being played out in schools up and down the Pacific North American coast, where a new form of "white flight" is taking place as white parents are removing their children from schools heavily populated by Asians, a phenomenon linked both to what white parents often see as the inappropriate demand for more strongly framed and intensified knowledge on the part of Asian parents, as well as the indisputable fact that their children are not, overall, performing as well (see Lee, 2009, however, on the myth of the model minority). Such intensifying transnational migration patterns have implications for class formation in the US and elsewhere, as class is now being produced and re-aligned in relation to large numbers of recent immigrants, whether those who possess "flexible citizenship" or those who enter economically powerful nations with little more than the clothes on their back, a proportion of whom do relatively well in school (Centrie, 2004; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001).

This means that class and class relations must be studied and theorized in relation to the increasingly interconnected world (Crespo Sancho, 2009; Li, 2008; Weis, 2004, 2008). Given shared international press in relation to the flight of jobs from first-wave industrialized nations, as well as the movement of both unskilled and professional workers to such job-exporting nations (at one and the same moment as a greater number and variety of jobs are being exported to nations such as China and India), we must consider the ways in which class is constitutive of newly articulated and lived out race/ethnic and gender dynamics in an international context (for an important example, see Zhao, 2008). The movement of peoples and accompanying processes of transnationalization wherein people live "here and there" (Crespo Sancho, 2009) have deep implications for class formation, particularly in first-wave industrialized nations that are increasingly host to new immigrants. As migrants position and reposition themselves inside new global circumstances, the nature of class relations inevitably changes, ushering in a new era of race/class relations.

The bottom line here is that our worldwide economic and social context is shifting dramatically, demanding both increased attention to the production of class and new ways of understanding such production in a wide variety of nations. In light of the review offered in this chapter, we need to focus specifically on the ways in which parents and children of varying social class background and across race/ethnicity/nation experience and interact with educational institutions from pre-K through post-graduate school, as well as the ways in which educational institutions themselves change in response to new global circumstances. This all must be tilted towards understanding the production of broader class relations and outcomes. Updating and extending earlier important work on knowledge and its distribution; parental

capital and its "effects"; and the production of youth culture and identities will enable us to make great strides towards understanding schooling and social class in the twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 Adam Gamoran (2001, 2008) powerfully highlights notions of "maximally" and "effectively maintained" inequality in two recent essays.
- 2 It is not my intent to discuss all ways that families and schools are linked to the production of class inequalities. High stakes testing, for example, is not covered in this essay, although there is ample research that suggests that such testing is linked to such production.

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