THEMATIC ISSUE

EDUCATION,
EQUITY
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

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EDITORIAL

This thematic issue of *Orbis scholae* is primarily devoted to the issue of equity in education. In the two-year lifespan of the journal this is only the 2nd English issue. In comparison to the English issue published last year and, entitled "Transformation of Educational Systems in the Visegrad countries[1] ", the present issue is in many ways different. The previous issue included four main papers that presented an analysis of post-communist transformation in four Visegrad countries using the same methodology, and even using a common structure for all the papers. The present issue is more diverse in many respects.

We are happy to see that the previous issue was welcomed by its readers and even provoked some responses. Cesar Birzea`s paper represents one such response. In his paper he supports Gabor Halasz's idea of a 'second transition' in Central European countries that is represented by their accession to the EU. The author does not limit his analysis only to four Visegrad countries, which was the emphasis in the previous journal issue, and uses wider geographical coverage of more European post-Communist countries. For the topic of the present issue there is an interesting finding confirming that the transition process has differed to a great degree between those countries. We argued for the Visegrad countries in the previous issue that equity issues were not high on the political agenda in the early phases of transformation processes in 1990`s. However, Birzea argues, that there was a quite different situation in Romania and Bulgaria, where the emphases on equalizing educational opportunities had priority in the same period.

A bridge between the previous issue and the present one is then constructed by Stanislav Štech in a paper that analyses changes in Czech education since 1948 from the perspective of justice. He describes the pre-1989 policy-approaches to educational equalization as a "statistical justice" approach and talks of 'compensatory approaches'. He sees a major reversal of this model after 1989, when the 'Liberal Era' with its emphasis on an individual model of success took the floor.

In the next paper Sally Power presents a brief overview of compensatory education in UK. She sees recent moves to a "politics of recognition" for schools in disadvantaged areas (e.g. alternative league tables based on contextualized value-added measures) as a dangerous "quasi-solution". She argues that politics must tackle, rather than simply recognise, the circumstances of the disadvantaged. Schools in disadvantaged areas need not just recognition but a "politics of redistribution". However, the heart of the matter lies in the difficulty of specifying and recognizing what policies have to compensate for. At the end of her paper, the author introduces an analytical framework based on B. Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing which can be used to compare and contrast different approaches to compensatory education which are part of various interventions being proposed and applied by policy-makers and their potential effects.

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1   The full text of this issue can be downloaded free of charge at the journal website http://www. orbisscholae.cz , in the section "Archive 2007".

Alan Dyson in his paper moves form the general level of policy-making to the school level and focuses on the role of the school in addressing various disadvantages. While admitting that schools constitute a rather weak countervailing factor to the overwhelming effects of socio-structural factors (class, ethnicity, gender) and that schools cannot hope to change patterns that are effectively shaped outside their gates, he suggests that the traditional dichotomy between what happens within the school gates and what happens beyond them should be questioned. Opening the school to the "outside" world is the core idea of community schools (called also extended schools, schools plus, full service schools), that have much to offer, even though they cannot by themselves solve the problem of disadvantage. The author reviews the various rationales community schools apply and describes what community-focused schools do and what they can achieve.

The logic of the order of the papers, moving from general policy analyses through school level approaches demonstrated by community schools' approaches, is completed by the fourth paper, written by Francesca Gobbo that reaches the classroom level. Her paper explores the potentials of an equitable classroom with its main motto 'learning from others and learning with others'. One concrete conception of an equitable classroom proposed by Elizabeth Cohen is called "Complex instruction", based on group work and cooperative learning, is discussed in the paper. Group and cooperative work by students uses their different cultural, linguistic and cognitive abilities as resources for learning, rather than as barriers. The author illustrates the experiences of applying such a didactical model in schools in the Bologna region by taking account of teachers' experiences and their reflections on using it.

One can ask whether today's research discourse on equity in education could be missing explicit mention of international student achievement projects, and particularly the OECD's programme PISA (Programme for International Students Assessment). Even though the answer is yes, this issue has not missed it! Laura Perry's paper examines the features of PISA that are useful for analysing educational inequalities. It reviews the analysis of educational equity and its measurement and synthesizes the findings from various studies into a larger theoretical framework.

The research paper in this issue, written by Stephen Gorard and Emma Smith, is based on the analysis of survey data of 13,000 15-years-old students from five European countries (England, France, Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium, Italy and the Czech Republic). It looks at the impact of schools and student experience on how students might develop civic "values" of fairness, aspiration, and trust. The authors present a lot of concrete findings from the study highlighting the students' conceptions of justice as well as their experiences in schools and their attitudes formed through school experiences. The authors conclude with the appeal: "Citizenship is not merely a subject in school, it must be a way of life".

I started this editorial by claiming that the present issue is in many respects different from the previous one, devoted to educational transformation in Visegrad countries. The topic of this monothematic issue is more general than the previous

one. It touches various levels of the educational establishment (school system level, school level and even classroom level). We have been able to gather the texts from authors with different backgrounds according to the country where they live (Australia, Czech Republic, Italy, Romania, UK) and from various fields of expertise (educational science, anthropology, political science, psychology, sociology). I believe that the broad approach in this issue, one that values diversity, enables us to learn from each other across the traditional borders of the disciplines and narrow definitions.

David Greger

A "POST-EGALITARIAN" SOCIETY - FROM STATISTICAL TO LIBERAL JUSTICE[1]

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Abstract: *The article provides a historical survey of the changes in the conception of educational equality and justice in Czech basic and secondary education. Three stages are identified: 1. unsuccessful administrative-political measures to improve equality of access for individuals of working class background; these ignored the requirements of individual cognitive work (1948 – the mid-1960's); 2. the era of strong valorisation of school education under the conditions of paucity of educational opportunities; the correlation between social differentiation and educational merit was weak (1960's – 1980's); 3. the last 15 years saw a growing tendency towards early selectivity and differentiation considered as "fair" by virtue of its reliance on supposedly socially and culturally neutral abilities and interests of the individual. The historical development in the area has resulted in a strongly individualistic conception of school success/failure.*

Key words: *Czech school, history of educational equality and justice, psychological assumptions*

Introduction

"The Czech educational system is characterized by significant educational inequalities" – such is the claim by sociologists (Matějů, Straková, 2005) on the first page of their report "Towards a Society of Knowledge".

What has happened, then, following forty years in which an "egalitarian" educational system was being constructed – a designation concerning which both communists and liberals are in rare accord (though, for precision's sake, they apply the terms "equal chances" and "unified school") ?

For the former, such a system represented an ideal arrangement to replace the "dual" system from between the two world wars (in the post-war decades, "unified school" became a symbol of a "new fair society"); for the latter, the term is a synonym of an injustice threatening the development of gifts and capacities which are necessarily individually specific and varied, thus resulting in a new order of unfair inequalities. Nevertheless, both camps agree that the educational system

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[1] This article is based upon a paper delivered at the international colloquium „Repenser la justice en éducation" held in May 2006 in Lyons (France) and organized by the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (INRP). It is a slightly abridged version of a paper to be published in a volume based on the proceedings from the above-mentioned colloquium and edited by Jean-Louis Derouet and Marie-Claude Derouet-Besson.

in place between 1950 and 1989 guaranteed a certain degree of equality.

This paper provides a short historical overview of trends in educational equality and justice in Czech basic and lower secondary schools. Given the limitations of the genre, (the paper is based on a selection of secondary materials) this article has chosen to propose one perspective from which to view the changes in the educational system in the Czech Republic: the perspective of justice. I will argue that the administrative and instrumental nature of communist policies in the 1950's strengthened the conviction that educational dispositions are determined biologically and are intraindividually invariable. In the subsequent periods of the development of the educational system in Czechoslovakia, the educational offer was differentiated in response to this fact. However, given the paucity of educational opportunities and the low correlation of social differentiation and educational achievements, it only paved the way for an individualist conception of education. This is the reason why liberal notions of just education in which the question of justice is divorced from the issue of equality found ready acceptance after 1989.

Equality of access to education as an administrative instrument in the construction of social justice

The ideology of the communist party which became a dominant force after the war sees education as its exclusive territory and as one of the privileged instruments in the erection of a new society devoid of injustice and crises, as these result from social inequalities inherent in the old social order. "Socialist" (Communist) society would be "fair by definition", for the party advocates – and partly ensures – access for all to the means of production, to healthcare, social security and, of course, open, free and general access to school education.

Since 1948, the new educational policy of the communist regime was carried out under the aegis of the principle of equality for all – widely shared at the end of the war – conceived *per negatio* as a reaction to the dual educational system.

What were therefore the reasons for the relatively easy acceptance of the "unified school" system as an emblematic expression of justice, an acceptance by far exceeding the ranks of ideologists of the single ruling party? It should be pointed out that the new conception of educational justice built upon the experience of differentiated educational science and practice from between the two world wars and was centered on the **criterion of equality of access.** In this sense, injustice was objected to by pointing at the percentage (exceptionally low in 1946) of children who received their education in branches of long secondary/high school education (and most of whom were of upper-class origin). Realities of this sort and the theoretical debates between advocates of the individual psychology of ability and gifts on the one hand, and of educational science calling for a shared educational basis (common core) on the other, were still in place after the war (1945-1948).

When the communists took power, the educational system was threefold. At

the age of eleven, after communal (primary) school, pupils coming from different social classes were channelled – either into "discount" education (an additional three years at their former communal school as a lay-by of a sort, accounting for 5.5% of the age group in 1946), or into municipal schools which did indeed allow certain pupils access to upper secondary schools and high schools (in 1946, the "municipals" comprised 83.5% of the age group), or, finally, into a "long" secondary/high school of seven (technical schools) or eight years (general). A majority of the pupils in the last group would gain access to university education or to relatively privileged jobs (at the end of the war, schools of this kind comprised 11% of the age group).

These numbers reveal sufficiently the extreme **selectivity** of the Czechoslovak educational system in terms of two factors highlighted by its critics: the selection took place too early and within a framework which made future re-orientation impossible. Injustice was therefore perceived in the far too unequal access to an extensive period of quality education and this perception was intensified by the premature nature of decisions concerning orientation and the impossibility of their later revision.

However, the fiercest debate concerned the **consequences** of the inequalities in question. Advocates of the selective system accused their adversaries of seeking to undermine the **quality** of education, citing **psychological arguments** to argue their case (the absorption capacity of the then educational branches allegedly reflecting a naturally unequal distribution of gifts and abilities in pupils). The critics of early selectiveness and advocates of the 'unified school' denounced segregation within the system and the attendant lack of social justice, since in 1948 "long" secondary/high schools were attended almost exclusively by young people of well-to-do background (both in cultural and educational terms) while, as a matter of fact, pupils from communal and municipal schools could hardly gain access to higher levels of education. First and foremost, these critics stressed the aspect of social cohesion. One may thus see how arguments in favour of justice in educational matters polarized the debate: with on the one hand those who stressed the perspective of the specificity of the individual, his particular gifts and who understood learning primarily as requiring predispositions conceived as "natural" (their concept of justice including **quality in education**); on the other hand those who put emphasis on the social and moral function of school education. The social function refers to the consequences of school education as productive of the necessary social cohesion which results from the participation of all in an identical type of educational process. The argument supporting the moral function of school education rests on the refusal to accept *a priori* differences posited by different educational programmes (in this concept of justice, the **quantity** and **universality** of approach are put to the forefront).

The educational policy of the communist party was therefore to merge several branches and introduce the 'unified school' system with the objective of providing the **same** quality of education for **everyone.** The social function of school prevailed over the quality of education itself – at least during the first decade after 1948. The

original project of building up differentiated education within the institutions of 'unified school' was abandoned. In the course of the following years, research and theoretical debate between those backing the "macroscopic" perspective (focused on conditions "external" to the activity of learning that need to be brought about) and psychologists and educationists who were trying to optimize the potential for learning in each pupil, gradually waned.

The only easily noticeable symptom of social change was targeted – a change in statistics concerning entrance into secondary and tertiary education (the latter essentially comprising universities and higher technical institutions). Inevitably, measures representing merely illusory shortcuts to reach the desired end were introduced. To illustrate the case, I will mention two of these. The first persisted till the end of the 1970's: *compensatory bonuses* in the entrance exam for young people of working-class and, to a lesser extent, peasant background. The planned effect (rapid change in terms of entrance statistics) was not achieved, as many young people thus assisted did not succeed and left their institutions, especially at university level. This led to another measure: the introduction of courses and of special schools targeting working-class children to prepare them for studies. These *"working class prep schools",* as they were known, were supposed to prepare young apprentices for their A-levels in the course of a single year, thereby opening up to them direct access to university (relieving them of the obligation to pass through selective entrance exams).

Several conclusions can be drawn concerning this approach which I shall call that of ***"statistical justice":***

- Elementary education saw improvements and a solid common educational culture was granted to all, but the system remained relatively closed at higher levels.

 - The macro-structural political act of instituting educational justice by this means fell into the trap of "shortcuts". In leaving aside the necessary cognitive work by the individual, its preliminary requirements and the conditions for its implementation, the result was not only the failure of a certain notion of justice (to wit, the notion of the injustice of inequalities), but also the introduction of policies which led to the failure of the compensatory measures which were supposed to favour working-class children. They also reinforced interpretations of educational failure which may be described as "biological" (relying on the notion of innate intelligence as expressed in the Czech idiom for those having a talent as "having the right cells"). As a result, equality policies were seen not only as ideological, but as psychologically inadequate as well.

- As these measures rarely reached the level of the individual, new injustices emerged. Large numbers of young people in the 1950's attained their A-levels or university studies at the cost of personal sacrifices (lower-class children at the cost of extreme mobilization in preparatory classes, a mobilization too often bound to fail; children from formerly "privileged" classes for their part were forced to "become" workers first in order to   be able to benefit from bonuses or had to

progress by means of alternative educational branches or branches parallel to their employment, etc.) Many children of intellectual background, of peasants or "hostile social elements" never had the opportunity of benefiting from equality of access and from justice in the domain of education. A "disappointed generation" was born. (Šanderová, 1990).

The paradoxical effect of policies promoting equality of access, which were dominated by contingent partisan political interests, was that education, diplomas and the opportunity to study became a highly desired and rare commodity. Secondary education was a long way from having become a mass phenomenon between 1948 and 1989. If the number of school-leavers completing secondary education and passing the 'maturita' examination was at 11% for the age group in 1946, it rose only to 39% in 1989. University and higher education was of a very low percentage for the age group (10-11% in 1989; besides, even today this percentage is one of the lowest for OECD countries.)

Valorization of the school in a de-stratified system of "historical inversion"

The first erosion of the unified and standardized system came in the 1960's with the introduction of specialized classes and specialized elementary schools (in arts, sports, languages, mathematics). During the period of political thaw, M. Cipro (1966) challenged the uniform method of teaching *"without considering the heterogeneity of pupils, … without respecting specific talents…".* Understandably, the change in educational policy was not provoked by arguments based on the right to choose or those stressing competition. Rather, two other reasons were cited: economic weaknesses demanded a better educated working force ("to cultivate talents" became the slogan of the 1960's) to boost the competitiveness of the country in the efforts of each of two political systems to emulate the other, and the "scientific" argument about individual capacities and gifts which exist somewhat independently of society and which the school should help to flourish.

This argument was considered as ideology-neutral. At the end of the 1960's, the trend was confirmed in the introduction of three types of secondary (upper secondary) institutions, including a four-year general "college". From the perspective of equality of treatment, however, the system as a whole still remained **highly standardized** (both in the positive and negative sense): same per capita funding, same manuals, same number of pupils per class, same quality criteria for teachers, heterogeneous classes in terms of pupils' social origin (specialized classes being the only exception), etc.

The perspective in which equality of access and equality of treatment are wed reveals that the Czech educational system at the end of the given period, i.e. in the late 1980's, offered a controversial and ambiguous picture.

On one hand, attendance at nursery schools rose successfully to 98% of children of the age group. The state could thus ensure pre-school education which "prepares

for future success at school of all children". Elementary school was reduced to 8 years, but compulsory education was extended to 10 years. It was characterized by minimum differentiation in terms of content, manuals, teaching methods, with only one selective element – specialized classes from 8 years of age on in certain elementary schools (following an entrance exam, they enrolled 5% of the school population in 1989). In this sense, basic equality (access to common culture) was assured.

Nevertheless, access to secondary institutions (for that matter never very diversified), was relatively difficult (their capacity varied between 34% and 40% of the age group throughout the 1980's). Because of shortage in staff and of a reduced capacity of institutions persisting even in the 1980's, a large number of families – members of the above-mentioned "disappointed generation" become parents – had a hard time reproducing their level of education with their children. Educational justice based on the reduction of disparities stirred a feeling of profound injustice. We have already mentioned that access to superior education remained the most limited (between 10-12% of the age group as opposed to the slow, but unceasing increase in the number of secondary school leavers who passed the 'maturita' examination – up to 39% of the age group in 1989).

The chances of educational continuity therefore remained fragile: good results at lower secondary school were a long way from guaranteeing access to upper secondary/high school; the same went for a good result at 'maturita' and entrance to university. The passage to superior levels of education depended almost entirely on the results of entrance exams taking place on one day (or over several days). This situation bred tensions while the diploma remained of rare value.

However, the phenomenon that did most harm to the feeling of educational justice as a source of social justice was the almost inversely proportional relation between the level of education or qualification received and wage level. This "historical inversion" reflects the fact that the connection between education and living standards (or social success) remained relatively weak. (Večerník, 1990; Matějů, 1990).

All the more that with uncertain political, social and economic fortunes, which do not always make it possible to accumulate and transmit economic and financial capital, education and educational culture remain the only value which seems inalienable.

One must add to this the fact that in the 1980's, the diploma (as an exchange value) became an important instrumental value: because of the degradation of the economy and of working conditions for less qualified jobs (though better paid), it served to avoid hard, dirty or risky work. Social success was therefore indirectly, or even paradoxically, dependent on success in education.

For these reasons, the quality of family background, parental support and parental choices (although limited by the reduced offer of the institutions) proved to be the decisive factor for success in education at the end of the 1980's.

Let us summarize: educational justice relied on principles of equal treatment for all at the level of basic culture (lower secondary school) and on equality of result of

the prevalent majority of children (virtually no unschooled children, no illiterates, a limited number of functional illiterates, etc.). Élites from specialized schools and upper secondary schools (winners of a number of international competitions, especially in the domain of science and maths) justified the system and the conviction that success or failure depend on largely innate individual capacities.

Nevertheless, in listing the effects of forty years of policies aiming at educational justice, we should not forget the paucity of diplomas (the number of candidates exceeding the capacity of highly desired institutions); the necessity of involving the family in order to pursue a successful educational career and the reinforcement of the individualist conception of success or failure at school.

Educational justice was no longer understood as centering on the issue of equality (of access) but was defined in terms of the development of everybody's potential. However, at the end of the 1980's, the problem of equality of access returned, this time at higher levels of the system. Furthermore, it combined with a feeling of loss of social value of diplomas which used to represent a social insertion ticket within informal exchange networks. This state of affairs did not make it possible to assert the "principle of difference" as opening the upward path by means of education and establishing social differences according to educational merit.

The liberal era: The divorce between justice and equality

The year 1989 saw a major reversal and the new political class soon sought to project the principles which were introduced in the administration of (once more capitalist) society into the domain of education. It can be said that the representatives of the "new" model of society acted by **negating** the previous educational model, in an attempt to revive the *status quo ante*, by **prolonging** and emphasizing certain features and **strategies** employed by parents in the 1980's, and by an assiduous **application of market principles** and of the market economy.

The feeling of a crisis in schools and of injustice in education found expression in three ways. It was worded in terms of *lack of quality* of education resulting from unification. The "all together" strategy was seen negatively as a brake on the development of talented children by their mediocre peers. In the eyes of critics, this lack of quality was manifest in the absence of diversity of institutions, and, consequently, in the absence of opportunity for individual choice in the market of school education which was thus falling short of the new liberated economic order.

The second reproach was expressed in terms of *the excessive orientation of communist schools towards factual knowledge* at the expense of the formative function of the school, thereby ignoring the progress of pupils' personality and of their creativity. These two objectives of school education were perceived as mutually exclusive (and even outstanding results of Czech pupils in international assessment surveys at the beginning of the 1990's were interpreted negatively as confirming the use of excessive drill and practice methods).

The third critique criticised authoritarianism: *the school was represented as an institution which was authoritarian and violent* towards pupils and their families.

What was accentuated was the *absence of "humanist" principles* at school (it was deemed undemocratic, leaving little or no autonomy to the pupil, etc.)

The stage looked opened for a new form of justice based on the principle "let everybody make a free choice of his destiny". It expressed itself by a *retreat of the state* (deregulation and autonomy of institutions and of actors), by the *introduction of competition and of diversity* at any cost, and by the *official endorsement of the individual model of success* (if the state should intervene, it is through assisting institutions in charge of the gifted as well as of the handicapped).

The retreat of the state was reflected in the contents of education. Institutions gained greater autonomy: since 1990, they could decide on 30% of the syllabi and since 2005, they have been obliged to formulate school programmes (under the designation of "framework programmes") in all subjects. The passage from curriculum defined by the state towards "framework objectives" defined in terms of psychological competences was grounded in law in 2005.

Besides, this retreat was reflected in the criteria for the profile and quality of teachers; today, there are no obligatory profiles or standards of teacher qualification at national level (they depend on individual universities – whose programmes, though accredited, are always institution-specific.)

The rapid differentiation (stratification) of society, where the newly rich who arose out of privatization prove the lack of relevance of school education for success (and where only 29% of the population in 2001 had a salary above the national mean and where the so-called middle class was very weak and always menaced by pauperization), was reflected in reforms which differentiated the structure of the educational system. The unified lower secondary school, synonym of "discount" education, gave way to new secondary/high schools of 8, 7, 6, 5 and 4 years, as well as to curious institutions such as the "martial arts college" or the "college in family education". Choice became possible, yet towards the end of the 1990's, the effects of the principle of enlarged range on offer were clear – there was a large number who felt deceived.

"Diversity" as in itself a guarantee of quality and as a factor in competition bore its first rather bitter fruit. First, results of TIMSS and PISA enquiries reveal that the quality of the Czech average revolves around the levels of the early 1990's or has dropped slightly (depending on disciplinary field). Yet, it can be said that inequalities between Czech educational institutions have grown strikingly and that the results of lower secondary school pupils after the departure of the "gifted" and of those attending "long" secondary/high schools (colleges) have declined, as did their chances of succeeding at the entrance exams to university. (This is partly the result of a considerable drop in the number of classical general secondary/high schools and an increase in the number of specific secondary/high schools "reflecting the interests and talents of the pupils"). In addition, the "effect of the family" variable plays a more important role in the Czech Republic than in a majority of OECD countries.

Individual success was understood as interwoven with the logic of entrepreneurial spirit, associated with specific character traits such as self-denial,

ability to make sacrifices or a strong will, and, last but not least, with talent. It was overrated by the media and decision-makers, and almost appeared to be incompatible with the emphasis on necessary intellectual work at school. Research by didacticians (Slavík, 2005) speaks of "the myth of creative genius" put forward by decision-makers, educational activists and even certain teachers at the beginning of this decade. Respect for rigorous work vanished from social and even educational discourse. This is why the connection between specific intellectual efforts, the, quality of the school, school results and success in life (in society) was further extenuated.

We are therefore witnessing a parallel increase in the importance of parental choice, in their ability to interpret the situation and make decisions, and, on the other hand, in the uncertain character and unintelligibility of the system. The chances that a child of a worker will gain access to university are three times lower today than for a worker's child in France or another OECD country.

Increased selectivity in the past fifteen years, a more varied range of options offered within the system accentuating the necessity to make choices and not merely to follow a logic of prescribed education, a slow tendency towards de-segregation (schools for the disabled, impaired, gifted, special schools, etc.) – all these did facilitate and spur tendencies which already existed in outline towards the end of the 1980's. Individual qualities and family support provide the key to school success.

Nevertheless, the new form of justice seems to be facing a certain degree of resistance – resistance from teachers and two thirds of parents who demand of the state that it not retreat and refuse to take responsibilities that they believe are not theirs (choosing the best teachers and institutions and participating in the construction of curricula and of education). In recent public opinion surveys, around 65 % of those interviewed expressed their conviction that all children should receive education together for as long as possible – while backing the possibility of choice within a school.

Contemporary societies differ, it would seem, in the degree of and motives for resistance to the principle of personal merit as dominant principle. Nevertheless, after the experience with a proactive egalitarian justice, it is more difficult to challenge the scientific-psychological argument of "natural" inequality. That is, the argument which obscures the "cultural" nature of the psychological processes and functions and which tends to distort the problem of educational justice by offering erroneous ways out.

Conclusion

Statistical justice founded on the principles of equality of access and, subsequently, on that of equal chances which was implemented administratively and proactively in a context marked by deficiencies and by an insufficient availability (both in range and number) of school careers has had the counter effect of contributing to

an easier acceptance of inequalities as "fair", since these inequalities are thought of as freely chosen and depending solely on the capacities of the individual and the attention given him by his family.

If, furthermore, the connection between education and post-school life is obscured or undermined, policies promoting justice based on equality of treatment are considered as ideologically-motivated and as a waste of efforts.

Il seems that in the era of globalized liberal market capitalism, where states are increasingly losing influence and where flexibility and the ability to adapt are reduced to personality traits, in a society which denounces redistribution efforts as unjust – with the exception of certain visible individual handicaps – and following an experience remembered as egalitarian, the new form of justice rests on a shared definition of the social bond which serves to establish which inequalities are just and which are not.

Justice and equality are drawn apart. There is a tendency to dissociate the two indivisible elements which, according to Aristotle, define justice – legality and equality (general law valid for all and the same rights for everyone under that law). In the liberal mindset, the two have nothing in common, at least in the matter of school education. On the contrary, "laws" instituting redistributive justice (to compensate those for whom fortune has reserved less and to restore equality in this respect) are seen as contrary to equality and individual merit. They are found to be in conflict with distributive justice (to each according to his merit). Let us note that this logic can only be adhered to if we understand the individual, his merits and the psychological prerequisites of his actions in a culture-free manner (the term culture being used in the sense of historical-cultural psychology here).

Liberalism triumphs with its conception of justice as a sum of individual deserved destinies. Yet, it seems to me that without a historical-cultural analysis of the genesis and development of psychological functions and of the social bond, it will be difficult to come up with strong arguments to help justice and equality to become reconciled.

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HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THE CONTINUING FAILURE OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION?

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Abstract: All education systems, to a greater or lesser extent, are marked by educational inequalities. Nearly all education systems, again to a greater or lesser extent, have put in place a variety of 'compensatory' strategies to help reduce these educational inequalities. These strategies have gone through different phases and enjoyed different degrees of support, but have generally been as much a part of the education system as the inequalities they are designed to address.

This paper explores the continuing reinvention and failure of compensatory education strategies. It looks, in particular, at the emergence and limits of recent moves to implement a 'politics of recognition' for schools in disadvantaged areas. It argues that children in disadvantaged schools need a 'politics of redistribution', but that the mechanisms of distribution and the nature of what it is that is to be redistributed are problematic. Drawing on theory and empirical research, the paper concludes by arguing that, until we have a clearer idea of what it is that we are compensating, compensatory education policies will be doomed to fail.

Keywords: Compensatory education, educational inequalities, social injustices, urban education, Bernstein.

Introduction

At the heart of this paper lies the question 'how should we respond to the continuing failure of compensatory education'? It has been prompted by the mounting evidence that the latest wave of compensatory measures within the UK looks set to be no more successful than earlier interventions. This failure presents a number of challenges to sociologists of education. We know, as Bernstein (1970) famously pointed out over forty years ago, that 'education cannot compensate for society'. However, we also generally reject the stance that attempts to reduce educational inequalities are inevitably futile.

The paper begins with a brief history of the continuing reinvention and failure of compensatory education in the UK and then goes on to look at broad ways in which we might respond to this failure. Drawing on Nancy Fraser's (1997) analytical distinction between economic and cultural injustices, it discusses the relative merits and drawbacks of developing either a simple politics of recognition or a simple politics of redistribution. It identifies the absence of a theoretical basis for compensatory education as a major obstacle to developing an adequate political

response. The paper concludes by outlining the potential of Basil Bernstein's work for the developing a theoretical approach.

A brief history of compensatory education in the UK

'Compensatory education' is the term that developed in the UK, borrowed from the USA, during the 1960s to describe systematic attempts to counter the low educational performance of disadvantaged students. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the UK government had already put in place a range of policies designed to promote equality of opportunity in education. These measures included, for example, the 1944 Education Act, which provided free secondary education for all. This Act led to the huge investment in new building programmes and teaching staff. However, by the 1960s it was apparent that while these measures had provided formal equality of opportunity they had not equalized educational outcomes between rich and poor. As Halsey (1972, p. 6) bluntly puts it: 'the essential fact of the twentieth century is that egalitarian policies have failed.'

The enduring gap between rich and poor presented a major cause for concern for post-war governments who saw it as a remnant of an old class-divided Britain that needed to be more meritocratic if social progress were to be achieved. The crisis in education in particular was highlighted in the influential Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education), published in 1967, which focused attention on the continuing disadvantage experienced by children living in deprived areas. This Report requested not only that the schools serving these areas should be of equivalent standard as those in non-deprived areas, but that they should be 'quite deliberately' made better. It was hoped that a policy of positive discrimination would bring additional resources *within* the school which could then 'compensate' for the disadvantages of deprivation experienced by the child *outside* the school.

Following the publication of the Plowden Report, the first major programme of compensatory education began. In England and Wales a number of Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) were identified in the late 1960s. The initiative involved 150 building programmes in 51 local authorities, plus 572 schools that were recognised for giving their teachers special payments for the more difficult teaching conditions. There was also a joint scheme between the (then) Department of Education and Science and the Social Science Research Council to fund a £175,000 action-research programme in five EPAs. The funds were spent developing and implementing educational initiatives and ensuring rigorous evaluation of their impacts, with a view to developing innovative approaches to the enhancement of educational attainment in socially disadvantaged areas.

The outcomes of the evaluation appeared in successive reports (Halsey, 1972; Midwinter, 1972; Morrison, 1974; Payne, 1974; Barnes, 1975; Lovett, 1975; Smith, 1975) throughout the early 1970s. These reports are extremely mixed in both their approach and their tone. While some speak positively of instances of good practice or outline general directions that it might be profitable to pursue, demonstrable evidence of any actual improvement in educational outcomes is difficult to find.

The lack of evidence of impact, together with confusions in the way the policy was framed and implemented (Smith, 1987), led to its collapse as the 1970s progressed. In general, during this period, enthusiasm for compensatory measures and other forms of 'social engineering' waned as the New Right emerged as a political force. The welfare state increasingly became seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution. The language of class differences disappeared. Indeed, Margaret Thatcher claimed it was a 'communist concept'. Differences between people were increasingly viewed as arising from *individual* and not *societal* attributes. As Margaret Thatcher famously said in 1987 'there is no such thing as society … only … individual men and women.'

Not surprisingly, Conservative governments under Margaret Thatcher and her successor John Major set about the task of dismantling the state apparatus that had made compensatory education possible. This included the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (as well as the Greater London Council). The power of local authorities was severely limited by the 1988 Education Reform Act which obliged them to devolve the majority of their funds and management responsibilities down to schools. The Act (and subsequent amendments) also provided incentives and encouragement for schools to 'opt out' of their local authority entirely (see Fitz et al., 1993 for an account of this policy).

At the same time as eroding the capacity of the state to 'engineer' social outcomes, the Conservative government promoted the importance of individual entitlements. For example, in 1981 the Government launched the *Assisted Places Scheme* which enabled academically able children from 'poor homes' to attend elite private schools (see Edwards et al., 1989). It also attempted to stimulate an education market so that 'ordinary' parents could have choice and schools would be forced to respond to consumer rather than professional control. It did this through diversifying provision, removing artificial limits on school enrolment and providing 'performance' data on individual schools (see Gewirtz et al., 1995; Whitty et al., 1998).

Research on the outcomes of these reforms is complex and contested (see Gorard et al., 2003). However, there is general consensus that while they may not have made the situation significantly worse for disadvantaged parents and children, they certainly did not make it better. In general, advantaged children continued to attend advantaged schools and disadvantaged children continued to attend disadvantaged schools.

In 1997, after 18 years in power, the Conservatives were heavily defeated and New Labour came to power. The welfare state and the acknowledgement of class-based inequalities returned – albeit a somewhat different conception of class than that which dominated the earlier period. In Tony Blair's (1999) words, Britain was on the way to becoming a 'one class' country:

Slowly but surely the old establishment is being replaced by a new, larger, more meritocratic middle class … A middle class that will include millions of people who traditionally may see themselves as working-class, but whose ambitions are far broader than those of their parents and grand-parents.

The danger was no longer one of class antagonism, but of a small group of families who were excluded from this new meritocratic middle class. Social exclusion involved more than just poverty:

> It's a very modern problem, and one that is more harmful to the individual, more damaging to self-esteem, more corrosive for society as a whole, more likely to be passed down from generation to generation, than material poverty. (Blair, 1997)

In order to address this excluded 'underclass', New Labour put in place over the next 10 years a huge array of initiatives targeted at disadvantaged areas and schools. In England, 1998 saw the launch of *Education Action Zones* (to run alongside *Health Action Zones* and *Employment Action Zones*). These were followed in 1999 by the *Excellence in Cities* policy and *Sure Start Local Programmes* for the pre-school years, and subsequently by *Neighbourhood Nurseries, Early Excellence Centres* and *Extended Schools*. In Wales, there have been interventions such as *Communities First*, *Flying Start* for the early years and *RAISE* for secondary schools. In Scotland, there is the *Integrated Community Schools* programme. Over the years, some of these policies have been replaced by others and some have been merged together, but the emphasis on targeting extra resources at deprived schools and areas has remained.

As we have written elsewhere (Power et al., 2005), although New Labour's approach to compensatory education interventions shares some of the characteristics of their predecessors, they are also somewhat different. The Table below shows some of the main differences.

Table 1: Contrasting characteristics between early and late compensatory education policies

	Earlier reforms	**New Labour Reforms**
Mode of governance	State bureaucratic	Self-governing partnerships
Accountability mechanism	Resources (inputs)	Results (outputs)
Time period	Ongoing	Time-limited
Identification of areas	Externally-defined	Self-defined
Identification of strategies	Top-down	Bottom up

In an approach typical of New Labour's 'third way' (Power & Whitty, 1999), these new programmes are usually governed by partnerships rather than state-bureaucracies. For example, each Education Action Zone was run by a forum of business partners, professionals, community and parent representatives. And while the development of earlier programmes was usually measured in terms of how much money had been invested, the new programmes are given performance targets which they have to reach. Funding tends to be temporary – for between

three and five years – and sometimes dependent on performance. Also, in order to improve commitment from those 'on the ground', the boundaries of the areas, and the strategies which will be put in place, are often defined at the local level. This has led to a 'cocktail' approach of strategies, something which I shall return to later.

While the more responsive formulation of the New Labour reforms may have overcome some of the shortcomings of earlier reforms, the evidence to date suggests that they too have had limited impact. Research I have undertaken with others on the English Education Action Zones policy[1] (Power et al., 2004) and the Scottish Integrated Community Schools programme[2] (Sammons et al., 2003) indicates that while some individuals have benefited, there has been little narrowing of the achievement gap. Smith et al. (2007) in their review of the evidence on recent English policies have similarly struggled to find any compelling evidence of an improvement in educational outcomes. As they point out:

> 'The evidence on impact suggests at best modest gains, and this at a time when the economy has been improving in ways that have reached through to some of the most disadvantaged parts of Britain.' (Smith et al., 2007, p. 147).

That this lack of impact is not unique to the UK, or to New Labour, is supported by the evidence being complied across Europe as part of the EUROPEP project (Demeuse et al., 2008).

Responding to the ongoing failure of compensatory education

How we respond to the failure of compensatory education will depend on the nature of inequalities which disadvantaged children and their schools experience. In thinking about these inequalities, I want to draw on the Nancy Fraser's (1997) very useful distinction between economic injustices and cultural injustices. Although, as Fraser herself acknowledges, these different injustices rarely exist in their 'pure' forms, there are heuristic advantages in disentangling them.

Economic injustices involve:

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1 Education Actions Zones (EAZs) were launched in England in 1998 and ran for five years. They were run by a small number of 'partners' including local authority, business, voluntary sector and community representatives and involved up to 25 schools. They were later subsumed within the Excellence in Cities policy. For an overview of the main findings from our ESRC-funded research on the policy, see Power et al. (2004).

2 The Integrated Community Schools programme (formerly called the New Community Schools programme) was launched by the then Scottish Office in 1998. The 37 NCS projects in the pilot programme involved over 170 schools or institutions in 30 education authorities. Some projects were single schools but most comprised clusters of associated schools. The pilot was due run for three years. However, before it was finished the Scottish Executive announced in 2001 that the programme was to be 'rolled out' to all Scotland's' schools. For the main findings of our SEED-funded research on the policy, see Sammons et al. (2003).

- Exploitation (having the fruits of one's labour appropriated for the benefit of others)
- Economic marginalisation (being confined to undesirable, poorly paid work – or having access to none)
- Deprivation (being denied an adequate material standard of living)

  Cultural injustices, on the other hand, include:
- Cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own)
- Non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of … authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices …)
- Disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life situations.)

Fraser illustrates the distinction through an analysis of what she sees as the different issues faced by 'exploited classes' and 'despised sexualities'. She argues that the working class suffers the economic injustices of exploitation, marginalisation and deprivation and that their disadvantaged position is determined by, indeed is defined by, the political and economic structure of society. Although members of the working class may also suffer cultural injustices, Fraser suggests that these usually arise from the material hardships they experience. According to Fraser, it therefore follows that to alleviate these injustices; a politics of redistribution is required. This may include, among other things, redistributing income, changing the division of labour etc.

The situation of the working class is contrasted with that of gays and lesbians, who, Fraser contends, suffer cultural injustices. They live in a largely heterosexist society in which their own sexuality is either rendered invisible or routinely maligned. Although this may have material consequences, Fraser argues that, unlike the working class, they need a politics of recognition rather than redistribution. This may involve positive affirmation of gay and lesbian relationships, challenging the homo-hetero dichotomy, etc.

From Fraser's analysis it becomes clear that not all injustices are of the same order and that different forms of injustice require different remedies. The question for us to consider is whether disadvantaged students and schools suffer from an economic or a cultural injustice.

The cultural injustice behind educational failure

If we go back to Fraser's definition, we can certainly see that the disadvantaged *do* suffer from cultural injustices. For instance, ethnic minority communities can be seen to suffer from cultural domination. They are subjected to the patterns of

interpretation and communication of another culture - and one which is often alien and hostile to their own. These communities, and the schools they attend, are also often treated with disrespect. They are routinely disparaged in stereotypes in the media and in everyday representations.

Some sociologists (eg Keddie, 1973) goes so far as to suggest that it is not only that we have deficit views of disadvantaged communities but that our definitions of curriculum, intelligence and behaviour are all culturally relative and are thus arbitrarily imposed by the dominant onto the dominated. The imposition of these inappropriate frames of reference, rather than any attributes of the disadvantaged, becomes the source of educational inequality.

If we see the source of the problem of educational failure as being located in cultural domination then it is possible that programmes of compensatory education actually exacerbate the injustice. This kind of critique is reminiscent of earlier critiques of compensatory education, in particular that made most powerfully by Basil Bernstein (1971, p. 192) in his famous paper 'Education cannot compensate for society':

> The concept 'compensatory education' implies that something is lacking in the family, and so in the child. As a result the children are unable to benefit from schools. It follows then that the school has to 'compensate' for the something which is missing in the family and the children become little deficit systems.

Certainly, Smith (1987) subsequently argued that one reason for the demise of the EPAs was the lack of a coherent conceptualisation of disadvantage which led to the 'internal collapse' of the policy. In particular, he criticised the tendency to emphasise the 'worst' features of EPAs which led to a perception that disadvantage was attributable to familial and individual pathologies.

The more recent reforms are also underpinned by deficit notions of the inner-city communities and their inhabitants. For example, an analysis of how disadvantaged parents are represented in Education Action Zone applications reveals many instances of negative portrayals (Power & Gewirtz, 2001). For example, one comments that '… the norm is where pupils have been brought up in families dependent on benefits from the government'. The dysfunctionality of these families is revealed through 'an apparent lack of male role models' and a 'climate of indiscipline'. The bids describe how 'domestic violence and abuse are two common features of every day life within the housing estates', where 'many parents do little to ensure their children … subscribe to basic norms of behaviour'.

It is possible to argue, therefore, that compensatory education *compounds* the difficulties of those living in disadvantaged areas through further contributing to their cultural injustices. What is needed is a politics of recognition.

A politics of recognition for disadvantaged children and schools

The argument that disadvantaged children need a politics of recognition is nothing new. Many educationalists in the 1960s and 1970s tried to counter what they saw as negative and deficit representations of the disadvantaged with more positive appreciation of their lives and culture. The following statement from an American speech significantly entitled 'S*trengths* of the inner city child' (my emphasis) by Leon Eisenberg (1973, p. 245) is fairly typical of the position taken in this period:

> The key issue in looking at the strengths of the inner city child is the importance of not confusing difference with deficit. Any teacher who has taught a grade in the middle-class section and a grade in the lower-class section of the city can certainly testify to the difference. Inner city children's clothes, their accents, their activity level, their classroom behaviour, their type of verbalisation, their health standards, all do differ.

However, in the UK we are recently seeing the emergence of a new kind of politics of recognition. It is a politics of recognition that has been called for by many involved in education to counter the crude ranking of schools within the education market place. Over the last twenty years schools in England have been compelled to publish their students' results at various stages. These results are then used to compile 'league tables' of performance. There have been many complaints that these tables fail to take into account contextual differences between schools. Moreover, these tables do not recognise that different schools may have different priorities. The critics argue that these tables themselves constitute a form of injustice.

Table 2: 'Improving Schools' league table

Name	1997 GCSE result (%)*	1997 rank	1996 GCSE result (%)*	1996 rank	Rise
Harris City Technology College, London	64	37	27	74	37
Archbishop Temple School, Preston	57	44	22	79	35
Bowland County High School, Clitheroe	58	43	26	75	32

Percentage of pupils gaining at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C.
Source: 'Improving Schools' http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/education_league_tables/32677.stm

In order to counter this injustice, the New Labour government, and some academics, have sought to develop alternative league tables. For example, from 1998, the English Government published an 'Improving Schools' league table. The

following table contains the results of the 'winners' of the first of these new kinds of league table.

The school at the top of the table, Harris City Technology College, has seen a 37 point rise in its ranking as its GSCE results have increased from 27% in 1996 to 64%, in 1997 - a larger increase than any other school in England. The second school, Archbishop Temple, has seen an improvement of 35 points – with 22% of students obtaining the standard GCSE result in 1996 and 57% achieving it in 1997. It is clear from this table that schools with very high levels of attainment cannot be rewarded, because they have less scope for improvement. The table is a reverse of conventional performance tables in as much as it is only those schools that usually are consigned to the bottom of the league that are able to appear at the top of this table.

Since 2004, there have also been a number of other tables which have based rankings on 'value-added' measures. These measure, not the final result, but how much the progress has been made by pupils as they move from one stage to another.. Sometimes other weightings are put in to allow for contextual disadvantage. These alternative tables are then reported to celebrate the achievements of disadvantaged schools. The extract, called 'Hidden Triumphs' (Crace, 2006) below is taken from a *Guardian* newspaper report on a school which does badly in a conventional performance league table, but well in a value-added league table:

> You wouldn't know the corridors were painted only a few months ago. Damp stains have already appeared on the ceilings and the walls are peeling … King Richard secondary school in Portsmouth is falling apart. Literally. It was built in the late 1940s and should have been knocked down 10 years ago ... There again, the school blends in with its surroundings. King Richard is in the heart of Paulsgrove, a run-down working-class estate on the northern edge of the city ... Everything about Paulsgrove screams low expectations. Check out the government's GCSE school league tables and King Richard seems to fall in line with the neighbourhood. In 2005, 46% of its pupils achieved five or more passes at A*- C, bang on the average pass rate for Portsmouth … but 10% down on the rest of England. Yet research published today … shows that King Richard is doing a great deal better than these figures suggest. … and has thus significantly outperformed expectations.

However, a politics of recognition which turns failure into success in this way is potentially very dangerous. Recognising that schools have to educate children in difficult conditions, and that some schools are better at it than others, may make the teachers working in them feel less stigmatised but will do nothing to tackle the underlying causes of educational failure. Indeed, at its extreme end, such a politics of recognition may end up *celebrating* the experience of exploitation, marginalisation and deprivation. This kind of politics of recognition is also dangerous because it 'naturalises' the failure of the disadvantaged. These alternative league tables tell

the government and teachers that these schools are doing the best, or better, than can be expected in the circumstances.

What is needed is a politics that tackles rather than simply recognises the circumstances. For example, it is not just as Eisenberg would have us believe that the health standards of the 'inner-city' child *differ*, it needs to be acknowledged that they are *worse*. The issue *is* one of deficit. However, this does not mean, though, that the poor are responsible for these deficits. The identification of deficits constitutes a condemnation of economic exploitation and injustice. And this inevitably brings us back to the need for politics of redistribution within education – but one which does not repeat shortcomings of previous and current interventions.

It is not enough just to assert that we need a politics of redistribution. It is easy for sociologists simply to point out a general direction without being specific. We also need to clarify what it is we are redistributing, how and to whom. In order to do this we need to have a much clearer conceptualisation of what compensatory education is trying to do. The lack of a strong theoretical base has contributed to the lack of a solid empirical base. While there are many evaluations of different interventions, but they have not accumulated into a coherent account of the processes and problems of compensatory education. The absence of coherence in terms of how we frame compensatory strategies has also been exacerbated by the move towards a 'what works' approach. Although the underlying research evidence for any particular strategy 'working' is usually fairly weak, the piecemeal implementation of 'good ideas' has led to a huge mushrooming of different kinds of interventions underpinned by quite different – and sometimes contradictory - change mechanisms. At times this diversity of approaches has even been seen as potentially advantageous in itself. For example, when the Education Action Zones policy was launched, a government minister talked favourably of the benefits of a 'cocktail' approach and drew parallels with the multiple medications that are most successful in treating HIV/AIDS (fieldnotes, 1999). While there may (or may not) be practical merits in this approach, it makes the systematic exploration of the efficacy of the different elements impossible.

In order to cut through this chaos, we need an analytical framework which will help us grasp both the complexity, but also the underlying principles, of different interventions. In the next section, I will briefly outline some ideas I am developing with Geoff Whitty (Power & Whitty, 2008) which we think can be used to compare and contrast different approaches to compensatory education with a view to exploring their relative potentialities for improving the educational experiences of disadvantaged pupils.

A Bernsteinian analysis of compensatory education

While Bernstein's (1971) critique of compensatory education is as powerful now as it was nearly forty years ago, we believe that his theoretical understanding of educational transmissions (1971, 1977, 1990, 1996) can provide a fruitful starting

point for thinking about how to make compensatory education more effective than it has been so far. It enables us to move beyond a simple politics of recognition or redistribution.

Bernstein's analysis of education is, as is widely acknowledged, highly structural in that it is concerned to make visible the underlying grammar of educational transmissions. Through his work he has attempted to address what he sees as a major failing within the dominant theories of cultural reproduction - the absence of a theory of pedagogic discourse. Within these theories, education and schools are little more than channels for external power relations. It is, he argues, 'a matter of great interest that the actual structure which enables power to be relayed, power to be carried, is itself not subject to analysis.' (Bernstein, 1996, p.18) What we need is more analysis on the structure of the relay and less on what is that is being relayed. The two concepts at the root of his analysis, and the ones which will inform the analysis, are those of classification and framing. Classification reflects the distribution of power and the principles by which boundaries are established between categories. These categories might relate to agencies, agents, discourses or practices. Strong classification is underpinned by the rule that 'things must be kept apart'. Weak classification must be underpinned by the rule that 'things must be brought together'. Classification determines the metaphoric structuring of space. Framing, on the other hand, reflects the distribution of control over communication. It can refer to the relations between parents and children, between teachers and pupils and between teachers and parents. Strong framing is where the transmitter has explicit control over the communication; weak framing gives the acquirer more apparent control over the communication.

Strategies of compensatory education are, at their root, nearly always about re-ordering these principles. They seek to strengthen some aspects and weaken other aspects of the relationship between the neighbourhood, the family, the child and the school. However, they do so in differing directions. In the following section, examples of strategies implemented in recent reforms in the UK have been categorised in terms of the extent to which they alter the classification and framing relations between the school and the home.

Interventions with strong classification and strong framing

Some of the strategies designed to 'compensate' for educational disadvantage can be categorised as being strongly both classified and framed, in that they do not attempt to weaken the strong boundaries between home and school nor to weaken communicative control of the pedagogy. Indeed, they may even strengthen classification and framing at the level of the primary school in particular. These strategies generally involve giving students and their families in disadvantaged schools *more* education - more intensive teaching programmes, more teaching materials, more teaching assistants. These activities may be directed at the child, the family or the broader community. The following activities (and others listed in the paper) are examples of initiatives that have been implemented in the *Education*

Action Zones initiative in England and the Scottish *Integrated Community Schools* programme. Examples of these activities have included:

> The purchase of literacy & numeracy games packs;
> Reading recovery programmes
> Establishing a maths library in the school

In all these activities, there is a clear boundary between the specialist and the learner. There is no blurring of the boundary between educational knowledge and everyday knowledge. It is clear both what is being imparted and how it will be evaluated.

They may be some altering of the temporal boundaries between school, home and community, between school time and after-school time, between term time and holidays. There may also be some altering of the boundaries between home and school – with parents and community members being encouraged to come into the school for classes and moves to take the 'school' into the home. However, while the location boundary may have altered, the strength of classification between school knowledge and everyday knowledge remains unchanged. There is always a strong division of labour. It may become more complicated within the school – for example with the introduction of teaching assistants, but the demarcation of responsibility is clear and hierarchical within the classroom.

Issues and implications

To some extent, this form of intervention represents a classic politics of redistribution. There are clearly a number of potentially positive impacts arising from giving pupils, parents and the community 'more' schooling. In some ways it could be argued that providing more intensive lessons and better resources is the only way to tackle the inadequate educational experience which poor and disadvantaged pupils have experienced hitherto. These extra resources will bring them a little closer to the kind of provision from which more advantaged students benefit.

However, while some individuals may benefit from these programmes, it is hard to see how they can provide a systemic solution. Firstly, the scale of the redistribution which would be needed to provide poor and disadvantaged schools with sufficient resources to compensate for current financial injustices both in the home and in the school would be enormous.

Secondly, it seems unlikely that a solution based just on giving students more of the very kinds of activities at which they are failing is likely to work. As Bernstein argues, it is the strong classification and framing of pedagogy which gives the middle class its advantages in the first place. Indeed, he claims that the 'strong classification between family and school is a product of the symbolic power of the middle class family' (1996, p. 106-7). Because middle class children have been prepared from an early age to distinguish the difference between home and school

they are more likely to have access to the distinctive recognition and realisation rules which the school context demands. Unless disadvantaged pupils have access to these rules as well they will always be at least one step behind. Simply increasing the frequency and intensity of educational activities demands is hardly going to transform failure into success.

Interventions to weaken classification and weaken framing

By contrast, there is a range of strategies which seek to address educational disadvantage not through giving parents and students 'more' schooling but through weakening the strength of classification between the school, the home and the community and the framing of the relationship between the teacher or expert and the parent and child.

The weakening of boundaries can occur within the curriculum and in the relationship between the school and the community. On the curriculum front, and as Bernstein identified, there are moves towards an integrated curriculum for those deemed to have learning difficulties. Schools have introduced activities such as Youth Theatre Groups or local community arts projects.

For these students, who are likely to fail performance-related tasks, there are moves towards 'personalising' achievement in ways which will celebrate 'competence'. The competence model is evident in the moves towards 'Personalised learning plans'.

Like the strongly classified and framed strategies, these strategies can also emphasise the expressive domain, but here the approaches are more therapeutic. They may involve some form of self-reflection and self-realisation. Relations are likely to be less hierarchical. The role of fellow pupils is emphasised e.g.:

> Peer education
> Buddy support scheme

Physical boundaries between the inside and the outside of the school are weakened. School space can be used by parents – without the purpose having to be classified as explicitly 'educational' e.g.:

> In-school family room & drop in facilities
> Parents' room, lending library and PC/internet
>
> Indeed, there may be moves to 'democratise' schools through consultations with pupils, parents and the wider community, e.g.:
>
> Creation of parent forum
> Consultation with parents on curriculum & school ethos

In some ways these strategies are reminiscent of the earlier moves towards the 'community education' programmes of the 1970s which were built on a politics of recognition. These strategies were, to some extent, a reaction against the 'deficit' perspective embodied within some forms of compensatory education. It is not that the disadvantaged pupil and their family are 'lacking' (and therefore do not need to be given 'more'). They are disadvantaged by a middle class education system which fails to recognise different and distinctive cultures.

Issues and implications

If maintaining or strengthening the classification and framing between home and school is likely to do little to reduce educational disadvantage, then it might be argued that breaking down these barriers and building more inclusive relations can only prefigure a greater mutual understanding.

But, while Bernstein, in his critique of compensatory education, argues 'the contents of the learning in school' should be drawn much more from the child's experience in his (sic) family and community (1971, p. 192), the idea that simply weakening boundaries will of itself make a significant difference is both empirically and theoretically difficult to sustain.

There is already significant evidence to suggest that weakening the classification and framing of pedagogies does not, on its own, enhance the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Indeed, there are some indications that the invisibility of the rules which are implicit in integrated curricula actually makes the acquisition of recognition and realisation rules harder (Sharp & Green, 1975; Daniels, 1995).

In part this is because this weakening of classification and framing is relatively superficial, in as much as the underlying distribution of power and principles of control remain unchanged.

Indeed, their invisibility renders the authority of the teacher and the school less open to challenge. It is more probable, therefore, that simply weakening the classification and framing without changing or challenging the underlying distribution of power and control will achieve little.

Moreover, even if there were to be a more thoroughgoing 'opening' of the school so that the local community became the source of educational change that the community education pioneers of the 1970s envisaged, it is unclear whether this would significantly increase the *relative* advantages of the disadvantaged pupil. The equivalent valuing of different cultures now seems strangely naïve and misguided. And although Bernstein might have argued for greater connection between school knowledge and everyday knowledge, it is not entirely clear what he meant by this. While noting the many shortcomings of schools, he was probably not arguing for the collapsing of the distinction between home knowledge and school knowledge. Indeed, even in his early *New Society* article (Bernstein, 1970), he argued that education must involve the introduction of children to the universalistic meanings of public forms of thought.

Interventions with weak classification but strong framing

In some ways the two preceding categories of strategies are reminiscent of earlier compensatory education reforms. The first is based on an old-fashioned politics of redistribution, the second on an old-fashioned politics of recognition. What we are seeing very strongly in the more recent initiatives, though, is a growth in strategies where the classification is weak – in that boundaries between the school, the family and the community are blurred - but the control over the communication is very strong.

Within the school, there are a range of schemes which are aimed at changing student behaviour – not through the imposition of explicit pedagogies and targets as in the C+F+ strategies or the weakening of the boundaries of the C-F- initiatives. The boundaries between areas and activities are weakened as the focus encompasses the whole child, but the pedagogy is very strong. For the pupil, there can be intensive programmes and activities designed to change behaviours:

> Develop existing SPIN (effecting change/communication problems) and
> fast track (developing social competence) initiatives
> Activity based, team-building group work for poor attenders

For the family and the community, there is a whole array of schemes designed to 'improve' parental competence. In line with proposals to introduce 'super nannies' into deprived areas, many compensatory education programmes provide courses such as the following:

> Assertiveness & anger management for parents
> Positive Parenting Programme
> Men's parenting group

These programmes and courses are weakly classified in as much the boundary between everyday knowledge and school knowledge is dissolved, but strongly framed because they are underpinned by a clear power relationship between the expert and the learner. The pedagogy is highly visible, with the teacher/expert having techniques that the pupil or parent must learn.

Issues and implications

At first sight, this type of intervention looks to have a lot of potential. It brings the everyday knowledge of the family context and pupil experience into the educational domain but it does not hide the power relations between teacher and taught. It is very explicit about the required recognition and realisation rules. However, it is also deeply problematic. The strong framing theoretically enables the everyday to be developed into the esoteric, the context-dependent into the abstract, the horizontal discourse into the vertical discourse. But there is no esoteric,

abstract or vertical knowledge within it – or at least not as currently developed. It is empty of knowledge content – or at least the kind of knowledge that will enable disadvantaged pupils to have access to the forms of knowledge available to advantaged children.

Indeed, these interventions are often based on recontextualised forms of behaviourist and therapeutic psychology which are predicated on very strong deficit theories of disadvantaged homes. While the explicitness of the framing potentially renders the authority of the school open to challenge so that it has continually to justify and legitimise its authority, the messages being transmitted within this relay render any such challenge symptomatic of pathological socialization. As currently constituted, these types of interventions are about pedagogising the whole child and even the family.

Whether this kind of intervention could have more radical potential if it were based on different assumptions or on a different recontextualisation of knowledge is difficult to know. Some might argue that the combination of weak classification and strong framing could be used for the purpose of illuminating the nature of social reality, history and culture. For this to happen, though, there would need to be some radical revisioning of the knowledge base of education.

Interventions with strong classification but weak framing

We have not so far characterised any compensatory education initiatives as involving strong classification and weak framing, partly because they are difficult to identify in current initiatives. Yet this is perhaps what our critique of other approaches points to. The weakening of the control over the communication may allow connections to be made between pupils' experience and the curriculum, but as a means to introducing them to the abstract forms of thought and universalistic knowledge. There is already considerable evidence that actually making those connections has proved highly problematic for many pupils, and indeed their teachers, not least because using the different discourses entails acquiring different recognition and realisation rules (Whitty et al., 1994). However, difficult as it may be, articulating the connections and disconnections between home and school must be worth exploring more consistently.

Clearly, this is only the beginning of an analysis using the concepts of classification and framing, but one we think that has some potential. Of course education cannot compensate for society in any simple way. But that does not mean that educators should accept the continuing failure of the disadvantaged as an inevitability. While Bernstein's analysis shows us the intractability of the relationship between knowledge, schooling and inequality, it also provides a way of thinking about what would need to be put in place if that relationship were to be interrupted.

Conclusion

This paper began with the question of how we should respond to the continuing failure of compensatory education. It was been prompted by the mounting evidence that the latest wave of compensatory measures within the UK looks set to be no more successful than earlier interventions. Moreover, the UK experience looks no different from that elsewhere.

One strategy is to replace a failed politics of redistribution with a politics of recognition. However, while current reforms, like their predecessors, do embody deficit representations of disadvantaged children, families and communities, more positive re-evaluations of disadvantage are at best futile and at worst dangerous. In particular, there must be serious concerns about the new politics of recognition which has emerged in the UK and which presents educational failure as educational success.

We need to develop a more creative response – and one which has a much stronger theoretical basis. I have attempted to outline one potential way of developing a theory of compensatory education through drawing on the theories of Basil Bernstein. It is far too early to predict whether this is the most appropriate framework – or whether it will have any purchase on policy and practice. However, it is not too early to predict that without an adequate conceptualisation of what we are trying to do, future attempts to offer disadvantaged children a more fruitful educational experience will be doomed to fail.

Acknowledgements

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BEYOND THE SCHOOL GATE:
SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Abstract: *In England, as in many countries across the economically developed world, governments have seen the reform of the school system as a major strategy for promoting social justice. The focus has been on the continual 'improvement' of schools through increasing central control of curriculum and pedagogy, the introduction of high-stakes testing and accountability, and the creation of education quasi-markets in which schools compete to attract students. Whatever the achievements of these reforms, it is increasingly clear that they have been unsuccessful in overcoming the deeply-entrenched relationship between socio-economic disadvantage, low educational achievement and limited life chances. This paper argues that reform efforts need to be refocused so that the work of schools is aligned more fully with wider public policy efforts to address disadvantage. In particular, it advocates the development of 'community focused' schools which look beyond their gates to the social justice issues in the areas they serve. The paper shows how such schools have developed in different forms in many countries, and concludes by suggesting that their work can become part of an 'area approach' to promoting social justice.*

Key words: *Schools, community, full service, disadvantage, education policy, England*

Introduction

When Tony Blair was leader of the New Labour opposition in England, he famously declared that his three priorities in office would be, 'education, education and education' (Blair, 1996). This was no merely casual remark. New Labour governments have displayed a remarkable faith in education both as the engine of economic development and as a means of achieving greater social justice. In the context of economic globalisation, they have seen education as the means of equipping the nation with the highly-skilled workforce needed if it is to compete successfully countries where wage costs are much lower. In the context of persistent social inequality, on the other hand, they have seen education as the means of counteracting the effects of social deprivation and equalising the life chances of young people from more and less disadvantaged social backgrounds. As Blair subsequently put it:

> …we cannot hope to prosper as a nation if we do not
> educate all our citizens properly.
>
> (Blair, 2005)

These views have led New Labour governments to pursue, amongst other things, a vigorous programme of school reform. They inherited from previous Conservative administrations a system in which the curriculum was controlled centrally, children were tested and schools inspected regularly, results were published, and a quasi-market was established in which schools competed to recruit students. Declaring a 'an unprecedented crusade to raise standards' (Blair, 1999) New Labour governments from 1997 began to prescribe teaching methods, set expected performance targets for schools and encourage the radical intervention in schools which failed to meet these targets. At the same time, they have been aware that the English education system has historically been bedevilled by a long tail of low achievement, linked to social disadvantage, and manifesting itself particularly in schools serving concentrations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Accordingly, strategies were developed for, amongst other things, supporting disadvantaged children in classrooms, addressing their personal and psychological difficulties, recruiting the best teachers and head teachers, and offering additional resources, vigorous support and decisive intervention to their schools.

However, the outcomes from all of this activity are, at best, ambiguous. There are real doubts as to whether, and how far, the successive waves of reform of the school system have actually raised standards of achievement (see, for instance, The Primary Review, 2007). In particular, there are doubts about whether they have succeeded in narrowing the gap in educational achievements or in life chances between children from more and less advantaged backgrounds. It remains the case that children from poor backgrounds tend to lag behind their peers before they enter school (Hansen & Joshi, 2007), that they tend to do badly while they are in school (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007), and that, far from their life chances being transformed by schooling, social mobility is, if anything declining (Blanden et al., 2005). Whatever the reforms of education may have achieved, they have not, it would appear, broken the fundamental link between social background, educational outcomes, and life chances.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Basil Bernstein's famous dictum from nearly four decades ago (Bernstein, 1970) continues to hold good – education cannot compensate for society. Whilst reforming schools and offering additional support to children may be necessary conditions for overcoming the effects of social disadvantage, they are not in themselves sufficient conditions. In the face of the overwhelming effects of socio-structural factors such as class, gender and ethnicity, mediated by family functioning (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003), the work of schools constitutes actually a rather weak countervailing factor. They might be able, perhaps, to make a difference at the margins, but they cannot hope to change patterns that are effectively shaped outside their gates (Mortimore & Whitty, 2000).

It is tempting, in this situation, either to believe that educational change must wait upon more fundamental social change, or to despair of the possibility of educational change entirely. However, there is, I suggest, an alternative which emerges when the dichotomy of what happens within the school gates and what happens beyond the school gates is questioned. Traditionally, in England and many other countries, schools are largely detached from those parts of children's lives that occur outside the gates. They work with children for only some of their childhood years (eleven in England), for only some weeks in those years, for only some days in those weeks, and only some hours in those days. For the most part, they have little involvement in what happens to children outside school and often find it difficult to work with agencies that have greater involvement. Many school leaders are uninterested in what happens beyond the school gates, and even those that are have only limited means at their disposal of intervening in prevailing social and economic conditions (Ainscow et al., 2007; Ainscow et al., 2008; Cummings & Dyson, 2007)

However, this picture is not universally true. From at least the 1920s, some schools in England have interpreted their role more broadly, seeking to offer services and activities for their students outside school hours, to become proactively involved with families, and to play a part in the community as a whole. In so doing, they have enhanced their capacity not simply to teach their students but to engage with other factors in their lives that might impact on their achievements or, more generally, on their life chances. New Labour governments have, not surprisingly perhaps, become interested in the possibilities opened up by such schools. They have, therefore, launched a series of initiatives aimed at developing what they choose to call 'extended' schools, culminating in the attempt to develop one full service extended school in every local authority area (DfES, 2003), and, more recently, a programme aimed at enabling every school to provide access to extended services (DfES, 2005).

These developments form part of an international movement for the development of schools of this kind (Dyson, in press). These schools carry different labels in different places - full service schools, community schools, extended schools, schools plus, and so on. They are perhaps best referred to as 'community focused schools', a term coined in Wales to define a school that:

> …provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.
>
> (National Assembly for Wales, 2003, par. 1.2)

The lack of an agreed label indicates that there is little agreement about how these schools might operate, what their aims should be, or what outcomes they might realistically produce. It is also the case that, whilst there are substantial research literatures dealing with schools in disadvantaged areas, school-community relations and other cognate topics, the research base that deals specifically

with schools of this kind is limited both empirically and theoretically. As one review of the international literature suggests, there has been "little systematic, rigorous evaluation of the concept [of the community focused school] and its implementation" (Wilkin et al., 2003, p. v.).

In this situation, we simply do not have enough high-quality evidence or analysis to present an authoritative research review. It is inevitable that what follows in this paper, therefore, will be somewhat speculative. Nonetheless, community focused schools, I believe, raise significant questions about what schools might be and do, and, particularly, how schooling might relate to wider social policies for tackling disadvantage. With this in mind, I shall attempt in the remainder of this paper to indicate some of the features of community focused schools in England and internationally, to consider some of the differing assumptions upon which different examples are based, and to review briefly such evidence as we have about their likely impacts. Most important, however, I shall address some of the issues to which such schools give rise and some of the opportunities which, I believe, they open up. It is then for practitioners, policy makers and researchers to interpret these issues and opportunities in their own contexts, and to consider whether community focused schools in some locally-appropriate form might have something to offer.

What community focused schools do

Community focused schools are highly variable in the way they operate and the services and activities they offer. As Joy Dryfoos, one of the pioneers of 'full service' schooling in the USA, puts it:

> Although the word 'model' is used a lot, in reality no two schools are alike; they are all different. The quality that is most compelling about community school philosophy is responsiveness to differences: in needs of populations to be served; in configurations of school staff; in capabilities of partner agencies; in capacity for change in community climate; and in availability of resources. These programs are always changing in response to changing conditions …
>
> (Dryfoos, 2005, p. vii)

Two examples, drawn from very different contexts, will serve to illustrate some of the differences and commonalities amongst these schools:

> The *Arturo Toscanini Complex* (ATC) is a campus in New York City in the USA, hosting three middle (grades 6-8) schools. It is located in a disadvantaged and multi-ethnic inner city context and offers a menu of activities which includes:

- extended day provision, including homework support, literacy tuition, creative writing and tutoring;

- programs focusing on personal and social development;
- fitness and health programs;
- performing arts activities;
- access for students and families to health, dental health, and mental health services;
- social work support for students and families;
- opportunities for student involvement in leadership activities and community issues; and
- English as a second language, welfare assistance, family support, health insurance advice, and cultural and leisure activities for parents and community members.

(see http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/files/factsheet145+2new06_1. pdf)

By contrast, Camps Hill Community Primary school in Stevenage, England, caters for children up to the age of 11. Although it is located in an area of relative disadvantage, Stevenage is a medium-sized 'new town' rather than an inner city area, and Camps Hill works with a range of other schools to deliver community focused activities. These activities include:

- a Mums and Toddlers group, open to the whole community;
- a Nurture Group, for children aged 5 to 7 with severe behavioural, emotional and social needs and where parents learn alongside their children;
- community arts events;
- before and after school clubs for students;
- public use of the school premises for leisure and arts activities;
- projects with local businesses where business people work with students to tackle real community issues;
- a Parents' Lounge where parents can learn, or socialise with each other in a space they feel is their own, and which is available for use by other community groups;
- drop-in/advice sessions for parents in conjunction with the School Health Team.
- work placements in the schools' nursery for older students from nearby schools
- an annual Family Learning Week in which staff help parents to learn alongside their children.

(see http://www.continyou.org.uk/case_studies/camps_hill_hub_ community)

Despite the differences in provision and context between these two examples, they reflect features that are common to community focused schools in many places (Dyson, in press). These include extra-curricular provision for students, support for students' social and health needs (often provided by professionals other than teachers), work with students' families, and opportunities for community members to use school facilities, and engage in arts, leisure, learning and vocational

development activities. In many cases, these activities and forms of provision take the form of relatively minor additions to the school's core educational provision, requiring little adjustment of existing staffing, structures and practices. Elsewhere, however, schools become quite different kinds of institutions, with large numbers of staff who are not teachers, a wide range of facilities other than classrooms, a user population much wider than the student population, and significant adjustments in management structures and funding arrangements to support their community focused role (for examples from the English context, see Ball, 1998; Craig et al., 2004; Cummings et al., 2007; Wilkin et al., 2003).

Rationales

The provision and activities of community focused schools are underpinned by more or less explicit rationales. Their leaders typically have in mind some view of what they might achieve by reshaping the role of the school, and why such a development is needed in the situation they face. Typically, these rationales are related to the issues of social and educational disadvantage which we raised earlier. Dryfoos, for instance, makes the case for community focused schooling in the following terms:

> …schools are failing because they cannot meet the complex needs of today's students. Teachers cannot teach hungry children or cope with young people who are too distraught to learn. Anyone working in an inner-city school, in a marginal rural area, or even on the fringes of suburbia will tell you how impossible her or his job has become. The cumulative effects of poverty have created social environments that challenge educators, community leaders, and practitioners of health, mental health, and social services to invent new kinds of institutional responses.
>
> (Dryfoos, 1994, p. xvii)

However, by no means all community focused schools are founded on the same set of assumptions. In England, for instance, the identification of such schools with strategies for addressing (particularly) urban poverty has competed against very different, and somewhat longer-established rationales. Many years ago, Henry Morris, then Chief Education Officer of the predominantly rural county of Cambridgeshire, proposed the establishment of 'village colleges' which continue to serve something like their original purpose even to this day. Morris was concerned that the expanding and industrialized towns were threatening the rural way of life because of the economic opportunities they offered and the social, leisure and educational facilities to which they gave access. He wanted his village colleges to consolidate and extend the community facilities that were available in rural settings as a means of retaining the population and enhancing their quality of life. In this way:

> The isolated and insulated school, which has now no organic connection

with higher education, would form part of an institution in which the ultimate goal of education would be realized. As the community centre of the neighbourhood the village college would provide for the whole man, and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived, the environment of a genuine corporate life. The dismal dispute of vocational and nonvocational education would not arise in it, because education and living would be equated. It would be a visible demonstration in stone of the continuity and never ceasingness of education.

(Morris, 1925, p. XV)

Dryfoos and Morris are separated, I suggest, not so much by time (as the continued existence of village colleges confirms) as by context – urban disadvantage versus rural remoteness – by different views of what is needed in those contexts to create a viable society in which all people have acceptable life chances, and by differing conclusions as to the part that schools can play in this process. For Dryfoos, schools have to become foci for interventions in the lives of children and their families in order to overcome the pressing problems created by poverty. For Morris, on the other hand, schools are community hubs, enriching the lives and opportunities of local people, and contributing to the viability of their communities. Nor are these the only rationales for community focused schools. In South Africa full service schools are about locating services for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools so that they can be included in those schools (Department of Education., 2005). In Saskatchewan, Canada, 'community schools' concern themselves, amongst other things, with cultural affirmation and community empowerment for First Peoples (Saskatchewan Education, no date). In some of the new democracies of central and eastern Europe, the focus is on fostering democratic engagement, as students and adults tackle social problems in their communities (see, for instance, http://www.cs-network.ru/).

These examples could be multiplied many times over. Underpinning all of them is a sense that schools have to become involved in tackling issues beyond their traditional boundaries. However, this leaves ample scope for differences of view as to what those issues are, where and how far beyond the boundaries of the school they lie, and what the school can and should do in response to them. Ultimately, of course, these views rest on fundamental assumptions about the purposes of education, the origin of social problems, and the characteristics of viable societies. Such assumptions are frequently implied by advocates of community focused schools and the actions of the schools themselves, but are, unfortunately, rarely made explicit.

What community focused schools can achieve

In this situation, there are real difficulties in assessing how far the promise of community focused schools has been realized in practice. Where rationales differ

so markedly, it is inevitably difficult to assemble an evidence base to support their effectiveness. Moreover, the outcomes envisaged by some rationales – community viability, say, or the empowerment of marginalized groups – are inherently difficult to assess. Not surprisingly, therefore, most evaluations have focused on schools that are trying to improve educational and life chance outcomes for disadvantaged students and adults, and, within that, have focused on those outcomes that are easiest to measure. Even here, however, the complex, multi-strand nature of most community focused schools make the identification and attribution of outcomes difficult, and there are real doubts about the quality of research that has thus far been produced (Keyes & Gregg, 2001; Wilkin et al., 2003).

Nonetheless, the evidence that is available seems to point towards a positive, albeit somewhat tentative, conclusion (see, amongst many others, Dyson & Robson, 1999; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sammons et al., 2003; Szirom et al., 2001). Where schools work beyond their traditional boundaries, they put themselves in a position to have a greater impact on the educational and life chances of their students, of their students' families and, in some cases on the well being of the communities where students live. A review of the evidence on 'community' schools, for instance, whilst noting the limitations of many evaluations, concludes nonetheless that such schools produce positive outcomes in four areas:

- **Student learning:** Community school students show significant and widely evident gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development.
- **Family engagement:** Families of community school students show increased stability, communication with teachers and school involvement. Parents demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning success.
- **School effectiveness:** Community schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment and greater community support.
- **Community vitality:** Community schools promote better use of school buildings, and their neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.

<div align="right">(Blank et al., 2003, p. 1-2. emphases in original)</div>

The situation in England

As I indicated above, England has a long tradition of community focused schools reaching back until at least the 1920s. The most recent versions of this approach – the extended and full service extended schools introduced by New Labour governments – have an interesting origin. New Labour's concern with disadvantage – labeled as 'social exclusion' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001, 2004) – focused particularly on the way a wide range of disadvantaging factors came together in the poorest parts of towns and cities. It accordingly set about formulating a national neighbourhood renewal strategy to tackle these factors in a coordinated way (Social Exclusion Unit,

1998). As part of this process, it investigated the contribution that might be made by what we are here calling community focused schools, but what at the time the Government chose to call 'Schools Plus' (DfEE, 1999).

The consequence is that recent developments in England have had a rationale that is much closer to Dryfoos than to Morris. In other words, they have been based on concerns about the destructive impacts of poverty and disadvantage, and on assumptions about the capacity of community focused schools to intervene to prevent or mitigate those impacts. However, they also embody a recognition that, in disadvantaged areas at least, a focus on improving the quality of what happens within the school gates will be ineffective unless it is accompanied by interventions in what happens to children in their families and communities beyond the school gates. As one Government briefing puts it:

> Across government, we see [extended schools] as a way of ensuring that all young people get the best possible start in life, making the most of all their potential and skills, developing confidence and the motivation to learn and achieve as they move through the years of compulsory education; staying safe, healthy and active as they move into adulthood, and making a valued and valuable contribution to the communities around them….[I]n those places where social and economic needs are most acute, where there is stubborn and multiple deprivation, schools are a vital element of renewal. They are often the only truly universal service for young people in an area.
>
> (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006, p. 7)

The evaluation of these developments has often suffered from the familiar problems reported above. However, the full service extended schools initiative received a relatively well resourced and robust evaluation, combining the analysis of performance data with case studies of process, theory of change evaluation of outcomes, and cost-benefit analysis (Cummings et al., 2007a, 2006, 2005). The findings of this evaluation confirm and extend the international findings reported above. Specifically, these schools were having significant positive impacts on highly disadvantaged students and families. In some cases, these effects were quite literally life changing: young people who might have dropped out of education were retained in the school; and adults who had lost all aspiration for themselves rediscovered their ability to learn and found the confidence to gain qualifications and move from unemployment to employment. There were some indications that full service extended schools were improving more rapidly than other schools in disadvantaged areas, and that they were able to narrow the gap somewhat between the achievements of more and less disadvantaged students. There were also some indications that, in time, they would begin to have widespread effects on engagement with learning and other indicators of well being in communities as a whole and might, given the right conditions, play a part in the transformation of those communities. Finally, when the costs of interventions were calculated, they were high, but so too was the financial value of the benefits, and, since these

benefits accrued chiefly to the most disadvantaged, there was a significant element of redistribution in the initiative.

Some caveats

If we return now to the starting point for this paper – the stubborn link between social background, educational achievements and life chances in England – it would appear that community focused schools have much to offer. Rather than attempting to combat the effects of disadvantage through educational interventions alone, they provide a means whereby those effects can be tackled across a range of arenas – children's lives outside the classroom, the dynamics of their families, and the cultures and opportunity structures in the communities where they live. However, it would, I suggest, be premature to assume that the development of community focused schools offers in itself a solution to the problem of educational disadvantage. There are four important caveats to be entered in respect of the potential of such schools.

First, although community focused schools are, by definition, outward-looking and eager to form partnerships with other community agencies, their view of socio-economic disadvantage nonetheless remains essentially 'school-centred' (Cummings et al., 2007b). By this I mean that their priorities have to be on teaching and learning, and the focus of their concern with disadvantage has to be on how it impacts on educational achievement. This may make them reluctant to engage with wider social agendas, or lead them to address those agendas selectively, or to try to 'capture' the resources of community agencies in support of educationally-focused action. This in turn may make them problematic partners for other agencies and may lead to their being viewed by other professionals and by community members with some suspicion. As one community worker in a disadvantaged area once told my colleagues and me:

> Schools are like a monster, they eat up everything in their path, then spit it back out again…Schools are like a secret society. They make plans that involve others but the others are always the last to know. Others are used by schools for their own ends; they're self-interested.
>
> (Crowther et al., 2003, p. 32)

Such tendencies are, of course, particularly marked in the current English situation, where school leaders are encouraged to act autonomously, and where they are placed under intense pressure to produce improvements in their students' attainments over very short time scales. In such circumstances, it is very difficult for even the most socially-aware leaders to 'de-centre' and commit themselves to a wide-ranging, long-term and multi-agency approach to disadvantage.

Second, and related to this, the capacity of community focused schools to make a real difference to socio-economic disadvantage is severely limited. The

weapons in the hands of schools tend to be directed at the difficulties experienced by individual children and their families. They are able to offer powerful forms of individual support and encouragement, overcoming crises in children's and families' lives, and keeping vulnerable children and adults engaged with education. It is much more difficult for schools to engage with the large numbers of people who live in disadvantaged circumstances in the areas they serve, or to address issues that cannot be solved by additional personal support. So, it is hard for them to bring about changes to local cultures, for instance, or to address the infrastructural problems – in terms of access to housing, transport and employment – which local people face (Cummings et al., 2007a). It is, of course, impossible for schools to tackle the origins of disadvantage in underlying social structures and processes (Dyson & Raffo, 2007). If, as some have argued (Lipman, 2004, 2007), educational problems are ultimately driven by the forces of economic globalization, there is little that even highly committed community focused schools can do other than treat the most immediate and superficial symptoms that manifest themselves in their student populations.

Third, the inevitable school-centredness of community focused schools easily slips over into a problematic form of paternalism. It is difficult for school leaders, faced with the multiple problems presented by children and their families, and determined to intervene in those problems so that children can achieve, to avoid seeing children and adults in disadvantaged circumstances in deficit-oriented terms (Cummings et al., 2007b). It then becomes difficult for those leaders to recognize and build on the strengths of local people, to take their views of what is needed locally fully into account, or to involve them in the governance of community focused approaches. Ultimately, there is a danger that, in trying to ameliorate the problems of people in disadvantaged circumstances, community focused schools contribute to their disenfranchisement and oppression. As the American researcher, Robert Crowson argues, viewing schools simply as the provider of services to disadvantaged communities may actually constrain the potential of those communities, ignoring the broader community development agenda focused on developing the resources which communities can access and manage for themselves (Crowson, 2001).

Finally, despite all the research efforts around community focused schools, what we know about their impacts and potential is actually extremely limited. This is not simply because of the poor quality and other technical limitations of the research noted above. It is also because the best-researched initiatives tend to have been located in urban areas of concentrated disadvantage and, indeed, have been established precisely as a response to these challenging conditions. This is certainly true, for instance, of the full service extended schools initiative in England which explicitly sought out schools in the most disadvantaged places in every local authority area as locations for extended provision. The consequence is, however, that we know relatively little about how community focused approaches work in less disadvantaged areas, or what they might offer to students and communities who are not living in disadvantaged circumstances.

In particular, taking Crowson's cautions about service-provision seriously, we do not know whether targeting additional services on students and families with the greatest difficulties is actually the most effective way in the long term to meet those difficulties. As Moss et al. (1999) point out, community focused approaches targeting disadvantaged students, families and community emerge, particularly in the US and UK, out of particularly polarised social conditions, and out of particular assumptions about the wider social role of schools. Other countries think differently about schools, families and communities and counter disadvantage in other ways than by targeting additional services through community focused schools. It is not at all clear, therefore, whether community focused schools as we have described them here represent the best way forward everywhere, or simply represent the most promising way forward in situations that have already been allowed to become dysfunctional.

A way forward?

These caveats should give us pause for thought. Community focused schools have much to offer. However, they cannot by themselves solve the problem of social disadvantage or the reproduction of disadvantage in the educational arena. They are no substitute for wide ranging social and economic policies arising out of a deep political commitment to social justice. On the other hand, I wish to argue that there are ways of extending the impact of community focused schools, even in situations where the wider policy context remains ambiguous.

It is, for instance, not inevitable that the leaders of such schools will fall prey to the temptations of paternalism and school-centredness. There is no reason in principle why school leaders should not be committed to notions of social justice that go beyond raising educational achievements, nor why community focused schools should not become catalysts for the development community activism (see, for instance, (Anyon, 2005; Lipman, 2004). Indeed, some of the community focused schools my colleagues and I have researched have placed considerable emphasis on educating their students for future community leadership roles, have handed over control of many of their extended activities to community groups, and have offered support and encouragement to those groups in taking direct action to improve conditions in the areas where they live (Cummings et al., 2007a). Even in situations where there are strong incentives to think of local people in deficit terms, therefore, the implication is that paternalism is a danger but not necessarily an inevitability.

Similarly, there is no reason why the impacts of community focused schools should not be multiplied by locating their work within an overarching strategic framework for local action. In one local authority in England, for instance, a radical reform of the school system is explicitly linked to the physical and economic regeneration of what in recent years has been a highly disadvantaged town (Barnsley Metropolitan

Borough Council, 2005). Learning is seen as central to the creation of a skilled workforce able to attract employers into the area. Schools, therefore, are being reconfigured as 'learning centres' responsible for the education of both children and adults. These centres are located strategically around different areas of the town, where they work closely with teams of workers from child, family and community agencies. Head teachers join local partnerships responsible for commissioning work from these multi-agency teams and developing an area strategy. Not surprisingly, in this local authority, these developments are stimulating some radical rethinking about what the curriculum of such a centre should be, how children and adults are best taught, what 'learning centre' buildings should look like, and how the concerns of educationalists should interact with those of professionals in other agencies and of people in local communities.

This process of rethinking is, I suggest, in many ways the most significant aspect of the emergence of community focused schools. In England, as in many other countries, the structures and practices of schooling have remained substantially unchanged for generations. Perhaps more important, the role of schools as rather isolated factories of learning has been substantially unchallenged. Community focused schooling may, in some cases, do no more than marginally adjust this factory model, addressing some of the superficial manifestations of social inequity and making children and their families more manageable in the context of an essentially unreconstructed school system. However, as schools begin to work beyond their traditional boundaries, important questions are raised about what schools are for and how they relate to other social and economic interventions in the pursuit of greater social justice. Although these questions may, ultimately, be answered in rather traditional ways, the potential for something different to emerge is real. It is, I suggest, a potential that demands to be exploited.

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LEARNING FROM OTHERS, LEARNING WITH OTHERS: THE TENSE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE

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> *"Plurality means acknowledging others,*
> *and listening seriously to them"*
> *(Griffiths, 2003)*

Abstract: *After pointing out how individuals' relational dimension, and thus personal and collective differences, have been positively recognized by multicultural and intercultural during the last forty years, the author stresses that educational processes and policies are still interrogated by learners' unequal status and opportunities. She then explores the areas of research, theory and practice (such as comparative education, cooperative learning, ethnography and cultural anthropology) that recognize how the educational and socio-cultural importance of relating to, and learning from, others and with others can respond to issues of equity and social justice.*

Keywords: *other/otherness; comparative education; cooperative learning; intercultural education; ethnography.*

Introduction

Acknowledging others' diversity – be it ethnic, cultural, religious, sexual or physical – as well as their common humanity has characterized Western educational thought for at least the past forty years. Today, multiculturalism is too often used as a descriptive concept that allows social researchers and educators to refer conveniently to the increasingly complex and heterogeneous fabric of societies, but in fact it emerged and grew from the political demand of minority citizens for self determination and for recognition of the value of diversity, a demand originally representing a way of attaining social justice whose meaning, and reach, was thus extended beyond equal opportunity and access to education (Gobbo, 1977).

The awareness that others have the right to be acknowledged, and that attention must be paid to what they say, had historically and politically been anticipated by those others' self-acknowledgment of their otherness, and by the fact that they had succeeded in making their voice heard. These moves spurred lasting and heated debates in countries such as the United States (see Berube, 1994; Gobbo, 1992), but with regard to education they emphasized the specific aspects the relational dimension consists of: for one thing, who one is and will become cannot be conceptualized outside of what one is - her/his plural memberships in society. For

the other, "having a say is learned in a relationship with or against others" (Griffiths, 2003, p. 35).

As Griffiths states it, education is "to choose to work with other people" (idem, p. 96), a point that the Latin etymology of the verb "to educate" had expressed in terms of the "act of drawing out". According to a first interpretation, the educator's task is to draw or bring out what interests or potential are within the young person, and then foster his/her growth by providing him/her with opportunities to make sense, reflect and act. According to a second interpretation, the educator's task is more similar to that of the pedagogue, namely to lead the young person where knowledge is imparted or to those who can impart it[1]. Education cannot be pursued without the intervention of others: even when we speak of someone committed to educate him/herself (as in the case of Sartre's character of the self-taught man in La nausée), we must imagine a person that becomes responsible for, and supports in different ways, his/her eagerness to know, or to do, after having acknowledged his/her own desire or need as another person would.

We learn from others continuously: because as human beings we are endowed with very few innate capacities, every newborn must be involved in a very early process of education. Thanks to this, it will slowly learn all that is deemed cognitively and emotionally important for participating competently in the way of life that parents, relatives and neighbours already share and have informally been passing on to it. Later on, schooling will engage others in the task of purposely transmitting both disciplinary contents and social knowledge, while young people, in turn, will seek to find answers to their own questions by themselves and set out to explore contexts and relations that are not yet part of their everyday life and culture, or that can no longer be taken for granted - as anthropologists would specify.

Yet schooling itself can be a hard experience, because social and cultural inequalities are more often confirmed in the classroom than interpreted and confronted with solutions. On the one hand, social stratification does influence the very process of learning and the degree and quality of things learned in different ways (Goodenough, 1976; Ogbu, 1996; Wolcott, 1996) as does the experience of migration and the discontinuity between the "little traditions" learned at home and within the community (Wax & Wax, 1971) and the mainstream (and majority) culture. On the other hand, the organizational, educational and cultural principles to which schools refer to, and which they enact, have increasingly attracted researchers' close and critical attention (see for instance, Florio-Ruane, 1996; van Zanten 1996, 2003; van Zanten, 2000; Gobbo, 2000; Piasere, 2004, 2007; Saletti Salza 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008; Sidoti, 2007) for the negative effects they can have on minority pupils and students. My ethnographic research among the fairground and circus people in an area of the Veneto region, in the North East of Italy, represents a truly instructive vantage point from which to understand the subtle ways in which

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1   In both cases, the responsibility for the intentional action of educating young persons is traditionally assigned to adults, though contemporary educational thought would certainly recognize that young people can also transmit knowledge to their peers effectively and even introduce adults to their own views.

the right to education is not realized, or realized in a do-it-yourself fashion which is not available to everyone, and that certainly cannot be the means by which the right to education may be upheld (Gobbo, 2003, 2006, 2007a, 2007b).

Reflecting on the others

It seems appropriate, at this point, to consider who are the others from whom, and with whom, we learn. If again we take etymology as a starting point, we find that the word offers a suggestive, though not conclusive, indication: the *other* is one of two people, one facing another, and the two make a pair where they can also be in opposition to one another. The inherent connection between the one and the other is thus established, though there is no guarantee that this inextricable relation will be acknowledged and accepted in a positive vein, as history teaches us. The other wears, or has been made to wear, the masks of the outsider, the alien, the foreigner, the stranger, the guest, even that of the scapegoat. Nobel Prize winner Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) illustrates vividly and dramatically the unjust enforcement of *otherness* onto others.

Each of those figures is logically tied to its opposite: so the outsider reclaims the insider, the alien the native, the foreigner and the stranger the family or the familiar, the guest his or her host. Spatial distance, birth rights (especially when they are based on the *jus sanguinis*), family, community and the feelings they entail (see Benveniste, 1976) provide the various rationales for the pairing connection. What connects each pair is also what divides it. The border lines between the one and the other can be the geo-political ones that are signalled by national frontier posts and guards (thus making those who cross the borders against the rules into trespassers and illegal presences). However, such lines run also through everyday life: the natives' cultural ways are different from, or opposite to, the others' ways which are other. Imagining national identities (Anderson, 1996) has favoured the belief that the attained national borders in fact defined and protected a relatively homogeneous entity, sanctioned by history, language and culture, to which schooling has provided a crucial contribution.

In recent years, cultural anthropology itself has been indicted for having constructed cultural and ethnic identities as metaphorical islands, surrounded by outsiders, marginal people, and foreigners. We owe it to Frederick Barth (1969) if forty years ago he deconstructed (as today we are wont to say) such an image, by giving empirical evidence that the geo-political borders had to be distinguished from the symbolic ones: the latter may differentiate cultural identities just as the former do, but they can also be reinvented by being metaphorically moved and redrawn.

On the basis of my own ethnographic research, I would say that symbolic borders are a matter of mutual (and not necessarily friendly) perception that also depends on the type of, or reasons for, social contacts. Thus, the Veneto fairground and circus people whom I studied between 1999 and 2001 claimed that their occupational nomadism made them to be perceived as *others* by the sedentary residents of

towns and villages that periodically host fairs and these occupational nomads (Gobbo, 2003, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). With time, and their communication abilities, those travelling families succeed in making themselves trusted and appreciated by their periodic hosts. The latter's diffidence is generated by the unfamiliar presence represented by fairground and circus people: by definition, nomadic people can stay in a place only for a short time so that they do not fit the *order* of a sedentary society whose maintenance - as Michael Herzfeld recently reminded us (2006, p. 265) - is "both a practical and conceptual task. At the conceptual level it starts with the question 'who is to define the order?', namely 'who is to define the borders?'. It is a question of classification", so that – continues the anthropologist – "people who move 'without a fixed residence' contaminates bureaucracy", and are thus perceived as "out of place" – a perception that is often shared by them also (Gobbo, 2007b, 2008).

As I remarked, "whenever we speak of individuals or groups who are marginal or have been marginalised with respect to the rest of society, we usually imply conditions of social injustice and exclusion, if not of segregation, and a serious difficulty, if not an impossibility, for those people to make their voice heard, their stories listened to" (Gobbo, 2006, p.790)[2]. Thus, when the travelling families are contrasted with their urban *co-citizens*, their "otherness" appears the result of a complex, socially constructed and ritualized web of relations that is also subject to temporal and individual variability. With particular regard to the right to education, I have come to the conclusion that "the educational inequality their children suffer does not depend on the sociological and historical traits of a given problematic context (…) but on the disquieting exception that occupational nomadism is perceived to represent for the dominant sedentary lifestyle and for schools" (Gobbo, 2007b, p. 483; see also European Commission, 1994; Ecotec, 2008).

On the contrary, anthropologists have always considered *other* people, and *other* cultures as indispensable for an understanding of humankind. Furthermore, very early in time they recognized that "this kind of comprehension is only possible when the investigator moves, usually literally as well as metaphorically, out of his own culture into the unfamiliar one which he wishes to understand and 'learns' the new culture as he would learn a new language" (Beattie, 1964, p. x). In ethnography, "being there" is indispensable not only for the continuing construction of anthropological knowledge, but also for opening up individuals' perspectives

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2 However I also added that the view from the margins, and the knowledge and skills it entails, is quite different from that of the outsider: "while marginality means that a person, a location or an activity is not in a central position and therefore, by extension, is of little importance, influence or weight (metaphorically speaking), that person, location or activity is nevertheless logically and symbolically connected to the centre – however defined – by the fact of representing its boundary or boundary area. Thus, staying at the margins of a society, of material and symbolic production, of cultural and occupational opportunities does not prevent such "spatially mobile groups" from having recurrent, usually brief, contacts with sedentary populations (as even prehistorical and classical records indicate), and "today, as in millennia past, children look forward to the periodic visits of carnivals, puppet shows, jugglers and storytellers" (Berland & Salo, 1986)" (Gobbo, 2006, p. 790)

and prospects. When there is "only one looking glass, you never discover you are a prisoner of its refraction. The only way to recognize that is to look into a different mirror, one which deforms reality in another way. Only then can you see that you've had a point of view all along" (Bohannan, 1998, p. 7).

In this sense, disciplinary and educational goals appear as strictly interrelated: by interpreting fieldwork as an opportunity to learn – from others and with others – how one's view of things and people has been shaped by received and often unexamined beliefs and values, a major educational aim is set, and hopefully reached, namely that of questioning and overcoming a parochial vision too often at the roots of prejudices, and of racism. Fieldwork is a different way of learning from others (and with others, as I shall illustrate), and has its reason in the recognition of a positive value to otherness, diversity, difference that, albeit not synonymous terms, are today all used to refer to, and to stress, the many changes characterizing our societies, and the different approach they promote in education. Migratory flows have brought not only manpower but also *men* and *women* whose different languages, religions, beliefs and cultural traits which the native or autochthonous citizens are invited to pay attention to, valorize and respect.

"Learning from others" and intercultural education: with particular reference to Italy

In intercultural education, others' cultural, religious and linguistic differences are seen as an asset rather than a reason for exclusion, discrimination or imposed assimilation - as has happened in history too many times. Diversity is assigned an educational value and it is seen as representing a valuable educational opportunity in contemporary complex societies. Disseminated during the last 25 years through continental Europe in particular, this perspective has qualified in an important and consistent manner about twenty years of Italian educational politics and policies. In Italy, the rights of non Italian pupils were upheld by the 1998 Immigration Act that affirmed "the principle of equal treatment for foreigners in access to public services" and placed the "duty on 'regions, provinces, municipal authorities and other local authorities' to take measures aimed at eliminating obstacles" (ENAR Report, 2007). More recently, the *Curricular Indications* published last year (MPI, 2007), after having underlined that a pupil is a *unique* individual *also because of his/her cultural identity*, recommend that dialogue on, and valorization of, different religious beliefs and cultural ways be promoted in heterogeneous classrooms. These new, other, students will "open new horizons" for their Italian peers (and hopefully for their teachers as well) precisely thanks to their diversity. The latter is presented as uncharted territory to be explored and appropriated by as yet unaware Italian students whose minds and hearts will be touched by the encounter with diversity. But it is also envisaged that in learning to understand others' diversity, they will also engage in listening to, and reflecting on, their own feelings of surprise and/or concern so as to realize how important a disposition towards dialogue and

interrogation is for the construction of their own identity (*idem*).

From the beginning, in Italy as elsewhere, intercultural education has been assigned the task of promoting a sense of educational and social membership in their new environment among immigrant students (or immigrants' children), and has been defined as an effective alternative to assimilation and to the construction of bounded ethnic communities – which, however, are increasingly more numerous and visible in most multicultural societies. Towards these two ends, in Italy, for instance, heterogeneous classrooms have ideally been seen as a viable, and *equitable*, educational decision[3].

It must also be mentioned that, at least for my country, the twenty year long commitment to intercultural education subscribed to by many teachers and citizens has not been able to effectively ensure the right to education of the non Italian or foreign students (as they are alternatively defined)[4] (Comitato oltre il razzismo, 2006; Demartini, Ghioni, Ricucci, Sansoé, 2008, for an extensive case study of Turin schools). Firstly, the official regulation of enrolling foreign students in the grade corresponding to their age is not always honoured, and these students' delay in enrolment increases significantly with age and school grade and level, indicating a partial inability to meet these students' educational needs by the schools (MPI, 2008). Secondly, the risk of strengthening and disseminating stereotypical views of other cultures, and of ignoring the interesting changes within those groups, is a matter of real concern, which has been stressed by ethnographic research among Roma, Sinti, Caminanti (Piasere, 2007; Saletti Salza, 2007, 2008; Sidoti, 2007), and among occupational nomads (Gobbo, 2007a, 2007b). It must also be admitted that with time cultural, ethnic and religious diversity seems to have become perceived and treated mainly in terms of limited language proficiency[5]. In any case this prevailing current concern has played down the educational and *civic* relevance of the goal of learning – *all together* – that one's own and the other's familiar views of the social and cultural worlds they inhabit could become much wider. In other words, by setting the task of language learning in isolation from the parallel transformation of the other pole of the relation – that is, *us* – the message is conveyed that far from capitalizing on the opportunity to look into different mirrors, we can keep our gaze fixed on ourselves, and thus avoid learning anything

3   However, it is known that many Italian families choose to enrol their children in primary and lower secondary schools where the number of Roma and foreign pupils and students is low, because the presence of the latter is seen as causing teaching to slow down in order to help those whose linguistic proficiency is limited (Gobbo, 2000).

4   The fact that more and more immigrants' children master Italian language and cultural ways because they were either born in Italy or arrived there at an early age, thus attending Italian schools from the beginning, has prompted the definition of them as either "second generation" or "generation 1.75, 1.5" in relation – in this case - to the time of their arrival. On the other hand, the legal status of the so called "second generation" youth is that of foreign citizens, and though change of the citizenship law (still based on the *jus sanguinis*) is presently debated, such change is not yet in sight.

5   Teaching Italian is considered as something that will give the students a passport to social and cultural inclusion, but the way language learning is conceptualized appears rather narrow (Sansoé, 2007).

different about ourselves. As I pointed out some time ago, this recent trend could probably have already been foreseen when diversity was initially elaborated as the educational resource it can certainly be. However, if we imagine it "as a rather fixed, homogeneous (immigrants seem to have an ethnic identity not a class one!) and unchangeable quality", then even the best educational intentions run the risk "of supporting those very stereotypical attitudes and actions that interculture was meant to challenge" (Gobbo, 2004a, p. 1). Learning about the others' different beliefs, values and behaviour might be necessary though not sufficient if it does not "translate into an ability to consider the hosts' own beliefs, behaviours and habits as similarly situated in culture, ethnicity (if any) and religion. Instead, they are taken as givens, and even considered in danger of being changed, or only challenged, by the others" (*ibidem*).

For this reason, the crucial role that imagination can play in education, and, increasingly, in our multicultural societies, should be recognized, as has been indicated by philosophers (see, among others, Greene, 1978, 1995; Hanson, 1986; Appiah, 1996; Nussbaum, 1997), and as results from analysis of metaphors of social and cultural heterogeneity (Gobbo, 2009, in press).

"Learning from others" and comparative education

Before speaking more extensively about fieldwork I would like to consider the importance of "learning from others" in comparative education.

Although the reflective turn that qualifies part of the contemporary educational discourse continues to testify that crucial insights can be reached by going inwards, into a person's experiential dimension as long as it is interpreted – that is, drawn out - through a theoretical perspective, it is true that a greater part of the contemporary educational discourse chooses to outline teaching and learning paths that can answer the challenge posed by globalization. When educators look at schools, teachers and learners from the point of view of the global market, their stress is on efficient teaching of the necessary competences as well as on the awareness that learning must become a lifelong endeavour.

Globalization has spurred school reforms that owe much to the belief upon which comparative education was established as a field of scholarly research: namely, that "learning from others", comparing educational policies and systems, and borrowing, or being lent, reforms could bring improvement to a country's processes of schooling, at the organizational, pedagogical and content level. Furthermore, by upholding the comparative approach, educators and policy makers who travelled to different countries and visited different school systems explicitly recognized the limits of institutional self-sufficiency, perhaps even the dangers of ethnocentric or nationalist pride. They were instead convinced that to collect and disseminate the "lessons from elsewhere" could widen, as it does today, the cultural and socio-political horizon of a country.

From a historical-disciplinary point of view, the *others* from whom to learn were not individuals, but school systems and institutions, educational strategies and

innovations, though the so-called end products – the individuals who had been through the learning process – were evidence of a desirable way in which the goal of educational success could also be achieved at home, since it had been achieved elsewhere. What was to be transferred, or transplanted, into new educational soil was chosen on the basis of positive performance and overall results, and though comparative educators soon started to realize that local socio-political contexts and educational traditions had to be taken into account when making their comparisons, the past examples of educational borrowing or lending represented also an opportunity to understand – as Sadler had suggested more than a century ago – the relevant connections, as well as their differences, that various educational perspectives, pedagogical strategies, political and institutional decisions on education could have.

From today's vantage point, could we define those inter-educational encounters as an early form of globalization? In a recent short text, Thomas Popekwitz has in fact argued that there is more to globalization than the economic and social changes for which it is either invoked or rejected, and has thus located globalization much earlier in time that we would have expected. According to his interpretation, globalization emerges in relation to the role of knowledge in modernity: the "disenchantment" that knowledge brought with itself has contributed in a major way to constructing a world inhabited by individuals that are both *agents* and *actors*. In Popekwitz's view, the agency exercised by modern individuals has been enacted in history through what he calls "salvation themes", mainly grounded on reason and rationality, that were instrumental in freeing people from the boundaries of their communities of origin and the socio-cultural constraints that they implicate. From this angle, globalization is appropriately defined as a series of "projects of a modern mind that knows itself through particular expert systems of knowledge" (Popekwitz, 2004, p. viii), while it could be added that "border crossing" too began much earlier than we thought! But then, as a *researcher*, and not unlike my colleagues in education and/or social sciences, I have learned to use theoretical frameworks elaborated elsewhere to explore current problematic issues. In any case, Popekwitz's interpretation lets us clearly understand why the circulation of knowledge was, and is, so crucially connected to the investment in learning/schooling, whose extension and improvement can in turn question, improve and/or re-create knowledge.

Not surprisingly, in times of wide socio-political transition or change such as the contemporary one, the relevant "lessons from elsewhere" are brought home by politicians and educators aiming to ameliorate and/or change national educational systems and standards so as to meet the resistible causes of globalization, and to participate in the growing "global interconnectedness". Yet it is worth remembering how historian Tilly interprets the circulation of knowledge and goods we now call globalization, and the consequences that affect some populations but not others. He does so by stressing that "seen from the centres of influence, it looks as though the entire world is globalizing. Seen from the edges, penetration of global influence is highly selective. At least in the short and medium run, it increases

inequalities. Scientific advances, for example, are having profound effects on medicine, communications, agriculture, and manufacturing. But those effects concentrate very heavily in already rich countries" (Tilly, 2004, p. 20). To this, he then adds that "many of the same unequal connections that transferred wanted goods and services across the world also delivered commodities that few people desired. Global warming provides an obvious example. (…) So far, rich industrial countries have contributed most to global warming through exhaust from their factories, houses, buildings, and motor vehicles. But because poorer industrializing countries generally consume higher-emission fuels, the balance is changing" (*idem*, p. 21).

Comparative educators, therefore, have become less optimistic about global educational borrowing and lending, and tend to pursue their research goals by paying greater and deeper attention to how contexts with relatively or widely different social histories and cultural institutions may accommodate educational innovation from elsewhere. They also point out that seldom are the latter transferred without being first translated into, or filtered through, the local educational perspectives and traditions (Steiner- Khamsi, 2004).

Schriewer and Martines are among those who have interestingly problematized what, and how, can be learned from others: recently they challenged the assumption that the greater communication and transfer taking place among those concerned with improving schools might lead to convergence of educational patterns, contents and structures. On the contrary, through extensive research, they gave evidence that situated educational traditions and contexts are capable of enacting a subdued, but successful, "resistance" to what others have, or would like, to teach them. Furthermore, they highlighted how acceptance of educational innovations is almost always mediated by local political agendas as well as by theoretical perspectives, pedagogical experiences and personal/professional memories (Schriewer & Martines, 2004). Thus, what often results from such an inter-educational encounter is not only an interesting re-elaboration of a new educational approach, but also the problematization of some aspects of it that have been brought into relief precisely by its transfer into different contexts.

"Learning from others and with others": the case of ethnographic research, or fieldwork

I have always believed, and written, that teachers too would benefit from learning to exercise their ethnographic "sight" (Gobbo, 2000, 2004a, 2004b). It is an anthropological *mantra* that such "sight" places what is familiar to us at a distance, and does the opposite with what is foreign. Some teachers with whom I worked to test a strategy of cooperative learning spelled this out clearly, when they noticed – looking at themselves - that we try to understand others, and even ourselves, when we can no longer take the habitual ways of life for granted. It is at that point that it is crucial, and often urgent, to make sense of a situation, of its changes, and to compare the customary way of doing things with a different, or alternative one.

Ethnographic research or fieldwork has been consistently hailed as a discipline-specific approach that is also an experience or perhaps more precisely *an experiment in experiential learning*. Often it has been described as an impressive learning process implicating an indispensable closeness to others – "*vivere con*" (to live together with), as Italian anthropologist Piasere (2002) has dubbed it, or "intimate, long-term acquaintance" (Wolcott, 1995).

Usually, fieldwork is also defined as participant observation: the stress is on seeing, and on the ethnographer's visual attention. This definition is in line with the many visual metaphors used in cultural anthropology and anthropology of education in order to speak of culture: it is common to speak and write of cultural *perspective*, *mirrors* and *lenses*, of people's *point of view* and of their world *vision*, though today we steer away from any panoptic temptation we might have had in the past. However the warm, and metaphorical, invitation that anthropologists issue to their readers and students is that of educating themselves to see, and to avoid "cultural blindness" especially when research is carried out within the researcher's own social environment (Nesbitt, 2004). Anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott reminds us that fieldwork should be "an approach that keeps humans always *visibly* present, researcher as well as the researched" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 15, emphasis mine). They are visible in a way that to him requires an artist's imagination as well as that of a scientist's, because the fieldworker's task is to reveal something of the other that is already present but still covered or hidden. Thus it is not by chance that Wolcott evokes Michelangelo and his theory of sculpture through a story attributed to the artist: "when asked to describe how he carved the magnificent David, his explanation was, 'I took a block of stone and chipped away everything that was *not* David'. His famous set of statues – the anthropologist continues – the Prisoners of Stone, suggests something of the same. Once the figures were freed, Michelangelo did not return to 'complete' the works; *his* task was finished, in spite of the fact that the statues were not" (*idem*, p. 27).

For his part, Italian anthropologist Piasere notices that in doing ethnographic research it is impossible to distinguish neatly between ethnographer and subjects of research: in fieldwork, the one becomes part of the field, as the other is by definition. But in this case, the sense of sight is no longer the prevailing one: the ethnographer's *participation* or *immersion* in the field implies that all the senses are engaged. Yet, I believe that with multiculturalism and its demand that the others' voice be listened to - and seriously listened to, as Griffiths states (2003) - *hearing* comes eventually to the foreground, qualifying the others as speakers, spokespersons, or interlocutors who must not only be observed but also asked and (seriously) listened to. From being subjects (or worse, objects) of research, the others, from whom ethnographers wish to learn, become their interlocutors and collaborators in the success of the project. As has been remarked (see Galloni, 2007; Gobbo, 2007b), the others do not merely listen and answer the researcher's questions, but they themselves ask him/her questions, make observations, or keep silently to themselves (Piasere, 1997). For his part, the ethnographer recognizes that "fieldwork is characterized by personal involvement to achieve some level of

understanding that will be shared with others" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 66), and that "in the simple act of *asking*, the fieldworker makes a 180-degree shift from observer to interlocutor, intruding into the scene by imposing onto the agenda what he or she wants to know" (*idem*, p. 102).

For us educators, the idea of learning that anthropologists share appears somewhat eccentric: while it is acknowledged that the subjects of research are their *teachers*, the latter never speak *ex cathedra*, even though they are the only ones to possess the relevant information which anthropologists are eagerly looking for. The special learner-teacher relationship entailed by ethnography is rather informally enacted, and *those* teachers hardly pass on their knowledge according to any sort of curricular indications. At the same time, the ethnographer-learner *learns by asking questions* (and this is also quite different from a regular classroom teaching session) but the questions he/she asks are meant to find out what the others "know and know about, not to 'test' their knowledge. The questions we ask, the manner in which we ask them, and what we do with the information given are intended to signal our interest in and regard for what people know" (*idem*, p. 107). It is an interest that is not confined to information, though, because ethnographers find it really difficult, if not impossible, to imagine starting a study for which they have "no personal feelings, felt no interest or concern for the humans whose lives touched" theirs (*idem*, p. 166). As Nesbitt (2004, p. 150) recommends, "ethnography requires us to be reflexive, because the ethnographer affects, and is affected by, the field".

In the end, unforgettable lessons of life are learned from others: "waiting" is one of them, as "we cannot hurry the lives of those about us, but only our own" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 85) , and in any case "fieldworkers live with the excitement of continually learning and unlearning, formulating and reformulating pictures of how individuals and groups are connected and how identities evolve, including their own identities" (*idem*, p. 153), a condition that many educators and teachers would love to see shared by their students as well.

"Learning with others" and cooperative learning

What about learning with others through cooperative learning? When we talk of learning with others we add a different quality to what I have so far presented: we claim that this kind of learning is not only a collective endeavour whose responsibility is at the same time assumed by the group and by each group member, but also that it is not structured according to that "division of labour" I mentioned earlier and that the teacher-learner pair helps to visualize.

Learning with others blurs instead such distinctions as much as the process of cultural acquisition and the construction of cultural *propriospect* had blurred the boundaries between cultures (Wolcott, 1996). In this case, learning becomes a task that can be better achieved with others, yet the cooperative task is interpreted as enhancing individual agency and initiative to ask different questions and propose different solutions. The others are the partners, co-workers, co-teachers and co-learners with whom to carry out and complete a project, or plan how to solve a

problem. Going beyond individual success aims at improving classroom relations, at creating a climate that will benefit the single learner as well.

In educational thought, "learning from others and with others" is valued positively because it acknowledges learners as active persons, characterized by a disposition to assume responsibility - as individuals and as group members - for what they accomplish, on the one hand, and on the other hand as persons with different backgrounds and experiences that can bring unexpected views and contributions to school work and be seen as pupils or students "of promise" rather than "at risk". In my view, this does not so much entail *celebrating* diversity as noticing, and enhancing, what becomes relevant and meaningful in connection with time, social and personal relations, communication modes and competences. Diversity certainly cannot exist without being *acknowledged* and respected by others, but at the same time it requires the creation of an educational environment and opportunities that can effectively realize the right to education for everyone. "Learning from others and with others" can thus become a transformative experience – that is, an authentic educational experience – because it entails the acquisition of knowledge that concerns both school learning and ourselves as situated selves, as differently enculturated persons.

And yet, if I were to stop at this point, and congratulate educators for having devised a desirable educational strategy to overcome selfish behaviour and goals, or at least to tame them so as to later transform them in capacities for collaboration and respect, I could certainly be satisfied from an ideal and normative point of view, but I would become aware that a few important aspects – such as the classroom context and the web of social expectations - have remained bracketed out of the picture.

Educationally important as cooperative learning is, to practise it as if it were mostly a matter of changing the rules of the learning game would not make us, and others, able to confront diversity as an issue pertaining to the discourse of social justice[6]. This last part of my presentation is devoted to a certain way of thinking, and then of engineering, how cooperation can bring about equity, and not only a safe, friendly classroom climate. Complex Instruction, invented by the late sociologist and educator Elizabeth Cohen, is not only interesting as group work, but has also the major quality of indicating how established social expectations and habitual classroom tasks can confirm what she defines as classroom and social stratification.

Her main goal being the achievement of equitable classrooms[7], Cohen warned

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6 While the many versions of cooperative learning are presented as all aiming *to realize* more effective opportunities for everyone to learn and participate in the educational process, it seems that those different versions of cooperative learning focus more (and certainly understandably) on how to work in group or cooperatively, and less on how students' social and cultural differences (and their perceived social status) can prevent the attainment of such goal. See Batelaan P. & Van Hoof C. (1996) and Batelaan P. (1998).

7 As she wrote, "the purpose of the program is the creation of equitable classrooms. These are classrooms where all students have access to challenging curricula, where students all participate equally in cooperative learning, helping each other to grasp difficult concepts and to solve

that re-organization of classroom work would not be enough to pursue social justice. Those pupils and students who are perceived as others in a negative sense can be formally included in a group, but at the same time be successfully excluded from interaction and thus from learning. She urged teachers and educators to understand the structural and cultural reasons why diversity and exclusion go together even in situations where the opposite is purposefully aimed at. Thus her Complex Instruction is logically preceded by the sociological analysis of the social system of the classroom that is characterized by a certain kind of classroom task, by the roles of the students and teachers, and by the patterns of interaction among students and between students and teachers.

What are the forces outside and inside the classroom that create inequity among students and that we need to understand in order to create equitable classrooms? I will concisely indicate them, and then proceed to share what I learned *from* the teachers and *with* the teachers engaged in testing their own didactic unit of Complex Instruction.

According to Cohen (2003), the structural conditions that influence classroom interaction and learning are to be found in the social conditions that result from wide changes in populations' movements and diversity. They can be summarized as the following:
- growing population heterogeneity,
- growing school population heterogeneity,
- limited language of instruction proficiency,
- marked cultural differences with respect to mainstream culture.

Social stratification also takes its toll, as it produces
- cultural differences related to socio-economic differences,
- low socio-economic status,
- lower political and economic resources,
- discrimination/exploitation/exclusion,

The consequences inside the classroom and in school work are such that the divide between successful and unsuccessful pupils and students is strengthened. In fact, exclusion is very likely to take place when some students
- are expected to be unable to learn both basic and higher order concepts,
- do not have equal access to interesting learning materials,
- are not expected to be ready for tasks requiring a higher order cognitive capacity,
- cannot participate in group work in an active and significant way, and
- their ideas are not taken into consideration by their peers.

The classroom social system is furthermore characterized by language and cultural differences connected to individual differences,

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problems, and where almost all of the students are successful in academic performance". (Cohen, 2003, p. 15).

- initial learning differences,
- different cultural repertoires,
- that all contribute to the formation of
- different expectations of learning competence, and
- differences in academic status and in peer status

The latter are the consequences of different expectations of learning competence by teachers and peers because of the non-diversified character of school learning activities, since
- tasks are the same for every students,
- students cannot decide how to carry out the task,
- teacher's evaluation criteria are usually the same for every student's work,
- students cannot evaluate their own work,
- an academic hierarchy among students and a difference in academic status among peers are established.

Cohen paid close attention (and invited teachers to do the same) to how interaction among students and between students and teachers is related to learning, noticing that the higher status students are those who interact more often and thus learn more. Her conclusion addressed the *reasons* why inequality may persist in group work participation, namely i) status problems, ii) students' self-perception, iii) students' perception of other, low status students, iv) local academic and peer status problems, v) different expectations of competence, that taken all together are at the basis of self-fulfilling prophecies. The didactic strategy she invented consists of didactic units centred on multiple abilities, and expects teachers to delegate authority to pupils and to give detailed feedback to them on group work dynamics, once the tasks have been completed. As I wrote, "though Complex Instruction predates intercultural education, it has a powerful intercultural dimension since it looks at, and works with students' different cultural, linguistic and cognitive abilities as resources for a form of learning that is achieved when every student participates equally in group work, and can contribute in his/her specific way to the understanding of difficult concepts and to the solution of open-ended problems" (Gobbo, 2007c, p. 77)[8].

Up to this point, I have spoken of cooperative learning as an educational strategy enacted by highly motivated teachers – in Italy and elsewhere - who aim to make pupils and students understand that there are different ways to learn, and that some of these ways can be more just than others, when each is made responsible

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8 With regard to the this point, Pieter Batelaan' writings and projects were crucial in establishing the connection between intercultural education and cooperative learning – and Complex Instruction in particular – and to disseminate it in Europe through the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE), the conferences it promoted, and the articles in the *European Journal of Intercultural Studies* (now *Intercultural Education*). Gent Steunpunt ICO in Flemish Belgium was equally important and often worked in conjunction with Pieter Batelaan and IAIE towards the same educational and innovative aims. See Batelaan P. (1998).

not only for his or her performance but also for that of his/her classmates. This does not mean that "learning with others" is always successful or unproblematic[9]: on the contrary, I want to suggest that the above indicated educational and civic goals are met when the understanding of what a cooperative learning project requires is accompanied by teachers' social and cultural self-questioning and conjecturing. Their efforts of analysis and interpretation may eventually become a true learning experience for all.

During the meetings, when teachers prepared and discussed the didactic unit to be tested, they realized how they had also learnt to relate to their pupils and themselves as *classroom ethnographers* (see Gobbo, 2007c). In their reflective narratives, those teachers initially brought the relevance of their own civic and educational values, as well as of their own political and educational experience, to the foreground, making all of us understand that perhaps another kind of "lesson from elsewhere" had been learned while they practised Cohen's cooperative learning strategy. By comparing and discussing with each other what had happened in their classrooms, and had left them with a feeling of uneasiness, they were then able to cast a critical look at the so called "culture of the school" and the expectations and behaviour that make it visible, even though it usually remains largely hidden and implicit, at least from a strictly educational perspective.

Teaching teachers this strategy of cooperative learning had been geared to providing them with a new and hopefully effective answer to the structural changes taking place in Italian schools and society as result of immigration flows. In their view, the contemporary migratory processes had caused a new sense of social and educational responsibility as well as an eagerness for educational approaches capable of being creative and effective. That was what they all had expected from the course, and why some of them later continued to meet.

The teachers' awareness could be seen as the result of a special kind of intercultural encounter, that deserved to be explored through reflective conversations in order to understand if, and in what ways, their eagerness to learn and practice educational innovations was in a dialectical relation to their professional experience as well as to their personal value choices and goals.

For one of them, whom I will call Silvia, Cohen's strategy could not only open and problematize "teachers' [current] educational horizons", but also raise issues such as the influence social status has on children's learning, the goal of equality of educational opportunities and the problematic status and role of teachers, back to the current Italian educational scene. Silvia connected her participation in many educational innovative projects to the time when she started to teach: she had colleagues who had been involved in the educational and political "battle" to introduce longer hours of schooling so as to provide children from disadvantaged Italian families with educational direction and support in doing their homework. Her political involvement dated from those years, and she stressed that the seventies and the first years of the new century had many things in common. If

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9   For example, a detailed report of what worked and what worked less well can be found in Batelaan P. (1998) with regard to the Comenius Project CLIP that involved nine European countries.

earlier progressive educational innovations addressed the needs of Italian families, by providing them with *tempo pieno* (full-time schooling), now the changes have to be answered in new, educationally effective, ways. Her appreciation for the course on Cohen's cooperative learning approach was for an additional, distinct reason, namely the possibility of reaffirming her values, hopes and goals for an education concerned with the common good.

Two others (with the fictional names of Valeria and Elena) also remembered the seventies and the drive in favour of educational changes carried out by the teachers that had characterized those years. Back then, group work had been introduced in classrooms, and teachers' authority had been questioned through so called active pedagogies that entailed teaching pupils and students how to do research in their familiar environment, write reports on the data collected, and even prepare their own textbooks together with the teacher. The fourth teacher acknowledged that to her the Complex Instruction's focus on social justice and equality of education was ideally connected to the students' and country's unrest of 1968. She was still in high school, at the time, but it seemed that those conflict-ridden years had left in her the determination to find, and put into practice, "principles and tools to create a friendlier and more tolerant climate among pupils".

With their sharp and articulate reflections on themselves as persons and as professionals, on their educational ways and the school environment, this small group of teachers provided a special educational contribution, besides producing their own Complex Instruction unit and testing it in their own classrooms of Bologna city and province. Practicing Complex Instruction in classrooms with children between 6 and 10 years of age made them realize that, perhaps not surprisingly, they had taken for granted the way things are usually done in school, or, better, that had looked at those ways from an exclusively educational point of view – what they aimed at, rather than *how* they aimed at it. However, once they started to organize cooperative class work around the units they themselves had created, this didactic turn helped them to see that their sincere enthusiasm for implementing innovation had initially obscured important aspects that deserved examination. For instance, there was the "culture(s) of the school" – the way their work is characterized by a specific, but largely common, way of teaching and organizing learning activities that also influenced their interaction with pupils and the latter's expectations. One of these teachers, for instance, had realized that it was really hard for her to let pupils succeed, or fail, by themselves, while they were working on the cooperative learning units. Increasingly uneasy, and aware that hovering over the pupils working in groups had been advised against by Elizabeth Cohen, that teacher had eventually interpreted her anxious behaviour through her habit of mediating learning and answering pupils' many questions and requests for help.

The same teacher also looked for further explanations, hypothesizing that institutional pressure not to waste school-work time, and to use it in the most efficient way, was somewhat responsible for her "inappropriate" behaviour. She remarked that to explain to pupils how to go about carrying out a task or

solving a problem, saved her some time. Thus having seldom asked them to read the instructions by themselves, she could now understand why her pupils were troubled by the new requirement.

I have summarized those teachers' narratives not to argue that learning and practising cooperative learning is a walk down "nostalgia lane", but rather to point out what educational comparativists have alerted us to, namely that any innovation is mediated, or filtered, through local theoretical perspectives and pedagogies. In this particular case, testing the units of Complex Instruction in their classrooms also gave those teachers the occasion to re-affirm, update and even re-invent educational goals that they had strongly supported, and still support and identify with.

Conclusions

As an educator and an anthropologist of education I am well aware that the historical turn of multiculturalism, about forty years ago, resulted in research and theorization specifically conducted on processes of *acquisition* of knowledge – that is learning - as they were allowed to focus on and to interpret cultural diversity, also and particularly *within* social groups, differently from the focus on cultural transmission. The cultural "propriospect" theorized by Goodenough (1976) and Wolcott (1996) aimed precisely at pointing out how different social, historical and political circumstances influence learning, so that what we learn is always mediated by what we already learned (in the family, in the group, in the environment), or have had a chance to learn independently.

Of course, those processes of cultural and educational exploration and acquisition do not always result in a positive educational experience: from others we might learn prejudices or ways to exclude peers from sharing tasks and knowledge. As for working in groups – and thus not only learning from others but also with others – this does not always guarantee inclusion and cooperation, as I have just indicated in the previous paragraph. The celebration of diversity (that, among other things, aims at maintaining or raising pupils' self-esteem) too often ignores the *social, political and economic reasons* why diversity has come to stay – especially if it concerns immigrants' and minorities' diversity. For these reasons I believe that Elizabeth Cohen's warning should still be heeded: when teachers (as well as innovative educators) fail to recognize that they perceive negatively the connection between diversity and low social status (due to social or ethnic stratification), they also fail to acknowledge how the resulting low expectations will significantly limit their interaction with the low status pupils, as well as the interaction between the latter and high status students. The consequence will be that the goal of constructing equitable classrooms through learning from each other in groups will be severely limited if at all attained.

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USING PISA TO EXAMINE EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

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Abstract: *Educational equity can be measured by the degree to which student academic outcomes are patterned by group differences. In more equitable national education systems, the influence of gender, ethnicity, race, immigrant status or social class on students' academic outcomes is slight. Comparative research can illuminate how educational policies, structures and practices either mediate or exacerbate group differences in student academic outcomes. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an especially useful cross-national dataset for measuring equity and developing theory about the influence of policy and practice on educational inequality. This paper examines the features of PISA that are useful for analysing educational inequality. It then reviews how PISA has been used to analyse educational equity, and synthesizes the findings from these various studies into a larger theoretical framework. The paper concludes by discussing how PISA could be further used in future lines of research.*

Key words: *Educational inequality, PISA, cross-national analysis, student achievement*

Introduction

Since 2000, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has been administering an international test of student achievement, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is administered every three years, so we now have three datasets from 2000, 2003 and 2006. All OECD member countries, as well as some non-member countries, have been participating in PISA.

PISA assesses 15-year old students' literacy in four domains: mathematics, science, reading and problem-solving. PISA is not designed to test students' mastery of any given curriculum. Rather, it tests students' ability to apply knowledge in scenarios common throughout all industrialized societies. It thus tests students' general literacy and numeracy in a broad sense. Moreover, PISA is designed to be relevant to all member countries. Each country participating in PISA has the opportunity to select test items that are not appropriate to its particular socio-cultural context. These questions are then struck from the test, thus ensuring that all questions are culturally relevant to participating countries.

The aim of PISA is to provide data and evidence for countries seeking to improve student learning. It is thus intended to provide policy makers and researchers with

tools for determining best practice. It also serves as a mechanism for benchmarking an educational system with other national systems, as well as tracking changes within individual systems over time. While not directly encouraging the wholesale adoption of foreign practices, PISA is designed to provide an evidence base upon which countries can view policies and practices that may be useful or that could be adapted for their unique national context. This is the applied aspect of PISA.

While PISA is often used as a cross-national league table of educational systems, it can also serve the needs of basic research. It has great potential for developing theory and knowledge about the ways in which different structures, policies and practices lead to different educational outcomes. Rather than providing a "recipe" for best practice, this use of PISA develops understanding of the conditions that lead to student learning, as well as the boundaries and parameters that constrain it.

While PISA assesses academic outcomes, it also contains a rich amount of student and school background information. Students complete an in-depth questionnaire about their family background, attitudes toward their school and teachers, school experiences, and educational expectations. Principals of participating schools also complete a questionnaire about their school and teaching staff. While these features of PISA will be discussed in more detail later in the paper, they are mentioned here to illustrate the potential of PISA for providing information about a large range of issues that may foster or hinder student learning, and that may be associated with educational inequality.

This article provides an overview of the ways in which PISA can be used to examine educational inequality and equity. It discusses how researchers have used PISA to extend our understanding of educational inequality. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of further ways that PISA can be used to contribute to the research literature on educational inequality. Due to space constraints, the paper discusses primarily cross-national rather than single country case-studies of PISA. Where relevant, studies that have examined other sources of data have also been included to provide context and further support for the discussion of PISA's contribution to theory about educational inequality.

Features of PISA relevant for examining educational equity

The first feature of PISA that is relevant for examining educational equity is its rich measure of student socio-economic status (SES). SES in PISA is called educational, social and cultural status (ESCS). It is an index of three measures: highest parental educational status, highest parental occupational status, and economic and cultural resources available to the family. The economic and cultural resources measure is itself an index of a large number of questions about objects and behaviour, including: the number of computers, books and original artworks in the home, number of bedrooms, and possessions such as a dishwasher or piano, as well as frequency of visits to libraries, museums and art galleries. It thus provides a very detailed and comprehensive measure of the cultural and economic capital available to a given student. These three dimensions are then computed into a

single ESCS score. PISA's index of socio-economic status is much more refined and comprehensive than datasets that divide students into binary SES categories (e.g., receiving government assistance or not), or that only include one dimension of socio-economic status (e.g., father's occupation).

In addition to SES, PISA asks students about other personal characteristics that may be relevant to researchers examining group-based educational inequality, including gender, linguistic background and immigrant status. Students are asked whether the language they speak at home is the same as the language spoken at their school, where they were born (i.e., whether they are not native born or if not, where overseas), as well as where their parents were born. Individual countries are also able to ask native-born students about their ethnic status if deemed appropriate. Depending on the country, this could mean asking students if they identity themselves as indigenous, Roma, North African, etc. In this way policymakers and researchers can evaluate whether particular groups are especially prone to educational disadvantage.

Based on these student characteristics, researchers can compute measures of the social composition of participating schools. For example, researchers can average the ESCS scores of the participating students in a given school to determine the socio-economic composition of the school (i.e., middle class, working class, etc.). Other measures of school composition include gender (single-sex or co-educational), ethnicity (percentage of students from particular ethnic backgrounds), immigrant status (percentage of students born overseas), or linguistic background (percentage of students who are native speakers). Of course, a measure of school composition is a proxy for the school, since only a sample of the students at any given school participates in PISA. Researchers must therefore treat calculations of school composition with caution. Nonetheless, the ability to calculate a proxy measure for school composition is an immense advantage of PISA. Some other datasets use rough measures for estimating school socio-economic composition, such as the postal code of the surrounding community. Such a measure is easy to calculate but is obviously not always accurate, as a particular school may enrol more students from certain socio-economic or cultural backgrounds than others.

In addition to questions about their family background, students are asked specific questions about their attitudes toward their teachers, school, and education in general. For example, students are queried about their relationships with teachers, sense of belonging to their school, time that teachers spend on classroom management, relevance of their schooling experiences, and post-secondary educational expectations. They are also asked if they are attending the closest neighbourhood school or not. These questions can provide researchers with important information for examining the relationship between student and school characteristics.

Principals are also asked to complete a questionnaire about their school's sector or type, resources, policies and climate. A subset of questions pertains to the teaching staff, including the school's ability to attract and retain teachers, teacher morale, and teacher qualifications. School policies include the school's admission

criteria and selectivity. Both the student and principal questionnaires provide useful information about school funding and sector. These variables can provide useful information to researchers analysing the relationship between equality of student outcomes with school funding, school resources, school sector, school structure (comprehensive or differentiated), parental school choice or school selectivity.

While PISA offers rich information about schools and students, it is not without disadvantages in terms of studying educational inequality. The first disadvantage is that PISA does not measure students' prior ability. It is therefore difficult to make causal claims about the relationship between student and school variables and student outcomes. For example, researchers may find that schools that enrol large numbers of students from high socio-economic backgrounds also have high levels of academic achievement, but it could be the prior ability of the students, not their socio-economic status, that is influencing the outcomes.

Another disadvantage of PISA is its cross-sectional, not longitudinal, design. As PISA by definition assesses 15 year-old students, each PISA cycle measures a different and unique group of students. Since we cannot trace how a particular student's academic achievement changes over time, we cannot make causal claims about the impact of particular school structures or policies on student outcomes.

What has PISA shown us about educational inequality?

Many researchers and policymakers have argued for decades that comprehensive systems of secondary education are more equitable than differentiated ones. Data from PISA has not only confirmed that comprehensive systems are generally equitable, but also shown that they can promote overall higher levels of learning, thus countering the claim that comprehensive systems promote equity at the expense of quality (OECD, 2004a, 2005). Rather than reducing the proportion of students performing at the highest level of proficiency, many comprehensive systems are able to increase the proportion. Most of the top performing countries on PISA have comprehensive systems of secondary education, including Finland, Korea and Canada. On the other hand some comprehensive systems, such as the US, do not perform above the average. Thus it is likely but certainly not guaranteed that comprehensive systems are more equitable than differentiated systems.

Related to this is the finding that the ability of secondary schools to select students often exacerbates educational inequality. School selectivity reproduces social inequality because higher SES students are more likely to receive the type of academic education that contributes to higher performance on PISA (OECD, 2004a, 2005). Indeed, the association between individual SES and performance on PISA is strongest in the central European countries, which have a long tradition of selective and differentiated secondary education, compared to other OECD countries (OECD, 2004a). An OECD secondary analysis of PISA has shown that school structure/selectivity is the largest influence on student achievement, followed in descending rank of influence by student socio-economic status, school socio-economic composition, then school resources and climate (OECD, 2005). In

comprehensive systems, most schools do not select their students, although plenty of exceptions exist. By contrast, many schools, especially those offering general academic education, select students based on entrance examinations and other assessments of student ability in differentiated systems.

Findings from PISA suggest that a range of educational policies can reduce group-based educational inequality. The first and perhaps most important policy is to reduce selectivity within the educational system (OECD, 2005). Obviously for differentiated systems this would entail a radical change, as this type of structure is based on the notion that schools select their students. Many countries with comprehensive systems also have selective schools, however. Researchers have found that some nominally comprehensive secondary schools in the UK are more likely to select some students over others (West & Hind, 2006). In their secondary analysis of PISA, Jenkins et al (Jenkins, Micklewright, & Schnepf, 2006) found that 28 percent of English secondary students attend a school that selects students based on academic ability or the recommendations of feeder schools. And finally, it should be recognized that comprehensive schools can also "select" students by charging high fees. The point is that selection can occur in both differentiated and comprehensive systems, and through a variety of mechanisms. From a policy standpoint, however, selectivity that is structurally and institutionally embedded in the system – via differentiated secondary schools, for example – plays a very significant role in reproducing educational and social inequality.

Curricular differentiation between institutions (as in differentiated secondary education systems) or within institutions (tracking or streaming) mediates the relationship between student SES and academic achievement in many countries. Using data from PISA, Marks and associates (Marks, Cresswell, & Ainley, 2006) have shown that curriculum differentiation due to school type or within school tracking explains 60 percent of the association of student SES with academic achievement. This is another reason why differentiated systems in particular show stronger associations between student SES and student outcomes and are therefore less equitable. In differentiated systems, the curriculum varies greatly by school type. An exception here is the Netherlands, which has a core curriculum for the first three years of lower secondary education (OECD, 2004b); notably, the Netherlands is an exceptional case of a high-performing, fairly equitable differentiated secondary system.

Even in comprehensive systems, however, curriculum can vary by school. Edwards (2006) has shown that curriculum differentiation is occurring in Australia between public and private schools, and between high SES and low SES schools. Using TIMSS data, Lamb & Fullarton (2002) show that curricular differentiation due to tracking within schools explains up to one-third of variation in student achievement in the US and Australia. Curricular differentiation has also been documented in New Zealand (Thrupp, 1999) and the US (Jaafar, 2006; Oakes, 2000; Tate, 1997). A centralized curriculum valid for all schools, as is common in many comprehensive systems, could reduce educational inequality (Wößmann, 2000), although it would not necessarily reduce curricular differentiation within schools.

Moreover, experience from Australia would suggest that a centralized curriculum framework valid for all schools within a given state does not remove the possibility of substantial between-school differences in curriculum orientation.

Student intake is also strongly associated with student achievement. When the SES of the students within a school is measured at an aggregate level, we can call this "mean school SES." All things held equal, a given student will tend to perform at a higher level if placed in a higher mean school SES than in a lower one (OECD, 2004a, 2005). Indeed, PISA has shown that in most countries, mean school SES is more strongly associated with student achievement than is individual SES (OECD, 2004a). This finding confirms earlier studies that have found that the association between academic achievement and mean school SES is similar as with individual SES (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Sirin, 2005).

While the OECD reports show that the achievement of all students is strongly associated with the mean SES of their school, they have not explicitly showed that the association is equal for all students. In other words, the findings discussed in the reports do not rule out the possibility that the association between mean school SES and academic achievement is stronger for lower SES students than for their higher SES peers. To examine this possibility, we (Perry & McConney, 2008) conducted a secondary analysis of the Australian PISA 2003 dataset. We found that the association between mean school SES and student achievement is similar for all students, regardless of their individual SES. In other words, the association between mean school SES and academic achievement is just as strong for high SES students as it is for their lower SES peers.

The OECD's findings about mean school SES suggest that increases in mean school SES are associated with consistent increases in student achievement. The reports have not examined the possibility that the relationship between mean school SES and academic achievement might show a curves or bumps, or even flatter portions. A review of the literature about school composition has likewise not revealed any studies that have explicitly examined whether the strength of the relationship changes as mean school SES increases. We therefore decided to examine this question as well, again using the Australian data from PISA 2003 (Perry & McConney, 2008). We found that increases in mean school SES are associated with consistent increases in academic achievement. The relationship between mean school SES and academic achievement in Australia does not weaken as the mean school SES increases; rather, we found that the association becomes stronger as mean school SES increases. In simplified terms, moving from a low SES school to a middle SES school is associated with smaller gains than moving from a middle SES school to a high SES school, although the pattern generally shows a positive and largely linear relationship.

Schools that enrol large numbers of students from middle or upper SES backgrounds tend to have higher academic performance than have socio-economic composition of a school for a variety of reasons. Overall, schools with a higher mean SES tend to have more favourable educational conditions than schools with a lower mean SES (OECD, 2005). These more favourable educational conditions

derive from both student- and school-level factors. Due to their social and cultural capital, higher SES students are more likely to succeed in school than their lower SES peers. When large numbers of such "capital rich" students are concentrated in a classroom or school, a culture of achievement often develops and further supports the students in their academic endeavours (OECD, 2004a).

Higher SES schools are also more likely to be better resourced than lower SES schools. For example, researchers in the US have found that lower mean SES schools typically differ substantially than higher mean SES schools. Compared to higher SES schools, teachers in lower SES schools have lower expectations of their students, assign them less homework, are more likely to be teaching out-of-field, and are less qualified (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Orfield, 1996; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Tate, 1997). Lower SES schools often have fewer material resources than higher SES schools, at least in the US (Tate, 1997). The OECD has argued that school-level factors, including resources, learning environment, climate and policies, play a relatively small role in explaining variations among student achievement (OECD, 2005). Yet, other OECD reports of PISA note that these factors might be obscured since they are highly correlated with the socio-economic composition of schools (OECD, 2004a). In other words, it is likely that student and school SES variables subsume differences between schools that may be reflected in school climate, policies and resources. Chiu and Khoo's (2005) secondary analysis of PISA would confirm the argument that differential levels of resources available to schools is associated with educational inequality.

As school socio-economic composition is strongly associated with student outcomes, many researchers are concerned about the potential of school choice to increase school segregation by SES, and therefore exacerbate educational inequality. Yet researchers have used PISA to show that parental choice of school can actually reduce school segregation by SES, not exacerbate it (Gorard & Smith, 2004; Jenkins, Micklewright, & Schnepf, 2006). These researchers have shown that institutional differentiation and diversification, not parental school choice, are strongly associated with inequitable student outcomes. School choice, by contrast, can apparently counteract the effects of residential segregation.

In summary, results from PISA suggest that educational inequality can best be tackled by making schools more similar to each other in terms of curriculum, resources, and students. Specific measures include reducing curricular differentiation between and within schools, reducing institutional diversification, reducing the ability of schools to select students, promoting inclusive (non-segregated) schooling, and providing an equitable distribution of resources. Promoting parental school choice within a comprehensive, undiversified system may actually lessen educational inequality by reducing school segregation by SES.

Conclusion: How else can we use PISA?

Blossfeld and Shavitz's (1993) classic comparative study showed that education policies alone are not that effective in reducing educational inequality in access to

higher education. Rather, they argued that public policies that reduced poverty and promoted social mobility were perhaps even more effective than educational policies, such as lowering entrance requirements to universities or providing scholarships to low-income students, in improving access to higher education for lower SES students. While a more recent study has argued that this conclusion may no longer be true (Marks & McMillan, 2003), the general insight is still valid. That is, are social policies that increase the economic, social and cultural capital available to lower SES students also responsible for ameliorating educational inequality?

One way to answer this question could be to analyse how working class students vary across countries. We know that the performance of higher SES students is relatively consistent across countries, but the performance of lower SES students varies significantly (Lokan, Greenwood, & Cresswell, 2001). Similarly, we know that immigrants from some cultural backgrounds are more likely to experience educational success than other immigrants, and that this success is likely due to their cultural heritage and social capital than to educational policies or practices *per se* (OECD, 2004a). These findings lead to the question whether some countries are better able to serve their lower SES students because these students are more similar to their higher SES peers? In other words, are class differences less extreme in some countries than in others, and is this associated with different levels of performance? Future studies could use PISA to compare working class students across countries. Specific student-level variables in the PISA dataset that could be useful include questions relating to cultural capital (e.g., cultural possessions and participation) and social capital (e.g., attitudes toward schooling and post-secondary educational aspirations). Examining these student-level variables could shed light on the role of educational and general social policies in reducing educational inequality.

Similarly, future research could examine differences between schools. Do schools with large numbers of lower SES students look different than middle class or higher schools, and does this vary across countries? Are there differences between teacher morale, discipline climate, teacher-student relationships, teacher recruitment and retention, and material resources? As noted earlier, much of the research about school differences due to socio-economic school composition comes from the US, a country that is characterized by wide disparities in the funding and resources available to schools. We know much less about how school-level variables might vary in countries with more equitable school funding and resourcing. A comparative analysis of the ways in which schools differ from each other, across a range of national contexts, could develop theory about the mechanisms that mediate the relationship between mean school SES and student achievement.

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THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL EXPERIENCES ON STUDENTS' SENSE OF JUSTICE: AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF STUDENT VOICE[1]

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Abstract: *This paper is based on a survey of 13,000 grade 9 students in five European countries. Using logistic regression analysis, it attempts to relate their aspirations, sense of justice, and trust in others, to their family backgrounds and experiences of schooling. Robust models emerge for the indicators of each of these three outcomes. Once individual student background is accounted for, parental involvement in education is no longer a relevant predictor. Students' reported treatment at the hands of other students and teachers at school, and the mix of student intake to their school, are the key predictors of adopting values such as tolerance of others. Schools with mixed intakes in terms of parental occupation, education, and country of origin have more aspirant and tolerant students, once the individual student background is factored in. This has implications for policy-makers. Schools in which students are treated with respect by teachers and other students have more trusting and generous students. This has implications for practitioners and practitioner bodies.*

Key words: *Equity, student voice, comparative education, logistic regression*

Introduction

A key objective of education development is to increase participation and achievement among school students, especially those facing disadvantage in terms of language, poverty, ability and special needs. Another is to enhance their enjoyment of learning and their preparation for citizenship. Much education research concerns achievement and participation. But less effort has been put into considering how to promote enjoyment and 'good' citizenship, and how to recognise success or failure in this (EGREES, 2005). We add to knowledge in this area by looking at the impact of schools and student experience on how students might develop the civic 'values' of fairness, aspiration, and trust. We present the results of a new European survey of 13,000 15-year-olds, using an instrument assessing their experiences of justice at school, home and in wider society, their backgrounds, and their hopes for the future. Having introduced the topic and methods, the paper covers some of the findings before considering the possible implications of the

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findings for school policies, and the behaviour of teachers.

This project looks at schools as organised societies and the part they play in creating among students a sense of justice and what is to be valued. For many students, their experience of school is fundamental to their conception of wider society, their place as citizens, and their sense of justice (Gorard, 2007a). One particular concern was to represent the views and experiences of potentially disadvantaged students, including those with learning difficulties, or behavioural problems, those apparently less suited to an academic 'trajectory', plus recent immigrants, those learning through a second language, or who are from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. We know from previous studies (our own and the wider literature) that these indicators of potential disadvantage are strongly linked to individual student attainment (Gorard & Smith, 2004a). But more generally it seems 'information about the position of the most disadvantaged groups in education is extremely scarce and fragmented. Genuine comparative research in this respect at the EU level is currently impossible because the basic information is not available' (Nicaise, 2000, p. 314). More research is needed on the effectiveness of school reforms in tackling educational and social exclusion. We considered it essential for the benefit of policy-makers and practitioners that we ask students and listen to their own accounts of school and wider experiences. Students have clear and coherent opinions, are willing to express them given a chance, and appear to be responsible commentators on a process of education that they are intimately involved in (Smith & Gorard, 2006).

Methods

Our project ongoing has moved from a re-analysis of existing data sources at EU level (Gorard & Smith, 2004b), through two large-scale pilot studies in five countries (EGREES, 2005), to the complex survey of (grade 9 students in 403 schools described in this paper. In the survey, there were around 80 schools each from Belgium, Czech Republic, England, France, and Italy. This yielded 12,575 complete cases, with a few missing or undefined responses allocated to the null category for each variable. The random sample of students was drawn from official lists of the schools in each country, via teaching units (classes). This was supplemented by a boosted sample of face-to-face structured interviews with students educated otherwise – in hospitals, offenders' institution, and special schools. The grade-9 students were intended to be around 14-years old at the time but, because of the grade repetition prevalent in some countries, the ages varied. This variation provided useful data for examining the possible impact of repetition on student views. The achieved sample was excellent, and representative of those students in each country facing potential disadvantage.

We collated existing official data about the intake, location, internal structure, governance and performance of these 403 schools where available. We supplemented these with a classroom-level questionnaire for the teaching staff,

and with free-standing comments, observations and field notes taken during administration of the student survey. We use these various contextual sources as illustrations and potential explanations of the findings from the students. The student survey was piloted with 2,000 students in 100 classes in the same five countries – French-speaking Belgium, Czech Republic, England, France and Italy. This both assisted the main study and yielded useful data of its own (Gorard et al., 2007).

Part of our student questionnaire was built around questions intended to elicit responses about respondents' own principles of justice (Gorard & Sundaram, 2008). We proposed that students would quite properly use different criteria (such as demand for autonomy, equal treatment, or equal opportunities) in different domains (EGREES, 2008, report to DG Education and Culture, available from the authors). We offered vignettes to students for them to consider how to act in a variety of situations, revealing the criteria of justice they might employ on each occasion. For example, we asked them to imagine a situation where a named student, with a plausible ethnic minority name, has trouble with reading. We offered students a range of options such it was fair that the named student got the same teacher attention as everyone, that the named student was offered more attention to help catch up even if this meant less attention for all others, or that the student should seek help outside school. The analysis below compares the students who were happy with the named student getting extra help with all other students. In addition, the student questionnaire asked about their family background (and key measures of disadvantage), their views on an ideal education, and their opinions on wider social issues such as crime, immigration and government. We examined their experiences and the potential impact of their experiences on well-being, work, relations at school, involvement in tasks, and results, plus perseverance in school, ethical and civic judgements, trust in institutions, and unfairness in general. The groupings selected to represent potential disadvantage include:

> Those outside mainstream schooling
> Differentiation by sex
> Achieving low marks, low aspirations for future career, 'failed' at school or retained for one or more grade
> Speaking a language other than that of the test country, moved to that country since birth, or parents had moved to that country
> Parents had no job or a 'low' status occupation
> Parents had not been to university (as a relatively comparable indicator of education across the five countries).

The data have been analysed in terms of frequencies and cross-referenced. We have described differences in outcomes and experiences between socio-economic and ethnic groups, countries and school types (EGREES, 2008). These initial results were presented to an international audience of teachers, school leaders and teacher trainers for discussion and feedback both on the presentation of results

and on further analyses to be conducted. The comments and concerns of these practitioners have been integrated into our analysis as far as possible.

We have also modelled the plausible social and educational determinants of the different perceptions of justice among different types of students. In the models, variables were classified in terms of background (e.g. student sex), predictors (e.g. experience of justice), and potential outcome variables (e.g. sense of justice). This enables 'prediction' of the outcome variables using both background and experience variables to assess the influence of family and school on students' developing sense of justice. The three models presented in this paper are derived from logistic regression analysis with binary 'dependent' variables – professional aspiration, trust, and help for the disadvantaged. In each case, around 50% of students were in each category (wanted a professional occupation or not, were willing to trust most people or not, were willing for a student with difficulties to receive extra help at their expense or not). And in each case the regression analysis used the other 'independent' variables to predict which category a student would have chosen, so increasing the accuracy from around 50% to around 70% (so explaining 40% of the residual variation). The independent variables were entered in six blocks representing student background (such as parental occupation), aggregated (i.e. school-level) background, parental support (such as whether parents talked to children about schooling), aggregated parental support, experience of justice at school (such as whether students were bullied), and aggregated experience of justice. The stages represent a rough biographical order, and so protect the analysis from the invalid influence of later proxies (such as success at school replacing parental education). This is the method introduced by Gorard et al. (1998), developed by Gorard & Selwyn (2005), and now adopted by others (e.g. Antikainen & Huusko, 2008).

The 'aggregated' variables are the percentage of students in each school sample reporting the first response in each classification, or agreeing with the statement in the questionnaire. All other variables are categorical, and results are reported using indicator coding with the last category as the referent. Variables were selected within each stage by means of backward stepwise elimination (likelihood). Those eliminated were deemed irrelevant as they did not affect the quality of the result once other variables had been taken into account. As with all such models, these do not represent any kind of definitive test but are a way of filtering the results to see potential patterns.

In two countries (France and England) a very high proportion of students have no reported job aspiration (a defect of the machine-reading and coding of forms), and this proportion might distort the results (making country appear a good predictor). Therefore, country of student is omitted as a predictor from the analysis of aspiration (rather than omitting this large number of cases). Some variables were specific to each country and these are also omitted. The estimate of the school-level data is derived from the sample here, because the school-level data collected from each school is too varied in quality. There is no universal objective indicator of

student attainment. Here we use student self-report of attainment, and this does lead to some problems of interpretation (see below).

Given the inevitable imprecision of the measurements involved in this international postal survey, it would be unwise to focus on any small increases in correctly predicting aspiration or on variables having only a minor impact on the results. Because the original sample required some replacement of cases due to non-response, it is no longer considered a random representation of each country and so the issue of significance (p-values) is no longer relevant. The findings below are described in relation to the very large sample itself.

The paper describes three modelled outcomes in turn – occupational aspiration, a criterion of justice, and willingness to trust others.

Predicting professional aspiration

Professional aspiration was used as the dependent variable in a binary logistic regression. In total, 48% of students reported wanting a professional occupation after leaving education, and the remaining 52% did not. Any prediction of an individual student aspiration to a professional occupation would be 52% correct simply by assuming that no on wished to be a professional. The success of the model depends on its ability to improve on this baseline figure. The percentage predicted correctly in terms of logistic regression for each stage of the model is in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of students correctly allocated to professional aspiration or not, by batch of variables

Batch	Percentage predicted correctly	Percentage of remaining variation explained
base figure	52	-
student background	64	25
aggregated background	69	10
parental support	69	0
aggregated parental support	69	0
experience of justice at school	71	4
aggregated experience of justice	71	0

As can be seen, the model is reasonably successful in predicting aspiration over and above the baseline figure, especially given the likely variation in occupational structure between countries which cannot be picked up here because of the huge difference in response rates between countries (see above). A further 19% (over and above 52%) is explained in total. Of this increase, almost all is accounted for by student background characteristics, and school-level figures for student background (the school mix). A small amount of the remaining variation is accounted for by

students reported experience of justice at school.

Of the student background factors, once other characteristics are taken into account, whether the student was born in the country of the survey or not, and whether their parents were born in the survey country, are not relevant to aspiration. This suggests fairness of a kind, in that those students born outside the country of the survey or with one or more parents born elsewhere have the same level of professional aspiration as 'indigenous' students.

The most important predictor of aspiration is (self-reported) level of attainment at school – used as an indicator of academic talent. Students reporting high attainment are 2.39 times as likely as those reporting low attainment to want a professional occupation, *ceteris paribus*. Similarly, students reporting average attainment are 1.57 times as likely as low attainers to want a professional occupation. So, one interpretation is that low attaining students have lower occupational aspirations. Where we have been able to verify these self-reports with Key Stage results (for the England sample), they are reasonably accurate. However, it is also possible that both of these subjective variables are simply picking up the same level of confidence in self-reports.

If attainment is put aside for this reason, the most important influence on aspiration is, unsurprisingly, the occupation of parents. For example, 59% of students with professional fathers also want a professional career, compared to 45% for children of skilled worker fathers, and 41% for children of those in unskilled or no employment.

Students with professional mothers are 1.38, and professional fathers 1.58, times as likely to report professional aspirations. Those with semi-professional mothers are 1.27 times and semi-professional fathers 1.05. It is unclear from this survey whether this is a kind of direct reproduction or whether there are latent forms of capital in professional families that lead to higher aspiration among children. Lesser influences are sex (females 1.09 times as likely as males), first language (those speaking home language 1.10 times), and father attending university (1.14). Mother attending university is not relevant for this generation.

When the student background variables are aggregated to the school level, as an estimate of the school mix effect of clustering similar students in schools and classes, they can further improve the predictions of aspirations. One interpretation of this is that there is a school mix effect on student aspiration. So, for example, as well as the student's father's occupation being a good predictor (see above), the percentage of professional fathers in each school is also a good predictor. In fact, the odds of aspiring to a professional occupation increase 1.02 times for each percentage of the school intake with professional fathers. This is a very large increase in addition to the impact of the student's own father. The mother's occupation is slightly less important than father's for the school mix (1.01), but where they were born is somewhat more important. The odds of aspiring to a professional occupation increase 1.03 times for each percentage of the school intake with mothers born in the survey country. Or put another way, while the country of origin of each student is not apparently relevant to their aspirations, having schools with

high concentrations of students with mothers from another country reduces aspirations. Where the student and the father were born does not seem to matter so much once the origin of the mother is taken into account. The odds of aspiring to a professional occupation increase 1.01 times for each percentage of the school intake speaking the language of the survey country at home, regardless of the language spoken by an individual student.

Those attending school with a high percentage of students from professional, educated families tend to have higher aspirations even where they are from different kinds of families themselves. If accepted, this finding has a clear message for the promotion of social justice via the school mix. Allowing students from professional, educated families to cluster in specific schools will encourage social reproduction. There is no gain in such clustering, since there is no clear school mix on attainment (Gorard, 2006a). There is a cost in terms of social mobility. Thus, as with many analyses, but this time in terms of social justice, we conclude that comprehensive and undifferentiated schools are the best as a system (Gorard, 2007b). Education cannot directly influence inequalities in student background. But the allocation of school places is generally a lever that is under the direct control of central and local government.

The clustering of parents who have been to university is not relevant once these other factors are taken into account. More importantly from a policy perspective, the backwards stepwise regression also eliminated the percentage of boys and girls and the percentage of high, average and low attainment students as predictors. Thus, as far as we can tell from this survey, putting girls (and boys) in separate schools does not influence their aspiration once their background is factored in. Similarly, selecting students to school by (self-reported) attainment neither increases nor decreases their aspiration. It is socio-economic segregation between schools that matters here.

The survey included four questions about the student's relationship with parents, and the kinds of interest and support their parents provided. Using these variables makes no difference to the quality of the prediction and all four items are eliminated in backward stepwise selection – both individually and aggregated to school level.

There is a small but discernible relationship, once the preceding factors are accounted for, between students' reports of experiencing justice in school and their aspirations. While background is very important and school structure (such as segregation) is important in producing aspiration, there is still a small role for the interaction of teachers and students at school. In terms of policy, an interesting result in terms of student experience is that whether a student repeats a year or more (i.e. born before 1991) makes no difference to aspiration (*ceteris paribus*).

Students strongly disagreeing that they get on well with teachers are much less likely to report wanting a professional occupation (Table 2). Those strongly agreeing were 1.30 times as likely as those strongly disagreeing to want a professional occupation. If there is any causal link here it is unclear. It might be that teachers have a role in reducing the hopes of some students. Students strongly agreeing that

teachers respected their own opinions even when they differed in opinions were 1.25 times as likely as those strongly disagreeing to want a professional occupation. These two items both relate to the individual student and their relationship with teachers. Those students with professional aspiration tend to report better personal relationships with teachers.

However, the opposite is true when they consider student:teacher relationships in general. Students with professional aspirations tend to identify the unfair treatment of other students. Those strongly agreeing that teachers respected all students' opinions even when disagreeing were less likely to have professional aspirations (0.88) than those strongly disagreeing. Similarly, those strongly disagreeing that all students were treated the same had the highest aspirations. Again, those strongly disagreeing that they trusted teachers to be fair had the highest aspirations (0.84).

Table 2: Coefficients for student/school experience variables

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Get on well with teachers	1.30	1.33	1.16	1.15
Teachers respect my opinions even when we disagree	1.25	1.02	1.03	0.99
Teachers respect all student opinions	0.88	1.07	1.07	1.15
Teachers treated all students the same	1.02	0.81	0.93	0.92
Teachers can be trusted to be fair	0.84	1.01	0.91	0.90
Good friends at school	1.72	1.82	1.54	2.22
Discouraged easily	0.95	0.83	0.90	0.99
Friends with low marks	1.05	0.99	0.84	0.85
School was a waste of time	0.47	0.58	0.60	0.84

Note: all coefficients are in relation to the strongly disagree category

Those strongly disagreeing that they had good friends at school had the lowest aspirations. Those strongly agreeing were 1.72 times as likely to want a professional job. The other odds were agree (1.82), neither (1.54) and disagree (2.22). Those strongly disagreeing that they were discouraged easily had the highest aspirations. Those strongly disagreeing that they had friends who got low marks at school had the highest aspirations. The other odds were strongly agree (1.05), agree (0.99), neither (0.84) and disagree (0.85). Those strongly disagreeing that school was a waste of time had the highest aspirations. The other odds were strongly agree (0.47), agree (0.58), neither (0.60) and disagree (0.84). However, the model was also run with this last variable omitted on theoretical grounds. It could be interpreted as an outcome of schooling as well as an experience. In general, those with the most positive personal experience of school had the highest aspirations (or *vice versa* of course). So there is an important role for schools in the creation of future aspirations, perhaps especially in the interaction between students.

Predicting criterion of justice

Whether teachers should give more help to a student with reading difficulty or not was used as the dependent variable in a binary logistic regression. In total, 51% of students reported that the teacher should give extra help to a student with a specific difficulty, and the remaining 49% did not. Any prediction of an individual student happy for more help to be given to a student with a difficulty would be 51% correct simply assuming that everyone was happy with it. The success of the model depends on its ability to improve on this baseline figure. The percentage predicted correctly for each stage of the model is in Table 3. The model increases the accuracy of prediction, compared to the baseline, by 20%. Of this increase, nearly half is attributable to the student background, and half to experiences at school. There is only a small school mix effect, and most of the variation explained operates at the individual level.

Table 3: Percentage of students correctly allocated to help criterion of justice or not, by batch of variables

Batch	Percentage predicted correctly	Percentage of remaining variation explained
base figure	51	-
student background	60	18
aggregated background	61	2
parental support	61	0
aggregated parental support	61	0
experience of justice at school	70	18
aggregated experience of justice	71	2

Note: For comparison purposes, we used the same variables to 'predict' an entirely random binary outcome to assess the dangers of fitting the model post hoc. The best such model is around 54% correct, meaning that a lot of the variance explained in tables like this one is unlikely to be spurious.

Insofar as we can explain student willingness for others to get extra help, student background is a factor, although the sex, attainment, and country of origin of the student are irrelevant to this criterion of justice. Also irrelevant are the occupations, education and country of origin of parents. Those living in England are more likely to approve of help given to others than those in Belgium (0.92), Czech Republic (0.95), France (1.00) and Italy (1.00). This is illustrated in the percentages agreeing with extra help, when this variable is looked at in isolation. The raw figures are England (72%), Belgium (59%), Czech Republic (44%), France (51%) and Italy (36%). In addition, given that the vignette is about difficulty in reading, it is interesting

that those speaking the language of the survey country are generally happier for a student struggling with reading to be given extra help (1.26).

There is a small improvement in correct predictions if the student background variables are aggregated to the school level as an estimate of the school mix effect of clustering similar students in schools and classes. Schools with higher proportions of students born in the survey country are less likely to be happy with extra help given to others. Support for the criterion declines by 0.99 for every percentage of indigenous students.

The survey included four questions about the student's relationship with parents. Using these variables at individual or school level makes no difference to the quality of the prediction (just as with aspiration).

A large number of school experience variables are not relevant to increasing the quality of the prediction, including whether a student repeats a year or more (i.e. born before 1991). But there is a very clear relationship, once the preceding factors are accounted for, between students' reports of justice in school and their willingness for a student in difficulty to receive extra help.

Being respected by teachers, with teachers not getting angry in front of others, not punishing students unfairly, concerned for student well-being and prepared to explain until everyone understands, are key to students learning to support help for those with difficulties (or reporting this at least). Taken at face value this suggests a clear role for teachers in educating citizens who are tolerant and supportive of the difficulties of others (Table 4). They do this not only (or perhaps at all) through citizenship pedagogy but through their exemplification of good citizenship in action (Gorard, 2007a, 2007b). There is similarly a key role for the students. Having friends is important, and also avoidance of being mistreated by other students. Those reporting being hurt, bullied and having things stolen by other students at school are all less likely to support extra help for others. This is *not* a school mix effect (e.g. where those attending schools with low levels of theft are more supportive anyway). Thus, it appears to stem directly from treatment by others. Some of the differences are slight. For example, 44% of students who had been clearly bullied were in support of help for others, compared to 51% who had clearly not been bullied. Nevertheless, there could also be a role for teachers here then, in preventing such mistreatment and educating the potential bullies and thieves.

Table 4: Coefficients for student/school experience variables

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Teachers respected my opinion	1.03	1.11	1.21	0.98
Teachers interested in my well-being	1.27	1.00	1.10	1.07
I have good friends in school	1.70	1.70	1.82	2.38
Something of mine stolen	1.02	1.18	1.14	0.98
I was deliberately hurt	1.18	0.91	1.08	0.87
I got discouraged easily	1.06	0.93	1.01	0.97
Teachers got angry with a student	0.81	0.89	0.94	0.98
Teachers continued explaining	0.98	1.06	1.01	0.94
Teachers punished fairly	0.81	0.68	0.74	0.80

Note: all coefficients are in relation to the strongly disagree category

Predicting levels of trust

Whether most people can be trusted was the third outcome used as the dependent variable in a binary logistic regression. In total, 51% of students reported not trusting people generally, and the remaining 49% trusted people to some extent. Any prediction of an individual student trusting people would be 51% correct simply assuming that no one trusted people. The success of the model depends on its ability to improve on this baseline figure. The percentage predicted correctly for each stage of the model is in Table 5.

Table 5: Percentage of students correctly allocated to trusting people or not, by batch of variables

Batch	Percentage predicted correctly	Percentage of remaining variation explained
base figure	51	-
student background	56	10
aggregated background	56	0
parental support	57	2
aggregated parental support	57	0
experience of justice at school	62	10
aggregated experience of justice	64	4

Student background characteristics explain some of the variation in outcomes but not as much as might be expected. And this influence mostly operates at the individual level, with no evidence of a school mix effect. Of the increase of 13%

in correct predictions over and above the baseline, over half is attributable to experiences of justice at school. This is after background and parental support have been taken into account, and so represents reasonable evidence of the influence of school.

Insofar as we can explain a tendency to trust people with these survey data, student background is a factor. However, the sex, language, country of origin of the student, and the occupations of parents, are irrelevant to this issue of learning to trust most people. Those students living in England are slightly more trusting than those in Belgium (0.99), Czech Republic (0.98), France (0.99) and Italy (0.98). Those with a father born in the survey country are also slightly more trusting (1.08). However the main determinant of this improvement in the baseline model lies in the (self-reported) attainment of students. Intriguingly, students reporting higher levels of attainment at school are somewhat less likely to report trust (0.94) than average attainers who are in turn less likely than low attainers (1.05). Whether this is due to greater perspicacity, or another confounding variable, is not clear.

The survey included four questions about the student's relationship with parents. Using these variables makes a small difference to the quality of the prediction. Parents talking to students about their friends and interests, and being interested in their well-being, are irrelevant here. Those whose parents treat them with respect and talk to them about school tend to be more trusting. Those who strongly agree that their parents treat them with respect have relative odds of 1.13, agree 1.20, neither 0.97 and disagree 0.90. Those who strongly agree that their parents talk to them about school have relative odds of 1.12, agree 1.19, neither 1.06 and disagree 0.91. This suggests a role for parents in the exemplification and formation of trust.

There is a very clear relationship, once the preceding factors are accounted for, between students' reports of justice in school and their sense of trust in other people. While background is important in producing trust, the biggest factor among the items surveyed is the reported interaction with teachers and students at school. Unlike aspirations, whether a student repeats a year or more (i.e. born before 1991) makes a difference to trust (0.93).

Those who report getting along well with their teachers, and trusting their teachers to be fair, are more trusting in general. Of course, there is a possible element of tautology in several of these 'independent' variables. Students who have repeated one or more years are less likely to be trusting (41%) than those who have not (50%), perhaps linked to the lack of grade repetition in England. However, it is actual experiences at school that are most strongly related to trust. Students who regard school and teachers as fair, and the meting out of punishments as fair, and who have not been hurt or isolated by other students nor had something stolen are, perhaps understandably, more trusting. As with the help outcome, this suggests a clear role for teachers in educating citizens who are generally trusting of others. They do this through their exemplification of good (or indeed poor) citizenship in action. There is also a role for teachers in preventing the mistreatment of some students by others and educating any potential 'bullies' or 'thieves' (Table 6).

Table 6: Coefficients for student/school experience variables

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Got along well with teachers	1.08	1.12	1.10	0.82
Trust teachers to be fair	1.17	1.12	1.02	0.86
Felt invisible to mates	0.86	1.15	1.09	1.14
Something stolen	0.89	0.87	1.02	0.92
Deliberately hurt	0.81	1.0	1.07	1.14
Discouraged easily	0.82	0.82	0.85	0.92
Friend from abroad	1.09	1.13	1.07	1.10
Friend with low marks	1.14	1.04	1.18	0.90
All students treated same way	1.10	1.07	1.07	0.98
Teachers got angry	0.86	0.95	0.95	1.00
Teachers punished fairly	1.23	1.27	1.27	1.14
Student marks deserved	0.97	1.12	1.12	0.88
School was fair	1.40	1.35	1.23	0.87

Avoidance of bullying, personal violence, and theft are related to learning to trust others – or put the other way, the least trusting are those who have been victims of bullying, violence, and theft at school. Therefore, there is an argument that what happens at school differentially influences students' sense of what is just and fair, and what wider society is like. And a lot of what happens is the direct responsibility of other students, while only indirectly due to the (in)actions of teachers. If citizenship education entails learning appropriate levels of trust in others, then the level of reported mistreating of students by other students is a clear barrier to progress.

Discussion

It is important to recall that a lot of potentially important things remain unmeasured in our survey of students. The school level characteristics, for example, have had to be estimated by simply aggregating the responses of those students who respond. In addition, we cannot claim that the samples are perfectly representative, nor the questions perfectly phrased for each language, and there is inevitably some non-response. Most importantly, we are associating some parts of the reports of students with other parts of the same reports. There is no test of a causal model here, and even a danger of elements of tautology in some findings.

Nevertheless, the scale of relationship between the predictors such as student background, school mix or student experience of justice, and the outcome variables trialled here is substantial, over a large sample across five countries. The results are credible. Another way of imagining these findings is to contrast them with the long-standing work on academic school effectiveness. School effectiveness, as a

field, has the same problems as the work described here. It is not a causal test, does not have complete information, has to deal with omitted variables and missing cases, and so on.

In one crucial respect, school effectiveness models are stronger and more impressive than those described here. They are capable of explaining between 80% and 100% of the variation in student academic outcomes simply in terms of background data, such as student prior attainment (Gorard, 2006b). The attainment of students in schools is largely predicated on their prior attainment and background characteristics. In developed countries, it does not appear to make much difference which school a student attends. Going to school obviously makes some difference in comparison to not going to school but little difference in comparison to going to a different school in the same system. Almost all schools are free, compulsory, roughly equal in funding, inspected, with trained staff, widely shared curricula, and standardised tests. There is very little variation (0 to 20%) left to attribute to the differential impact of schools, and this 0 to 20% includes the error components contributed by inevitable flaws in the research and measurement (see above). There is almost certainly not enough variation remaining to identify a school mix effect on attainment (Gorard, 2006a).

In contrast, the models described here explain only about 20% (10/50) of the variation in student 'justice' outcomes using student background data alone. The main reason for this is that unlike school effectiveness work we do not have a prior score for student sense of justice. We do not know, therefore, how much (or little) students' sense of justice has changed since their arrival in secondary-age school. In school effectiveness work it has become traditional simply to ignore the error component and attribute all variation in outcomes left unexplained by student background to the 'school effect'. It is in this respect that our model here is stronger. There remains 60% (30/50) variation in outcomes, and we leave this unattributed (except to error and flaws in the research). But the school mix (for aspiration) and school experience variables (for help and trust) actually explain a further 20%. They are modelled in biographical order (and so the time sequence necessary for causation), rather than the nesting hierarchies used in school effectiveness, which perforce ignore characteristics that do not nest such as sex or parental support. This is a more powerful finding than the school effects purportedly found in school effectiveness work. Thus, it is worth thinking about the consequences of.

The use of school improvement models has led, indirectly, to an overemphasis on the most visible indicators of schooling - examination and test scores. The use of test scores leads to three related problems. It may marginalise other purposes and potential benefits of schooling. In addition, it suggests that variations in the scores themselves are largely the product of school effects when the evidence clearly shows otherwise. It also neglects the fact that the scores themselves are artificial, and technically difficult to compare fairly over time or place. The mix of students within schools has implications for their raw-score standards of achievement (note, for example, that all schools deemed 'failing' in the UK have high levels of student poverty). But, in general, the lessons from PISA and other international studies

are that mixing students between schools whether in terms of occupational class, income, or sex, leads to no depreciation in attainment (Haahr et al., 2005).

Equity is difficult to define but represents that sense of fairness which underlies our decisions about the principles of justice to apply in different domains for a given set of actors. In specific situations there is considerable agreement, among students, about what is fair and what is unfair. Equity is an important ideal for education, in terms of school as a lived experience as well as its longer-term outcomes for citizens and society. Students have quite clear views on what is fair, and are generally willing and able to express those views. Are research users willing to acknowledge and act on those views? We summarise here some of the early possible conclusions from this new study for policy-makers, practitioners and researchers.

In general there is a high level of equality in the responses across all countries and indicators of disadvantage. This is highly encouraging, since even if we were to conclude that some students are objectively disadvantaged, the students themselves are not aware of this or are not treated in any systematically inferior way. In fact those outside mainstream schooling were in many ways the most positive about their treatment and experiences. They often felt respected and cared for in appropriate ways. However, the number of cases was small and this is an important strand for future in-depth research. Very few students see school as a waste of time.

There is little impact of school experience on aspiration (although of course this could be due to missing variables). This finding confirms a number of recent international syntheses of evidence on the importance of a mixed intake to schools (comprehensive rather than selective, for example) for both efficiency and equity of attainment. It adds to that the key message that school mix also relates to subsequent aspirations. This could affect patterns of post-compulsory participation and attainment as well (Gorard et al., 2007). School experience combines with social background to form a relatively permanent learner or non-learner identity (Gorard & Selwyn, 2005). What is true for aspirations appears also to be true for post-compulsory participation in education or training (Gorard & Smith, 2007). Clustering students in schools by socio-economic, whether deliberately or not, reduces the educational as well as the occupational aspirations of the most disadvantaged. In general, students reporting a positive experience of school (not bullied, treated with respect by teachers) have more professional aspirations (or vice versa of course).

However, as we have shown here, clustering students with similar backgrounds in schools tends to strengthen social reproduction over generations. With the potential determinants of these outcomes modelled in lifelong order, future aspiration is not particularly influenced by experiences of justice at school. Rather, it is here that the school mix has its greatest impact. The implications for policy are clear. To raise occupational and educational aspirations of the most disadvantaged in society a mixed school intake is desirable. If we wish disadvantaged students to raise their educational and occupational aspirations, one simple lever under our control is the policy of allocating students to schools. A mixed, comprehensive

and undifferentiated system of schools is preferable in this regard to a tracked, selective, faith-based or specialist one. Socially segregated systems are unfair to the most disadvantaged and are at best zero-sum for attainment, in comparison to comprehensive systems.

Students in more comprehensive systems, who speak the language of their country of residence as a first language, are also more content that extra help is given to struggling students - even when this help means that they may have less attention. If struggling students themselves are taken out of the analysis, ironically support becomes stronger. Thus, there is widespread but not universal support for a principle of fairness other than equal treatment for all.

Fairness for individuals, a sense of justice, and social cohesion are as much a product of experiences in schools, as lived in, as they are of the formal educational process. Social, ethnic and economic segregation matters, but not primarily for the sake of test results. It does not make sense to have a society preaching racial tolerance within a racially segregated school system, for example. For students their schools are their life, and not merely a preparation for it. Equity in schools matters for today, for the range of experiences of each student, for social cohesion, and to allow schools to teach important aspects of citizenship without being open to the charge of being hypocritical.

Immigrants generally report being well treated, and are as likely as others to have good friends, good relationships with teachers, and hopes for the future. There is a far smaller proportion of recent immigrants in the Czech Republic and their responses and those of other to them are slightly different. There is less integration (friendship patterns) of recent immigrants there. Students in the Czech Republic are more supportive of new immigrants having to adopt the cultures and tradition of the host country. While the figures are low, it is clear that immigrants in Italy report substantially more negative episodes such as being bullied or hurt by other students. There are concerning levels of reported bullying of students by other students in England, especially among the lowest achievers (30% of low achievers reported being deliberately hurt by another student).

Once family background is accounted for, there is a clear impact of students' experiences of school on students' sense of justice. As may be imagined, those treated best at school tend to have the most positive outlook on trust, civic values and sense of justice. Perhaps the biggest threat here lies in the actions of other students, and so any (in)actions of teachers to prevent bullying, stealing and violence.

Teachers were not always perceived to be treating students fairly and consistently. There is a difference here between the personal experience of the students, and their perception of the treatment of a minority of others. A common view was that teachers had students who were their favourites, that rewards and punishments were not always applied fairly, and that certain groups of students were treated less fairly than others. How can a curriculum for citizenship, which embraces issues of fairness and democracy, be effectively implemented if the students themselves do not mostly believe that their teachers are generally capable of such behaviour?

In one sense, it does not really matter what the curriculum states about citizenship compared to the importance for students of experiencing mixed ethnic, sex and religious groups in non-racist and non-sexist settings, and of genuine participation in the decision-making of the schools

A similar conclusion comes from consideration of learning to trust other people. Most students do *not* trust their government. This is especially so in the Czech Republic. Most students do not trust adults in general, and have learnt to be cautious in dealing with them. There is widespread agreement that all students should be treated with respect by teachers, their opinions valued, and not humiliated in any way. Teachers can help produce positive citizens both through the respect with which they treat students and in the way that they act to prevent the mistreatment of some students by others.

Students are happy for their assessed work to be discriminated in terms of quality and effort, but they complain that hard-working, high-attaining should not otherwise be favoured by teachers. This is a clear and strict application of the principle of merit, and one which teachers are apparently generalising from and so misusing. Students were able to give clear examples of injustice and of the principles they used to identify injustice. In schools there is a clear mismatch between what students want and what they experience, in several ways. These include students wanting their opinions respected even when the teacher disagrees; few report this. Students want teachers to continue explaining topics until everyone understands; few report this. Students want marks to reflect quality of work; many do not report this happening. Students do not want hard-working students to be favoured (except in assessment terms); most report the opposite.

The most important lever under our control to encourage support for the more disadvantaged relates to behaviour in schools. Schools and classes that are respectful, fair, and intolerant of bullying tend to have more supportive students. Citizenship is not merely a subject in schools, it must be a way of life.

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DISCUSSION

BACK TO EUROPE AND THE SECOND TRANSITION IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract: Back-to-Europe and post-communist transition were the main objectives of Central European countries at the beginning of 90's. After 2004, when most of the CEE countries acceded to EU membership, followed by Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, a new transition began. This is a transition to knowledge society, as defined by Lisbon Agenda, whose objectives are not political, but economic, social and educational. This paper is devoted to the new transition process where the performance of each CEE country will depend on its human resources, tradition and management capacities.

Key words: Transition, educational reforms, knowledge society, Lisbon Agenda, Central and Eastern Europe

Introduction

This analysis is a follow-up to the previous English issue of *Orbis scholae* (2/2007[1]) dedicated to "Transformation of educational systems in the Visegrad countries". Based on a broader geographical coverage, this article supports the idea of second transition in CEE countries, shared olso by Halasz (2007) in his article published as a part of previous Orbis scholae issue.

Transition was one of the catch-words of the '90s. Although the term as such denotes any change from one state to another, from one stage of evolution to another, transition became a major topic of political analysis particularly after the post-communist revolutions of 1989. Whether it was the "velvet revolution" in Czechoslovakia, the "televised revolution" in Romania, the "melancholic revolution" in Hungary or the "singing revolution" in Estonia, the goal was the same: to replace totalitarian rule with democratic regimes. A new phrase was coined "countries in transition" designating ex-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The change of political regime thus inaugurated a new historical stage, under

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1   The full-text of the previous issue of Orbis scholae journal on "Transformation of educational systems in the Visegrad countries" (Walterová & Greger 2007) could be downloaded from the following URL: http://www.orbisscholae.cz/archiv/2007_02.pdf

the generic name "transition". The term designates an **interregnum situation**, which requires more or less clear reference points for the destination of transition, intermediary stages and the changes this process involves.

In a well-known book entitled "Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe" Dahrendorf compared post-communist transitions to crossing the desert in biblical times and the need for Moses' people to wander across the desert for 40 years so that only the new generation who knew nothing of servitude, would reach the Promised Land.

The situation in the 20 years covered by the peoples in the ex-communist countries turned out to be quite different. The period of 'wandering' across the sands of transition was shorter but it raised huge issues impossible to anticipate. In the end, post-communist transition was not so much a peaceful change of regime, a linear translation process, but rather a race with plenty of hurdles. Transition did not just bring under discussion the political regimes prior to 1990's, it shook the pillars of social order such as stability and continuity, social legitimacy and mobilisation, civic culture and the system of values. As an historical experience, transitions in Central and Eastern Europe led to the resolution of issues specific to the respective countries. It also provided **learning experiences**, which could prove useful to the new wave of post-communist transitions in the western Balkans (Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina) or former Soviet countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia).

What are the lessons to be learned from the 15-year-experience of post-communist transitions in Central and Eastern Europe? The lessons differ widely from one country to another. In broad terms, the major trends were as follows:

1. Post-communist transitions created a **fast changing social environment** which affected all public sectors and policies. In some cases these changes were impossible to monitor thus making it difficult to coordinate and assess the effects. Hence, the common belief that transition changes were spontaneous, influenced by external factors rather than the product of well structured programmes.

2. Transitions intensified the **differences existing between former communist countries** prior to 1990. Apparently homogeneous and unitary owing to the common governing ideology, these countries were actually quite different in terms of readiness for transition to capitalism and democracy culture. Pre-war experience of democracy and competitiveness as well as the quasi-reforms conducted from within the communist parties in the name of communism with a human face, commonly known as "perestroika" really counted.

3. Education underwent **modernization reforms** (of methods, textbooks and curriculum contents) as well as **restructuring reforms** (in management, legislation and financing). Educational reforms attempted to follow the general pace of political and economic changes without anticipating them and without turning education into the major lever of social changes. It was only in the late '90s that **systemic reforms** were envisaged in countries like Hungary, the Czech Republic or Slovenia, which placed learning in the centre of public policies.

4. In general, with some differences in favour of countries in Central Europe the experience of transition highlighted the existence of a **vicious circle of human resources:** on the one hand, political and economic reforms depended on available human resources, on the other hand investment in human resources development was limited by economic and social performances. We might even go so far as to say that the differences between countries in transition were due to the differences in human resources management.
5. From a social and cultural point of view, post-communist transitions resolved many problems while creating and intensifying **new issues** either unknown or controlled before 1990: brain drain, degradation of public services for culture and healthcare, deepening social inequalities, long term unemployment, emergence of subcultures and consumerism, erosion of motivation for learning.

In a study devoted to post-communist transitions from the perspective of value changes (Bîrzea, 1996), we noted the formation of an "**interregnum culture**" that cannot be reduced to the modernity/post-modernity scheme applicable to Western societies.

The following trends characterise this particular culture:

a) The emblematic values of communism (e.g. revolutionary militancy, patriotic labour, class struggle, submission to the state-party) are on the verge of extinction. They are manifest only in those that remain nostalgic about former regime and take the form of collectivist or egalitarian reactions, an effect of residual communism.
b) On the other hand, new values have emerged, deemed unacceptable under the previous regime: freedom, personal initiative, political pluralism, human rights, critical thinking, multiculturalism.
c) Traditional values, prohibited by the communist regime, such as nationalism, elitism, monarchy, religion, privacy and property, have re-emerged and are relatively influent.
d) Some values associated with the old regime persist yet they have either changed content (e.g. equality, solidarity, citizenship, membership, well-being) or are no longer considered so important (e.g. loyalty, discipline, altruism, collectivity).

The element that very few analysts foresaw in the early 90s was the **European Union's capacity** to extend towards the east by integrating a large share of the "countries in transition". Initially, on the background of post-revolutionary euphoria, one of the most influential slogans was "**Back to Europe**". Everybody saw Europe as the Promised Land, the place of freedom and prosperity they had become abusively estranged from. "Back to Europe" was seen primarily as a sign of normality and historical justice. However, EU membership was not listed in any of the political programmes or documents of the 1989 revolutions.

Obviously, 20 years on, these objectives have undergone notable changes. For most ex-communist countries, with the exception of the member countries of the Community of Independent States, "Back to Europe" means first and foremost **EU**

membership. This status confirms the end of transition, represents the official recognition of having met the three Copenhagen criteria, two of which refer directly to post-communist transition objectives: the realisation of a democratic regime and of a functional market economy. Are we to understand that gaps have been eliminated entirely? Could it be that the respective countries have entered a new period of transition whose purpose is no longer a change of regime but a transformation of the entire social system? If we admit the fact that transition means first of all "societal learning" (in the sense attributed by Botkin, Elmandja & Malitza, 1972) and that historical recovery requires more than 15 years, then the statement that post-communist transitions end simply by accession to the European Union needs to be more carefully revised.

Some authors (cf. De Soto and Anderson) hasten to speak of the start of a new stage, even more dramatic than post-communist transition, which they call "**post-transition**". Others, like Rosati (1998), based on macroeconomic analyses, maintain that the gaps will persist for many years to come. Realising a market economy, Rosati says, is not sufficient for an effective EU membership. As you can see in Table 1, modelled on Rosati's (1998, p. 42–43), the duration of the "**new transition**" will be numbered in decades, unlike the post-communist transition of the '90s that lasted only 10-15 years. If you take as a reference point the level reached by the three poor countries at the time of their accession to the EU (Greece, Spain and Portugal) and calculate the annual growth rate, you will get very different transition rates, all of them very long: 7-9 years for Slovenia and 81-87 years for Bulgaria.

Table 1: Long-term growth projection for CEEC (apud: Rosati, 1998)

Country	Number of years to average to EU-3	
	Barro growth rate	Levine-Renelt methodology
Czech Republic	9	12
Estonia	33	36
Hungary	19	20
Latvia	81	70
Lithuania	55	52
Poland	24	29
Slovakia	30	49
Slovenia	7	9
Bulgaria	87	81
Romania	65	60
Croatia	75	71
Albania	48	63
Macedonia, FY	53	55

These estimates are absolutely shocking. Fortunately, they are hardly credible:

they are too optimistic in the case of Albania and too pessimistic by comparison with countries that already have positive results in terms of EU integration, namely Latvia and Estonia.

However, we have cited these data for two reasons. Firstly, because they draw attention to existing gaps and the difficulties of the new transitions, after the "Back to Europe" euphoria and secondly, it is interesting to note the point of view of economists that reduce transition to a never-ending historical catching up. At any rate this point of view is contradicted by the EU which indicate that in the area of education countries in Central and Eastern Europe have come close to and in some cases have even gone beyond the EU average.

Our paper focuses on the relationship between post-communist transitions and EU integration. To be precise, we will concentrate on the **new transition stage** entailed by EU accession and its significance for educational policies.

For obvious reasons, this analysis cannot circumvent the context initiated by the **Lisbon Strategy** and its effect on the new member states and candidate countries. In this sense, we will start off from two basic assumptions:

- *First*: According to the Lisbon Agenda, all EU member countries as well as candidate countries may still be considered countries in transition; the common goal of these countries is to realise a knowledge-based society. In other words, we are speaking of a **new transition**, whose objectives are not political, but economic, social and educational.
- *Second*: after accomplishing political pluralism and market economy, countries in Central and Eastern Europe must perfect the cultural and educational transition. In the '90s educational reforms followed or were merely associated with political and economic changes. The new transition inaugurated by EU accession and the Lisbon Agenda is based first of all on education and training, as the major priorities of public policies.

These work premises capitalize on a thesis we launched in an earlier study (Birzea, 1994), namely the thesis of **multiple transitions** according to which post-communist transition actually consists of three interdependent transitions, each with its own duration and objectives:

- **political transition** is the quickest and can be accomplished in approximately 5 years;
- **economic transition** is slower and can be achieved in approximately 10 years, depending on the degree of communization of the economic system;
- **cultural transition** is the slowest, and needs to be spaced out over one generation (approximately 25 years), because it involves changing values, attitudes, competences, social relations and life styles.

The first two were accomplished over the 15 years of post-communist transition. The third is still ongoing and it will undoubtedly be accelerated by EU membership and the Lisbon Agenda.

Despite the multiple educational reforms conducted in the '90s in ex-communist

countries, investment in human resources was not a priority. Post-communist transition was first of all an economic and political transition. The main goal of educational reforms was to gradually correct the old system (e.g. by eliminating communist ideology), modernizing the curricula, school management and teacher training schemes. These modernising or catching-up reforms were prevailingly focused on the immediate issues of their particular educational systems. The effects of globalisation and the opening up of educational systems to the outside world remained subsidiary goals.

If within this context we apply Carnoy's (1999, p. 37) classification of educational reforms, we will notice that the experience of the '90s in transition countries is very similar to "**equity-driven**" and **"finance-driven" reforms**. Although this scheme is not a perfect fit in all situations[2], we can conclude that the top priorities in the '90s were equity-related measures (e.g. learning facilities for population at risk, non-discrimination and quality education for all) and financial support for public policies in education and training. With a few exceptions, all countries in transition resorted to conditioned loans from the World Bank. The influence of external resources was so great that some countries (e.g. Romania and Bulgaria) even ran the risk of educational policies becoming incoherent, owing to their excessive dependence on external donors. Each of the latter had specific objectives and their own philosophy of education which did not always coincide with the priorities set at national level.

Carnoy's three reform strategies are not mutually exclusive. They express however, three distinct priorities. The Lisbon Agenda and its objectives in education and training is a clear example of **competitiveness-driven reform**. For the very first time in EU history, the Lisbon European Council (2000) placed education, culture, research and training in the centre of community policies. By assuming the strategic objective of becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy, the European Union proved that it understood the crucial role of human resources development, until then the responsibility of national states. Even if, as indicated by the Kok Report (2004) and the Maastricht Study (Tessaring and Wannen, 2004), the objectives of the Lisbon process have been only partially reached, what matters is that in the European context a new period of transition has begun, where learning is called upon to play a key role.

Assuming the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda[3], the new member countries as well as the candidate countries implicitly became involved in this **new process of transition**. As in the case of post-communist transition, the performance of each country will depend on actual resources and resource management capacity.

From this perspective three key-questions could become the subject of intense debate:

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2   This analysis is valid particularly for Eastern European countries (eg. Romania and Bulgaria). In the Central European states (eg. Czech Republic, see Greger & Walterová, 2007, p. 37–41) the equity measures were initiated mainly by the NGOs, they were not the state priorities of early 90's.

3   For details, access:http://europa.eu.int/com/education/policies/2010;
    http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/keydoc/2002/progobj-en.pdf

- To what extent are educational systems in Central and East European countries ready for globalisation and Europeanisation?
- Did the reforms of the '90s anticipate the exigencies of the new transition to a knowledge-based economy?
- What kind of gaps remain and how wide are they (i.e. the gaps between the new and the old EU member states, the new member states and candidate countries, and between the new member states themselves)?

Our paper limits itself to the three questions formulated above and attempts to find at least partial answers.

In order to do this, we will refer to the data provided in the Commission's Reports ("Education across Europe 2008)[4] as well as the Kok Report and the Maastricht Study.

First of all, we noticed that there is no overall gap between the performances of the new member countries and the EU average. Unlike macroeconomic analyses which support the idea of one **wide and enduring gap** between economic performances, educational indicators point to a **wide variance** of education systems.

In some cases (e.g. public expenditure for education, ratio of those who completed at least ISCED 3 for education, ratio of pupils to teaching staff, participation in scientific studies), new member countries (NMCs) have even obtained results above EU average. The areas where NMCs lag behind are participation in lifelong learning, private expenditure for education and number of foreign students. The closest to the EU average in general are the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Overall, the data in education and training do not confirm the macroeconomic analysis conducted by Rosati and authors (Barro, Levine and Renelt) which supports the thesis of a 10-year to 80-year-delay compared to the three poor countries at the time of accession (Spain, Portugal and Greece).

The gaps are so great, says Rosati, that NMCs actually only benefit from a "quasi membership". We do not have the competencies to judge either such evaluations or the superficial differentiation that some politicians still make between the "New Europe" and the "Old Europe"[5].

What is absolutely certain however, is that we cannot make any such clear-cut distinctions in **education**, nor can we declare without a shadow of a doubt that one geopolitical region is "more recent", more dynamic or more interesting than another.

In the second place, despite the aforementioned convergence there are striking differences in terms of **competitiveness** and **quality of educational systems** in

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4   Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training. Indicators and Benchmarks 2008, Brussels, European Commission, 2008.

5   Obviously such classifications are merely opportunistic and context-driven. Europe is just as old and everlasting whether its roots are in the East or in the West. Europe in Herodot's time was located in the Balkans and the Diets in Central Europe were simultaneous with similar Parliamentary settings in Western Europe.

NMCs and EU-15 countries. These differences are visible especially if we take as points of reference the skills assessment resulting from PISA international surveys or the percentage of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (ISCED 5A, 5B or 6). In the '90s, countries in Central and Eastern Europe modernized textbooks and curriculum contents, introduced ICT on a wide scale and conducted VET reforms. These changes were made mainly in relation to their own criteria and the training needs of their specific labour market. The respective reforms were carried out in a national framework without taking into account what Laval and Weber (2002) call "new world educational order".

Finally, the Lisbon Agenda provides exceptional opportunities for Central and East European countries. In just a few years, they have made **considerable progress** (with the exception of private financing in education and participation in lifelong learning). Among the countries with the best performances we find CEE countries have reached four of the five benchmarks: share of early school leavers (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia), reading literacy (Latvia, Poland), upper secondary completion rate (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia), graduates in mathematics, science and technology (Slovakia, Poland).

In other words, like the EU-27 group, the new members and candidate countries have mixed results in education. There is no "best" educational system, meeting all criteria, just as there is no "last" system under all international rankings. CEE countries have returned to Europe, and found it confronted with its own historical transition, which ought to restore its international supremacy.

Post-transition, post-industrial revolution or just a catching-up exercise? For new member countries, "Back to Europe" means all of these together. They approach the new transition with the recent experience of rapid and substantial social changes. They are therefore ready for a new stage of systemic changes and educational reforms. They must, nonetheless learn two new things, crucial for the success of the new transition. On the one hand, lifelong learning and investment in human resources must be placed in the centre of public and economic policies. On the other hand, transition to a knowledge-based economy is a collective endeavour, accomplished by the open method of coordination. This is an entirely new experience, quite different from the egocentric and nation-centred efforts of the '90s.

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REVIEWS

MACBEATH, J.; GRAY, J.; CULLEN, J.; FROST, D.; STEWARD, S.; SWAFFIELD, S.
Schools on the Edge: Responding to Challenging Circumstances
Paul Chapman Publishing, 2007, 156 pages.

'Schools on The Edge' is written by authors from the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University who have extensive experience of school effectiveness and school improvement. The book is based on the DfES funded in-depth evaluation study (2001–2005) of the governmental project 'Schools Facing Exceptionally Challenging Circumstances' (SFECC).

The book is divided into two halves. The first half examines life in disadvantaged "at-risk" communities, and maps various policy initiatives and responses to tackle persistent educational inequalities. It thus places the SFECC project in a wider policy context in England, giving an overview of policies aiming at providing opportunities for all students to succeed. The second half is mainly concerned with eight schools involved in the SFECC project, and analyses how various initiatives were realized at school level and what were the relative successes and failures of the project in eight schools. The first half thus captures the big picture (macro), while the second half examines the detail (micro/mezzo school level), and it is the natural interconnectedness of both halves that makes the book unique reading. The tension between the top-down and bottom-up approaches for addressing achievement gaps penetrates the whole book and one of the main questions it addresses is whether sustained improvement is possible in schools facing difficult circumstances.

Chapter 1 poses the question of whether every child matters to English schools, and to what extent English schools have been able to create opportunities for all children to succeed. Like every book written by authors working in the field of school effectiveness/improvement research, this book starts with how research into school effectiveness reacts to the "pessimistic" works of many authors (referring to Coleman, Bernstein, Kozol, etc.) who were questioning the role of schools in society and mainly their potential to tackle inequalities. This book provides a more positive picture of the role of schools in society. In reaction to findings that claim student outcomes are explained mainly by family background and to statements that "education cannot compensate for society", school effectiveness research proposed the opposite thesis that schools could make a difference to the lives and learning of young people.

Chapter 1 goes on to summarize the findings of school effectiveness research. The authors see its contribution mainly in the delimitation of the size of the school effect, in the descriptions of factors which may have contributed to this school effect and in the scope for change and improvement which these studies have opened up. However, the fact that the school's "social mix" reported by Coleman et

al. is considerably more important than other factors found by school effectiveness research (e.g. levels of teacher experience or resourcing), is openly admitted. The authors also refer to the problematic transfer from school effectiveness research into school improvement research.

The first chapter expresses the belief shared by the authors that schools could make a difference even for disadvantaged children from deprived areas where multiple disadvantages combine to make educational success difficult to attain.

Chapter 2 goes on to have a closer look at educational policy and its impact on educational inequalities. It starts its policy overview with the introduction of the comprehensive school system in England in 1965 (though it never became universally spread throughout England) that was seen as a major step towards closing the achievement gap. The next milestone to referred by the authors is the move to a common curriculum, a logical step following comprehensivisation and codified in the 1988 Act that put in place the National curriculum. Later on the agenda of choice, accountability and performance control was seen as an answer to persistent inequalities by policy-makers, even though it is widely questioned by the available research which shows the opposite effect – rising inequalities.

The authors continue to point out a few important policy initiatives that applied some form of positive discrimination at area or local authority level, namely the area-based approaches from Educational Priority Areas (EPA) in 1967, through Education Action Zones (EAZ) in 1998 to Excellence in Cities (EiC) introduced in 1999. They briefly describe a few other examples from half a century of initiatives and they suggest that for a large number of schools no significant sustained school improvement has been achieved by any such policies or initiatives.

The issues in the first two chapters are revisited in chapter 3 through the lens of communities and the exceptional challenges which they present to schools on the edge. The authors use the concept of social capital (mainly with reference to its three explanatory concepts – bonding-, bridging- and linking- social capital) to explain the differences in attitudes to school learning between the children from deprived and those from more affluent backgrounds. The concept of social capital stresses the importance of life outside the school; it moves our attention from school to community, to local environment, housing and social services, employment opportunities, health and crime levels. It is well documented that in schools serving disadvantaged areas learning is subject to a series of disruptions – temporary residence in different localities, transition between several schools, frequent absenteeism through ill health, etc. These schools have a disproportionate percentage of students with special educational needs, children from families where English is not the first language, recent immigrants, etc. The authors suggest that it cannot be assumed that the defining characteristics of an effective school can be applied to make an ineffective school more effective, especially in the case of schools facing multiple disadvantages.

Chapter 4 is the first chapter of the second half of the book, which concretely deals with the SFECC project. Chapter 4 provides case studies of the octet of schools chosen by the DES to join the project. Chapter 5 then discusses the project itself

and its various components and chapter 6 examines the performance of these eight schools during the SFECC project.

Chapter 4 is entitled "Schools of Hope" referring to one common feature of the eight schools - although they all served communities where hope had sometimes died, these eight schools themselves were places of hope for a better future. The aim of the project was to demonstrate that with the right kind of support even schools on the edge could turn failure into success. Presented case studies of eight secondary schools involved in the project show that even though these schools shared common indices of disadvantage, they were still quite different in many respects from each other.

Chapter 5 describes the core components of the project that had a number of strands: a reading programme to improve literacy, pedagogy underpinned by ICT (information and communication technologies), networking and focus on leadership. Each school received a direct funding of £150,000–£200,000 each year. In this chapter the authors point out some difficulties in putting into practice the different project components and their differing degrees of success in the eight schools. For example, a highly prescriptive reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary and writing programme for slow or hesitant readers was welcomed and judged as highly successful in four schools while it was totally refused as too prescriptive and ineffective in others. The authors add that there was a little independent evidence of the success of this particular reading programme during the period when the SFECC project chose to incorporate it.

Some components of the project were not well prepared and thus their potential was lost, as in the case of schools networking through video-conferencing, where the quality of video was insufficient for sharing student work and classroom practice and the website for video posting and sharing was set up tardily.

Among all eight schools developing and extending leadership has proved to be working well. The creation of a School Improvement Group (SIG) with five to nine staff members who act as evaluators of practice and promoters of change, was widely seen as the most successful aspect of the SFECC project. All members of SIG underwent special training organized in six two-day sessions over a two-year period, including topics such as effective teaching, formative assessment and data to inform teaching and learning. The authors found that regular training over two years and teamwork within each SIG drawing together staff from different departments was a key factor in success and that the SIGs had acted as "engines of change". At the end of this chapter the authors posit themselves and partly answer a more general question in relation to this project as well as to other policy initiatives, namely: Can governments change schools?

Chapter 6 deals with measuring improvement in the octet of schools. The authors used different criteria for measuring improvements in these schools: a comparison of each school's performance with their previous best; pupil progress as „added value"; comparison between the eight schools involved in the project and similar schools and the effect and results of the SFECC Project compared with other policy initiatives. The authors discuss the limitation and nature of these four

approaches to evaluation and suggest that using all these approaches at once is preferable to limiting the evaluation to one of them. Different ways of looking at a school's performance tend to give different results. The only common characteristic for these different measures is the certainty that progress across schools in any initiative is likely to be variable. Some schools make considerable progress while others make less, as was also the case in the SFECC project.

In the final chapter, chapter 7, entitled "Schools for the future", the authors discuss more general findings that arose from the evaluation of the programme. They consider the top-down approach to change applied by the SFECC project to be its central failing and they suggest a more collaborative bottom-up approach to be used in future. In this chapter the authors offer nine salutary lessons for policy-makers, that are, I believe, internationally valid as is their final statement: "A society that is committed to offering all its citizens equal opportunities has no choice about whether to have policies for schools in "exceptionally challenging circumstances". Stated baldly, the gap between schools serving mainstream communities and those on the edge is not just large but, in most people's view, unacceptably so. The moral case for intervention should be taken as read, but whatever action is launched in the name of social justice, it should be approached with sensitivity, support and receptiveness to research, combined with a firm grasp on the lessons of history."

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

CONFERENCE: EDUCATION, EQUITY
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Prague, 16th –19th June, 2008

An international conference on education, equity and social justice was organized by the Institute for research and development of education which is a department of the Faculty of Education. The conference took place as part of the celebrations of the 660th anniversary of Charles University in Prague and that's why it was opened with a speech by Vice-Rector Stanislav Štech, whose academic specialization concerns the conference topic.

The conference participants came from universities in 16 countries, including prestigious universities situated in Western Europe but also universities in developing countries, whose experts offered their perspectives on problems concerning inequalities and injustice in education.

The aim of the conference was to focus on all the key processes concerning justice from the micro to the macro level of schooling, which means looking at the relevant processes in schools, classrooms or even during interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves, as well as at processes which are going on in the context of the national educational system and its wider social implications or international comparisons. This aim was mirrored in the choice of keynote speakers. The complexity of the points of view offered was multiplied by the interdisciplinary foundations from which they came (from educational science, sociology or psychology and anthropology to statistics).

Belgian psychologist and statistician Professor Marc Demeuse (University of Mons), in his wide-ranging lecture "The European Commission stepping up both the efficiency and equity of education and training systems", stressed a lot of empirical evidence which shows us that it is possible to combine two seemingly contradictory demands, the one for greater efficiency and the other for equity. And what's more, this is the case not only in the sense of equal access to education (which means no discrimination in terms of gender, ethnicity, the socio-economic status of parents, region and so on) but also in the sense of the equal use of educational outcomes on the labor market and so on. A very good example of these findings is provided by Scandinavian countries whose pupils are among the best in international comparisons of educational performances and outcomes, but where levels of social difference among pupils are among the lowest and where the dependence of performance on gender, socio-economic status and so on is low. That's one of the reasons why, as Professor Marc Demeus pointed out, the first international official trip made by reform-minded ministers of education from different countries in the world is to Finland or to some other Scandinavian country,

although the so-called Finnish model is very difficult to implant in different socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts.

It could be rather provocative in front of a largely academic audience to present the key thesis of the speech which says that policy documents, for example those of the EU or national ministers of education, make a lot of ambivalent and even controversial statements and adopt positions which as a consequence stimulate theoretical as well as empirical research on educational topics. For example, it is taken for granted that smaller classes always lead to more effective learning processes. However, this positive effect brings added value only up to a certain class size; after this critical number, there is no added value in reality. In a similar way, it is assumed that the best thing to do to eliminate educational inequalities between disadvantaged pupils (those with poor family background) and mainstream background pupils is to start pre-primary education as early as possible. In fact, we don't know what kind of effect adding one more extra year of education for such children would have.

British sociologist Sally Power (Cardiff University) stressed in her lecture „The continuous reinvention of compensatory education" that all education systems are more or less stigmatized with educational inequalities which more or less mirror the socio-economic inequalities which can be found in any particular society. At the same time, almost every educational system which produces as well as reproduces social inequalities, offers some compensatory mechanisms to eliminate these inequalities. Nowadays, we can see a trend towards a more complex approach supporting disadvantaged areas and localities, but Sally Power's critical review of the most important compensatory approaches and policies used to date showed their weaknesses and limits. The thesis that if we want to have a successful compensatory policy, which is not so far our situation, we need to clearly know what we want to compensate, is a rather pessimistic conclusion concerning the future. Until then all policies will be unsuccessful.

Professor Alan Dyson (University of Manchester) went down to the micro level in his lecture „Beyond the school gate: schools, communities and social justice" which showed new trends in school developments toward community schools in Great Britain. From his perspective, the new community model of school can work as a powerful instrument for dealing with problems of social inequalities, social exclusion and a variety of other social problems, because schools like this care not only about what is going on inside but also what is going on beyond their gates. The concept as well as the practice of community schools is changing. It is not only a center of social life of local communities (like villages or neighborhoods) but also a provider of a variety of social services. Community schools focus not only on learning processes but offer a wide variety of activities after classes as well. These activities are not restricted to learning processes, weekdays and children only, but provide an offer of leisure time activities on all days and at all times and for young people as well as for retired people, for example. According to Alan Dyson we can observe an expansion of many other social functions which are to be dealt with on school grounds and at school level in the case of the new generation of community

schools. The priorities are social services – from social security and health care to unemployment – which are guaranteed by the state or NGOs and have so far been provided outside the school gates. In the case of new community schools these tasks are dealt with just in the schools, so that the problems are addressed immediately in the place where they are occurring. Alan Dyson stressed that school can be more flexible in these cases in comparison with ineffective administrative bodies, office departments or social workers which are too distant from the places where problems occurred.

Italian anthropologist and ethnographer Francesca Gobbo (Turin University) focused on the classroom level in her lecture „Learning from others, learning with others: The tense encounter between equality and difference". The anthropologist's starting point is based on the differentiation people make between "me" and "others" and between "us" and "them" or between "ours" and "the foreign" which is a consequence of people's experience with different people. At classroom level in the context of multicultural society and related trends towards a more heterogeneous composition of classes, there is a more and more important problem of interaction among pupils with different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds which has consequences for educational inequalities. According to Francesca Gobbo, interactions among pupils influence the divergent trends in the case of educational inequalities because higher-status pupils (caused by socio-economic or mainstream culture and ethnic family background) interact more easily and more often with other pupils, and this has positive effects on learning processes. On the other hand, pupils with lower status interact less often with classmates and as a result learn less at school. As a consequence, their status in the class is decreasing, they continue to interact and learn less than the others and the gap in knowledge between the pupils grows.

As for the presentations in different conference sections, these reflected key contemporary problems in the field of educational inequalities, for example in terms of gender, socio-economic status, immigration and other points of view. The conference covered all the important trends concerning education, equity and social justice and showed the potentialities as well as the limits of qualitative and quantitative methods used in research.

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23RD CESE CONFERENCE: CHANGES IN EDUCATION AND EDUCATION POLICY IN EUROPE AND IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Athens, 6th – 11th July, 2008

The Comparative Education Society in Europe – CESE - ranks among the oldest scientific societies dealing with comparative education (CE) in the world. It was founded in 1961.

The establishment of CESE was initiated by renowned experts such as Josef Katz, Edmund King, Franz Hilker, Bohdan Suchodolski and others. Two comparativists, in particular, had a major impact on the concept and focus of the society – Joseph Lauwerys, the first professor of comparative education at London University, and Samuel Robinson, director of the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg. In 1969 the 4th CESE conference was held in Prague on the initiative of the comparative education section of the Czechoslovak Pedagogical Society. The organisation committee was chaired by František Singule. This conference constituted the first major opportunity for the meeting of experts in comparative education from the Eastern and Western blocs since the setting up of CESE, but, at the same time, it was also the "swan song" of Czech comparative education following the Prague Spring. Cooperation was re-established and Czech CE was revitalised as late as the 1990s.

On 6 – 11 July 2008 Athens hosted the 23rd CESE conference entitled "**Changing Landscapes, Topographies and Scenarios: Educational policies, Schooling Systems, and Higher Education. *The World in Europe – Europe in the World*.** The conference was attended by over 300 experts from 35 countries representing all five continents. The host institution was the University of Athens (UA). The conference was organised by the *Centre of Comparative Education, International Education Policy and Communication at the Education Faculty of the University of Athens (CCE)*. The conference was opened by the vice-rector of UA, professor **O. Karakostas**. In his address he stressed the importance of education for human emancipation and the role of the University of Athens, the oldest university in the Balkans, for the encounter between Eastern and Western erudition and culture. Professor **R. Cowen**, president of CESE, spoke on the tasks of comparative education in the current world of globalisation, and emphasised its key importance for the understanding and interpretation of changes taking place at educational institutions and for the workings of education systems. Professor **D. Mattheou**, chairman of the preparatory committee and head of CCE, welcomed the participants on behalf of the organisers and presented information about the activities and plans of his organisation.

The conference agenda was divided into **7 sessions**: 1. Access to Education. 2. Knowledge. 3. Learning and Teaching. 4. Quality: Accreditation and Assessment. 5. Re-definitions of Space. 6. Old and New Solidarities. 7. Young Researchers. Moreover, **2 parallel symposia** were organised: 1. Views from the North on Education: Practice,

Policy and Method. 2. Comparative Education at Universities Worldwide.

The **General Meeting of CESE** was also part of the conference. In his report the outgoing president of CESE, professor R. Cowen, emphasised the need for creating networks in the area of comparative education that stretch beyond European borders, and the need for an exchange of information about activities (conferences, projects) in periods between conferences that are held once in 2 years. The call for **strengthening interdisciplinary links with expert networks in other fields** received a positive response. The General Meeting approved nominations for the new committee. Professor *Miguel Pereyra* of Granada University (Spain) was appointed President.

The plenary and other sessions and symposia at the conference were beneficial both in terms of theory and methodology. They provided important information about developments within the discipline, ongoing research and development projects, the situation in countries with an advanced scheme of comparative research into education that are well known and monitored, and the situation in countries and regions where the field is gradually developing. The main contribution can be seen in the priority focus of the conference sessions on the effects of globalisation on education, and changes in education systems - particularly in schooling and higher education.

Plenary papers were focused on key topics. Professor *A. Kazamias*, renowned American comparativist of Greek origin considered to be a leading scholar in his field, delivered an engrossing presentation entitled "*The Owl of Minerva, Pedagogical Eros and Other Comparative Mysteries*" where he focused on education from historical and comparative perspectives with numerous references to ancient philosophy. He raised many pressing issues related to erudition and education for the 21st century in the knowledge society in the context of emerging cosmopolitanism. He adopted a critical position particularly on the current overrating of the instrumental function of education, stressing its economic effectiveness and undervaluing its ethical, cultural and aesthetic functions.

In her plenary address *Are Universities Nowadays Actors and Promoters of Economic Development?* French sociologist *Ch. Mousselin* raised the key question of where the development of higher education is heading with an increasing emphasis on commercialisation of the products of research and teaching, toughening competition and differentiation of institutions. She sought answers through analysing results of comparative empirical research at universities in 3 countries (France, Germany, USA). She pointed to different mechanisms and differences in the quality and prestige of the universities that affect their development. She came to the conclusion that higher education institutions act as market players, but economic profit is not the only criterion of their operations (quasi-market).

Professor **U. Eichler** from Kassel University spoke on the topic of "*Internationalisation and Europeanisation of Higher Education in Europe: Where Do We Stand and Where Do We Move?*" He dealt with institutional changes, the funding of curricula, academic careers and the management of higher education institutions. His attention was centred on an analysis of the objectives and implications of the

Bologna process. The speaker warned about risks, particularly the risk of curricular convergence and the international stratification of higher education institutions. At the same time, he highlighted the importance of potential advantages and opportunities generated by the mobility and heterogeneity of students, and the contrast between various research and teaching paradigms that enrich knowledge. He also pointed to the phenomenon of euro-socialisation, as well as changes in the perception of academic freedoms and the strengthening of links between the academic community and society in the context of universities providing a service to society.

The final plenary presentation, which was devoted to professor Lauwerys, was delivered by leading world-known comparativist **A. Welch** of the University of Sydney. His presentation, which concerned one of the most widely discussed topics of current pedagogy, was entitled "*National State, Diaspora and Comparative Education: The Place of Place in Comparative Education*". He drew attention to the limitations of the traditional approach where the nation state is seen as the comparative unit (and international organisations carry out their analyses on the same basis). However, current research in comparative education increasingly places emphasis on other units (classes, schools, regions…) and groups within which "*international neural knowledge networks*" are created. New intellectual diasporas emerge that are not restricted to a particular location. They are the consequence of international mobility, intellectual migration and intercultural transmission and work also thanks to modern communication media. The author delivered an excellent theoretical analysis of the meaning and importance of the terms "*intellectual diaspora*" and "*circulation of knowledge*" accompanied by a number of examples from the international university environment.

The findings from the session **Re-definitions of Space**, in which the author of this report took part, relate to social, cultural, national and political aspects of education, changes in the topography of education policy, and the focus of research projects and teaching in view of international mobility. Many case studies documented changes in the location of education and the diversity of links between formal and non-formal education in local communities and groups outside communities. Moreover, the session brought a lot of specific information about changes in the European education area and the implications of the Lisbon and Bologna processes for educational institutions, schools and universities.

The symposium *Comparative Education at Universities Worldwide* chaired by professor C. Wolhuter saw the presentation of papers from 12 countries (among these, unfortunately, the Czech Republic was the only country from Central and Eastern Europe – the paper was delivered by the author of this report). A new international publication (of the same title as the symposium) was also presented as part of the symposium. It contains 47 chapters concerned with the state of affairs and development of comparative education at universities in all continents. There is enormous interest in educational research in the Czech Republic. In this context we cannot but highlight the need for publications issued in English.

The 24th CESE conference will take place in 2010 (in the 2nd half of August) at

Uppsala University (Sweden). Its central theme will be **Knowledge and Education for the Knowledge Society**, the key issues being *What is Knowledge? What Knowledge for Whom? How to differentiate Information x Knowledge x Competences?*

As these questions represent the fundamental issues widely discussed and explored in a number of empirical research studies, we warmly recommend that Czech experts should attend the conference. (For detailed information see the CESE website: http://www.cese-europe.org/index.html)

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