Explorations of Educational Purpose 24

Tom G. Griffiths
Zsuzsa Millei *Editors*

Logics of Socialist Education

Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty

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Logics of Socialist Education

EXPLORATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

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Editors

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Reflections from Zuccotti Park and Tahrir Square: Interesting, Uncertain, Insecure but Exciting Times for Socialists

Mark Ginsburg

Introduction

In their introductory chapter of this informative and important volume, Tom Griffiths and Zsuzsa Millei refer (via Wallerstein 1998) to the Chinese proverb of being 'condemned to live in interesting times'. As I write this preface during the first days of 2012, I believe that 2011, at least, was a very interesting year. Griffiths and Millei explain 'that governments, policy makers, social movements, and educators in the broadest sense, are seeking to deal with the uncertainties and insecurities of transforming national and global societies and economies … in part, by discovering and reorganising ideas and resources, including versions of socialism'. Thus, in reviewing this volume, I found myself focusing on developments that took place this past year – and continue to occur – in two cities: New York and Cairo.

Zuccotti Park in New York City, USA

Let us begin in New York. Having accepted an offer to serve as a visiting professor at Teacher College, Columbia University, I moved to this city, arriving there on 30 August. Coincidentally, this was less than 3 weeks before the Occupy Wall Street activists, on 17 September, established their base in Zuccotti Square (renamed 'Liberty Park'), which is located in the Wall Street financial district on the island of Manhattan, about 130 blocks south of the campus of Columbia University. Before the overnight campers in this movement were evicted by New York City police on

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15 November,[1] I spent either Saturday or Sunday during several weekends participating in some of the protest marches, talking with some of the diverse participants (including Egyptians) and generally soaking up the progressive political energy that radiated not only in this park but in other cities in the USA and around the world.

From my direct observations and discussions as well as from a range of media reports, I learned that some of the activists were socialists and communists (i.e. members of organised parties or tendencies) and some had been involved in anti-capitalist globalisation protests organised during meetings of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Others were not affiliated with nor labelled themselves as socialists or communists, but as signalled by the most popular chant – 'We are the 99 percent' – the growing numbers of young and not-so-young men and women coalesced because they were outraged by the increasing inequality between the rich (the 1%) and everyone else.[2] While the Occupy Wall Street movement has refrained from elaborating a core set of issues or demands, their 'Principles of Solidarity', which was adopted by the Occupy Wall Street's New York City General Assembly as 'a living document', expresses that 'we are daring to imagine a new socio-political and economic alternative that offers greater possibility of equality' (Occupiedmedia 2011).

At least for me, the 'occupy' movement was sparked by 'and continues to be driven by' democratic socialist ideals, including attention in its principles of 'empowering one another against all forms of oppression; redefining how labor is valued; and … the belief that education is human right' (Occupiedmedia 2011). Thus, it nicely links to both sections of this edited volume: (a) 'Negotiating the present: twenty-first century socialism' and 'Discovering aspects of socialist institutions and thinking for transformation'. I believe that those of us involved in the movement can learn a lot from reading the various chapters of the book.

Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt

Let me now move our geographical location from New York to Cairo. Having collaborated with Egyptian educators since the late 1980s, visited Egypt numerous times and lived in Cairo between 2004 and 2006, I perhaps paid more attention than

[1] Following over a month of verbal sparring between the protesters, police and the park's owner (Brookfield Office Properties), the police forcefully removed the protesters from Zuccotti Park, because of 'unsanitary and hazardous conditions', though a police statement indicated that protesters could return without sleeping bags, tarps or tents (Walker 2011). The protesters issued their own statement under the title, 'You can't evict an idea whose time has come' (Occupy Wall Street Media Team 2011). Six weeks later members of the group re-occupied Zuccotti Park on New Year's Eve (CNN International), when New York Police were focusing a large portion of their human and financial resources to provide 'security' for revellers who were bringing in the new year in Time Square, 50 or so blocks to the north.

[2] According to the US Congressional Budget Office (2011), the income of the top 1% of earners has more than doubled over the last 30 years. Furthermore, in 2007 the richest 1% of the American population owned 34.6% of the country's total wealth, and the next 19% owned 50.5%, and these percentages increased during the Great Recession which began in 2008, such that the percentage of wealth owned by the top 20% of Americans grew from 85 to 87.7% (Jacobs 2011, p. 7).

the many millions who watched the rise of what I term the 25 January social movement and the fall from power of President Hosni Mubarak and some of his ruling group.[3] More recently, I had an opportunity – perhaps ironically on Christmas day[4] – to spend an evening in Tahrir Square, observing groups of (mostly) men gathered in small groups and engaged in discussions, to view a series of photographs in a tent 'museum' depicting part of the storied events and sharing some 'revolution' tea and interpreted conversation with some people who continue to be involved in the movement.

Many of the youth and other activists in the 25 January movement seemed to be driven by economic concerns, unemployment and inadequate salaries even among highly educated Egyptians. And while the economy remained an issue, the movement's demands [**] ended up focusing on the removal of Mubarak from office and holding multi-party elections for legislators and the president, in part because of accusations that Mubarak and other leaders had become wealthy through their leadership positions and because of the at times violent crackdown on the protesters in Tahrir Square and other sites around the country.

While there is debate regarding the role played by the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-ʾi wān al-muslimūn*) during the initial phases of the 25 February movement, there is little question that the Brotherhood was best positioned politically to attract votes in the first two (of three) regional rounds of parliamentary elections (November–December 2011). The Freedom and Justice Party (*izb al-ʹurriya wa al-ʼadala*), which was established on 30 April 2011 by the Brotherhood, secured approximately 40% of the votes, more than twice that of other parties.[5]

This represents a major shift for a group that was banned (in 1948, 1952 and 1981 up until 2011) and thus prohibited from waging electoral campaigns until Mubarak was forced from office in February 2011. Founded in 1928 by a school teacher, Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood was first banned in 1948 by the Egyptian monarchy that ruled under British colonialism; then, after playing a key role in the anti-colonial struggle, it was banned again in 1954 by the post-colonial revolutionary government of Gamal Abdel Nasser (following an assassination attempt), and, after being given legal standing by President Anwar Sadat in exchange for its collaboration against leftists (socialists and Nasserists), it was banned again by the government of Hosni Mubarak (because of the Brotherhood's link to those

[3] Up until now, I refrain from referring to this as a revolution. In part, this is because many of Mubarak's team remained in or were named to ministerial and other positions, including the members of the Supreme Council of the Military who ruled Egypt at least through the November–January national legislative elections. More generally, I conceive it to be an open question the extent to which Egypt's political economy will be transformed as a result of the Egyptian version of the Arab 'spring' or 'uprising'.

[4] The irony of being in Tahrir Square on 25 December is not just that approximately 90% of Egyptians are Muslim but that even the minority Coptic Christians celebrate Christmas on 7 January, which became a national holiday in Egypt within the last decade.

[5] The Freedom and Justice is led by Mohamed Morsy as president, Rafik Habib (who is Christian) as vice president and Saad al-Katatny as secretary general (Wikipedia 2012b).

who assassinated Sadat) (see Ginsburg and Megahed 2003). During the 1990s, the Ministry of Education removed educators who were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and sought to eliminate curriculum content and dress codes (e.g. requiring girls to be covered) (Herrera 2006). Nevertheless, with the opening of the system to multi-party parliamentary elections, in 2005 independent candidates affiliated to the Brotherhood won 20% of the seats, more than any other group outside the governing National Democratic Party (see Ginsburg et al. 2010). However, in the 2010 parliamentary elections, which was marred with irregularities, almost all of these candidates were defeated by individuals running on the National Democratic Party slate (Bayoumi 2010).

So, how does the emergence of the religion-based Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt have any relevance to this volume devoted to socialist ideas about education and society? Indeed, the Party's political programme indicates that it supports free-market capitalism but without 'manipulation or monopoly'. And for some, the fact that the Party, like the Brotherhood, is committed to establishing a society based on Sharia (Islamic law as inscribed in the Qur'an and Sunnah) may render it as anti-socialist. However, it is important to note what one of the spokespeople for the Party stated, 'when we talk about the slogans of the revolution – freedom, social justice, equality[6] – all of these are in the Sharia' (Wikipedia 2012b). According to the Muslim Brotherhood, among other groups, Islam requires people to strive for social justice and to eradicate poverty. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood, having begun as a religious social organisation, preaching Islam but also teaching the illiterate, setting up hospitals and establishing commercial enterprises, might be seen to reflect a key dictum of Marxism, from each according to his/her ability and to each according to his/her need. Certainly, the many years of providing educational and social services to poor Egyptians, who somehow the national and provincial governments could not reach, accounts for the strength of their political base.

More surprising to many analysts and many of my Egyptian colleagues was the electoral achievements of the Al-Nour Party (*izb al-nūr* or 'The Light'), which captured approximately 20% of the seats in the first two rounds of parliamentary elections. Al-Nour was established, after the ouster of Mubarak, by one of the largest Salafist groups in Egypt, the Salafi Call (*Al-Da'wa Al-Salafiyya*), also known as the Al-Dawaa movement. Like the Brotherhood, the Al-Dawaa movement promotes a society based on Sharia. However, the Salafis are seen to be more strict in their interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, claiming to model their practices of Islam directly on those of the Prophet Muhammad, and the Al-Dawaa movement was established in the 1970s as an alternative to the Brotherhood (Wikipedia 2012a).

[6] With respect to gender equality, the Muslim Brotherhood interprets Islam conservatively. Its founder called for '… segregation of male and female students' and a separate curriculum for girls (Shenker and Whittaker 2011). And, in October 2007, the Muslim Brotherhood issued a detailed political platform. Among other things, it called for … limiting the office of the presidency to Muslim men. … While underlining 'equality between men and women in terms of their human dignity', the document warned against 'burdening women with duties against their nature or role in the family' (Bradley 2008, p. 65). For discussion of multiple perspectives on the role of women within Islamic discourses, see Ginsburg and Megahed (2003) and Megahed (2010).

Nevertheless, one can see in its programme that the Al-Nour Party (2012) has elements in common with what might be derived from socialist ideals and practices. For example, the Party calls for:

- Free education from the earliest stages
- Free medical treatment
- Increased availability of housing
- Food self-sufficiency
- Government subsidising water, fertiliser and improved seeds
- Antitrust laws to fight against business monopolies (particularly in areas such as food)

Moreover, it is claimed that Al-Nour's electoral success was partly a result of loyalty they won from voters through their 'charitable activities: help for the sick and the poor; financial assistance to widows, divorcées, and young women in need of marriage trousseaus; and abundant religious instruction' (Wikipedia 2012a).

Conclusion

To conclude, I note that in their introductory chapter to this edited volume Griffiths and Millei quote Wallerstein (2010, pp. 140–41) regarding the choices available to those who critique and challenge the current dominant, neoliberal, capitalist world: 'We can choose collectively a new system that essentially resembles the present one … Alternatively we can choose a radically different system, one that has never previously existed – a system that is relatively democratic and relatively egalitarian'. They also refer to Stark and Bruszt's (1998, p. 7) view of 'social change not as transition from one order to another but as transformation – rearrangements, reconfigurations, and recombinations that yield new interweavings of the multiple social logics that are modern society'.

I agree with the editors and authors of this book that socialist ideas and practices are a rich source on which to draw as we struggle for creating a more just and sustainable world. Certainly, this is evident in the 'Occupy Wall Street' and related movements. At the same time, I encourage colleagues, and not only those on the left politically, to consider the ideas and practices of Islam and Islamic (and other religious) groups. While the outcome of current developments in Egypt is far from clear, it should be apparent that we can learn much from the tactics as well as the ideologies of the Muslim Brotherhood and even those of the Salafi Call.

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Discovering and Negotiating Socialist Educational Logics Under Post-socialist Conditions

Tom G. Griffiths and Zsuzsa Millei

Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty in the Twenty-First Century

Citing an ancient Chinese curse, Immanuel Wallerstein (1998) frequently notes, in reference to our historical world-system and its structures of knowledge, that we are condemned to live in interesting times. Our times are indeed interesting in multiple and complex ways, as could perhaps be claimed at all times. Into the second decade of the twenty-first century, analysts like Wallerstein argue that we have, for some time, been living in world-system defining times with heightened opportunities to influence the course of the current system's transformation towards an uncertain alternative. Žižek (2011) concurs, asserting that 'we are entering a new period in which the economic crisis has become permanent, simply a way of life', coupled with multiple crises that 'occur at both extremes of life – ecology (natural externality) and pure financial speculation – not at the core of the productive process' (403). What Wallerstein, Žižek and other theorists have in common is their elaboration of distinctive challenges that confront global capitalism in the twenty-first century, challenges that some argue defy resolution without disrupting capitalism's essential operating principle of the endless accumulation of capital (see, e.g. Li 2008; Wallerstein 2011a). In this renewed critique of contemporary capitalism, Alain Badiou (2008) has been central in promoting discussion about the idea of communism, its historical and contemporary meanings (see also Douzinas and Žižek 2010). For Badiou (2008), the communist hypothesis for contemporary times insists that 'a different collective organisation is practicable, one that will eliminate the inequality of wealth and even the division of labour' (35). These challenges and possibilities open new spaces for rethinking, imagining and theorising alternatives.

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The rise of neo-liberal capitalism, or simply neo-liberalism, can be read as an attempt to halt and even reverse long-term structural trends within the capitalist world-system of increasing wages, increasing input costs and increased taxation (Schouton 2008). That is to say, a systematic programme of decreasing the costs of production to maintain and maximise profits and capital accumulation. On the question of stimulating capital accumulation, David Harvey (2009) documents the 'dismal' achievements to conclude that 'neoliberalisation has broadly failed to stimulate worldwide growth' (154), but through privatisations and intensified processes of commodification has effectively redistributed wealth and income from the lower to the upper classes (see Harvey 2009: 159–165). The logic of neo-liberalism has spread across the globe and across all institutions of the modern nation state, including the provision of basic social services like health care and education. Where versions of the welfare state emerged and developed over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, offering some measure of social security now, and/or the promise of security in the future, the neo-liberal offensive invoked new levels of insecurity and uncertainty for populations across the globe.

Neo-liberalism began in developed capitalist states, winding back welfare state provisions and installing a counter logic of individual responsibility for ever more facets of social life, including essential services like health care, education and retirement pensions. The privatisation of the latter is described by Harvey (2009) as 'one of the most egregious of all policies of dispossession, often procured against the broad political will of the population' (161). Such policies were applied on a substantial social democratic welfare base in countries like Sweden, Norway and Finland, for example, but the same logic had penetrated many of the socialist states, such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, during the 1970s and 1980s in the idea of 'market socialism'. Under 'market socialism', some of the industries, including education, were decentralised, and entrepreneurship was encouraged in the service economy coupled with the 're-privatisation' of the individual to gain 'relative freedom from state inference' with the hope to increase the standards of living (Robinson 1982: 3; Sáska 2004; Stark 2009). In this way, individuals' opportunities to improve their economic situation through becoming private entrepreneurs increased, while the state's role to provide social security, enshrined in the conceptualisation and creation of welfare states by the 1950s, weakened.

The end of the Cold War and the loss of the geopolitical counterweight of the Soviet Union had and continue to have extraordinary implications globally, with its demise most acutely experienced by former socialist states, and those under the rule of national liberation movements/governments. In some cases, extreme versions of neo-liberalism applied in national contexts, sometimes under the banner of 'shock therapy', with devastating results. This included the restructuring of the communist system of welfare with extreme repercussions as populations lost the few aspects of their socialist past that had made life under the authoritarian communist party regimes tolerable – universal health care, free public education, public housing and transport, subsidised utilities, etc. (Potůček 2009; Taylor-Gooby 2004). Roy's (2000)

seminal text on the 'creation of nations' in Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia adds another crucial dimension by exploring the cultural loss of a collective identity:

> What is one to do with medals that were won in a war that no longer has meaning? What does one do with awards that were once the pride of model Soviet workers? The trips to Moscow, the commemorative badges and lapel pins, the diplomas with their hammers and sickles, the whole *cursus honorum* which meant that one was 'someone'? … Now, though, all these things which previously marked a person's existence as being positive are no longer meaningful … The teleology of everyday life has disappeared (164–165).

Perhaps the most apparent component of the contemporary crisis of capitalism, and the one on which there is most consensus amongst critics of neo-liberalism, and of capitalism more broadly rather than this particular variant, is the ecological crisis confronting the globe (Fotopoulos 2006). The ecology of the earth is threatened by increased global temperatures, a result of growing concentrations of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide) related primarily to the use of fossil fuels. The consequences include rising sea levels, extreme climatic events (floods and droughts), reduced global agricultural capacity and the massive extinction of species (Li 2008: 170). One of the most immediate consequences of the ecological crisis on humans is the biological one. Detailing the catastrophic effects of the growth economy escalating during neo-liberalism, Koumentakis (2009) discusses the elements of the biological crisis in the increase on chronic degenerative diseases, unhealthy habits due to consumer society, significant number of people in the global South suffer from apparent physical and mental weakness due to environmental pollution, and the diseases of the global North summarised as psychiatric and neurological diseases and cancer, diabetes and obesity. The biological crisis also includes the disruption of the food production chain and animal welfare violation and the spread of diseases, such as 'mad cow', through industrial farming. Requiring coordinated global action to stabilise the ecology of the planet, we find growing 'climate sceptics', 'food security', 'animal rights' and 'alternative energy' advocates, thus civic protests, merging into political movements and organisations. Their appeal can be understood from many angles, including the complexity of the climate science, the perceived threat to living standards and health (in the developed world) and the psychological discomfort of the high level of insecurity and uncertainty that the global ecological crisis entails.

Adding to this context, the world is still feeling the effects of the so-called global financial crisis (GFC), with some arguing that the crisis is ongoing and a second wave is on its way, if not already here (Panitch et al. 2010). At the time of writing, desperate efforts are made, one after the other, to ensure that Greece and Italy are loaned sufficient additional billions of Euros to enable them to continue to pay their debts, amidst fear of an unmanaged default and its effect on the international financial system. In both cases, the presidents have stepped aside to facilitate the creation of 'governments on national unity' to implement the austerity packages being imposed to reduce debt and government expenditure and restructure the national economies. Here again according to mainstream economists like Stiglitz (2010), such packages will almost certainly add to the downward spiral in these and associated

national economies, with all of the consequent social and political repercussions. These processes play out in a climate of increasing fears of an unstable European Union, the disestablishment of the Eurozone and the possibility of member states leaving the Union.

Global insecurity can be seen to have escalated then via the implementation of neo-liberal inspired policies seeking to increase profits on the expense of social welfare and social security, compounded by the collapse of historical socialism, and then global ecological and financial crises that transcend all national borders. In an interview marking the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, Zygmunt Bauman's sociological analysis concludes that since 9/11 we live in continual uncertainty and individuals have fears never experienced before, 'when there is nothing in control'.[1] The fears are scattered and diffuse making it difficult to pinpoint the source of these fears. The imminent possibility of environmental or financial crisis that seriously effect individuals' lives continuously lurks over us. This applies both to our private and public lives, while every move we make to stabilise our lives might have quite the opposite consequences. Bauman adds that there is a separation between power and politics, where power is the ability to do things and politics is to decide which things to be done. As he explains further, power and politics was united in the form of the nation state up until about 50 years ago. There was a reasonable expectation that when it was decided what needed to be done, there was power oriented towards that and things were done. As power has arguably evaporated from the nation state to the 'space of flows', politics has remained at the local level. In this way, the separation has increased between deciding what actions are needed and the power necessary to do the things that need to be done. This reorganisation of power and politics contributes to the feeling that, in Bauman's terms, 'there is nothing in control'.

We would argue, however, returning to Wallerstein's theorising, that this situation presents us with historically unique opportunities to disrupt and overturn neo-liberalism. While governments, through applying a neo-liberal logic, increasingly devolved responsibility for social and welfare security to communities and individuals, this shift also contributed to the politicisation and organisation of community actions, as is evident at the time of writing in the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement with parallel occupy movements across the globe challenging neo-liberal logic and challenging the response of central governments to the GFC.[2] Some of these movements explicitly base their ideas on reconceptualised understandings of socialism, such as the landless workers movement in Brazil as discussed by Tarlau in Chap. 4.

Wallerstein (2010) characterises the contemporary situation as one in which we face distinctive historical choices. He metaphorically refers to the battle (and choice) between the spirit of Davos, site of the annual World Economic Forum, and the spirit

[1] See: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/video/2011/sep/01/zygmunt-bauman-terrorism-video?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3486

[2] See http://www.occupywallst.org

of Porto Alegre, site of the World Social Forum. Acknowledging that the names are not important, Wallerstein (2010: 140–141) argues that they represent a struggle underway in some form since 1968, a struggle over the nature and content of the contemporary world-system:

> We can choose collectively a new system that essentially resembles the present one: hierarchical, exploitative and polarising. There are many forms this could take, and some could be harsher than the capitalist world-system in which we have been living. Alternatively we can choose a radically different system, one that has never previously existed – a system that is relatively democratic and relatively egalitarian.

This characterisation is linked to a longer argument, developed over decades, about the emergence of 'liberalism' as the dominant ideology of the capitalist world-system in the long nineteenth century (e.g. Wallerstein 1995, 2011b). In this argument, a version (and interpretation) of liberalism emerged triumphant from the struggle between the three main ideologies of the modern world-system, conservativism, liberalism and radicalism (socialism/communism); this struggle in turn connected to the cultural impact of the French Revolution.

In Wallerstein's analyses, liberalism is posited as the dominant ideology, or 'geoculture', of the modern world-system, such that a common set of values underpinning and running through the constitution of modern nation states and their institutions can be identified across the multiple polities, including ostensibly socialist and non-socialist regimes, that make up the world-system. These values include core aspects like the promise of (and belief in) linear national economic development and growth via rational planning and policy action of policymakers within central governments, carrying some notion of social and economic well-being, if not utopia, being over the horizon for the national population. This line of argument connects the collapse of historical socialism to its failure to sufficiently deliver on the promises of liberalism, given in part the incapacity of the capitalist world economy to deliver such outcomes for all states given the reliance of core zones on surplus value extracted from peripheral zones of the world economy. The ensuing crisis of the 'two-step' solution of achieving state power and then legislating to change the world, as another core feature of the geoculture of liberalism, adds to contemporary uncertainties and accompanying historical opportunities.

Wallerstein's thesis of the capitalist world-system in crisis, and a long period of structural transformation into some uncertain alternative, aligns with a broad range of analyses citing major structural crises globally. These are typically associated with the world financial system and its key institutions (e.g. Toussaint and Millet 2010), the global environmental crisis (e.g. Bellamy Foster et al. 2010), conflict, war and terrorism (e.g. Chomsky 2010). Wallerstein's observation that we are condemned to living in interesting times usually comes with the idea that we are also 'condemned to act' (Wallerstein 1994: 16), whereby action involves the intellectual task of understanding social reality and the capitalist world-system, as a basis for thinking and imagining more equal, just and democratic alternatives, and the political action required to move in such directions.

Discovering Socialism

By now, into the second decade of the twenty-first century, Fukuyama's (1992: 4) thesis of the end of history, with 'Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government', has been quite thoroughly challenged. In the current climate of the crisis of neo-liberal capitalism or 'market fundamentalism', even mainstream figures like Stiglitz (2010) are describing the two decades since 1989 as 'the short period of American triumphalism' (219) and one that has clearly ended. Stiglitz (2010) refutes Fukuyama by elaborating the breadth and depth of the contemporary crisis and loss of legitimacy of at least the United States' market fundamentalist version of 'democratic market capitalism' (219). The challenge to this sort of free-market orthodoxy, referred to for a long period as the 'Washington Consensus', has been extensive and found in the whole political spectrum. Stiglitz's (2002, 2010) analysis points to the developing world's understanding and critique of the hypocrisy of developed nations' attempts to impose the free-market 'consensus' on them while protecting their own markets. Noam Chomsky has similarly detailed and critiqued this type of hypocrisy for decades, pointing out that 'the worst results were found where the [Washington consensus] rules were rigorously applied, as in Latin America' (Chomsky 2007: 334).

Accepting this critique of the dominant social and economic paradigm that has been promoted and imposed globally since the collapse of historical socialism, however, does not at all translate into the rediscovery of the socialist past and call for its return. We have some sympathy with major intellectual figures who have remained on the Left, like Eric Hobsbawm for example, who asserted that:

> The USSR and most of the states and societies built on its model, children of the October Revolution on 1917 which inspired us, have collapsed so completely, leaving behind a landscape of material and moral ruin, that it must now be obvious that failure was built into this enterprise from the start (Hobsbawm 2002: 127).

But Hobsbawm's critique is coupled with the view that:

> if you think that communism is something greater than the history of the backward countries in which it happened that communists got to power, then that history is not reason enough to abandon the chosen cause (Hobsbawm 2000: 160).

For Hobsbawm, this is about the ongoing need for political projects driven by 'the possibility of improving and emancipating the world', without 'believing in the utopia of a perfect world' (161), and so for the editors, in this sense 'discovering socialism' and its potential to contribute to such action.

There is ample evidence of ruptures in the Washington consensus, and the accompanying assumption that there is no alternative to the dominant model of market capitalism (Stiglitz 2002, 2010). These ruptures range from emerging local and global social justice movements, frequently and inaccurately described as 'antiglobalisation' movements, to what in some ways appear to be orthodox left-wing political parties implementing programmes of radical social democracy under an overt critique of global capitalism and expressed intent to define and construct a viable model of socialism for the twenty-first century. Lopes Cardozo's chapter dealing with the case of Bolivia offers a rich and

nuanced insight into the complexities and resulting tensions associated with an overt, contemporary programme of decolonising mass education and promoting indigenous and non-capitalist values. With respect to political developments in Latin America, Sader (2008) described the rise of Left and Centre-Left governments in the first decade of this century as indicative of the end of neo-liberalism and development of 'alternative policies for regional integration' (30). Rodríguez-Garavito, Barrett and Chavez (2008) refute Carlos Casteñada's (1993) depiction of the 'clear-cut, sweet, and spectacular' victory of the United States and capitalism in Latin America, arguing like Sader that in stark contrast, 'the region is witnessing the multiplication and consolidation of leftist movements, parties, and local and national governments' (2).[3]

As the chapters in the first section of this volume, Negotiating the Present: Twenty-First Century Socialism, make clear, socialism as an idea is being cited and debated in contemporary Latin American states, their governments and in broader social movements. Indeed, the national governments of countries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador are seeking to elaborate a model of the 'twenty-first century socialism', with an emphasis on democratic participation, or 'protagonistic and participatory democracy' as advanced particularly in Venezuela (see Chap. 2 by Lopes Cardozo ; Chap. 5 by Shah; and Chap. 6 by Griffiths). Developments like these require rigorous and critical assessments, as does the evaluation of historical socialism. Our purported 'discovery' of socialism then rests on a conscious intent to avoid uncritical presentations of twenty-first century socialist utopias, being well aware of the perils Hobsbawm alluded to (see, e.g. Imre et al. 2010). As Wallerstein (1998) acknowledged, 'utopias are breeders of illusions and therefore, inevitably, of disillusions' (1). He called instead for the development of 'utopistics' that constitute:

> the serious assessment of historical alternatives, the exercise of our judgement as to the substantive rationality of alternative possible historical systems … Not the face of the perfect (and inevitable) future, but the face of an alternative, credibly better, and historically possible (but far from certain) future (1–2).

This volume seeks to contribute to such efforts, through its analyses of historical and contemporary socialist projects and their educational systems and policies. The discovery of socialist logics here, within and around educational projects, involves the constant dialectic process of clarifying and understanding these logics in historical socialist and contemporary post-socialist conditions.

Socialist Logics for Education and Social Transformation

Universal education to at least some level was a part of the promise of liberalism, the dominant ideology and geoculture of the world-system established in the 'long nineteenth century' (Wallerstein 2011b: 277). Enshrined as a basic human right in

[3] Carlos Casteñada may be described as a Latin American equivalent of Fukuyama (see Casteñada 1993).

Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[4] education was also casted as a precondition for individuals to realise other human rights. Since its introduction, mass schooling was also thought to provide opportunity for social improvement for everyone, 'and for access to power and privilege which only a few in society had hitherto enjoyed' (Taylor et al. 1997: 126). Part of the logic here was the belief in education's potential to disenfranchise already disadvantaged people as educational credentials were converted into professional occupations with improved remuneration (see McCowan 2010 for a review of the 'positional benefits' of schooling underpinning dominant expressions of the universal right to education and argument for an alternative basis of the right). Moreover, using the same sort of logic, it was hoped that the upward social mobility for individuals could be extended to nation states, and in this way, the application of universal education became a core strategy for addressing extreme poverty and so-called 'underdevelopment' of nations.

The commitment to achieving universal access[5] to education, at least up to a certain (minimal) level, is a central component of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), via the 'Education for All' (EFA) agenda, that seeks to realise universal access to primary education by 2015, and that also cites the need to provide learning opportunities at every stage in life, from infancy to adulthood (see UNESCO 2011). By 2012, the achievement of the modest goal of access to universal primary schooling was by no means assured. Wider structural, social, political and economic arrangements worked against this goal's accomplishment within nation states and on the global scale.[6] Klees (2008) characterised this situation as a lack of political will to devote sufficient resources to universal primary education and other MDGs, arguing that 'simply having these policies may be sufficient for compensatory legitimation; fulfilling them, judging by past experience, seems to be less important' (322).

By referring to the goal of access to universal primary education as 'modest', we are not downplaying the seriousness of the fact that as of late 2011 approximately 69 million primary school-age children do not have access to primary schooling, nor the importance of realising such goals.[7] However, as some of the authors in this volume point out, universal primary (and kindergarten and secondary) schooling has been rapidly achieved historically (e.g. Chap. 9 by Perry and Chap. 10 by Bain) and in this century (see Chap. 5 by Shah and Chap. 6 by Griffiths), in line with socialist logics of education. These experiences highlight the potential for such goals to be achieved

[4] See: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml.

[5] We are critical of the term 'universal access', since it only guarantees access, but not the completion of a high quality primary schooling.

[6] UNESCO's (2011) report notes that 'there is still a very large gap between the Education for All goals set in 2000 and the limited advances that have been made' (1), while a 2010 MDG Fact Sheet observed that 'the pace of progress is insufficient to ensure that, by 2015, all girls and boys complete a full course of primary schooling' (see http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_2_EN.pdf).

[7] See UNESCO (2011).

and indeed for more ambitious targets to be realised, when underpinned by both the required political will and the associated social and economic resources and policy priorities. As UNESCO's own analysis consistently notes, the question of resources and infrastructure required for states to achieve universal primary schooling is the major hurdle still to be overcome; this problem being inextricably linked to states' differential position within the world economy. Our point here is that socialist logics and the associated will and investments delivered universal education in diverse socio-economic contexts. Therefore, it continues to hold some value and offer potential insights, in terms of the wider, global, social and economic conditions and logics needed to achieve and move beyond the modest EFA goals.

Questions of access to quality education, and equity in student performance, clearly remain a major theme globally in research about assessment and reform of educational systems (see, e.g. Alexander 2010; Stromquist 2005; Gorard and Smith 2004). In the post-socialist era, the focus on access and equity puts forward a utopian ideal of a pure meritocracy in which educational performance is determined only by individual's ability, interest and effort, without any embedded influence of social, economic and cultural capital impacting on these internal features of individuals. Meritocracy is again, arguably, a goal towards which former socialist states made significant advances, and from the 1960s critiqued the very framework of this kind of logic embedded in capitalist education systems (see, e.g. McCallum 1990) that put forward the meritocratic ideal without the aim of and accompanying policies for social transformation, required to realise this kind of egalitarian ideal (as evident, e.g. in Bakonyi et al. 1963 textbook for kindergarten teachers).

Understanding differences in educational performance is historically based on shifting theories and remedies. The socialist logic is only one way to tackle this issue. Reform trajectories from the 1960s identified disadvantage in terms of differences in racial, ethnic and socio-economic background and addressed these on a cultural level, such as compensatory education programmes based on the theory of 'culture of poverty' (Taylor et al. 1997). In the post-socialist era, understanding and remedying disadvantage, while disadvantage is growing globally, is even less associated with socio-economic conditions. The focus is typically on the 'better' governance of education systems, including the reform of the curriculum to 'better' account for difference, school reform to be more 'inclusive', the professional development/'change' of teachers and the earlier identification of 'problem' students and families. These approaches add to or perpetuate the myth that tinkering with pedagogical and/or curricular reforms, or improving schools or the 'quality' of teachers, or 'fixing students' can bring about the utopian meritocracy in isolation from wider social dynamics.

Some limited indications of the requirement to underwrite educational access and equity with social and economic reforms can be found in dominant policy narratives. For example, UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009* (UNESCO 2008) cites the need to 'strengthen wider anti-poverty commitments' (3) and makes general calls on national governments to 'develop well-defined targets for reducing disparities … based on wealth, location, ethnicity, gender and other indicators … and monitor progress towards their achievement' (4). These are part of other MDGs in such reports but presented as part of the move towards achieving quality Education

for All with equity. More equitable funding of schools and better management of 'selection processes' between schools and the 'tracking' of students within schools are singled out as areas for achieving greater equity (92–93). Not surprisingly, these global policy initiatives fall well short of the envisaged transformation of society that historical socialism and more contemporary social justice and twenty-first century socialist movements advocate.

Education and Human Dignity

Within former socialist states, as in capitalist contexts, the expansion of mass school education was very clearly advanced in terms of the country making optimal use of the available human capital to support, via a process of rational planning, the project of national economic development. Here, we see aspects of Wallerstein's 'geoculture of liberalism' in educational policy. As Griffiths points out in the case of contemporary Venezuela (Chap. 6), decisions like these were often driven by distorted patterns of national economic development, industrialisation, wealth ownership and distribution inherited by socialist governments. Such histories, tied to colonialism and neocolonialism, and models of dependent development that may have required large populations with little or no education, exacerbated the perceived need for rapid expansion to support programmes of independent and endogenous national development. But the envisaged educational expansion was also political and ideological, explicitly acknowledging the potential contribution to basic human dignity, indeed to the fuller realisation of being human, that education could make.

Education under historical socialism shared both human capital logic and the idea of education as a fundamental human right, these being thrusts in overarching educational policy that clearly have global dimensions. At the formal policy level, however, and with real consequences for educational practice in many contexts, mass education under socialism was charged with achieving much more. It was in socialist kindergartens and schools that 'new' socialist citizens were to be formed, with the required dispositions, values and attitudes, and cultivated with a mix of knowledge of which a part was previously only accessible to the nobility and bourgeoisie, to bring about the transformation of their own society along the path towards socialism and communism. As Cheng (2009) concluded with respect to the Chinese and Cuban cases, 'the new man became the fundamental momentum and the centrepiece of the major radical policies and institutional innovations … from educational reforms and mass model emulation to militarisation, anti-urban and anti-elite culture, promotion of moral incentives, and so on' (222). The case of the Landless Peasant Movement (MST) schools in contemporary Brazil, explored by Tarlau in Chap. 4, illustrates the legacy of this type of educational goal as MST school teachers seek to apply and adapt Soviet theorists to educate socialist militants to transform Brazilian society.

This potential of education was taken up seriously in former socialist states. As a political principle, they placed high priority on the universal provision of a common

curriculum via the concept of integral or comprehensive kindergarten and schooling. Moreover, the extension of common educational experiences to all was typically carried out in a context of additional and complementary social programmes, like public housing, health care, transport, etc., and the distribution of educational resources by the centre to students, contributing to conditions under which upward social mobility became possible for many, especially during the first period of socialism (Sáska 2006). This logic was a characteristic of socialist education that originates in the anti-capitalist idea of reform or 'free education' developed in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and sees education as a tool for the development of full human potential (see for a detailed explanation Sáska 2006).[8] However, during the 1930s in the Soviet Union and after the 1950s in Hungary for example, this ideal and the associated institutional structural changes were seriously curtailed. Without further commitment to structural and pedagogical reforms, only a rhetoric of equality remained in place that limited the possibility of upward mobility to workers' children, for example, due to institutions returning to their earlier selection mechanisms (Sáska 2006). Powerful and long-lasting effects of this wave of reforms remained, however, even if it was transformed into a more symbolic form, as is well illustrated in Bain's chapter noting heightened attention on the model of comprehensive schooling that is correlated with both high achievement and equity in contemporary international assessment systems like PISA.

In concert with Bauman's (2001) assertion and our broad argument developed above, for the equal standing for each human, we need to first ensure 'equality of resources necessary to recast the fate of individuals *de jure* [condition we share with every man and woman] into the capacities of individuals *de facto* [capacity which sets them apart from a great number of contemporaries], and second, collective insurance against individual incapacities and misfortunes' (149). Social and economic transformation in this way is fundamental to delivering universal education that in turn helps to guarantee the 'equal right to be human and the equal ability to act on that right' (Bauman 2001: 150).

Comparative Education Theorising and Socialist Challenges

Post-socialism offers a research context that helps to complicate, critique and refine comparative education theorising. One line of theorising that has been widespread in the comparative education field, although arguably incidental in its treatment of

[8] Dewey visited the Soviet Union during these times repeatedly and advocated this type of education that strove to raise free humans through the project method, coupled with social transformation that could make this freedom possible. He believed that without social transformation this form of progressive education could not be achieved (Sáska 2006). Moreover, this educational philosophy of 'free education' and the 'waning of school' mirrored the ideal discussed by Lenin in *State and Revolution* about the 'waning of state'.

the question of socialist education, is the neo-institutionalist or world culture theory framework identifying global convergence in educational policy (e.g. Meyer et al. 1997). This approach looks to and compares policy of national systems, and their relationship to shared understandings of the institutions of the modern nation state, to account for similarities across national systems that are found in, for example, commitments to mass education and models of national curricular systems (Benavot 1992; Benavot and Braslavsky 2006; Meyer et al. 1992a), and education for national citizen formation (Benavot 1996; Meyer 2006).

Socialist contexts offer an extension to this theorising by challenging theorists to explain, for example, the development of the universal preschool education systems established in former socialist countries. By the 1960s, former socialist states mostly provided free or affordable universal provisions with holistic programmes encompassing care, health and nutrition in addition to education, which also reached out to parents (see, e.g. Batistič Zorec's reassessment of Slovene socialist preschools for children in Chap. 7, and also Millei 2011 and Millei and Imre 2010). In many core countries, however, universal access to early care and education remains an unfulfilled aim as of today. As documented by UNESCO (2008: i), access to 'basic programs in early childhood [also] remains very low in most of the developing world and few programmes exist for children under age 3'. Through this disjuncture, we see that well before the global push for the expansion of mass school education from the 1970s, as described by neo-institutionalist scholars (e.g. Boli et al. 1985; Meyer et al. 1992b), socialist logics, and the accompanying programmes of socialist governments, had acknowledged the importance of and invested heavily in providing a common and comprehensive education from kindergarten up to lower secondary level, for all of kindergarten and school-age children as well as for adults previously excluded from education systems.

Griffiths has sought to both critique and extend the institutionalist world culture analyses on the question of education under and for socialism, arguing that socialist states' ongoing participation in the capitalist world-system, and sharing of its dominant geoculture of liberalism, can better account for observed convergence across ostensibly socialist and capitalist political systems (Griffiths 2004, 2009; Griffiths and Knezevic 2010). Socialist education's retention of a strong instrumentalist character, developing human capital for national (and socialist international) economies and their growth, and seeking to prepare citizens loyal to the nation state, aligns with a world-systems perspective of multiple polities in a single world economy effectively seeking upward mobility for the nation state (towards core status), via a greater share of global surplus, with common implications for national educational policy, structures and systems. Contributions to this volume illustrate this type of convergence in historical and contemporary conditions and are coupled with nuanced understandings of the contextual differences of such convergent policies and their democratic and egalitarian effects and potentials under socialist ideologies.

Further complexities for comparative theorising are offered by the examination of the failures of historical socialist systems to achieve, partially or in full, desired transformations. Samoff's (1991) introductory essay for a special issue of *Comparative Education Review* on socialist education noted the fundamental link between socialist

governments' efforts to 'revolutionise their education systems' and 'efforts to transform their societies' (2). Published at the moment when historical socialism was in demise, Samoff (1991) suggested that failures in the intended formation of new socialist citizens through mass education were a contributory factor to the failure to realise the transformation of society and construction of a more 'egalitarian, meritocratic and participatory' socialist alternative. He noted, for example:

> What is striking, however, is that the broader themes of socialist construction–participation, democracy, self-reliance, collective responsibility, critical questioning of authority, demystifying expertise–are so little visible in the schools. Reproducing the values and relationships of the current social order pre-empts transforming it into something else (14).

Samoff went on to cite difficulties in conceiving and implementing models of revolutionary education, despite formal policy intent, while the limited efforts to democratise education were seen as part of a broader failure to expand and deepen democratic participation in governance more broadly under the banner of socialism.

What we see here, in part, is a quite straightforward disjuncture between formal policy and its enactment, and more specifically a disjuncture between the official curriculum of popular participation in governance and the lived experience of citizens. A recent volume by Blum (2011) explored in some depth the resulting 'double consciousness' or 'double morals' experienced by Cuban citizens when lived social reality contradicts the formal messages. Sanyal and Lancaster's analysis in Chap. 3 presents some further insights into this clash between local realities and official socialist ideology or the 'double morals' that are in work in contemporary Cuba, presented through the socialist pedagogy of debates in teaching *valores* (values) to primary school students. Connecting with this line of critique, Prew's chapter provides an illuminating study of the complex character and influence of left-wing liberation movements on educational policy and practice in Southern Africa, pre- and post-independence and apartheid. He argues that in South Africa in particular the radical rhetoric and alternative practices were quickly abandoned, connected in part to the post-Soviet/post-socialist context in which the liberation struggle triumphed. The apparent failures or vigorous negotiations in socialist systems of education open multiple paths for further research and theory building.

From another analytical position, post-socialism, as a condition of the present (Silova 2010) that is characterised by growing uncertainty and insecurity at the global scale and in people's private lives, provides rich and complex opportunities for engaged comparative education research. Here, we want to emphasise that this volume's contribution to this wider project is interested in what the past and present hold for the future, but in ways that avoid utopian approaches that focus on the absent features of an ideal future. We want to explore the ways in which the past can provide institutional and community resources for change in the present. Following Stark and Bruszt's (1998: 7) analytical consideration, 'we see social change not as transition from one order to another but as transformation – rearrangements, reconfigurations, and recombinations that yield new interweavings of the multiple social logics that are modern society'. From this perspective, we see particular aspects and structures rearranged and curricular and/or pedagogical practices transformed by mixing with,

altering or resisting characteristics of socialist education. Logics of socialist education, thought to have been discarded entirely or successfully 'reformed' in the post-Soviet/post-socialist era, were instead re-formed in multiple ways.

We therefore advocate comparative study of education in post-socialist conditions that understands modernisation theory as a rationality that governmental actors and policymakers appropriated to make sense of the changes ahead and act. In this way, underlined by a value system attached to modernisation theory, post-socialist 'transitions' were imagined, facilitated and assessed in relation to the idea of 'catching up' to the main features and structures of the most 'advanced' or 'developed' capitalist countries built on efficient modern market capitalism (Kornai 1992). Transition was thus driven by the implantation or strengthening of market mechanisms, restructuring of the banking and wider financial systems, 'the building of political institutions of the nation state for making democratic participation possible and, last but not least, the development of a pluralistic society' (Altaver 1998). The underpinning binary between socialism and a capitalist free-market economy, evident in transition policies and interpretations, quickly inscribed its logic onto educational reforms of the region as well. Reform policies and curriculum frameworks sought to immediately remove ideology in an attempt to depoliticise education, and hurried attempts were made to democratise and pluralise education systems, based on a priori evaluations of socialist education systems as non-democratic (see Chap. 9 by Perry).

The examination of socialist schooling and kindergarten education in this post-socialist context, inscribed with the logic of modernisation theory, is inherently tainted and almost by definition incapable of identifying and considering positive aspects of the past by virtue of the outlook examining deficiencies in comparison to the 'developed West' (e.g. Vonta 2007; Oun 2006 and see Perry 2009 for further explanation). It is not surprising that in these sorts of conditions actors in post-socialist states willingly borrowed educational ideas in order to catch up, or at least not fall further behind, internationally (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006: 189). Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe's (2004) work further complicates the understanding of post-socialist reforms by highlighting the ways in which policymakers effectively speak different languages to international and domestic audiences and may implement substantively different policies to those being formally borrowed when the latter is simply too unpalatable for local populations and their histories. The rereading of Slovenian socialist preschool by Batistič Zorec in this volume similarly complicates post-socialist reform, acknowledging the willingness of local actors to change to 'Western norms' but based on their own critiques and practices already in place. She also discusses some of the positive legacies of the socialist system in a more balanced manner.

Further problematising the pre- and post-socialist analysis from the perspective of transformations (the analytical lens adopted from Stark and Bruszt 1998), we can identify somewhat surprising reconfigurations (e.g. Batistič Zorec's Chap. 7, Kelemen 2009; Millei and Imre 2010; Millei 2011). For example, efforts to depoliticise, democratise and pluralise the education system in Hungary saw curriculum documents for schools and kindergartens rewritten as short frameworks that incorporated a focus on students' learning rather than teacher-centred didactics (Kelemen 2000).

By laying down only broad guidelines, they aimed to ensure pluralism and to offer more flexibility for schools and kindergartens to allow for the inclusion of alternative curriculum and pedagogical ideas that local practitioners have already been engaged with (Kelemen 2000). In this example, we see outcome-based measures, which focus on basic skills and activities to remedy teachers' perceived incompetence to teach (Luke 2010), and the accompanying centralised tests, accountability and performance measures that are so ingrained in neo-liberal thinking, being sidelined in the first post-socialist reforms. From the turn of the twenty-first century, however, these curricula include more elements originating from developed capitalist contexts, such as the European accreditation of knowledge, reducing the distance between the school and economy, remediation programmes and human capital decoupled from social transformation (Kelemen 2000: 328).

What we find then are recombinations of available elements, including socialist logics, being utilised in historical and contemporary post-socialist contexts. For example, in recent policy frameworks, the aim to raise healthy and patriotic individuals through holistic education, a fundamental logic of socialist kindergartens, is mobilised as part of a neo-liberal agenda. This agenda constitutes kindergarten as an important part of lifelong learning and basis for students' subsequent high achievement on standardised international tests, this logic used by policymakers to maintain the provision of almost free universal kindergarten education for children aged 3–6 in post-socialist contexts.

A Final Note

This volume acknowledges the view that governments, policymakers, social movements and educators in the broadest sense are seeking to deal with the uncertainties and insecurities of transforming national and global societies and economies. This is being done, in part, by discovering and reorganising ideas and resources, including versions of socialism. We want to highlight the ways in which these versions of socialism, and their accompanying ideas and resources, have created new educational reasonings and have shaped policies, curricula and pedagogies at different scales and at intersections of the global and the local.

We have divided contributions to our analysis in this volume into two sections. The first, Negotiating the Present: Twenty-First Century Socialism, illuminates the ways local actors in particular case studies negotiate the present and engage with the ideas and resources offered by more fluid, twenty-first century conceptualisations of socialist ideology, and socialist logics, and the relationships between these and educational policy and practice at different scales. Authors in the second section, Discovering Aspects of Socialist Institutions and Thinking for Transformation, explore aspects of and ideas embedded in socialist educational institutions and initiatives historically, to draw out often counter-intuitive understandings of their experience, and through this work provide further resources and ideas that can effect transformations in the present.

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Part I
Negotiating the Present: Twenty-First Century Socialism

Chapter 2
Decolonising Bolivian Education: Ideology Versus Reality

Mieke T.A. Lopes Cardozo

Introduction

> One state has died, and one state has been born. The colonial state is no longer, and the national state has arrived, bringing hope, for all the people of the world,

were Evo Morales' dramatic words as he was inaugurated as the first indigenous leader of Bolivia in the ancient site of Tiahuanacu in January 2006.[1] The election and re-election of president Evo Morales, identified by many as 'an indigenous leader', is symbolic for the rise of indigenous social movements in the last few decades, a cry for change in Bolivia as well as other countries in the region (e.g. Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela) and a broader turn to the Latin American 'new left' (Rodriguez-Garavito et al. (2008)). With a 'politics of change' since 2006, the Bolivian government has proposed a new political ideology of the 'twenty-first century socialism', which is aimed at radical transformations of Bolivia's politics, economy and society so that all Bolivians can '*vivir bien*' (live well).[2] With this new political push for radical

[1] See BBCs video reporting, 'Evo Morales sworn in as spiritual leader', http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8473899.stm (last accessed 01–04–2011).

[2] Although political rhetoric might mislead us to think otherwise, Bolivia's interpretation of the twenty-first century socialism in practice has not signified dramatic shifts towards a pure socialist model. According to Kennemore and Weeks, Morales follows a model of 'Andean capitalism', a pragmatic strategy of a centre-left government that aims to 'capture the capitalist surplus necessary for state spending', mostly from the country's natural resources (2011: 271). The nationalisation scheme of the MAS has made it possible for the government to fund various social policies, including the 'Bono Juancito Pinto', a cash transfer programme for school going primary education students of around twenty Euros a year.

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structural societal and educational transformation, Bolivia is marking an exceptional route towards development, which is however far from uncontested.

Bolivia's project for decolonisation stands in stark contrast to mainstream (neo-liberal inspired) global tendencies and generates an intriguing area for social science research. Education is a crucial sector to bring about these transformations, and teachers are envisioned as strategic political 'actors of change' in Bolivia's new route to development. Education has been positioned as 'the highest function of the state' (Proyecto de Ley 2007) and is at the forefront of debates in the streets, media and parliament. A new education reform law that aims to decolonise the entire education system was approved in December 2010. During the public launch of this new law 'that has been created by Bolivians, and not by the World Bank or the IMF', Bolivia's president Evo Morales claimed that 'teachers are the soldiers of the liberation and decolonisation of Bolivia' (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia 2010c).

Historically, Bolivian education was aimed at linguistic and cultural assimilation – or *castellanización*[3] – of the indigenous groups (Drange 2007). From this unifying and exclusionary system, Bolivian education since the 1990s is slowly changing to a more open, intercultural and multilingual type of schooling. The 1994 educational reform for intercultural and bilingual education was seen as innovative at the time. Its design and implementation process were, however, soon being criticised for a lack of genuine participation from Bolivia's education actors, and for being 'imposed' by foreign donors and consultants involved in the creation of the 1994 reform. The Morales government, after coming to power in 2006, immediately decided to create a new Bolivian-owned and 'revolutionary' education law to decolonise the education system named after two historical educators that struggled for indigenous education: *Avelino Sinani-Elizardo Pérez* (the chapter accordingly refers to the ASEP law hereafter). The ASEP law can be considered a powerful part of the state's 'agenda for change', as it takes up articles 77–107 of the state's new Plurinational Constitution (which consists of a total of 411 articles).[4]

Deep structures of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of ethnicity, language and class continue to exist in Bolivian society and its classrooms. The ASEP law envisions a radical break from these historical processes, yet the progressive political ideological discourse is met with resistance and obstacles in reality. The urban teachers' union delegates regularly march the streets of Bolivia's cities, with explosions of dynamite and fierce exclamations to reinforce their protests (for instance, directed against the current policy plans or to increase teachers' salaries). Many lower class parents would rather see their children being prepared to enter the modern urban labour market and improve their (economic) life standards, than being educated to enrich their ethnocultural identities and knowledges. While a wide variety of traditional clothing colour both urban and rural streets, the unwritten dress code of the generally rather conservative training institutes for new teachers still seems to be

[3] Translated literally this would mean something like 'enspanishment' of the population, aimed at imposing the Spanish language and culture.

[4] In this sense, the new Plurinational Constitution forms the legal basis for the refounding and transformation of the Bolivian nation.

'the more western the better'. This paints part of a larger picture of the tensions between ideological political intentions in an education system that is strongly embedded in a context of inequality, discrimination, tensions and mistrust.

The new Bolivian regime's idea of the purpose of education is clearly linked to the notions of interculturality and social justice. The following quote from the ASEP law (2007) demonstrates the significance and relevance of the relation between education and social justice in the Bolivian context:

> Education is in and for life, with dignity and social justice assuming work like a vital necessity and an integrative and balancing relationship with the cosmos and nature, to live well (para vivir bien).

Based on document analysis and interview data, for this study, I define the Bolivian conceptualisation of social justice in education as 'the process of transformation through decolonisation of the education system in order for all Bolivians to '*vivir bien*' (live well)'. *Vivir bien* is a central concept in the National Development Plan, the constitution and the ASEP proposal. This 'alternative cosmovision' of *vivir bien* seeks to

> live in harmony with nature, to live a social life in solidarity, with a democratic and integral plurinational and diverse development, a multidimensional change departing from cultural diversity and with interculturality and diversity at the basis of the quality of life. (National Development Plan in Yapu 2009: 51–52)[5]

In this sense, Bolivia's interpretation of 'social justice' is a broad conceptualisation that includes environmental justice, social equality and respect for diversity, political/democratic representation for all and an equal economic system to the benefit of all Bolivians – and particularly not serving the economic interests of foreign actors.

Taking the contemporary Bolivian societal and educational context of tensions and inequalities as a starting point, this chapter analyses how the 'revolutionary ideal' of a social justice-oriented education system to '*vivir bien*' – as laid down in the ASEP reform – is perceived by the different actors involved to be both *appropriate* and *feasible*. With this aim, the chapter examines the various challenges and opportunities for the policy discourse of the new ASEP reform for decolonising education and the government's idea of teachers as the 'soldiers of transformation' to translate into an educational reality. In order to do so, I draw from an interdisciplinary body of theoretical insights. For instance, I build on the insights of a 'politics of education' approach from Roger Dale (2005), which informs an understanding of the pluriscalar nature of educational governance, by taking the national level policymaking of the new ASEP law as a starting point, while at the same time engaging with the importance of processes and actors above and below the state level. The goal is a broader understanding of Bolivia's new education reform 'programme' (the content, the innovative policy), by also looking at the 'programme ontology', or *how* this policy was designed and works (Pawson 2002; Dale 2005). Similar to the link between

[5] *La Pachamama* is widely recognised in Bolivia as a highly spiritualised and honoured Mother Earth, which has a reciprocal relationship with humans.

justice and education in current Bolivian policies discussed above, the term social justice is appearing more and more throughout the field of education at a global level over the past decade – in literature and programme design of teacher education programmes, in educational conferences and in scholarly articles and books (North 2006: 507). While social justice has become education's latest 'catchphrase', not least in the field of teacher education, the meaning of social justice and its relation to education is far from settled nor unproblematic (North 2006, 2008; Zeichner 2009) and is used for different ideological purposes ranging from more conservative to more socialist-oriented perspectives.

For the purpose of this chapter, Nancy Frasers' (1995) critical theoretical approach to 'transformative social justice' is best suited to understand Bolivia's 'politics of change' and the 'revolutionary' transformation that is envisaged in the education system. Fraser (1995: 82) defined two types of remedies to social injustices including 'affirmative remedies', correcting the outcomes without changing structural frameworks, and 'transformative remedies', correcting outcomes by restructuring the underlying generative framework (Fraser 1995: 86). Frasers' perspective belongs to the more critical theorists, who refer to the struggle for social justice in education with the specific goal of depicting and eradicating unequal power structures (Boyles et al. 2009: 37). Fraser's elaborate three-dimensional theory of social justice (Fraser 2005a, b) helps to analyse how social justice is part of both the policy programme (the actual law) and the programme ontology of ASEP or the process of the creation of the law together with its prospect for implementation on the other. Fraser's three-dimensional approach to justice challenges (1) maldistribution (the economic dimension of justice), (2) misrecognition (the cultural dimension of justice) and (3) misrepresentation (the political dimension of justice). Her theory of social justice starts from the principle of 'participatory parity', which is appropriate for the analysis of the difficulties of genuine participation and ownership of ASEP at different levels (Fraser 2005a). It links to the third concept of representation, which is developed to open the framework of analysis to the multiscalar complexities of the political arena. Decisions taken at the state level often impact the lives of people above and below the state (at local levels but also in the wider region beyond the state). Similarly, international institutions and mechanisms may have an influence on processes of (in-)justice on national and local scales (Fraser 2005b: 304).[6]

The outcomes of this study are based on a four-year-long research project, which aimed to understand and analyse the role of Bolivian teacher education institutes and actors in underpinning or opposing policy initiatives for emancipatory education

[6] This dimension does not only deal with the first level *ordinary-political misrepresentations* (denying full participation as peers in social interactions), it also deals with a second level *boundary-setting mechanism of misframing* in the context of globalisation, criticising the framework in which the national state is the sole political space that excludes marginalised groups from any influence. On a third level, it states that many injustices in the world are not territorial in character and that chances to live a good life are not fully dependent on internal (state) political constitutions but also on, for instance, regional political agreements such as those constructed through ALBA (see Chap. 3).

and processes of societal transformation as envisaged by the current government under Evo Morales. During nine months of intensive fieldwork in Bolivia spread out over the period between October 2007 and May 2010, I employed a critical ethnographic research approach and conducted over 120 individuals and group interviews and discussions with policymakers, educators, teacher trainers and student teachers, primarily located in La Paz and Cochabamba.[7] In addition, I conducted a survey amongst student teachers while document analysis and a literature review similarly inform this study. All interviews and discussions were transcribed by a Bolivian research assistant in Spanish, and quotes referred to in the chapter are translated to English by the author. Similarly, all translations of official policy documentation are on account of the author.

The Road to Decolonising the Education System

The Bolivian government has tried to construct a progressive reform in terms of its ideological underpinnings and a sector wide restructuring of the education system in cooperation with a range of civil society groups. The first proposals for a renewed education sector were born in the educational commission of the Constitutional Assembly from mid-2006 onwards (Proyecto de Ley 2006; Drange 2007: 4; Gamboa Rocabado 2009: 67–69), which resulted in a long process of consultation and approval that continued throughout the period of this research, until the ASEP law was finally approved in congress on December 20, 2010. Many Bolivians see ASEP as an articulation of the Plurinational Constitution's and National Development Plan's more general goals (Yapu 2009: 51–52). ASEP reimagines education for critical analysis and '*vivir bien*', amongst other concepts, which can be connected to the debates on critical pedagogy of a social justice-oriented education, as was outlined in the introduction above.

As presented in one of the first documents that were developed for the new education law, schooling is aimed at: decolonisation, liberation and transformation (of economic, social, cultural, political and ideological structures); democratisation and participation; intra-/interculturality and plurilingualism; unity in diversity, with cohesion between people and between humans and the environment; critical social awareness; and to social justice more generally (Proyecto de Ley 2006). At a discursive level, the law thus covers an incredibly wide and ambitious scope, which – in discourse – relates to all three dimensions of Frasers' conceptualisation of social justice, including distribution (the economic dimension of justice), recognition (the cultural dimension of justice) and representation (the political dimension of justice) (Fraser 2005a; Fraser 2005b). More specifically, the reform is built around the

[7] The research is conducted in the context of the 'IS-Academy', a partnership between the University of Amsterdam and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

following four pillars, as identified by the Bolivian Ministry of Education: (1) decolonisation, (2) intra- and interculturalism along with plurilingualism, (3) productivity and (4) communitarian education. There are various interpretations of each of these four concepts, and conceptual clarity is lacking (see also Lopes Cardozo 2011). On the whole, 'decolonisation' can be seen as an umbrella or pillar for the far reaching reform. The official explanation of decolonising education is

> putting an end to ethnic borders that influence opportunities in the area of education, work, politics and economic security, where no one is privileged on the basis of race, ethnicity and or language. It also signifies to avoid favouring conceptualisations of the Western world as if they are universal, yet valuing the knowledges, skills and technologies of the indigenous civilisations, both of the Amazonian and Andian regions. (Congreso Nacional de Educación 2006)

ASEP's second pillar builds on the 1994 reforms' use of the concepts of interculturalism and bilingualism. In the present ASEP reform, this concept of interculturalism has shifted to a decolonial interculturalism and is coupled with that of intraculturalism. As the most practical part of ASEP, plurilingualism exemplifies the inter- and intracultural process: students will learn (in) the native language local to their area and Spanish.[8] This second pillar most closely adheres to Fraser's cultural dimension of recognition. However, bearing in mind some of the critiques to the implementation of the former 1994 reform in Bolivia of a folkloristic and narrow interpretation of intercultural education, the actual impact on the cultural dimension of social justice will depend on how well teachers are to be informed, trained and supported in order to turn this policy into a reality. The third and fourth pillars of productive and communitarian education relate respectively to the production of either practical knowledge, which can apply to the workforce, or to produce intellectually, and to the creation of a closer and dialectical relationship between the school and the surrounding community. Nevertheless, vagueness still exists as to how to interpret these conceptual pillars, and further analysis falls out of the scope of this paper (see Lopes Cardozo 2011 for a longer discussion).

Bolivia's political discussions and initiatives with regards to a decolonised education system try to engage in an 'epistemic dialogue', and it imagines an alternative future through embracing the critiques brought forward in coloniality debates. To some extent designed in cooperation between social movement actors, intellectuals and progressive political leaders, the reform agenda envisions to go against the 'Western', 'European' and neo-liberal ideas that until present dominate many education systems worldwide both in its organisational structures and its content focus. The envisaged result is a transformative restructuring or deconstruction of the

[8] In its initial documents of the new law, a trilingual education system was proposed, yet the approved version speaks of a 'plurilingual (teacher) education system'. Depending on the context of the school, the first language of instruction will either be Spanish or an indigenous language (in case of more languages spoken by different student, a communitarian committee will decide upon the language(s) of instruction). In addition, all students have the right to learn a foreign language, and all teachers will be taught sign language as well (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia 2010b).

education system (Fraser 1995), together with the revaluation of 'original' or indigenous knowledges (Walsh 2007a, b) and values through education, an approach that shows similarities to the ideas of Freire when he was involved in decolonising the education system of Guinea-Bissau (1977). In short, the main objectives of educational decolonisation in Bolivia are the opening up of different knowledges towards cultural/linguistic diversity and the creation of a critical awareness to function as an instrument of liberation of marginalised groups (Gamboa Rocabado 2009). This political discourse is however met with varying responses.

Main Actors' Power Struggles Around the New Decolonising Education Law

While Bolivia's new constitution and the ASEP reform work towards addressing historical social injustices, especially concerning the marginalisation of indigenous populations with regard to economic distribution, political representation and sociocultural recognition processes, the ideas of decolonisation are certainly not uncontested. Over the past few years, the (envisaged) role of the government has changed considerably from the way it was described by Regalsky and Laurie (2007: 239–240), as

> a foreign power that has spoken a foreign language and has given urban answers to rural problems with schools functioning to legitimate the state criollo hispanicizing hegemony through its hidden and explicit curricula.

While numerous international NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and international donors have been (and to some extent still are) involved in the Bolivian education sector, in retrospective, the present government speaks of a 'foreign imposition' of the 1994 reform, a position that seems to have gained ground. Hence, the WB and IMF do not play a significant financial role anymore in the education sector.[9] With ASEP, the Ministry of Education has designed a 'Bolivian-owned' policy and sees itself as an actor that strives to decolonise the education system so that it ensures social justice for all and inclusion, rather than an expulsion of indigenous values, knowledges and languages. In that sense, the rationale behind the ASEP reform can be considered 'revolutionary', as it seeks not only to produce genuine improvements in people's lives but also to build popular political capacity (Rodriguez-Garavito, Barrett et al. 2008: 24). Though the constitution and the ASEP law have a supportive base, there is also considerable opposition to the ideas it delivers. In this section, I analyse ASEP's programme ontology and mechanism,

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[9] Without going into detail of the specifics of all foreign initiatives in the education sector here, I think the following quote of a Bolivian academic explains this new situation and role for international donors: 'if international development cooperation organisations want to provide a helping hand [in terms of finances], they are very welcome, but the logic has to change, it has to be in line with our new logic of education'.

including the different interpretations and various power plays between different actors in a shifting educational landscape.

The Ministry of Education is a powerful actor in a centrally organised education system and constitutes the main driver behind the new education reform. The vision statement of the ministry declares how

> the Ministry of Education ensures a productive, communitarian and quality education for everyone with sociocultural relevance, contributing to building a just society, and a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature that supports the development of the plurinational state, to live well (vivir bien), through strengthening educational management. (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia 2010b)

Internal differences, however, exist on interpretations of the rationale in the ministry and also on the ways to implement the new ASEP reform for decolonising education. An ex-minister, who was still in her position when interviewed, acknowledged the resistance not only coming from teachers but also from people within the ministry itself. In other interviews in 2007 and 2008, several ministry officials expressed their concern and sometimes disapproval of the project, for instance, of the 'indigenous and rural' focus of the reform project, or the fact that teacher training institutes would be allowed to hand out university-level degrees. These interpretations stand in stark contrast to another group of officials in the ministry, by now perhaps the majority, who strongly support the new ASEP reform. For example, a former social movement leader, now working in the ministry, is a strong ASEP supporter. He affirmed the ministry had a strong political role in the development and promotion of the new decolonising policy lines.

The ministry not only struggles internally but even more so externally with various actors, who raised concerns against the new education reform including the urban teachers union (CTEUB), parts of the teacher corps that were not consulted nor well informed and do not feel ownership of the new plans, the Catholic church, groups of parents and more generally the political opposition particularly in the lowland regions. However different the positions of these actors might be, they share a fear that the current government plans will clash with their own interests and power positions. Nevertheless, Bolivia's Ministry of Education maintains the position that ASEP has been created largely by educational actors themselves, as particularly representatives of the rural union (CONMERB) were engaged in the development stages of the law, and several rounds of 'socialisation' (presentations and discussions) of the reform plans were organised, for instance, with teacher training staff.[10]

[10] Based on a historical strong divide between an urban and a rural education system, Bolivia similarly has a rural teachers' union (CONMERB), and an urban one (CTEUB). The relationship between Bolivia's teachers' unions and the government for a long time has been and to a large extent still is, mildly speaking, uneasy. The military dictatorships, the financial crisis of the late 1970s and the neo-liberal political direction (including Structural Adjustment Programmes) afterwards provoked a defensive attitude of both teacher unions, fighting for their salaries rather than educational quality issues (Talavera Simoni 2011: 11–13).

Moreover, it has used this position to differentiate ASEP's creation process from the 1994 law, which was mostly built by high-up government officials and foreign consultants, with some consultation from civil society groups. Embracing the decolonial opposite then would mean genuine participation by the people at the 'bottom' of the educational power structure, being teachers, their unions, parents, administrative staff of educational institutions and social movements. There exists, however, a gap between the government's participatory discourse and educators' own experiences. Respondents confirmed that rather than honest teacher ownership and implementation through participation, they felt that the ASEP has again been imposed from above, as many teachers have not been informed nor were consulted about ASEP. This relates to arguments made in some of the policy implementation literature of the need to listen to, and understand, the often silenced voices of teachers as well as their often resistant attitude which directly impacts processes of (non-) reform or (non-)implementation (Smith 2003; Jansen 2001). In the case of Bolivia, however, resistance to the radical new policy discourse does not only come from the teachers, as other societal groups (e.g. the church, groups of parents and the political opposition) bring forward similar and additional concerns that potentially hinder implementation processes in the future. This area remains an area that requires future research.

An indigenous ministry staff member in an interview in May 2010 brought forward how power relations are slowly shifting:

> it is no longer only the Ministry and the unions who decide on the education sector, now there are also other actors [like the CEPOs] involved. (115: 6)[11]

In contrast to the largely resistant attitude of the urban CTEUB, both the leaders of the rural CONMERB and the CEPOs emphasise their foundational roles in the creation of this law. According to the CEPOs, they have been main protagonists in the creation process, as was expressed by a CEPOs representative: 'This reform is the first real experience with how society really participates in the formulation of educational politics. Various societal groups were involved, such as teachers, professionals, parents, the Catholic church and even the military' (96: 19).[12] CONMERB similarly identifies closely with the government's analysis of participation, and the central level representatives strongly feel the new law was created in close cooperation with them. Nevertheless, while emphasised at the discursive level of the ASEP law, Fraser's third political dimensions of social justice (representation) in practice does

[11] The CEPOs are the *Consejos Educativos de los Pueblos Originarios* or the Indigenous Education Councils. The codes mentioned in relation to quoted sections of interviews relate to a qualitative coding analysis with Atlas Ti.

[12] The CEPOs are also currently engaged with the design of the curriculum for teacher training institutes. According to a member of the CEPO in Sucre (CENAQ), there are seven different CEPOs from different regions working on their curriculum proposals, and these are then merged together with input from the ministry. For more information, see www.cepos.bo.

not work very smoothly yet. In this sense, we can see a difference between a clearly social justice-oriented programme of the ASEP law and a programme ontology that does not fully carry out the social justice potential of participation and inclusion of the grassroots level. Participation of teachers in the creation of the law in reality means the participation of higher-level representatives of the unions, and many teachers do not feel engaged, a situation that is sometimes referred to as teacher non-participation (Smith 2003: 6). The findings show that even when a participatory discourse is implemented by including representatives of societal groups, this still does not necessarily mean all members of these groups have a sense of ownership over the process. Thus, the experience of talking to various (rural and urban) teachers shows how even living up to Fraser's 'ordinary first level of representation' is in reality a huge challenge (Fraser 2005a, b).

Bolivia's 'Normales', the pre-service teacher education institutes, are crucial actors in fostering or hindering the (envisaged and real) processes of transformation of Bolivia's education arena. Critical voices both inside and outside the teacher training institutes complain about an ongoing institutional culture of mistrust, corruption and 'friendship politics'. Respondents also mentioned the power of the unions to keep certain candidate trainers out of the system while keeping the old guard inside. Following from this reality, an urban teacher student thinks that real change in the Normales has to start with changing the attitude of those trainers that are closely linked to the union:

> they organise their marches because they want a higher salary, they do not care about the quality of the education. Some trainers here are better at motivating us to become a 'sindicalista' (unionist), then to become a dedicated teacher. (20: 17)

A rural teacher trainer also mentioned the conservative attitude of teachers unions as a barrier to transformation:

> the federations, at the departmental and national level, are creating barriers for change. It is not in their interest to change the education system. (39: 15)

These views present a rather conservative image of Bolivia's teacher training institutes. Nonetheless, a more nuanced perspective arises when we combine this with the supportive attitude of (at least the representatives of) the rural teachers' union, and similarly many of the rural Normales, towards the ASEP reform project. A director of a rural Normal explained how indigenous popular movements perceive the new ASEP reform as a way to build towards their envisioned destiny. This and similar remarks help to understand why particularly the rural institutes seem to have a more open attitude towards Morales' politics of change, and specifically the ASEP law, that aims to work towards a similar destiny of a country in which historically marginalised and ignored indigenous population groups are included and valued (see also Lopes Cardozo, 2011).

The picture I have provided so far of the power struggles in a polarised and heterogeneous field leads me to finally discuss some of the actual and foreseen implementation challenges of the ASEP reform.

Concluding Reflections: A Bumpy Road to Decolonising Education

This chapter showed how perceptions differ quite drastically on whether the 'revolutionary ideal' of a social justice-oriented education system to '*vivir bien*' – as laid down in the ASEP reform – is actually *appropriate* and *feasible* in Bolivia's context. In summary, the tense political situation and the long process towards consensus on the specifics and practicalities of the new education reform result in a 'sense of waiting' for new policy directives and teachers' support materials and training to come, in a time when social tensions are rising. In addition, there is a lack of consensus on the actual meaning of the four pillars of the new law. According to the government, ASEP has been designed with complete participation of civil society, but many actors – including many teachers – disagree. Not unexpectedly, if considering the radical nature of the new ASEP reform, there is considerable resistance, for instance, from teachers, the urban teachers' union, from within the ministry, from the church and the old elite including political leaders of the lowlands and middle class citizens in urban areas. The Normales are seen as conservative institutes, which are unwilling to bring about the envisaged changes. Teachers find themselves in a vacuum. While some continue to work with the 'old' reform guidelines and curricula, others relapse into the traditional teaching practices of before the 1990s. This impasse relates to the growth of opposition due to a lack of communication, wider consultation and information sharing between the Ministry of Education and other educational actors.

The education law aims to strengthen 'recognition' or Fraser's cultural dimension of social justice, as it aims to include historically marginalised and indigenous people by supporting their cultural logics. However, a large part of Bolivia's indigenous population imagines their future as part of a modernising approach to development rather than the 'coloniality approach' as proclaimed by the government. Many Bolivian teachers and academics explained that students and their parents are not so much in favour of the decolonisation project, and some even perceive it as a new form of imposition into their lives. This is a position, which should be respected, as these marginalised groups simply want to make sure their children grow up to have a better life. Similar to parents' opinion in the 1990s, this often means the desire to focus on Spanish in school rather than indigenous languages, as well as supporting migration to the cities and effectively contributing to indigenous assimilation into *mestizo* culture.[13] According to these parents, true dignity, which has been a central part of the indigenous demands in Bolivia, must be tied to significant improvement at the material level. The Indigenous Education Councils (CEPOs) have, however, strongly focused their struggles on gaining recognition and representation, both in

[13] The term *mestizo* refers to those from a mix of both Spanish and indigenous descent.

politics and wider society. Postero (2007: 22) hence argues, based on the arguments of Fraser's combined approach, that Morales' followers not only want their president to enact a politics of recognition but also a politics of redistribution. The relevance of Frasers' *three*-dimensional analytical framework is reflected in both parents' claim for redistribution and education's role to help disenfranchise marginalised groups, and the CEPOs and rural unions' claim for recognition and representation – a set of claims to which the government's approach of *vivir bien* aims to respond, yet perhaps not fully succeeds to convincingly do so.

Debates are, for instance, ongoing whether the new law will foster unity or create deeper divisions in Bolivian society. The ASEP law, in its (discursive) approach aims to overcome any form of discrimination, considering the current goal of *vivir bien para todos* (to live well for everyone), without discrimination (Article 1 of the ASEP law, Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia 2010a). An urban teacher trainer expressed criticism that is shared by a group of other resisting actors, on how he thought the new law, instead of unifying the Andean and lowland region and rural and urban areas, actually reinforces regional divides.

> The law is very biased, because it carries the name Avelino Siñani, and he was an indigenous man who lived there [in the highlands]. So teachers from the East of Bolivia do not accept this. It is not a Bolivian law, but a law for the Andean world. But who supports it? The rural teacher, because they have been the principal actors in the creation of this reform. (10: 5)

These types of reactions that interpret some form of positive discrimination assumedly present in the new law are both understandable and expected and perhaps reflect the tensions between universalistic and particularist interpretations of who's approach is valid (Wallerstein 2000), with the current government claiming validity of the decolonisation project based on historical structures of discrimination and exclusion for centuries in a row. In line with the critique of the potential to create wider divisions, there is a fear of a reverse form of discrimination. Instead of the historically marginalised position of indigenous groups, some now fear exclusion and discrimination for those groups that do not necessarily feel part of the decolonising, communitarian and productive education plans: including urban middle class citizens, people that do not identify as indigenous and people from outside the Andean region. The media plays a critical role in criticising the new law as an 'ethnocentric and racist intent of the indigenous movements to impose Indian ideologies in the cities' (Gamboa Rocabado 2009: 57).

For reasons like these, it is important to question whether ASEP is an imposition into the lives of Bolivia's population and subsequently whether decolonisation can be considered legitimate as a new 'imposition' as some actors perceive it. Important for this study is the recognition that the present decolonisation politics of Evo Morales do not necessarily reflect the lived experiences of more and more urban lower and middle class indigenous groups, whose identities are very hybrid and complex (Albo in Kohl and Bresnahan 2010: 11). While ASEP's 'programme mechanism' (Pawson 2002: 341–342), meaning the various supportive and resistant interpretations of the ASEP law by a range of Bolivian actors in the education field, both works for and against Morales' politics of change, the actual 'ASEP programme'

(the ASEP law) itself (Pawson 2002: 342) is also significant as it defines a new and influential ideological discourse of decolonisation and *vivir bien*. In this sense, a new hegemonic government discourse is taking shape, while at the same time it is being interpreted, mediated and defied by those that have to move these ideals into an educational reality. When we consider Fraser's third meta-political level of misrepresentation, and bearing in mind the former failure of implementing the 1994 reform, we can see how without enough support from teachers and other educational stakeholders a future successful implementation of the ASEP plans will be a very challenging process. Hence, Bolivia's recent decolonial approach is both unprecedented and contested. Taking into account the critique on the lack of a genuine level of consultation of teachers and civil society, even according to the approach of the state, the decolonial project seems flawed, even more so when considering that some view the decolonisation project as another imposition.

In line with similar developments in Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua, Bolivia's recent shift in state power to the (indigenous) left and its constitutionally backed-up decolonisation project has a rather contradictory nature, both in its process of incomplete participation as in its decolonising, inter-/intracultural, communitarian and productive content, as becomes clear from the various challenges discussed in this chapter. This wide range of tensions and critiques are triggered by the fundamental contradiction of a state led 'imposition' of Bolivia's decolonising and endogenous path to development that is perhaps not perceived as legitimate or appropriate by the entire population. Or, as formulated by Postero (2007: 20), it might be a misleading utopia to portray the indigenous people and Morales' project for decolonisation as the new answer to neo-liberalism and global capitalism. Nevertheless, Postero argues, the idealist utopian visions based on Andean culture employed by Morales' government effectively negotiate spaces for sociopolitical transformation, as they derive from traditional (indigenous) narratives to create a consensualised perception of appropriate and possible forms of social change. However, and as shown in this chapter, this effective strategic essentialist strategy carries the danger of reverse discrimination and Andean-centrism (Postero 2007: 1) or rural-centrism.

It seems the education sector in Bolivia is not only in an impasse, it is trapped in a prolonged crisis of the education system. However, instead of blaming the majority of Bolivia's teachers for the errors in the education system or for not fulfilling their tasks of transforming classroom realities, which is a commonly used argument (Bowe et al 1992: 2), I argue that the structural constraints of the (pre-service and in-service) teacher training system fail to address and stimulate teachers' motivations to provide good education and become actors of change. Bolivian teachers miss a permanent source of support to help them stay motivated and updated, while they face low social status, a deficient pre-service training and the challenge to combine multiple jobs at the same time.

Nevertheless, the Bolivian process is clearly an important educational initiative that remains unequalled elsewhere and deserves broad attention. Through dealing with issues of cultural diversity and historical marginalisation, Bolivia is wrestling with its historical and social injustices. Following the ideology of the ASEP law, social justice engaged in schools as well as broader political changes aim at '*vivir*

bien' will mark a new kind of citizenship. ASEP envisions new 'transformative' approaches to teaching and learning, based on a revaluation of alternative knowledges and critical reflection, which provides a Bolivian interpretation that links to the more critical theoretical interpretations of social justice education (North 2006, 2008; Boyles et al. 2009: 37; Zeichner 2009).

In conclusion, the road to Bolivia's 'imagined' decolonised education system *and* society is long and particularly bumpy, given the radical and transformatory nature of ASEP, the existence of multiple interpretations and multiple interests involved in (any) education system, including opposition from those that may support Morales' wider political project yet are wary about a potential negative impact of the new education route on either their children's upward social mobility or their own already overburdened tasks and routine manners in classrooms. Once again, Bolivian teachers – like many teachers worldwide on an almost continuous basis – are faced with a new reform framework (Smith 2003; Jansen 2001; Ozga in Vongalis-Macrow 2007: 430). Yet it remains to be seen in how far Bolivia's teachers will be able and willing to really function as '*soldiers of liberation and decolonisation*' in a highly sensitive context of both old and newer sociopolitical divisions and tensions.

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Chapter 3
Teaching 'Valores' in Cuba: A Conversation Among Teacher Educators

Illana Lancaster and Anita Sanyal

Introduction

Cuba offers a rich research environment for critical comparative scholars for the analysis of alternatives to dominant capitalist education discourses. As Breidlid (2007) explains, 'despite its problematical, ideological, and political aspects, [Cuba offers] an alternative discourse in education, which ought to be of interest to other developing [and developed] countries' (618). Cuban policymakers explicitly recognise their country's role to resist 'the homogenizing and exclusive power related forces that keep some nations rich and some poor' (Portales, n.d.: 4). What makes the study of Cuban education even more fascinating is that it is one of only a few countries, besides China and Vietnam, that maintained its historical social and political communist structures after the end of the Cold War in 1989.

In this chapter, we examine the ways in which selected socialist values are claimed to be transmitted by a group of teacher educators in the current socio-economic context in Cuba. Our broader aim is to dissect some Cuban discourses from the perspective of them being alternatives to global capitalist discourses. Our work builds on the work of such comparative scholars as Breidlid (2007), Griffiths (2009), and Blum (2011), who argue that in Cuba there is a tension between official state-led discourses and the lived realities of citizens. Breidlid (2007: 627) explains this tension as an 'imposition of [a] hegemonic discourse' that '[leaves] no space for alternative

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discourses', while Griffiths suggests that the processes of teaching political ideology have tended 'towards uncritical *formalismo'* [formalism] (47). This chapter contributes to the field by exploring in depth this tension and suggesting that this tension is a dynamic one in which teacher educators are actively engaging in and contributing to the reshaping of socialist ideology. The chapter examines the mechanisms by which these Cuban teacher educators ensure students learn appropriate and necessary values for the perpetuation of Cuban socialism in their contemporary contexts.

This chapter is based on a research project carried out during a 2010 trip to Havana and Santa Clara, Cuba. We were interested in understanding the role schools play in teaching socialist values. We begin with a brief presentation of Cuba's historical policy framework in order to situate values education against a changing sociopolitical and economic backdrop. We describe the research context, our positionalities, and the methods we used to collect and analyse data. We then analyse conversations we had with our Cuban colleagues on prostitution, focusing on the discursive practices of the role education plays in developing the socialist Cuban citizen equipped with the 'right' values. Ultimately, we articulate some of the ways in which Cuba, in the context of increasing influence from the global capitalist economy, attempts to negotiate the maintenance of socialist values in the broader context of political and economic change. We argue that a complex and dynamic process is taking place in which official ideology is flexibly negotiated at the classroom level to fit the realities of the teachers and pupils. To explore this dynamic and socially complicated process, we organise our argument into three parts: (1) need–greed tension, (2) majority–minority tension, and (3) a gendered reading.

Values and Tourism: Holding on to Socialism in a Liberalising Economy

For Cuba, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the demise of the socialist Eastern Block marked the beginning of a new wave of redefining socialism in a global context of the increasing hegemony of the capitalist market (Blum 2011; Carnoy 2007; Mesa-Lago 2005). The collapse of the USSR, whose trade and subsides sustained the Cuban economy, and which had enabled Cuba to fare far better than other Latin American countries during the recession of the 1980s, began the period of severe economic decline in the 1990s. This period of decline, known as the Special Period, was made worse by the US-led economic blockade and further contributed to Cuba's isolation. In response to the crisis of the 1990s, the Cuban government strongly reaffirmed the basic values of Cuban social policy and reasserted the political will to maintain its social development model. These values included a strong role for the state in the provision of basic social services for all Cuban citizens. Though the orientation and level of state responsibility have not significantly changed and Cuba has not sought economic efficiency through privatisation initiatives (Uriate 2004),

a process of redefinition has taken place.[1] The crisis brought the necessity for Cuba to begin to envisage alternative mechanisms for socialism in order to maintain its political and economic systems. Estrada and Guanche (2009) describe some of the ways the very centralised and authoritative power of the state began to be reshaped through lessening its dominance in social matters, lowering the degree of public dependence on the state, and the increase of public political participation (Estrada and Guanche 2009: 43).

In economic matters, the Cuban state was forced to adopt some capitalist measures after the collapse of the Soviet Union. One of these reforms was the promotion of tourism via joint ventures between the Cuban State and private capital, as a mechanism to attract hard currency, this being a central strategy for the survival of the Cuban economy in the post-Soviet context (Garcia 2010; Toro-Morn et al. 2002). Tourism enabled Cuba to survive the economic crisis, but it also posed significant challenges to Cuba's socialist project (Blum 2011). A parallel economy based on the dollar spurred increasing income inequities and a new class of Cubans emerged from those who could access employment in the tourism industry (Carnoy 2007; Uriate 2004; Mesa-Lago 2005). This dual economy and its concomitant social stratification is discussed by Treto (2009) who argues that despite Cuba's abandonment of radical egalitarian policies in the late 1970s and early 1980s in favour of Soviet models of prescribed occupational and income differentiation, Cuba managed to maintain equitable access to opportunities among its citizens.

With the reforms of the early 1990s, however, the equitable access to opportunities via the conventional education, training, and career path gave way to salary and purchasing power disparities produced by the emergence of the dual-currency economy. These reforms brought the devaluation of traditional labour, which contributed to increasing inequalities. Alternative forms of income (including remittances, the black market, and self-employment) provided massively higher levels of compensation compared to remuneration for traditional labour,[2] thus contributing to a greater acceptance of activities once considered illegal (González 2009). Treto (2009) suggests that while there is no national consensus on the balancing of social welfare policies and individual opportunities for economic prosperity, 'it can be said that Cubans, while maintaining an essentially socialist economy, would like to see more opportunities for prosperity, even at the cost of privatising certain sectors'(16). Treto's (2009) argument is supported by Blum (2011), who blames these new economic policies for creating 'social cleavages' and causing 'resentment and political disaffection among those left out of the opportunities offered by capitalist measures',

[1] Recently, a half a million state workers were laid off and encouraged to work in small private business enterprises.

[2] One US dollar currently purchases approximately 22 Cuban pesos. An average wage is between 200 and 400 Cuban pesos per month. In the mid-1990s, the black market exchange rate was between 90 and 160 Cuban pesos for one US dollar.

and in doing so, these policies 'move the country away from the egalitarian practices of the preceding three decades' (111). Blum (2011) also explored the ideological repercussions resulting from the mix of capitalist mechanisms with a socialist system, which inherently carries mixed ideological messages. She identifies '*doble conciencia*' (double conscience), a term that encompasses both a double standard and dual consciousness that arises from the necessity for citizens to adopt different and contradictory ideological values in order to function in society (Blum 2011). Together, Treto and Blum's analyses reflect a broader public discourse that serves as contextual backdrop for discussions on the role tourism plays in the Cuban economy.

From the 1920s until the end of USA–Cuba relations in 1959, Cuba's casinos and women, and its close proximity to the USA, enticed many North American visitors with disposable income and desire for pleasure seeking. Cuba was marketed to American tourists as 'a smiling, luxuriant, tropical land where romance, beautiful women, soft music-filled nights, and the enchantments of Spanish culture awaited visitors' (Schwartz 1997: xxi). Tourism, which had resulted in sizable profits for US companies, came to represent American imperialism's excess. Ultimately, this critique was used by Cuban rebels as a revolutionary mobiliser. Schwartz (1997) suggests that revolutionaries regarded the Batista regime's efforts to build tourist infrastructure as proof of 'corruption and complicity with scurrilous foreigners' (179). According to Schwartz (1997), the slot machines became 'the object of a moral crusade to save Cuba's youth from temptation' and the 'catalyst to mobilize dissidents' (179).

With the revolution came the severing of the imperialistic relationship with the USA. For the next 30 years, Cuba implemented social policy reforms directed at the establishment of mass access for all Cubans in education and health. These reforms included the nationalisation of private forms of education in the form of a free public system, which guaranteed the right to education for all Cuban citizens (Griffiths 2009). While tourism declined in Cuba during this time, it boomed in Mexico and other Caribbean nations, leading to Cuba's recognition of the value of the tourism industry in the region. Thus, in the 1980s, driven by pragmatic economic concerns, Cuba 're-entered the competition for tourist and hard currency' (Schwartz 1997: 205). By the 1990s when the USSR dissolved and Cuba needed to restructure its economy, tourism became a convenient and viable option for rapidly securing hard currency needed to purchase imports that had previously come from the Soviet Union. Fidel Castro recognised this in a 1994 news conference when he said:

> Tourism provide[s] the first opportunity to create joint associations and to introduce foreign capital in Cuba. We need all three things—capital, technology, and markets—to develop tourism in Cuba. We [do] not hesitate on the need to promote its development. (News Conference by President Fidel Castro with Participants in the 15th International Tourism Convention 1994)

While Fidel Castro recognised the need for foreign capital, a dual economy emerged that enabled those who had access to US dollars to enjoy privileged material well-being. In this context, prostitution became an avenue for many women to

access this dollar economy. Today, prostitution is referred to as *jineterismo*, from the word *jinetear*, which means to jockey, referring to the competitive act of riding a horse for economic reward. Prostitution is exemplary of the threat to Cuba's socialist project and is consistent with Griffiths' argument (2009) that real-life conditions are often inconsistent with official political discourse and lead to individualistic behaviour that reinforces values contrary to the socialist tenet of sacrifice for the common good. The public discourse around prostitution is a fertile ground for the incorporation of the reassertion of traditional revolutionary socialist values.

Values Education and the Role of Youth in the Socialist Project

In the years immediately after the Cuban Revolution, the need to develop citizens who would move the socialist project forward and develop the socialist nation became a priority. The context of political and economic restructuring emphasised the need to provide education that solidified these achievements into a broader national identity, a socialist conscience (*conciencia*). Towards this end, Fidel Castro in a 1968 speech articulated this vision of a socialist conscience:

> … those beautiful aspirations that constitute the communist ideal of a classless society, a society free from selfishness, a society in which man *(sic)* is no longer a miserable slave to money, in which society no longer works for personal gain, and all society begins to work for the satisfaction of all needs and for the establishment among men of the rule of justice, fraternity, and equality. (Castro as quoted in Read 1970: 134)

Revolutionary Cuban education had the main goal of preparing workers for a socialist state and was characterised by a strong link between education and national economic development. Later, as Griffiths (2009) lists, this was extended to include a focus on:

> Expressing a love for the homeland and international progressive movements, faith in the principle of revolutionary internationalism and militant solidarity with peoples who struggle for their freedom, a repudiation of wars of aggression and hatred of the imperialism that promotes them (49).

A political and ideological education was recognised as necessary in order to perpetuate socialism, and in 1972, this type of education was formalised in the school curriculum as a distinct and separate subject (Griffiths 2009). Due to the importance of ideological and political formation, teachers were recognised as vital actors within the socialist system and were deemed 'implacable defenders of Marxist-Leninist ideology and socialist morals in all aspects of life' (Ministerio de Educación, quoted in Griffiths 2009: 51). A core mission of education, thus, was the perpetuation of the socialist project through aggressive efforts to bring about an 'ideological transformation in the moral and social consciousness of every citizen' (Read 1970: 135).

In Cuba, attention to values education has seen a resurgence in the post-Soviet Special Period.[3] The 1990s are seen as a period of deteriorating values, in the context of the decline of historical socialism more broadly. Signalling the start of the Special Period, Castro stated in the official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Granma*:

> We are not dealing with our system's—our socialism's—deficiencies. …There is a problem of *conciencia* [a broader nationalist and socialist identity, conscience] …To what extent do we really manifest political, revolutionary, social *conciencia*? We manifest it often … incredibly, admirably, extraordinarily. … But in day-to-day life we are lacking *conciencia.* (Castro, 1989 as cited in Blum 2011: 94)

Specifically, it is argued that 'values like honesty, responsibility, solidarity, and honour' deteriorated significantly in this period (Baxter Perez 2001: 4).[4] With economic hardship and the influence of a growing tourism industry, which made way for foreign currency and new ideas to permeate, came a necessity to reinvigorate socialist values in a new and globalising climate. As Portales writes:

> An examination of the actual conditions in our country permits us to understand the crisis of values as an expression of economic depression. … The influence of the [economic] difficulties on the socialisation processes of children and youth, the [new] expectations of Cuban youth during the 90s, and the way in which they have been integrated into society… [denote] the impact of the Special Period. (n.d: 4)

The socialist citizen in the new millennium arguably carries the values and dispositions to maintain Cuba's socialist project in the current, post-Soviet context. The broad goal continues to create a citizen who is 'patriotic, revolutionary, anti-imperialist, a worker, honest, proud to be Cuban, and ready to give their life if necessary' (Baxter Perez 2001: 7). At the same time, students learn values through education that allows them to function productively in the new context, thus accommodating the new conflicting values of the reformed and reforming Cuban economy and society. Education, therefore, facilitates learning 'ways to negotiate and mediate the doublespeak of Cuban society' and navigating the mixed messages offered by two conflicting ideological systems (Blum 2011: 212).

Cuba's youth have consistently been held up as being central to the maintenance of the socialist project. The revolution also placed an emphasis on youth and their role in the future development of Cuba. The revolution intended for young people to be the vanguard and the mechanism for which socialism would be propagated from one generation to the next. Kapcia (2005) claims that central to the revolution, and the recommitment to revolutionary values during the Special Period, is the notion of *Cubanía*, a national unifying Cuban cultural and political identity. Kapcia (2005) argues:

> Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of *cubanía* was its continuing coherence, allowing successive generations to claim its inheritance; for it consisted less of well-articulated ideas

[3] This, however, is not the first time attention to values has re-emerged. Blum (2011), for example, elaborates how this trend has periodically emerged in response to different periods of economic and political difficulties.

[4] The authors have completed this and all subsequent translations from Spanish to English.

> than a series of ideological 'codes', such a code being understood as a 'set of related and cognate beliefs and principles that can be grouped together to make a coherent belief in a single, given, value' as one of the building blocks of the wider ideology. (Kapcia 2000, cited in Kapcia: 403)

For Kapcia (2005), these sets of codes contain 'a profound and consistent belief in the liberating power of education and culture and a belief in "moralism"' (404). In the context of the economic hardships of the 1990s, Cuban youth became increasingly frustrated and dissociated with these codes, beliefs, and principles (Blum 2011; Baxter Perez 2001; Kapcia 2005). The gap between the values supporting the Cuban socialist system—including the ideological tenets relating to work and daily economic realities—led to a sense of dissatisfaction with the world of work and arguably contributed to problems in achieving the desired political and ideological formation (Griffiths 2009). To address the lack of motivation and disengagement of youth, education has shifted attention to the cultivation of individual values and interests as well as keeping at the forefront the interests of socialism. Education 'walk[s] a tightrope in trying, on the one hand, to accommodate students' interests while, on the other hand, serving society's needs' (Blum 2011: 115). Developing the values for the perpetuation of socialism in the new economy, therefore, necessitates a view of the individual as part of a larger collective: 'an essential condition of the formation of values relies on the relationship between the social project and individual richness' (Portales, n.d.:10). Values education bears the important responsibility of creating youth that can take on the task of continuing the socialist system while connecting to students' individual lived experiences and perspectives. And while students' realities often contradict traditional socialist ideals, they must still learn to see themselves as actors in the service of the larger socialist society. This process underlines the complexity of values formation and the difficult task of values education.

Positionalities

We believe our backgrounds, previous experiences, and identities frame the questions we ultimately investigate in this project and influence how we understand the data, and therefore feel it is necessary to be transparent about our positionalities (Blair 1995; Collins 2000; Harding 1987; Ladson-Billings 2000). We are both women of colour and have been raised in families with strong commitments to social justice. Explicit commitments to social justice have informed our identities as public school teachers (former), critical educators, and scholars. While we have both earned doctorates in International Education Policy, we have spent the past several years working in teacher education at the university level. We see both our scholarship and our teaching as explicitly advancing counter-hegemonic discourses and practices. We are interested in the politics of power and the explicit study of ideology in education, and feel that it is important to be transparent about how our ideological orientations are enacted in our work with teachers.

In the USA, education is often regarded as value-free. However, scholars have long argued that values are tacitly transmitted, and these values reinforce a capitalist free-market agenda (Anyon 1996; Apple 2004; Bowles and Gintis 1976; McLaren 2003). We sometimes see a conflict between these values and our commitment to social justice and equity in education. We look to Cuba's socialist model, an education system in which values are explicitly addressed, to develop our understandings of how the American school can be a site for more equitable and just structures and practices. It is important to note that what we know about Cuba is coloured by the historical understanding of the socialist 'other' that we have encountered early in our lives as exemplified in the discourses of the late Cold War period. We were adolescents when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, an event which has come to signal the rise of the era of global hegemonic capitalism and brings to light Cuba's longstanding resistance to American imperialism.

Research Context and Data Collection

In the summer of 2010, we participated in a week-long study tour to Havana and Santa Clara, Cuba. We were two of a group of 17 educators who represented various fields and perspectives within higher education. The group included teacher educators, graduate students in education policy, faculty, and administrators. We American educators were grouped together according to research interests. A group of our Cuban colleagues from local pedagogical institutions were assigned to work with each group of North American educators to help answer our questions. We were interested in understanding the processes of how values are taught and what pedagogical approaches are used to address the teaching of values in classrooms. We, along with five other North Americans, were members of the 'valores' (values) group and were paired with seven Cuban teacher educators. Each American educator had the opportunity to pursue his or her research questions in this collective setting, and these conversations were audio recorded. Our research questions were the following: (1) How are values transmitted through education and (2) What is the role of teachers in this process? We addressed these questions through discussions in the *valores* group. While the topics of the group conversation on values education varied according to the interests of the members of the group, we transcribed and analyzed the parts of the conversations that addressed our research questions on the specific processes of teaching values in the classroom. The portion of conversation that forms our data took place during a follow-up to the group discussion between the co-authors and two of our Cuban colleagues. Three interrelated tensions emerged in our analysis. We named these tensions: (1) need–greed, (2) majority–minority, and (3) gendering–nongendering of prostitution. We use these tensions to explore the process by which teachers maintain the transmission of socialist values in the context of the current changing political and economic backdrop.

The Example of Prostitution

We begin with a brief description of the topic of conversation in our *valores* working group to give a context for the interactions that form our data analysis. In order to develop a more robust sense of how the transmission of values takes place, we posed questions to our colleagues in the group. We asked our colleagues for a specific example of a value being taught in the classroom. It was not difficult to get to a list of values that were important for our colleagues to teach in schools. These aligned closely with formal policy and discourses and included values like solidarity, honesty, work, patriotism, and collectivism. The specific values that are important, however, were not the focus of our inquiry since a list of values would not give us a sense of *how* values are taught in schools. The more challenging conversation for us involved seeking particular classroom examples in which values were addressed so that we could have a better sense of the teaching approaches being used. Overall, there was a consensus from our colleagues that values are taught as integrated elements of lessons within the subject areas and are taught through discussion and debates, with the ultimate conclusion being the adoption by students of the particular value. We continued to question, seeking more specificity, exactly how a debate progresses and ends and how teachers ensure that particular values are learned and adopted. In this context, an interesting example of a class debate on prostitution emerged. We revisited this conversation and explored the issue in more detail, in a smaller, more intimate setting with two of our colleagues, colleague 1 and colleague 2. This conversation revealed three points of tension to which we will now turn our attention by closely analysing a segment of this conversation.

Need–Greed Tension

Sitting around a small outdoor table with colleagues 1 and 2, the interaction began with one of the authors referring to the topic of the classroom debate on prostitution and asking:

> How does the debate end? That debate about prostitution, prostitution being, on one hand, a struggle for work, a struggle for money, a struggle for resources, one way to make a living in a very hard time. And on another hand, some see this socially inconsistent with what we want society to be like. So with children, or with adolescents, university students, and inside a classroom, how does that debate finish? How does it start and how does it finish?

To which colleague 1 responds:

> … When the revolution ended, prostitution practically came to an end. I am not going to assert that a woman doesn't enter into prostitution because of economic problems. … In Cuba, there is openness to tourism. It causes an influx of foreigners and tourists. … And then, prostitution began to develop.[5]

[5] The authors translated the excerpts from conversations.

Colleague 2 adds:

> Understand, prostitution and the young people that prostitute themselves … see themselves as battlers. Why a battler? Because what happens is that a girl hooks up with a foreigner and it changes the life of the family. He buys her a new house, gives her money, buys her new furniture. … Then, the [class] discussion was this: how is Cuba going to convince an individual to try to resolve the problem? She changed her home, her people. Nonetheless, it's prostitution. … The discussion was very difficult and confronting… The dialogue has the attitude of the element that you provide. The minority remains to be the people who don't have logic. … In Cuba, with all that the revolution has done to dignify women, it gave her a job, a fine life, this is the question: how is it possible that we justify prostitution? She enters into it for the good material things it gives her. [This is different] from a society in which a woman sells herself because there is not another way.

Colleagues 1 and 2 argue that prostitution is born out of economic need as evidenced in the two lines: 'I am not going to assert that a woman doesn't enter into prostitution because of economic problems' and 'Because what happens is that a girl hooks up with a foreigner, and it changes the life of the family. He buys her a new house, gives her money, buys her new furniture'. However, later in the conversation, colleague 2 offers a greed argument when she says 'This is the question: how is it possible that we justify the prostitution? She enters into it for the good material things it gives her. [This is different] from a society in which a woman sells herself because there is not another way'. For colleague 2, in this instance, prostitution is unjustifiable, a theme that takes prominence throughout the conversation. There seems to be an oppositional argument, something that we label the *need–greed tension*. Our colleagues offer a strong argument that prostitution arises out of economic need. At the same time, they seem to offer an opposing argument that prostitution arises out of a desire for material gains since the state provides for basic needs. In the larger *valores* group, several educators expressed the view that prostitution, which was eradicated by the revolution, re-emerged during the Special Period, a time of great economic hardship. At the same time, and at times by the same person, prostitution is said to be not about economic need; rather, prostitution is motivated by greed.

Because, theoretically, there is no need for prostitution in the socialist state, it is presented as an act of greed and is therefore morally corrupt. Colleague 2, for example, comments:

> In a society like the Cuban one, a woman doesn't have a lot, and because of this they prostitute themselves. There's no need to do this. Understand?…[The life in Cuba] is a better life. I am talking about the kids that left the classroom and prostituted themselves to the foreigners. I am talking about a *jinetera* and because of this we call them *jineteras*… But, with the opportunity that Cuban women have, the ones that prostitute themselves, is a moral problem. Understand?

Colleague 2 seems to suggest that the moral argument is stronger even though she recognises the validity of the economic argument. While she recognises that 'a woman doesn't have a lot', there is still 'no need to [prostitute] herself'. She reinforces her point when she says '…with the opportunity that Cuban women have, the ones that prostitute themselves, is a moral problem'. This moral problem is part of what creates the crisis of values since the socialist state ostensibly takes care of all its citizens' needs. There is also evidence here that morality is gendered, a discussion that we will take up later in the analysis.

In her work, Garcia (2010) offers a tight historical analysis of prostitution and state regulation of women's bodies. Garcia writes:

> Debates regarding sex work in Cuba tend to pose a simplistic binary opposition between pre-revolutionary prostitution before 1959 and Special Period *jineterismo* in the 1990s, obfuscating any discussion of related topics spanning the years in between these periods. According to this view, prostitution was eliminated in the early revolution and did not become an issue until later when the 'similar, but different' phenomenon of *jineterismo* surfaced. Casting *jineterismo* as 'new' has the discursive effect of distancing contemporary issues from Cuba's pre-revolutionary past. The creation of a separate term *jineterismo* as a 'new' phenomenon further disavows historical experiences that speak to the continuity of state regulation of women's bodies in Cuba. From this perspective, *jineterismo* has no historical antecedents, and appears to arise whole cloth from contemporary social relations. (173)

Discursively, *jineterismo* offers a response to critiques that if prostitution exists today in Cuba, then the revolution has failed. By distancing *jineterismo* from prostitution, the socialist state can develop a whole new set of discursive practices to help make sense of the need–greed tension. Referencing Kapcia's (2005) notion of codes, the discourse of *jineterismo* offers a set of related and cognate beliefs in which moral deficiency absolves the ambiguity that arises from the tension. That is to say, that prostitution existed in Cuba for centuries up to the revolution. The revolution eradicated prostitution for the next 40 years. *Jineterismo*, therefore, constructed to arise from an abyss absent from any historical antecedents. Fidel Castro (1992) speaks to this point:

> We had to accept tourism as an economic need, but we said that it will be tourism free of drugs, free of brothels, free of prostitution, free of gambling. There is no cleaner, purer tourism than Cuba's tourism, because there is really no drug trafficking, no gambling houses. There are hookers but prostitution is not allowed in our country. There are no women forced to sell themselves to a man, to a foreigner, to a tourist. Those who do so, do it on their own, voluntarily, and without any need for it.

Castro acknowledges the economic need for tourism; however, he also acknowledges that Cuba's tourism should not follow the global paradigm of tourism in which capitalist excess—drugs, brothels, prostitution, and gambling—dominates. Rather, Cuba's tourism is presented as clean and pure. Fidel acknowledges the presence of hookers in a nation without prostitution. He makes a distinction between hookers and prostitutes. Hookers have sex with foreigners because they do so on their own, voluntarily. Prostitutes, on the other hand, have sex with foreigners because of financial need. His speech is consistent with the discourse of *jineterismo*. Ultimately, women who become *jineteras* do so out of their own choice, a choice motivated by greed—a lapse in morality. *Jineteras* are thus labelled as social deviants with limited social values (Facio 1999).

Majority–Minority Tension

Now that we have established that *jineterismo* is a set of codes used to perpetuate the socialist project, we turn our attention to the transmission of this set of codes. According to our colleagues, 'debate' is one method in which sets of codes are

transmitted in the classroom. While 'debate' is discussed as classroom practice, 'debate' can also be inscribed with a broader sociopolitical meaning. Threaded throughout the conversation is a clear notion of a 'majority' and a 'minority'. The 'majority' represent those who espouse the official, morally correct opinion, that of the state. The 'minority' signifies those who espouse divergent ideas, and they are, as colleague 2 states, the 'people who don't have logic'. Colleague 2 explains:

> The discussion was strong and in this discussion there was a group [of students] that defended the idea [that prostitution is unjustifiable] and there was a minority group that rejected [the idea that it is unjustifiable] and they gave an argument to the kids, and in the end those that said that they were battlers [had better] arguments.

It is the 'battlers' who are constructed as the 'majority' and who are recognised as having better arguments. Wanting to better understand our colleague's argument, we inquired as to what might happen in the classroom if the 'majority' opinion was that prostitution was justifiable on economic grounds (and the 'minority' opinion was that it was unjustifiable). For us, having grown up in an education system that privileges the ideals of deliberative democracy,[6] the winner of the debate is he or she who presents the strongest and most persuasive argument. This decision results from the process of argumentation itself and does not require that those with different opinions change their minds. The role of the teacher from this perspective is to facilitate the development of thorough arguments. Colleague 2 offers a contrasting perspective to this view:

> You have to give them the argument … What happened was I could not tire. This is what I had to tell them: *I am the teacher* (her emphasis). Not only is it an interaction with her [the student minority], it is an interaction of the group. Morality, above what I have already told you, [is] the Cuban laws. Morality is what regulates public opinion … The discussion has the role of enabling the person to feel the pressure from the public. Morality is the regulator [and what dictates] morality is the public opinion. … Therefore, I have to do the job of the group in order to pressure the individual. It was on the opinion of the majority of the group [that prostitution is unjustifiable]. The minority was the one that rejected that decision.

In order to make sense of the above sentiments of our colleague, we return to Kapcia's (2005) work:

> Mainly [the Revolution resisting collapse] had survived, and now began to be mobilised, through the usual mechanisms for ideological adherence: the periodic collective ritualisation of 'belonging', inculcation through education, the effects of constant participation, the recourse to nationalism (especially against external threats) and the continuing formal commitment to the notion of the 'New Man'. (407)

Debate, therefore, is not a tool for exercising democracy in the classroom; rather, it is a teaching method/process in which formal ideological adherence is sought to take place. The roles and moral value of the two parties in the argumentation are decided from the beginning. The 'majority' opinion is the officially correct moral opinion. Any diverging views or ideologies, those of the 'minority', must be adjusted to align

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[6] We note deliberative democratic processes are ideals in our system of representative democracy.

with the 'majority', and in doing so, the commitment to the Socialist ideal is hoped to be perpetuated. The teacher, in her role as custodian of appropriate morality, protects the 'majority' opinion. For colleague 2, the winner of the debate is he or she who is consistent with official discourse, that is the 'majority' (even if only the teacher represents this view in the classroom—'I have to do the job of the group in order to pressure the individual'), or those who believe that 'Morality … '[is] the Cuban laws. Morality is what regulates public opinion'. The 'minority' still has to be persuaded by the teacher to adopt the 'majority's' view, the correct opinion and moral.

A Gendered Reading

In the *Politics of Gender* Gal and Kligman (2000) write of new socialist gender arrangements in Eastern Europe and their often contradictory goals:

> Scholars agree … on some of the broad features of socialist gender orders. There was an attempt to erase gender difference (along with ethnic and class differences), to create socially atomised persons directly dependent on the paternalistic state. Yet, women in socialism were also sometimes constituted as a corporate category becoming a special object of state policy with ministries or state offices dedicated to what were defined as their concerns. Women's full time participation in the labor force was dictated by the state, on which women were more directly dependent than they were on individual men. In short, the ideological and social structural arrangements of state socialism produced a markedly different relation between the state, men, and women. … socialist gender arrangements themselves varied slightly over time and space. Indeed, socialist regimes were often characterised by contradictory goals in their policies towards women: they wanted workers as well as mothers, token leaders as well as obedient cadres. (5)

In contemporary Cuba, the conversation around *jineterismo* reflects often contradictory discourses as well. In her analysis of *jineterismo*, Garcia (2010) offers a close read of the state's relationship with women. According to the state, *jineteras* are not active agents making rational choices that differ from the official socialist ideology about their work; rather, *jineteras* are presented as morally deviant, a characteristic that 'disguises their capitalist deviations' (186). Sex work, as a private economic practice, threatens the state's control of the economy and therefore results in even more extreme moralistic rhetoric (Fusco 1998, cited in Garcia 2010). The degree to which women are denied agency in this context is clearly articulated by Garcia:

> Discourses of moral pathology that represent jineteras as shameless, lazy, frivolous, superficial, sexually available, immature, irresponsible, and so on, serve to de-legitimate their agency and ability to choose, while also hiding the fact that the state cannot control or benefit from a particular sector of society that is 'successfully' achieving what the Special Period has made necessary for state and citizen alike. (187)

Jintereras, therefore, are constituted as immoral and greedy because they are not 'obedient cadres'. They engage in illegal activities associated with capitalist foreigners, a transgression, since their basic needs are fulfilled by the state. Constituting *jineteras* this way legitimise the state to reinstate its power over these women and make them dependent again on the paternalistic state.

In a socialist state with ostensible commitments to equality and women's liberation, one could argue that there should be one set of social and ideological arrangements for both men and women. However, the discussion around *jineterismo* indicates that there is one set of social and ideological arrangement for women and a completely different set for men. Based on the argument of *jineterismo*, women who prostitute themselves are morally deviant, and only females are prostitutes. When prostitution is practised by men, male prostitutes are constructed not as morally deviant; rather, they are constructed as morally endowed. This moral endowment is a virility that is consistent with the virile Cuban state. Hodge (2001) writes of *pingueros,*[7] male sex workers. For Hodge, the etymology of the word clearly defines the role of the male sex worker leaving the male sex workers' masculinity intact. Male sex workers avoid the scrutiny and policing of the body that women sex workers experience in Cuba. For male sex workers, their work of giving *pinga* is consistent with the nationalist project. Hodge offers up a compelling analysis:

> The state has been forced by economic exigency to admit capitalist incursion and relinquish some of its economic and ideological autonomy. Jineteras demonstrate this in their very bodies, and so they are an intolerable reminder of the growing power of external capital in internal affairs. This, [the Cuban government] cannot abide. But pingueros, at least representationally if not also practically, are quite the opposite: they represent the strength of the powerful Cuban phallus conquering the bodies of foreigners. No autonomy has been lost, and symbolically at least, no Cuban body has been defiled. (23)

For the student in the classroom where the debate is taking place, the framing of *jineterismo* is a gendered one in which prostitution is constructed female and this construction is based on the notion of moral deviance. While there is no evidence from our conversation of how male prostitution would have been handled in the classroom debate, we might infer that it would be less of a moral problem in light of the different social arrangements for men and women articulated above. We could conclude that a male prostitute might be seen as engaging in a justifiable means of income generation. Ultimately, a gendered reading gives us a more detailed understanding of the initial codes offered by the discourse of *jineterismo*—that those who choose sex work are moral and social deviants—and helps us understand how morality itself is gendered in this context.

Conclusion

The example of teaching values through the discussion of and debate around *jineterismo* offered by our colleagues suggests a set of codes that are being used to frame and reframe dynamic social arrangements in an evolving sociopolitical and

[7] Like the term *jinetera*, the term "*pinguero*" arose out of the Special Period to refer to male sex workers in search of dollars. Hodge writes: "the slang term for "dick" ("pinga") was added the suffix "ero," meaning, a man whose activity, or profession, has to do with his pinga" (22).

economic climate. The discursive practices around the 'majority–minority' debate serve as the mechanism for transmitting prescribed codes, codes that denote a notion of a correct and gendered morality for socialism. Our analysis identifies points of tensions, contradictions, and ambiguities that emerge as we interpret the codes and the mechanism by which they are transmitted. These tensions are evident in our emergent themes: the need–greed and majority–minority discussions and debates and the nuanced understanding garnered from a gendered reading. Teachers and teacher educators are engaging in the redefining of evolving ideological and structural arrangements. They participate in teaching ideology through taking up the official line offered by Castro and official policies (as 'majority discourses and morals'), and trying to make it work in the context of changing sociopolitical circumstances. Thus, the official ideology is flexibly negotiated at the classroom level to fit the realities of the teachers and pupils and in this reality it gains somewhat new interpretations.

Overall, our experience echoes that of Breidlid (2007), who comments: 'to conduct fieldwork in Cuba is not without its problems … To interpret between the lines bec[omes] the challenging task' (618). In reading between the lines we unpack the mechanisms by which values are taught and by which the definition of socialism in the Cuban context is being constructed and reconstructed. Ultimately, a complex and dynamic process is brought to light. We initially sought to understand Cuba as a counter-narrative, an alternative to our frameworks as North American scholars. What we now understand is that Cuba as counter-narrative is an active, complex, and contradictory phenomenon. Cuba is constantly making and remaking itself as a viable working alternative to capitalism. The perspectives and analysis offered in this chapter add depth to the understanding of how values important for socialism are addressed in the Cuban context. However, the dynamic and complicated social and ideological arrangements we discuss highlight the need for more and deeper empirical and theoretical inquiries. Ultimately, there is much still to understand about the ongoing process that is education for socialism in Cuba.

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Chapter 4
Soviets in the Countryside: The MST's Remaking of Socialist Educational Practices in Brazil

Rebecca Tarlau

> Once the revolution happens in the schools, people can make the revolution in the streets, however this link is not always necessary. In China, in Cuba, in Russia, without going through the schools, people were able to create a revolution in the streets. But, in a country like Brazil it is necessary to create a minimum general critical consciousness, a universal citizenship and a collective desire for radical change in order to achieve the utopia of constructing a new society that either becomes a reformed socialism or a revolutionary socialism. I prefer the latter alternative.
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> —Florestan Fernandes (Brazilian sociologist), quoted on the first page of an MST publication, *Principles of education in the MST* (MST 1999)

Three hundred people pushed to fit into a majestic room, located in the House of Culture in the town center of the city of Veranópolis. This relatively wealthy city of Italian and German immigrants, located between the mountains in the northeast part of Rio Grande do Sul, is not the most obvious choice of location for the discussion and implementation of socialist educational alternatives. The city is most widely known for having the highest life expectancy in Brazil and for its delicious wine. However, among militants[1] working with social movements that are trying to address issues of poverty and exploitation in Brazil, and especially among those interested in how schools can be part of this process, the city has a different meaning.

The city of Veranópolis is the location of the first school founded and administered by the largest agrarian social movement in Latin America, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Brazilian Landless Workers Movement, MST). The Institute of Education Josué de Castro (IEJC) functions as a private school with

[1] The English word "militant" is used as a translation of *militante,* the Portuguese word for an active member or volunteer of a political organization (political party, social movement, etc.).

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legal recognition from the Brazilian government.[2] On October 16, 2010, 300 people from different walks of life—government officials, labor leaders, old MST graduates, the Venezuelan ambassador—gathered in the Veranópolis House of Culture to celebrate the school's 15th anniversary. One of the two speakers that day was Luiz Carlos de Freitas, a Professor of Education at the State University of Campinas, who studies the educational initiatives in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1930. During his speech to the audience that day, Freytes reflected on the MST's use of Soviet educational pedagogies, saying, "I cannot help but think that we are in a school the Russian revolutionaries wanted to build."[3]

In this chapter, I give a brief introduction to the MST and how the movement's educational initiatives are tied to the MST's fight for socialism through small agricultural farming in Brazil. Then, I explain how the MST began to develop an alternative educational practice that incorporated both Freirean educational methods and Soviet pedagogies. This is followed by a review of the work of two Soviet theorists who are referenced most often by MST militants, Anton Makarenko and Moisey M. Pistrak. Finally, I end by analyzing the experiences of students at two schools the MST currently administers.

The data for this chapter is based on over 12 months of field research in Brazil, during July and August of 2009 and from October 2010 to July 2011. I carried out research in two different states—Rio Grande do Sul and Pernambuco—as well as the capital city of Brasília. During these 12 months, I conducted approximately 50 semi-structured interviews, all well over 1 hour, with MST educational militants and teachers, in addition to seven interviews with University professors.[4] Interviews were in Portuguese and extensive notes were taken during each interview.[5] While all of these interviews have contributed to my understanding of the MST's educational initiatives, I cite only six interviews in this chapter. I also draw on data from six focus groups I held with 35 students at one secondary institution. Another principal part of data collection was participant observation in more than 30 educational spaces where the MST is attempting to implement its pedagogy: public schools on MST settlements and camps,[6] technical secondary schools administered by the MST, and university

[2] This school is named after the Brazilian author who wrote *Geopolitics of Hunger*, which analyses the human-made causes of hunger and how these hunger crises are tied to the functioning of the capitalism on a global scale (Castro 1946). While the coordinators of IEJC insist on referring to the school with this formal name, most people know the school by the name of the educational entity that hosts the school, ITERRA (Technical Institute of Training and Research for Agrarian Reform).

[3] Quote from a public speech, Veranópolis House of Culture, Rio Grande do Sul, 10/16/2010.

[4] I also conducted over 60 interviews with government officials at the municipal, state, and federal level, who have a relationship to the MST and the educational pedagogies the movement is trying to promote. However, this data is not used in this chapter.

[5] All translations of interview data from Portuguese to English have been completed by the author.

[6] MST "settlements" are areas of agrarian reform where land has been expropriated and given to the MST families. MST "camps" are areas of land that MST militants are occupying, but to which they do not yet have the land rights.

courses organized in partnership with the MST. In addition, I shadowed the activities of the MST education sector in each state I conducted research, participating in events such as evaluations of schools, national conferences, political protests in defense of the MST's educational proposal, teacher-training sessions, and meetings between MST militants and government officials. Finally, I also reviewed dozens of educational documents the MST has produced over the past 30 years.

Introducing the MST

The Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST) arose in the early 1980s, at the tail end of Brazil's "economic miracle," during the political opening that paved the way for the democratization of the country. In the previous decades, rapid economic growth and industrialization had coincided with massive migration from rural to urban areas. In 1940, less than 32% of the population lived in cities; by 1991, 75% of Brazil's total population was urban (Plank 1996). For the Brazilians who remained in rural areas, hunger and malnutrition increased as the Brazilian government pushed many small landowners off their land in an attempt to increase large-scale agricultural industries. The MST formed as an attempt to combat this rural poverty through occupations of large unproductive land estates, which put pressure on the government to give these workers land on which they can work (Branford and Rocha 2002; Wright and Wolford 2003; Ondetti 2008). Since the first land occupations in the early 1980s, the MST has won land rights to 20 million acres, in the process giving over 350,000 families legal rights to their own land.

The MST has become famous around the world for its success in redistributing land in Brazil, but less well known is its simultaneous struggle for the right to free primary, secondary, and tertiary education for all children, youth, and adults living in MST settlements and camps. Over the past 25 years, the MST has pressured state and local governments to build more than 2,000 new rural public schools that currently serve approximately 200,000 students (MST 2009). The MST is also concerned about the *type* of education that occurs in these public schools, and over the past three decades, movement members have developed a theoretically innovative educational pedagogy for rural schools—nationally known as Education of the Countryside (*Educação do Campo*). However, since public schools are under the administration of municipal and state governments, the influence of the MST is continually being negotiated and can change rapidly depending on political elections, shifts in power relationships, or the movement's own organizational strength.[7] Therefore, MST militants also search out institutional relationships that offer more stability in

[7] The relationship between the MST and different levels of the Brazilian government, in terms of implementing the MST's educational pedagogies within public schools, is the focus of my dissertation (forthcoming, University of California, Berkeley).

implementing the movement's educational ideas. The MST has approximately ten private secondary schools that have official government recognition. In addition, ever since the 1997 creation of the federal program PRONERA,[8] the MST has partnered with dozens of universities across the country to offer over 40 bachelor courses to youth and adults living in areas of agrarian reform. The MST has almost complete autonomy over the pedagogical organization of these university courses.

The long-term goal of the MST is to use the formal school system as one vehicle to construct socialist economic alternatives in rural areas. The movement openly fights for a socialist society, drawing on revolutionary leaders such as Vladimir Lenin, Che Guevara, Rosa Luxemburg, Jose Martí, Emiliano Zapata, and Antonio Gramsci for their inspiration. While MST militants have no illusion that a socialist revolution in Brazil will occur in the near future, their activism is focused on reconstructing relations of work in the rural countryside through organic cooperatives that are sustainable and competitive in the current economy. When people in MST camps receive legal rights to their land, the movement encourages people to give up these individual rights and join their land together to construct agricultural collectives. Many MST courses offer joint technical degrees in agroecology, encouraging students to go back to their settlements and promote organic agriculture. The MST's most vocal fight is against large agricultural industries that dominate rural areas of Brazil. In April of 2011 the MST launched a national campaign against the use of agricultural pesticides, and movement members continually discuss the fact that since 2009 Brazil has become the number one consumer of pesticides in the world (MST 2011). In addition to organic agricultural collectives, the MST wants to construct alternative community health programs on settlements, invest in cultural events and youth activities, and, of course, create a school system that supports these new social and economic relations. MST militants are acutely aware that the traditional school system will not promote the type of society they want to create on their settlements; therefore, for 30 years MST militants have sought out educational theories, pedagogies, and practices to support their socialist vision.

Educational Experiments: Beginning to Develop an MST Pedagogy

Salete Campigotto is commonly known as the "first teacher" in the MST. The daughter of a small landowner in Rio Grande do Sul, she spent much of her youth working on the farm.[9] After finishing eighth grade in 1972, Salete spent 4 years as a first and

[8] PRONERA (National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform) is one of the most important programs that fund the MST's educational initiatives across the country.

[9] The information that follows about Salete Campigotto is from my interview with her in January 2011, as well as a formal published interview with Campigotto (Tedesco 2008). The rest of the history in this section comes from interviews and informal conversations with MST educational militants and analysis of MST publications on education.

second grade teacher, until she was finally able to enter a joint secondary school and teacher degree course in 1975. When she was 25 years old, in 1977, she met Father Arnildo Fritzen, an adherent of liberation theology,[10] who invited her to participate in a Christian Base Community (CEB)—an informal study group that met every week to study religious and political texts. It was through this CEB that Salete began to grow politically, eventually supporting one of the first land occupations that occurred in Rio Grande do Sul in 1979.[11]

In 1981, Salete decided to participate in a land occupation herself. At this point, she was 27 years old and the only person in the camp with a teaching degree. According to Salete, there were 112 school-age children in the camp; in addition, 70% of the adults in the camp were illiterate. Salete, together with a woman from the local University of Ijuí, began to organize informal educational activities for both children and illiterate adults. However, as Salete emphasizes, they wanted to teach in a way that was different from the traditional school system that trains students for the urban job market. MST militants began to search for educational references that could help construct schools that would become vehicles for economic and social change. Paulo Freire was already famous nationally for his work with adult education, as well as being a major theoretical influence within the CEBs. In 1982, two people from Freire's educational team agreed to visit the camp and work with Salete and others on how to use Freirean pedagogy.

Over a period of 6 days this couple introduced the major ideas of Freirean educational philosophy to the people on the camp: the importance of teachers doing research in the community before teaching, in order to understand the common language and topics of conversations in the community; the creation of generative themes from this research, which would stimulate classroom discussions; pedagogical activities based in students' realities and accumulated knowledge; a critique of the banking method of education where the teacher just transmits information to the students; and the need to educate through dialogue and posing questions to the students.[12] After this training, Salete said she began to teach the alphabet with words that represented the reality of the community, for example, "A" for "acampamento" (camp) or "O" for "ocupação" (occupation). She also taught geography by helping students identify where MST camps were located in the region or where the large landowners had plantations. To learn mathematics, the students practiced measuring a hectare of land and then used these measurements to estimate the size of the camp.

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[10] Liberation theology was a movement within the Catholic Church that believed charity was not sufficient to help the poor; it was necessary to change the structures that kept the poor in poverty. Liberation theology was extremely important for the development of new social movements, NGOs, and women's organizations in the 1970s and 1980s in Brazil (Berryman 1987). Father Arnildo was part of this liberation theology movement and a very important figure in the founding of the MST.

[11] For more detail about the history of these first land occupations in Brazil, see Wright and Wolford (2003), Wolford (2010), Ondetti (2008).

[12] For more in-depth reading on Freirean educational methods, see Freire (2002), Gadotti (1994), Hooks (1994) McLaren (2000).

Salete experimented with various educational methods, always with Paulo Freire as the principle theoretical reference. In 1983, the camp won legal rights to the land, and soon after the government agreed to construct the first public school in the country on an MST settlement, with Salete as the teacher.

In 1985, 1,500 families occupied Fazenda Annoni, a large plantation in north-central Rio Grande do Sul. This occupation drove the issue of land reform into the national spotlight. An important aspect of this occupation was the presence of hundreds of children, running around and playing in the camp, as parents participated in the enormous task of organizing the daily necessities for more than a thousand families. Salete started travelling to the campsite on a daily basis in order to work with these children. As she got to know the people in the camp, Salete discovered that eleven of those involved in the occupation already had teaching certificates. These teachers, along with some parents, began to formalize an education collective.

As the occupation at Fazenda Annoni received national media attention, many sympathizers began to visit and offer their support. Among a group of university student visitors was a woman, Rosali Caldart, who would became extremely important for the development of an educational pedagogy within the MST.[13] Rosali, along with another woman from the same university, helped to organize a study group with the camp's educational collective.[14] Through this study group, Rosali began introducing socialist pedagogies to the movement, primarily those developed by intellectuals from the Soviet Union. This was not simply an imposition of outside intellectuals but rather an attempt to synthesize outside theories with the ideas and practices already occurring within the movement. For example, when I asked Salete about her first experience with a Soviet theorist, she recalled that when working with children in Fazenda Annoni she would get the students to participate in manual work as well as the normal academic curriculum. Salete had a box of rabbits in the classroom, and the students were in charge of taking care of these rabbits. When Rosali came to visit and saw this combination of manual work and intellectual studies, she asked Salete, "Do you know that Nadezhda Krupskaya, Vladimir Lenin's wife, talks about this?" The next visit, Rosali brought an article by Krupskaya, which according to Salete was the first socialist educational text she read.

The study group that began to evolve expanded beyond Fazenda Annoni to include MST militants who were already settled and beginning the process of constructing new schools in their settlements. As Rosali explained, this education collective was focused on how to create a school linked to a larger social and economic project. She said that the collective searched for experiences around them that would help, but did not find any. While many people had experiences with Paulo Freire, Freire

[13] Rosali Caldart went on to write many important books about the educational pedagogies of the MST (Caldart 2004; Arroyo et al. 2004).

[14] All of the information about Rosali Caldart and her work with the education collective is from my interview with her in January 2011.

focused primarily on adult education and literacy methods, not formal schooling. In addition, Freire was concerned with the relationship between the teacher and students in a single classroom, not the relationship and structure of the school as a whole. Where in the world had people tried to create a different type of school linked to larger socialist goals? The Soviet Union was one obvious answer.

Discovering Soviet Pedagogy

Moisey M. Pistrak

Moisey M. Pistrak is one Soviet theorist whose work resonated with the MST's practical experiences. Pistrak is not widely known in the English-speaking world; there are no translations of his writings in English. The first translation of his work into Portuguese was the *Fundamentos da Escola do Trabalho* (*Fundamentals of a School of Work*) published in 1981.[15] It was not until 2010 that Professor Luiz Carlos de Freytes translated a second book by Pistrak into Portuguese, *Escola Comune* (*Commune School*), after spending several years in Russia studying Pistrak's educational theories.

Although there are very few records of his life, it is known that Pistrak was born in Russia, lived from 1888 to 1940, and was influential in reforming the education system in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. He was also a contemporary and follower of the educational theorist Nadezhda Krupskaya. Krupskaya was deputy minister of education in the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1939 and married to the revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin. Kruspkaya was one of the first Marxist pedagogues, and participated during the 1920s and 1930s in the construction of a Soviet public school system that would support a new socialist society (Pistrak 2000). While MST militants also mention Krupskaya when discussing Soviet educational initiatives during the 1920s, Pistrak is a much more common reference.

In *Fundamentals of a School of Work,* Pistrak discusses his experiences constructing and implementing a Marxist pedagogical method in primary schools in the Soviet Union. As he clearly states, "The revolution and the school should act in parallel, because the school is an ideological arm of the revolution" (Pistrak 2000, p. 30).[16] Based on this sentiment, the book offers an analysis of how to construct a school that prepares students to contribute to a socialist revolution. Perhaps the most important among the book's contributions is its emphasis on manual labor as a cornerstone of any school system, intended as a way of teaching the principles of discipline, organization, and collectivity. Pistrak writes, "It is necessary to teach love and esteem

[15] The original translation was done by Daniel Aarão Reis Filho and published by São Paulo Brasiliense Press in 1981. The publication quoted from in this paper is a 2000 publication printed by Editora Expressão Popular. All quotes from this book are translated into English by the author.

[16] All quotes from this book are translations from Portuguese to English by the author.

for work. Work elevates the man and brings him happiness; it educates him in a collective sentiment, it ennobles the man and because of this, work, and particularly manual work of whatever type, is necessary as a means of education" (Pistrak 2000, p. 48). Pistrak also emphasizes the importance of teachers engaging in theory and developing their own creative practices, the need to address the current political reality, and the self-management of the students, who should become the principal protagonists within the school.

In my interview with Rosali,[17] she said that MST militants saw Pistrak as engaging in a task similar to their own: creating a formal school system that directly supported a larger socialist project. Pistrak's theory of a "school of work," in which work was valued and students were involved in both manual and intellectual labor, was and remains one of the pillars of the MST's educational beliefs. Pistrak offered a language to theorize the practices that were already developing within MST camps and settlements, and his writings connected these local practices to other socialist projects. For MST militants I interviewed who have read Pistrak, the principal concept they recollect from his writings is that manual labor is a school in and of itself and should be connected to the intellectual tasks students are taught in the classroom. Today, the MST incorporates these ideas in various ways, from creating gardens or mini-factories in the schools, to requiring students to be responsible for all cooking and cleaning. However, the MST's use of Pistrak may be changing. Edgar Kolling, a leader in the national MST education sector, expressed in an interview that after 25 years, with the publication of *Commune School* in 2010, MST militants have come back to Pistrak, rereading his writings and discussing how these theories can continue to be incorporated into the pedagogy of the movement.[18]

Anton Semyonovich Makarenko

Anton Makarenko has become famous in educational circles for his work with children who had been orphaned after the Bolshevik Revolution. Born in Ukraine in 1888, Makarenko graduated from the Poltava Pedagogical Institute in 1917 and was appointed the head of a secondary school, a few months prior to the October revolution. In 1920, he was asked by the Soviet Department of Public Education to organize a residence and school for homeless children, which became the Maxim Gorky Labour Colony, named after the Russian intellectual Makarenko most respected. Makarenko's famous book *Road to Life* (*Poemas Pedagogicas*) is an account of his 7 years at this school working with war orphans (Makarenko 2001). In 1927, Makarenko was appointed the head of another colony for homeless children and adolescents, the Dzerzhinsky Labour Commune, where he worked until 1935. Between 1935 and 1939, when he passed away, Makarenko published several books that became popular in educational circles. Makarenko remains an extremely important

[17] Interview with Rosali Caldart, January 2011.

[18] Interview with Edgar Kolling, November 2010.

authority within the MST today; his books are studied in pedagogy courses, and he is quoted in official publications of the MST education sector. Makarenko's work is widely available in both English and Portuguese. In particular *Road to Life*, a story-like first-person account of his years as the director of the Gorky Colony, captured the imagination of many MST militants, allowing them to directly relate the experiences of the Gorky Colony to their own educational initiatives in Brazil.

While Pistrak was writing about a formal school system, Makarenko was discussing a school that was outside of the formal system, whose goal was to "form" war orphans into disciplined revolutionaries who would contribute to the construction of a new society in the Soviet Union. These war orphans were considered by Soviet society to be deviants and devoid of norms, and Makarenko believed that their personalities, character, and intellect had to be reshaped (Bowen 1962). His solution to this dilemma was the collective. He believed that students who are brought into a collective dispense with their individualism and begin to strive for a goal greater than themselves. Makarenko understood that a key aspect to constructing a school as a collective is allowing for the self-management of the students, permitting students to discuss together the daily tasks and problems in the schools and to determine their solutions (Luedemann 2002).

Ever since the first land occupations in Rio Grande do Sul, MST militants have worked with this idea of the collective, both in the organization of daily tasks in the camp and in the agricultural work on the settlements. Transforming a school into a collective made sense, given the prior organizational structure of the movement. As the next section of this chapter will detail, the MST has incorporated this idea into schools by organizing "Base Nucleuses" (Núcleos da Base, or NBs), which are collectives of five or six students that make up the foundational structure of any school the MST administers. While Pistrak offered a theory of manual work as an educational experience and Freire offered concrete pedagogical techniques within a classroom, Makarenko's theories discussed a transformation of the relationships within the school as a whole. As opposed to students simply arriving in the school and completing tasks that are set out for them, these students would become the principal agents determining how the school would function. For the MST, these student responsibilities include collectively addressing all disciplinary issues in the school, participating in discussions on curriculum, helping to organize the class schedule and extracurricular school activities and events, facilitating class discussions, evaluating teacher performance, and actively participating in larger debates about the goals and objectives of the school. Just as socialism had to transform power relationships in the workplace, Makarenko's educational pedagogy meant radically overturning the traditional relationships between principals, teachers, and students.

Picking and Choosing from Soviet Pedagogy

Although MST militants have clung onto Makarenko's idea of a school as a collective, not all aspects of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas are so easily accepted. In talking to MST militants about Makarenko, some people expressed concern about the

extreme authority he held, the fact that he was perhaps the strongest presence within the collective, and his harsh disciplinary punishments. At one point in *Road to Life*, Makarenko tells the story of becoming so exasperated with a student that he hits him as a form of punishment. In interviews, MST militants often mention this part of the book, expressing disagreement, but also arguing that you cannot throw out Makarenko's theories because of this one incident; the context of the Soviet Union and the extremely alienated youth that Makarenko was working with have to be taken into consideration.

Makarenko and Freire can seem like stark opposites, the former extremely concerned with discipline and conforming to socialist values, and the latter focused on dialogue, student expression, and a humanistic teacher-student relationship. This difference also stems from their different philosophical backgrounds and political contexts: Makarenko was a self-proclaimed Marxist working to ensure the success of the recent Bolshevik revolution and a model of democratic centralism. Success would require discipline, dedication, and the formation of a "new Soviet man" (Cheng 2009) who would submit to decisions of the vanguard party. On the other hand, Freire was a Catholic, a humanist, and writing in exile against an authoritative military dictatorship in Brazil. These differences might appear irreconcilable, but the MST has never felt the need to choose between the two theorists. Rather, the MST has incorporated aspects of both theories into its pedagogy, as well as drawing on Pistrak, and defends all three theorists in educational publications, conferences, and teacher-training courses.

From Makarenko the MST takes the idea of the collective, the importance of students being the principal organizers of the school system, as well as the idea of in-residence education where students live and study at the school. The MST uses Pistrak to articulate the importance of manual labor and valuing the culture of the working class. And finally, the MST continues to use Freirean methodologies in the classroom: working with texts that draw from the students' realities, organizing classes around debate and dialogue, and teaching students about the causes of poverty and oppression in Brazil.

On the other hand, the MST does not emulate the military character of the Gorky Colony, the idea that students should march around the school in columns and have military rankings. MST militants often critique Makarenko for his overbearing presence in the Gorky Colony. As Professor Luiz Carlos da Freytes explained, in the collective Makarenko creates, Makarenko is always present, whereas in the collective Pistrak develops, Pistrak disappears.[19] This difference between the two theorists offers the MST flexibility in how to build a collective within a school. This is also where the MST can draw on Freire, who believed in student-centered classrooms, but did not believe a teacher should simply become a facilitator of student-led discussion, but rather, must know where he or she is leading the students and be firm in that direction.

[19] Interview with Luiz Carlos de Freitas, January 2011.

The MST has thus refused to wed itself to one theory/theorist, allowing militants to adjust MST pedagogy to particular contexts and needs. As militants always tell me, the pedagogy of the movement is in *movimento* (movement—always changing and adapting). Finally, beyond picking and choosing from the theories of Pistrak, Makarenko, and Freire, the movement also incorporates its own organizational culture into the schools. For example, classes always begins with *mística*,[20] a moment of cultural and political performance that can include dance, music, theater, videos, or other cultural expressions that reflect on issues important to the students. Classes also start with "words of order" (*gritos de ordem*)[21] and the singing of the MST national anthem. Beyond this organizational culture, teachers discuss the history of the MST, news about the movement, and if there is an important event nearby, such as an MST march or workshop, students are brought along. Thus, while drawing extensively on Soviet theorists, the pedagogy of the MST really looks quite different than it ever did in the Soviet Union. It is a new hybrid, a locally adapted and dynamic pedagogy, drawing on the old, but created for a particular, contemporary, Brazilian context.

For many MST militants, the educational opportunities offered by the movement are the only way to complete secondary school and enter a university course. One example is Vanderlúcia Simplicio, who grew up in the northeast part of Brazil with 16 brothers and sisters, and with a lot of difficulty was able to make it through eighth grade. In 1992, when she was 20 years old, she began to participate in activities with MST militants, who were starting to organize in the northeast. Shortly after getting involved she was asked to participate in the education sector of the movement, teaching in an MST camp. A year later, she was invited to continue her education through an MST-administered secondary course being offered in Rio Grande do Sul. The movement paid for all of her expenses to attend this course. In 1998, Vanderlúcia was invited to be part of a group of 56 MST militants who entered the first ever MST university course, "Pedagogy of Land." After graduating from the course in 2002, Vanderlúcia got a post-bachelor degree in "Education of the Countryside," a course also organized by the MST. Finally, 2 years ago, Vanderlucia was accepted into a master's degree program in education at the University of Brasília and recently graduated in May of 2011.

In November of 2010, I travelled to Brasília for a conference, and while I was there I stayed with Vanderlúcia's family. At the end of my stay Vanderlúcia drove me to the airport, and it was a chance to ask her a few last questions. One question was about Anton Makarenko: as we pulled up to the airport, I finally asked Vanderlúcia about Makarenko and the importance of Makarenko in the movement. She said that he is very important to the movement, and that when she first read

[20] *Mística* is part of the MST's general organizational structure and is performed before all meetings, events, and conferences the movement organizes.

[21] *Gritos de ordem* are two-line chants that MST militants shout during meetings, marches, and rallies. They can express thoughts about education, revolutionary leaders, fighting for socialism, etc.

about the Gorky Colony she realized that the pedagogy course she was taking was trying to imitate this colony, that this is exactly what they were trying to do. She said she read the *Road to Life*, that she learned about the collective from it and that this collectivist attitude is a very important part of the pedagogy of the movement. At this point, she began to get pretty emotional. She told me that there is a lot of value in collective life, and all of her education up to this point has been collective. And now she has entered this master's program, and it is so individual, and it is very hard for her; she spent a lot of time crying the first year because it was difficult. Everything is very individualized, and although she was told she had to enter a master's program and begin to develop her own individual line of research, she does not like it. Classes are just battles of ideas between individuals, and there is less learning than there would be if people were collectively discussing and developing these ideas together. She says it is very hard to be in this individualized environment and with a small child as well.[22]

Vanderlúcia's juxtaposition of her experiences with MST-run courses, versus the way education is organized in mainstream universities, is revealing. The idea of the collective—which was part of the origins of the MST, but also reinforced through studying Makarenko and Pistrak—is in complete contrast to the philosophy of individualism that predominates in capitalist society. Transitioning from these MST-administered courses to a normal university master's program was hard for Vanderlúcia because she has always had a collective educational experience. Vanderlúcia's experience is a strong evidence of the success that the MST has had in transforming social relations within schools by implementing a creative adaptation of socialist pedagogy. The next section will describe two secondary schools where the pedagogy of the MST is being implemented and will analyze accounts of student experiences in these schools.

From the Books to the Classroom: Moving from Theory to Practice

Institute of Education Josué de Castro (IEJC)

This chapter began by discussing the 15th anniversary of the IEJC, the first MST private school to attain legal recognition. As one of the speakers at the anniversary emphasized, IEJC was created to prepare youth for a political project and to give them the technical skills they needed to achieve this project. Rosali Caldart, who was also a speaker at the event, said that the goal of this school was to prepare youth and adults for collective life and to create political militants who could help organize the movement and contribute to agricultural production in the settlements.

[22] Informal conversation with Vanderlúcia Simplicio, recorded in field notes, November 2010.

The original question was not "How can we create a different school?" but rather, "How can we pedagogically form people who will attend to the needs of MST settlements and camps?"[23] These clarifications about the original intent for IEJC are important, because like Pistrak and Makarenko, the MST is discussing a pedagogy that has a larger purpose: to create socialist relations of production in their settlements and camps and to form citizens with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to construct these socialist relations of production. This is a key aspect of socialist pedagogy: the direct connection between pedagogical strategy and the fight for socialist economic alternatives.

IEJC receives funding from both the government and other private sources, enabling the school to offer dozens of free secondary courses where students can pursue technical degrees in teaching, cooperative administration, community health, and popular communication. In partnership with the federal government and the state university, the school has also been able to offer post-secondary courses in pedagogy. The students who attended the first few courses at IEJC were older MST militants, in their 30s, 40s, and 50s, who had never had a secondary education. Fifteen years later, most of the older MST militants have passed through these courses, and thus, students now tend to be younger. However, IEJC maintains an age requirement of 17 years to go to the school. The school consists of different "courses" of 40–60 students that study together for 3 or 4 years. These courses are run through "alternation" (*pedagogia da alternância*), which means students spend a few months at the school studying and then a few months in their communities doing research. In any given month, there are at least two or three courses present at IEJC, with between 80 and 150 students.

When new visitors go to IEJC, they are amazed at the high level of organization and discipline at the school. Students get up at 6:30 AM for breakfast and are studying late into the night while also spending several hours each day cleaning bathrooms and common spaces, washing dishes, and organizing meals. Each morning, students from all the different courses in the school meet in a school-wide assembly, and all disciplinary issues are announced publicly, including students who have not made their beds or were late to class the day before. The school is managed by the students, in partnership with a collective of MST militants who oversee the school, through Base Nucleuses (Núcleos da Base—NBs). These NBs are small collectives of five to six students, who are in charge of cleaning, gardening, preparing snacks, maintaining discipline, and even facilitating classes. For example, each day a different NB is in charge of the classroom, and must take attendance, lead class discussions, make sure no one is causing a disturbance, and help the instructor in any other task. The active participation of these NBs in all aspects of the school is a direct influence from Makarenko.

On the first floor of the school, there are administrative offices, a large dining room and kitchen, and a well-kept library with over 23,000 books. On the second and third floors are the dormitories where students sleep. In the basement, there is a

[23] Quote from a public speech, IEJC, Veranópolis, Rio Grande do Sul, 10/12/2011.

bakery where students make the bread they eat at the school, as well as a factory where students make jams to be sold, teaching students how to set up and manage small industries. There is a day care center at the school, and all students take turns babysitting the young children, whether or not they are parents. Although IEJC does not offer primary education, student's children can attend the city public schools in Veranópolis. In the front of the school is a large garden in which almost all of the food that the students eat is produced. As for their meat supply, they have a partnership with a local farm in which they receive pork and beef in exchange for students working at the farm. While Monday through Saturday there are cooks at the school that prepare meals for the students, on Sundays the students are in charge of cooking. And beyond these manual tasks, the students have a very rigorous study schedule.

Izabela Braga has spent more than 7 years studying at IEJC, first as a student in a secondary course, and then in a post-secondary pedagogy course. In an interview with Izabela, she said that while she was at IEJC she really internalized the teachings of Pistrak, Makarenko, and Freire. She told me a famous quotation from Makarenko that was always repeated in the school: "Those who do not work, do not eat. No, that is a lie. Those who do not work should not have the right to eat."[24] Izabela said that this quotation emphasizes the importance of work: that there is time to study and time for work and that work is just as important as studying. Izabela said this is important to her because when she was in the kitchen cooking a meal for 200 people, she knew another group was cleaning the bathrooms, or washing everyone's clothes, or taking care of the children so the parents could study.

At the IEJC anniversary celebration, it was often expressed that the most important aspect of the school is that it prepares political actors to return to their communities ready to be active militants in the MST and fight for socialist alternatives in the Brazilian countryside. Whether they graduate with a technical degree in cooperative administration, popular communication, or community health, they have also learned about the political context of the country, the barriers to land reform, and the need to be organized and fight for more land redistribution and alternative forms of rural development. Although not all students become militants, many of the MST militants I met over months of field research were graduates of IEJC.

Institute Educar

IEJC is the MST's oldest educational institution; the school has developed dozens of courses and graduated over 3,000 students. However, it was clear from the beginning that the pedagogy of the movement could take place not only in the city of Veranópolis. Like Anton Makarenko, who decided to move from the Gorky Colony to the Dzerzhinsky Commune to see if his pedagogical methods worked in another context,

[24] Interview with Izabela Braga, November 2010.

the MST has also moved its pedagogical ideas across the country. As national MST leader Edgar Kolling said in a speech at the anniversary celebration, when IEJC was founded it was the only opportunity for MST militants to study; now there are dozens of examples of public schools, technical schools, and university courses in other cities and states where the MST must implement its pedagogy.[25]

One of these examples is Institute *Educar*, a secondary school that the MST founded in 2005, which functions as an extension of a federal technical institute. This institutional relationship allows students to get both their secondary degree and a technical degree in agroecology, while also giving the MST almost full autonomy to implement their educational pedagogies. Institute *Educar* is organized similarly to IEJC. There are several secondary courses occurring at any one time, but these courses are all organized through "alternation," with one course at the school for several months while students in the other courses are in their communities doing research. Students have to spend seven 3-month periods at the school to graduate. One important difference with IEJC is that Institute *Educar* accepts students right out of 8th grade. This means that many of the students are 12, 13, or 14 years old when they begin this 3-year secondary course. Each course is split into six or seven NBs. There is also a coordinating collective of the NBs (CNBT), and every study period a different person from each NB must participate. The CNBT discusses any concerns the students have, discipline issues, upcoming events, or messages from the collective of MST militants that direct school. This information then gets disseminated and discussed in the individual NBs. The most important decision-making body at the school is the assembly, where all the school directors and students come together to discuss issues as an entire collective.

At Institute *Educar,* the students adhere to a very strict and busy schedule. The day starts at 6:30 AM for breakfast, and from 7 to 7:30 AM each NB has a part of the school to clean, chores that shift every few weeks. From 7:30 to 8:00 AM is time for *mística*, "words of order," and the singing of the MST anthem. A different instructor comes to the school each day to work with the students for 6 hours, from 8 am to noon and 2–4 pm. These classes include conventional academic subjects such as biology, physics, math, history, and Portuguese, as well as agricultural studies. Lunch is at noon, and then from 1 pm to 2 pm there is another period of time for the NBs to clean the school. From 4 pm to 7 pm is "time for work," during which each NB is required to contribute to a different agricultural sector. Institute *Educar* has several acres of land with cattle, horses, and pigs, in addition to a large vegetable garden and fruit trees grown organically by the students. Several MST militants work at the school for free, coordinating these different sectors. In the evening, there is dinner and then time to either study or undertake a night activity.

The majority of the students at Institute *Educar* are the sons or daughters of people who won land before they were born, and, therefore, these students have no direct experience with the fight for land. Depending on the political activity of their parents, students may know almost nothing about the MST when they enter the

[25] Quote from public speech, IEJC, Veranópolis, Rio Grande do Sul, 10/12/2011.

school. This raises a critical question about how the MST's socialist pedagogy works in a context in which students do not identify with the MST or with any larger socialist project. I did group interviews with each of the NBs at Institute *Educar* to find out about their experiences.[26] I began by asking the students about their first impressions of the school. These impressions were often shock, confusion, and negativity:

> I was totally lost, the schedule was very hard, I did not know what a CNBT was, I had never heard of an NB. (F2, S4)

Other students responded,

> I thought it was strange, I wanted to leave, it was a very heavy course load and a different routine. (F4, S1) The first week was hard and I thought, is it always going to be like this? (F4, S6) I hated the school, I thought it was very different from life at home, I did not work at all at home, and it was hard to adapt to. (F6, S1)

Although the first study session was difficult for most students, and many dropped out of the school, the students who stayed expressed a complete transformation in their opinion of the school and their political understanding of the MST. One student, for example, said,

> The school contributed 100% to my political formation. I was always connected to the MST, through my parents, but I did not really have a notion about what an NB was, how to coordinate a meeting. (F1, S1)

Another student said,

> The school gave me a critical vision of society, I understand more about the MST, and I will continue to learn more and work with the MST because there is always work for militants. (F2, S2)

A third said,

> I did not know anything about agro-ecology. In my settlement there is only soy and corn, and it is all being grown with chemicals. Now I can enter the debate and say that this is not the way we should be going! (F5, S1)

As for disciplinary issues in the school, one student stated,

> There is a sector of discipline and ethics, and when questions arise or problems, the solutions are decided by the students. (F1, S2)

According to the students, this caused a lot of problems the first few weeks at the school:

> My friends would get mad when I enforced a rule, they would ask, why did you tell that I did not get to class on time? (F1, S1)

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[26] All of the following student quotes are from the six focus groups held with 35 students at Institute *Educar* in January 2011. Quotes included in this article are representative of all six focus groups, unless otherwise indicated as a unique response. All focus group sessions were recorded, and the number of the focus group and the student is indicated after each quote.

Another said,

> If you have friends it is hard, because you have to enforce rules, and they get angry, and they curse at you, but it helps that one person is the coordinator one week, and someone else is the coordinator the next study period. (F4, S1)

However, as time passed, students said it got easier:

> People eventually realise that they have to be part of this process, they learn and grow, it is not easy, it is very complicated until this learning process happens. (F1, S1)

Another student said,

> There is a need to create a consciousness that there is no longer really a director of the school, because outside of the school this does not happen. Here students have an opinion and outside they are just told everything. (F2, S2)

During these conversations on discipline I asked a provocative question to the six focus groups: if the students have so much control over the school, why not cancel class and play soccer? One response was,

> You have to have good sense, because we did not come all the way here just to play soccer. We were selected by our regions and have a responsibility to them. (F2, S4)

Another said,

> You are representing people in the settlement, you have to leave with something that you learned, not just soccer. They are betting on us. (F2, S1)

While most student replies focused on this personal sense of responsibility, one student admitted that although the students have control over little changes in the schedule, they would never be able to cancel class and play soccer. Finally, I asked students what socialism meant to them. Their answers were mostly in terms of equality and rights. Responses included,

> For me socialism means equality, equal rights. Lots of people go hungry in the world, socialism means everyone has what is necessary, but not too much. (F3, S3) Socialism is a society without oppression, with equality for all. (F3, S4) We are socialism, this school, everyone here is helping each other, and when we go back to the settlements we should continue to help each other. (F5, S4)

In contrast to these general answers, one student gave a more specific response:

> For me socialism is getting rid of privatisation, because privatisation in Brazil only leads to exploitation. It is necessary to divide all the goods in the world and privatisation does not do this. Brazil has a big potential and it is about dividing that potential among the population. (F3, S5)

These various responses shed some light on how the students at Institute *Educar* interpret and experience these educational pedagogies. Teaching, learning, and work in the school is explicitly based on the socialist theories of both Makarenko and Pistrak. Through the organizational structure of small collectives the students have a relative autonomy in the management of the school. The school also has a strong manual labor component, in which students are responsible for cleaning the school in addition to learning organic agriculture, working in the fields, and taking

care of the animals. Beyond these socialist pedagogies, many aspects of the school are specific to MST practices: *mística*, “words of order,” and the MST anthem. This combination of practices has created a school that is very different from the mainstream educational system, and many students have a hard time adapting. The class I interviewed was in their fifth study period, and although they had started with 60 students, they were down to 35. While this dropout rate is actually similar to regular courses offered by the local federal technical institute, it also means that Institute *Educar* is not successful in assimilating all students to this new form of collective life. Thus, the 35 students who were part of the focus groups are not representative of the original group of 60 students.

As the focus groups illustrate, the students who do stay in Institute *Educar* express a personal transformation in terms of their understanding of socialism, organic agriculture, and the history and importance of the MST. However, this fight for socialism is neither simple nor easily attainable. Institute *Educar* is located on one of the oldest MST settlements in the country, Fazenda Annoni. In this settlement, the movement has tried to implement various cooperatives and models of collective work, and almost all of them have fallen apart. The majority of the people living on this settlement grow soy, which they plant using pesticides and then sell to large companies for export. When students were asked in the focus groups about the biggest challenges at Institute *Educar*, their answers often touched on the difficulty of implementing the school’s socialist vision:

> The biggest challenge is to put into practice agro-ecology, because the world is dominated by international companies and it is hard to challenge this. (F1, S2) Production, to show that production can have another model, to show that the world can be changed. (F1, S3). To sustain the commercialization of what we produce in the school, to sell our produce outside of the school so we can change people’s opinions about the schools. (F2, S2) To show everyone that we are not a group of crazy people, that we are going to succeed in creating socialism and that we are studying for this goal. (F1, S1)

During these group interviews, the students at Institute *Educar* were clear about their goal of implementing the movement’s vision of socialism through small organic farming, however, they were also realistic about the challenges they faced.

Conclusions

For 30 years, MST militants have been drawing on a variety of theories to develop an educational pedagogy that is appropriate for their rural reality and achieve the larger goals of the movement. This educational pedagogy has three theoretical pillars: (1) Freirean ideas stemming from the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that emphasize the importance of the students’ cultural contexts and a critique of education as simply a transmission process; (2) Soviet theories based in Makarenko and Pistrak’s work, principally the importance of the collective, the students’ management of the school, and the idea of manual labor as an educational process; and (3) the movement’s own practices and needs as a political organization, for example, the necessity to train new

political leaders who also have technical expertise to help develop rural settlements. This synthesis of ideas—the pedagogy of the movement—is constantly contested by the Brazilian government, and in most contexts only ever partially implemented. On a mass scale within public schools in MST settlements, there are hardly any signs of this pedagogy at all. Nevertheless, in some institutional contexts where the MST has autonomy, this pedagogy is flourishing.

The pedagogy of the MST is unique not only due to the eclectic use of theories and educational practices, but also due to the fact that the pedagogy is organically linked to an alternative political project for the Brazilian countryside. This political project—challenging large agricultural industries through organic agriculture and collective work practices—faces countless barriers across the country, and there are currently only a few examples of successful collectives on MST settlements. If we evaluate the MST's pedagogy based on its goal of creating socialist alternatives in Brazil, we might come to the conclusion that it has been a failure. However, these difficulties must also be compared with the successes. For many MST militants, the educational opportunities the movement provides are the only means to get a secondary or a university degree. Vanderlúcia is an important example of an MST militant who was only able to study until 8th grade, but now has a master's degree. Vanderlúcia's story also illustrates the success of the pedagogy in teaching about the importance of collective learning and putting aside individualism, critical lessons for the development of "new Socialist men and women." The statement of IEJC student Izabela Braga and the many students at Institute *Educar* prove that this pedagogy has been successful in changing traditional power relationships within schools by giving students more responsibility and control. Their reflections illustrate that students are capable of taking charge of disciplinary issues and that they learn a lot in the process. These educational experiences are also a principal reason why many sons and daughters of people living on MST settlements, who often never had the experience of occupying land or living in a camp, have chosen to become MST militants. Therefore, the MST's educational pedagogy is important in the reproduction of the movement itself. Although socialism in the Brazilian countryside might not be a reasonable goal in the near future, the educational pedagogy the MST has developed over the past 30 years has affected the lives of many MST militants, and continuing to learn about these educational initiatives will help to shed light on what a twenty-first-century socialist pedagogy may look like.

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Chapter 5
Community Participation in Schooling: Redefined in Bolivarian Venezuela?

Ritesh Shah

Introduction

Globalisation and neoliberalism, while threatening and eroding the power and voice of the local, also generate spaces of possibility on the margins of this hegemonic new world order (Gibson-Graham 2006). Specifically, contemporary political and social movements across Latin America are contesting the means and ends of decentralisation and democratisation reforms to reclaim goals of social justice and equity (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Avritzer 2002). These 'projects of possibility' offer up hope that transformative practices on the local level will lead to the renovation of the established social grammar of society (Santos and Avritzer 2005). Venezuela has been at the forefront of this movement since the Bolivarian Revolution commenced in 1999. The main objective of this chapter is to explore these possibilities within the education sector and specifically the relationship that citizen-actors and communities hold with their schools.

When Hugo Chavez was elected as president of Venezuela in 1999, he argued that it had become a society that excluded the majority and that radical economic, political and social changes needed to be made to construct a 'Venezuela for All'. The belief was that representative democracy coupled with neoliberal economic doctrine had failed to mirror the needs and preferences of the majority of the population, and what was necessary was a more localised, grassroots form of political participation for citizens (Lander 2005). The new constitution of the Bolivarian Republic emphasised the establishment of protagonist democracy, or a form of political organisation where citizens would exercise their democratic sovereignty to substantially reshape the role of the state and its institutions (Bruce 2008). Over time, increasing emphasis has been placed on supporting citizen co-responsibility as part

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of building this form of democratic participation. Citizens have been provided with a growing number of opportunities to independently design, develop and manage community services such as education and health through new financial mechanisms and incentives—in essence challenging the work and role of state institutions themselves (Ellner and Hellinger 2003, p. 221). What began in 1999 with citizen participation being a complement or supplement to established state institutions and functions has slowly evolved over time to one where citizen bodies are encouraged to subvert an entrenched culture of corruption, nepotism and conservatism endemic in established state institutions (Bruce 2008; Boudin et al. 2006). Contemporary 'participation' in Bolivarian Venezuela focuses on citizens actively deliberating and debating with each other to identify problems at the local, regional and national level; assess various solutions to the issue under study; plan and implement solutions and evaluate such decisions within new or reformed governance structures.

The education sector has not been immune to this shift, and increasingly, the state is viewing this arena of activity as one that reflects and is reflective of a new political paradigm. Similar to the revolutionary politics of historical socialism, reforms in the education sector have aimed to shift underlying ideological values that reproduce the old social order (Carnoy 1990). The remainder of this chapter charts this intended ideological shift within the primary schooling sector by critically analysing the evolving purpose of participation of citizens within their schools and the changed relationships between schools and communities that such participation has brought about.

It begins by situating the establishment of citizen participation within a neoliberal doctrine of citizens acting to legitimate shrinking state involvement and increased individual fiscal responsibility. It then highlights how this has shifted since the start of the Bolivarian Revolution to recast such relationships as necessary to the development of deeper, more direct forms of democracy.[1] The author suggests that citizen participation on school governance councils is being actively mediated by the state through policy and structural mechanisms which prioritise the development of democratic principles and practice at local levels and work to challenge the status quo relationship between schools and their community (Gutmann 1987; Fung 2004). The argument advanced by Osterwell (cited in Gibson-Graham 2006, p. XX) is that such action is serving to destroy the monopoly of entrenched institutions [such as the school], 'destroying its hegemony, while at the same time furnishing new tools to address the complex set of problematic power relations it confronts us with from particular and embedded locations'.

Nonetheless, reforms that are coupled with regime change have often been labelled as little more than political symbolism, aimed at legitimating a change in discourse with little substantive impetus or reaction at levels of practice (Jessop 2006).

[1] This version of democracy emphasises public deliberation and self-governance and encourages the establishment of institutions in which citizens gather in spaces where they set the agenda, deliberate on conflicting goals and draft and implement policy (Barber 1984). These institutions become places where conflict over understandings of the "common good" and the implications for action are evaluated by the public, rather than hidden or discussed by "experts".

This has been a strong claim since the start of the Bolivarian Revolution from critics of the movement; thus, this study closely examines the implications of the discursive change for the participants themselves. By doing so, it recognises that local actors attach their own meaning to concepts such as 'participation' and 'partnership' (Anderson-Levitt 2003). Outcomes of this social reinvention continue to be shaped by the willingness of the bureaucracy and those in positions of power inside the institution to cede and share power with communities. Findings from empirical work conducted in 2006, at a time when many more substantive changes to educational communities were first established, found several structural constraints but also new possibilities embedded in the forms of community participation and joint collaboration that were occurring between citizens and their schools.

Discourses of Decentralisation, Participation and Direct Democracy

By the end of the twentieth century, democracy had in large part been stripped of its nineteenth-century revolutionary aspirations, dislocated from its radical roots and freed from its commitments to dialogue, communication and self-government (Wallerstein 2001). Democracy as practised had become what Barber (1984) would label as 'weak' or 'thin' democracy—little more than authorisation by the electorate for a small group of elite to represent public voice in decision-making. This coupled with the turn in many capitalist states to neoliberal ideology, which prioritised individual over collective liberty, has led to a loss of confidence in representative democracy to best voice the interests of the public good. As Chomksy (2003, p. 6) laments, most decision-making now occurs within 'largely unaccountable private tyrannies, linked closely to one another and to a few powerful states'. Critics argue that this organising grammar prevents citizens from participating or reflecting on matters of importance to them, denying them the experience necessary to develop a critical consciousness, further legitimating a sociology of absences (Santos 2007). The end result has been societies that are increasingly unequal, disenfranchised and individually focused.

Proponents of more participatory forms of democracy believe that only through the restoration of collective action and positive rights into systems of governance can the public good be adequately decided and more just societies restored (Santos and Avritzer 2005). Pragmatically speaking, it is argued that to protect the liberty of all, and in particular society's most vulnerable groups, public policymaking must be devolved and localised (Barber 1984; Guttman and Thompson 1996; Fung and Wright 2000). Decentred polities have the possibility to empower individuals who possess intimate knowledge and greater expertise over how to improve conditions in their particular setting. It offers the opportunity for multiple strategies, techniques and priorities to be pursued simultaneously allowing for innovation and heterogeneity. Concurrently, more immediate decision-making, implementation and evaluation of action allow for poor or ineffective solutions to be more rapidly corrected.

The results and consequences of decentralisation to local bodies, however, depend on the circumstances and context within which such reforms take place (Handler 1996; Gorostiaga and Paulston 2004; Dale 1997). Therefore, decentralisation to citizen-actors could not be assumed to be a democratising exercise in all cases. It can be as much an exercise in weakening democratic participation as it can be in bolstering it, depending on the responsibilities and mechanisms of oversight attached to such action. As Santos and Avritzer caution (2005, p. LXIX), '[t]he practices of participatory democracy are in no way immune to the danger of perversion and adulteration… [They] may be co-opted by hegemonic interests and actors with the aim of legitimising social exclusion and the repression of difference'. Decentralisation coupled with neoliberal governance rationalities has seen citizen and school actors manage an increasingly scarce amount of state resources, comply with externally imposed directives, and work to predetermined outputs (cf. Angus 1993; Galiani et al. 2005; Walker 2002). This greatly diminishes possibilities for practicing, exercising and strengthening strong democratic practices at local levels communities.

Robinson and Timperley (2004, p. 30) aptly note, 'reform of the structures of governance is not the same as reform of governance itself'. Accordingly, any decentralisation project aimed at strengthening democracy must create new structures and spaces within which individuals and social collectives participate in ways that constitute and subsequently change governance practices (Santos and Avritzer 2005). To do this, real autonomy coupled with authentic commitment to the democratic process is necessary (Fung 2004). In arrangements of school governance, this would be reflected in a judicious allocation of power, function and responsibility between local citizen bodies and state institutions that maintain education's place as a public and social good. The overall goal of such policy measures would be to support the work of local bodies to develop means and ends that are endogenously derived and driven, rather than externally defined or prescribed (Fung and Wright 2000). To do so, citizen-actors would be expected to deliberate alongside educational professionals and policymakers to identify problems, assess various solutions to the issue under study, plan and implement solutions and evaluate such decisions (Barber 1984; Gutmann 1987). Incentives would be provided by the state to promote such action, and to work together towards shared common interests, while simultaneously requiring such groups to be transparent and open as to how these interests were defined (Selznick 1992, p. 23). The role of the state should be to provide decentralised bodies with financing, expertise and the capacity to coordinate with actors who might not otherwise be readily accessible to such groups. The intended outcome would be an education system that focuses on the contingent and the specific, recognises the politics of difference and reconstructs schools as genuinely democratic spheres.

Drawing on these ideas, it will be shown how, prior to 1999, school governance councils and the types of 'participation' encouraged by citizen-actors in Venezuela were based on ideologies of representative democracy and neoliberalism. This chapter then explores how policies passed in the early days of the Bolivarian Revolution attempted to broaden the nature of participation of citizens on these governance councils and the new possibilities and continued challenges that resulted. To conclude, the author explores how, since 2006, more decentred and autonomous approaches have been initiated, compelling schools and citizens to work together on matters of local concern and broadening the purposes and mechanisms for joint action.

Data presented in this chapter is collected from an extensive review of policy documentation and literature from Venezuela, as well as the author's own empirical research in the country in 2006. The author spent 2 months within two *Escuelas Bolivarianas*[2] in Coro as an ethnographic researcher observing and participating in meetings that occurred between citizens and the schools and teaching and observing inside a number of grade five and six classrooms in each school. Field notes were kept throughout this period. At the conclusion of fieldwork, he interviewed both schools' directors and a number of teachers, members of the civil association and members of the educational community at each site. Three senior officials from the regional office of the Ministry of Education for Falcón State were also interviewed in Spanish.[3] All interviews were translated, transcribed and iteratively coded into themes by the author, a fluent Spanish speaker.

Community Participation in Venezuelan Schooling Historically

A movement towards the decentralisation of authority to local schools and communities began in the 1980s when it became increasingly apparent that Venezuela's education system was failing to effectively mediate what Dale (1997) notes as its three functions under a welfare state—capital accumulation, social cohesion and legitimating state activities and rationalities. Rising state debt, mounting social inequalities, skyrocketing unemployment and a patronage-based political apparatus plagued the country at this time (Roberts 2003; Parker 2005; Grindle 2000; Lander 1996). This was coupled with a politically driven discourse that mass education and centralised administration had led to a qualitative decline in educational quality (Muhr and Verger 2009). Influenced in large part by the Washington Consensus, the state sought to reduce government involvement and investment in the provision and management of compulsory schooling (Griffiths 2009). Efforts were made to decentralise authority and responsibility to sub-national levels during this period, while simultaneously reducing state expenditure towards education[4] (Celli 2004; Muhr and Verger 2009).

It is within this context that the discourse of communities participating in their schools first arose in Venezuela. Much of this was driven by neoliberal rationalities at

[2] The Bolivarian schooling system is comprised of *Escuelas Bolivarianas* (Bolivarian schools) which teach students up to grade 6, *Liceos Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian high schools) which teach students up to grade 12 and *Universidades Bolivarianas* (Bolivarian universities) which work with tertiary students.

[3] Pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter to protect the anonymity of the individuals interviewed.

[4] As examples of this, spending on education after reaching an apex of almost 9% of GNP in the late 1970s declined to less than 2% by 1999, and per capita expenditures in education dropped by almost one third (Parker 2005, 47). As a result, school infrastructure was unmaintained, classes were cancelled, teaching resources came under short supply and larger number of undertrained professionals entered the profession throughout the 1990s (Muhr and Verger 2009, 74–75). Today, similar issues exist but for different reasons. Access and funding to all levels of schooling have greatly increased under the Bolivarian Revolution, creating strains on existing staffing and infrastructure resources (see Griffith's chapter in this book).

the time (and still prevalent) which suggests that by better involving parents in the management and operation of their schools, service delivery and educational quality would improve (see, e.g. Abu-Duhou 1999; Bray 1996; Barrera-Osorio et al. 2009). Such policies have been heavily promoted by harnessing free-market principles of parents and students as consumers, to social-liberal contentions that citizen voice needed to be reinserted into public institutions such as schooling (Grant-Lewis and Naidoo 2004).

In Venezuela, this began with the establishment in the mid-1980s of *comunidades educativas.*[5] These educational communities, a joint venture between the families of students attending each public school in Venezuela and the educators working within them, were given legal stature and responsibility to 'manage' schools through the passage of *Resolution 751* (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 1986). The communities were expected to 'cooperate with the authorities…regarding various aspects of the educational program', as well as, 'promote the participation of families, the community, and other institutions to assist in providing educational services, make sure they function well, and contribute through economic means and the lending of services for the programs and maintenance of the school' (Article 3). Amendments and alterations made later to this initial legislation allowed these educational communities to 'contract out services' and call for 'annual quotas (fees)' that could be set at whatever limits decided on by this body (Celli 2004, p. 456).

School administrators interpreted this legislation as a means to compel parents to assist the school with shortfalls in funding and services that were no longer provided by the state. When members of the educational community refused to cooperate with school requests for such support, administrators or teachers 'scolded' their community in regularly scheduled meetings for their lack of assistance, fostering a climate of 'mutual distrust' (Platone-Loda 2004, p. 81). No incentive or opportunity was given in these meetings or forums for parents as 'participants' to question or debate decisions made by administrators and teachers regarding school activities or intentions. Instead, institutionalised power relations and bureaucratic norms protected schools from this scrutiny. Not surprisingly, many parents saw the relationship as one-way and increasingly ignored calls to participate in their educational communities as it became apparent *how* they were being asked to work in partnership with their schools.

Thus, by the late 1990s, the outcomes of these 'democratic' reforms were similar to what has been documented elsewhere when parents were incited to be more involved in schooling as state expenditure and involvement has been withdrawn. In Venezuela, as elsewhere, governance responsibilities had been involuntarily thrust onto voluntary workers to meet predetermined outcomes; associated community participation had been narrowly defined as shared financial responsibility for a child's education; and blame for school failure had shifted from the state to the communities themselves (Apple 2005). Participation became equated with weak forms of democratic deliberation, where actors assemble to substitute, rather than contest state functions (Gorostiaga and Paulston 2004).

[5] Translated into English as educational communities.

Redefining Democracy Under the Bolivarian Revolution

As part of the Bolivarian Revolution's aim of promoting citizen co-responsibility and fostering protagonist democracy, the *National Education Plan of 2001* changed the operation and mandate of educational communities (MCI 2001). They were given greater legal authority and quasi-autonomy from the state and the school they were connected to. A subset of this group in each school was granted the status of a legally incorporated civil association. This body was comprised of seven citizen-actors who were elected by their educational community, and representatives were expected to reflect the plurality of community organisations and interests.[6] Their mandate was to work alongside the school staff and parent body in the interests of the school and the community as a whole. To accomplish these aims, associations were granted a significant amount of control and autonomy over the daily operation of the school, including control of budgets, curriculum, social programs run as part of the school day (i.e. the school feeding program) and a lead role in employing school staff (Celli 2004, p. 462). Additionally, the government provided educational communities and civil associations with targeted funding to 'formulate, plan, and execute policies, programs, and local projects' (MED 2004b, p. 4, 2003). Accountability for these funds was maintained by requiring each association to summarise projects undertaken in an annual report (*Informe de Gestión*) that was produced for both the Ministry of Education and their local community. The associations were provided with legal, professional and ombudsmen support within each state-level office of the Ministry of Education (MED 2004a).

Unlike the past when participation was seen as 'conforming to norms, verbally accepting predetermined decisions, static, and unchangeable', these new relationships of shared governance were said to be based on 'dialogue, change, diversity of opinion, and a discourse of shared action' (MED 1999, p. 2). The participation of various actors in school governance aimed not at increasing efficiency of the system but rather at constructing social capital and democratic competence. Management of the school was conceived to be a shared exercise between school, community and state, in line with the principles of co-responsibility. At the same time, communities and educational professionals working together to define, shape and manage their schools was seen as a mechanism for developing democratic competence of all actors involved.

Several individuals interviewed during the course of fieldwork mentioned that, unlike the past, there is an authentic purpose to participation today. These individuals saw their voice and involvement in schools as being of value to long-term community development. One civil association member[7] felt that,

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[6] These representatives could either be parents/family members of students in the school or members of other social service organisations, such as the police, health care workers, etc., working within the local community. A notable absence from these bodies were students within the school, who were not given any official representation or voice in decisions that were made. The national government has encouraged these bodies to include amongst them, as far as is possible, a pluralistic representation of distinct ideological, ethnic and class interests (MED 2003).

[7] A Simoza, personal communication: 16 May 2006.

…Today, there is more of an incentive to participate because we are more authentic in our function [pause]… we are bringing meaningful and significant changes to the community and school. We have pertinence today while before even if we tried to change things they would stay the same.

This sense of empowerment was mirrored in an interview with another civil association member[8] at the same school, who believed that,

We have more power with our words and actions now than before. Those in power are forced to listen to us now…if the community doesn't ask for what they need…it is their own fault when they don't advance…that is co-responsibility.

Similarly, educators recognised that they must work more closely with and be attuned to the multiple constituencies within the community that surrounds them. Part of this comes from the recognition by educators, as clichéd as it might sound, that it does in fact 'take a village to raise and educate a child'. As the director[9] of one school saw it, her staff had a vital role in the life of the community outside.

We have resources and access to organisations that we can offer for the community to utilise. At the same time, the school has a role in reflecting the needs of our children within the broader community and voicing our particular problems that might also turn out to be community-wide problems.

Those in schools were aware that structures of accountability were slowly evolving to ensure they were working closely with their educational communities and addressing their concerns in their roles. One school director[10] recognised that,

What has really changed since [2001] is that it is required now that schools and communities work together and listen to each other. Before, in the times of past, schools could step all over the backs of the community, now it is imperative, because of the model of participation and legal structure that we work in, that this changes.

In her mind, what had changed was the authority that educational communities held over school staff in terms of management. She recognised that with changes instituted under the *National Education Plan*, lines of accountability had shifted.

Ultimately, I am not responsible to my superiors in the Ministry. I am not doing my job unless the community that I serve in the school sees me as doing my job in their interests. Many directors still hide behind the bureaucracy and rules to try to keep things the way they are, but you know, this will only hurt them. I know several schools where parents and the educational community have removed the director because they were treating the children poorly, the workers poorly, or just failed to hear or listen to the voices of the community.

According to senior Ministry of Education officials interviewed, several school directors and teachers had been either fired or transferred in the region as a result of multiple complaints filed against them by their educational community.

[8] B Adames, personal communication: 16 May 2006.

[9] M Bracho, personal communication: 16 June 2006.

[10] J Sanchez, personal communication: 23 June 2006.

Challenging the Status Quo?

Over the long term, the state expects citizens, through participation and involvement within their education communities, to infuse into schools a new set of new beliefs, values and practices. Yet, there are inherent concerns that when such activity is centred around established institutions and state agents carried over from times prior, the movement is prone to sabotage. Santos and Avritzer (2005) note that a polemic for state-driven projects of social reinvention is whether the state and its institutions can be a driver for citizens to construct non-hegemonic models of democratic participation. While the explicit rationale of the Venezuelan government is to construct a 'protagonist democracy' through citizen participation in schooling, participation as defined in the past was built on hierarchies of control and power that privileged the authority and voice of those in schools. These legacies of the past were writ large on the perceptions and practices framing conceptions of 'participation' at the time the empirical work was conducted. One school director[11] believed there was a limit to how far she could work with the educational community on matters of shared governance stating,

> Our parent representatives are mainly unemployed, or domestic workers, or street sellers, which makes it difficult for them to understand the nature of what we mean by participation. With these poor social and cultural values, they can only offer so much to us…In the school we don't come from that background, and our priorities are different. The culture in here is different than outside, making it difficult for them [the community] to understand what we need or want from them.

This sentiment was shared by some teachers spoken to, believing that their role was to directly contradict the values, beliefs and way of life of the community outside. As one teacher[12] shared in an interview,

> The students come to the school with a deficit of culture and respect…they have no role models to teach them the right way to be and act. We have to in many ways be substitute parents for these children because they have hardly any positive support at home. Our students lack the appropriate values to exist in society.

In such an environment, the nature of participation was visibly fractured. For example, at one school, the educational community was called to a meeting by the director where she proceeded to scold them for an hour about poor hygiene in the homes, and then handed over the reins to the president of the civil association to ask for donations. Members of the educational community were not given a place to express their ideas or opinions at any point. Shortly after the meeting, a member of the educational community[13] confided,

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[11] A Chirino, personal communication: 15 May 2006.

[12] E Arias, personal communication: 14 May 2006.

[13] N Jordan, personal communication: 17 May 2006.

> The only time the school calls on us is when they need money…they rely on us [the parents] too much to cover their expenses. I am sick of participating in these meetings if this is the only purpose behind them!

Thus, while the discourse surrounding the purposes of participation and the role and value of communities sharing governance duties with their schools had changed following the Bolivarian Revolution, the attitudes of some professionals within schools were still firmly entrenched in times of the past. Similar to Wilkinson's (2008) findings from participatory school councils in Brazil, deeply engrained sociocultural values continued to control the domains over which citizen-participants were asked to participate in school governance, helping maintain existing norms and behaviours in some settings.

This structural constraint was recognised by more than one individual as one of the big challenges of changing the form and function of participation and dialogue between schools and communities. As one teacher[14] acknowledged,

> Many directors are happy to maintain things the way they are inside the school [laughter] because it probably serves them best that way.

Early reforms following passage of the new constitution in 1999 relied on a supportive and willing bureaucracy for effective implementation of new norms of participation. However, decades of bureaucratic thinking, within a highly centralised organisation such as the Ministry of Education, challenged the localised, decentralised structures and practices that the reforms hope to institutionalise. The elite, many of whom oppose aspects of the Bolivarian Revolution, shield their interests through the large apparatus of state bureaucracy that continues to be riddled with problems of nepotism and corruption (Rivero 2006; Lander 2008).

One official[15] spoken to within the Ministry of Education recognised this challenge, acknowledging that,

> The culture of the past is still influencing the lack of active participation that is witnessed in many school communities, especially those in poorer regions of the state.

But he also believed that over time, as members of the educational community asserted their rights and authority more, these issues would diminish. Within schools, there was less confidence in this occurring. Teachers sympathetic to the Bolivarian Revolution felt that as long as citizens worked through existing state institutions, there would be little opportunity for the types of radical change envisaged under the reforms. As one individual[16] expressed,

> …even if you do know where you stand, there are many who are afraid of taking on the bureaucracy, especially the professionals inside schools, since it is known that they have the power to be retaliatory in return. Sadly then, in [educational communities] like ours all this leads to a sense of passivity and acceptance that this is the way things are and will always be.

[14] K Gomez, personal communication: 17 June 2006.

[15] J Sanchez, personal communication: 25 June 2006.

[16] M Portillo, personal communication: 15 May 2006.

In other arenas of social mobilisation within Venezuela where similar tactics had been employed, this became a common problem (see Bruce 2008). The dependence on the intermediation of the existing actors and entrenched institutions to promote the contestation of hegemonic conditions became a readily apparent paradox by 2006. For the state, it brought up important questions of whether the 'old' machinery should have any involvement in legislating or regulating more democratic ways of administering social and economic life.

Moving Beyond the State

A second wave of reforms had begun to take hold at the time that the empirical work for this chapter was conducted. These reforms differed in that they were being established outside the reaches of the bureaucratic establishment, enabling citizens to directly act, rather than expecting them to work within existing institutional structures. They are examples of the state's attempts to build what Fung (2004, p. 15) labels as '*empowered democratic communities*'. There are three qualities that distinguish these forms of participation from the manner in which they were constituted prior:

1. The direct contribution of citizens as participation and partnership figure more centrally in the formulation of overall agenda and visions and the development and implementation of specific strategies.
2. New participatory forums provided much greater autonomy to citizens outside of established bureaucracies.
3. The institutional design recognises the distrust and lack of confidence that the public has in traditional channels of authority and works to resolve the trust deficit by building direct avenues of communication between local officials and the public they serve.

Two such programs having a direct impact on the role and purpose of participation within educational communities—*Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario*[17] (PEIC) and the *Consejos Comunales*[18]—are examined in brief below.

PEIC at Work

PEIC was established to facilitate the development of locally contingent learning and community service projects for schools and students to undertake in consultation with their educational community (Griffiths 2009). As part of this national initiative, schools are expected to become spaces where the educational community,

[17] Loosely translated into English as Integral Education Curriculum Projects.

[18] Translated as communal councils.

students and teachers regularly work together on social development projects in and out of the classroom. The goal is to 'develop solutions to problems based on the needs of the students, community, and society guaranteeing active participation and significant learning, as well as innovation' (MED 2004b, pp. 19–20). Initiation of specific projects begins with educational communities identifying their development needs, which are then connected to their schools' resources, teaching and learning content and social networks to address these concerns. Based on models of action-research, the school and educational community are expected to reflect and express the strengths and resources each party has within it; identify opportunities, weaknesses and challenges that they share; develop and implement plans of action to address a particular community development concern and reflect on this action and plan to formulate future action. This process is documented as part of the annual report that the civil association produces.

At one school, it was identified that students were regularly missing school because of chronic but preventable health problems that continued to be unaddressed. For its PEIC project in 2005, the educational community decided to tackle this issue through a multi-pronged approach. Their initial analysis identified that the problem was the result of a combination of environmental conditions (i.e. the lack of access to regular health care and proper sanitation in the community) and a lack of community awareness about preventative measures (i.e. use of clean water, regular bathing, etc.). The school director and educational community proposed a project that would work in conjunction with *Barrio Adentro*.[19] A team of doctors, dentists, psychologists and other medical specialists from *Barrio Adentro* spent 3 months within the community assessing and treating more than 2,000 individuals—including all students and staff at the school, as well as a significant number of families within the schools' catchment area. The doctors identified that a significant number of the chronic public health issues they were treating arose from residents drinking water contaminated with waterborne parasites. Based on this evidence, the school and educational community lobbied the municipality for the extension of a clean drinking waterline to the community, which was subsequently installed in early 2006. Additionally, the educational community, using the school as a venue, hosted a number of health education classes to inform residents of chronic public health issues. Success of this project was affirmed when the team from *Barrio Adentro* returned in 2006 and noted that 90% of those treated initially did not require further treatment. The schools' civil association also remarked in its annual report in 2006 that attendance rates had increased remarkably as a result of decreased student illnesses.

Such initiatives are symbolic of how the government is using the educational communities' involvement with their school to promote social and community change. The state expects citizens, through such participation, to infuse into the educational system a set of new beliefs, values and practices, challenging the status quo extant inside schools and society. As the Ministry of Education (2004a, p. 12) states,

[19] *Barrio Adentro* (The Neighbourhood Within) is a health mission focused on community-based, free health care and treatment, provided by Cuban health workers that is another cornerstone project of the Bolivarian Revolution.

> The school is from, in and with the community; it is the summit and source of communitarian participation; it is a model of integral educational attention that promotes social justice; it is an example of permanent pedagogic innovation; as the same time as it struggles against educational exclusion. Therefore, it contributes to the improvement of the living standard of the community.

The evolution of PEIC at this particular school demonstrated a more equal partnership between the school and its educational community. Citizens from the community were critical partners in initiating the project, assessing aspects of the problem, strategising solutions and working with the government to bring needed resources. While the school provided its facilities for community meetings and health treatment and developed and delivered teaching resources and units of instruction on relevant health education topics, it was the community that ultimately acted as the protagonist in driving it. The projects' success was based on mutual trust, acts of shared leadership and the transformation of ideas into action, all done outside the active arms of the Ministry but with its tacit and implicit support.

For participants within these projects, it was an empowering experience. One member[20] of the community, who had been active in the development and implementation of the project, stated with pride afterwards,

> For the first time in my life, I saw the government listening to what we had to say, rather than us having to do what they tell us to do, or them saying what is best for us.

Schools Working Within the *Consejos Comunales*

Since 2006, educational communities and civil associations of schools have been connected into larger social networks such as the *Consejos Comunales* (communal councils). Groups of between 200 and 400 families living in close proximity, or 20 or more in rural regions, gather together in open neighbourhood councils to discuss and take action on community development initiatives. Each council is a sovereign political and legislative body that is supported through a combination of credits and grants from municipal, regional and federal sources (Bruce 2008, p. 140). When these councils were legislated into law in April 2006, the intent was to facilitate local communities, 'directly exercis[ing] control over the management of public policies and projects to meet their needs and aspirations…building a society of equity and social justice'. (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2006, Art 2). These councils are described by Chavez as 'the most important engine' of Venezuela's transition to twenty-first-century socialism and were perceived as the main mechanism for 'dismantling the old bourgeois state' (Bruce 2008, p. 141).

The councils were just being established within both of the educational communities visited at the time that the empirical research for this chapter was conducted in 2006. The councils were in the process of self-organising and electing

[20] A Simoza, personal communication: 16 June 2006.

spokespeople for each area of work relevant for the community (i.e. health, education, housing, infrastructure) to access initial funding[21] that was being distributed through the National Fund for Popular Government. In both educational communities, their respective school directors were asked to be a non-voting participant on these councils, and a representative from the civil association was chosen as the spokesperson for education on their respective councils. However, the school was only one voice amongst many on these bodies, and its control over setting the agenda in terms of community development and more specifically serving its particular interest was limited. School directors had less ability to control the flow of information and officially were represented by the elected education spokesperson of the community rather than a fellow professional colleague.

The dynamics of partnership, which for so long had been based on the notion of the school controlling and setting the agenda, appeared to have been radically altered with the establishment of these councils. As one community member[22] remarked,

> We have control with these councils…schools are an important and necessary partner to include, but ultimately they must convince us, rather than us convincing them of what is important for our community.

Directors recognised that they had a responsibility to encourage the formation and continuance of these bodies, as the improved well-being and development of the community their school was located in would have long-term benefits for the welfare of the students they taught. It meant shifting the common image of the school as the patron for community well-being and those living within it as grateful recipients of the schools' largess, which had marked Venezuelan society for decades (Buxton 2003). One director[23] readily acknowledged this shift in paradigm believing,

> When in dialogue with the community, you can't go in on your pedestal…you have to see yourself as the same, as a friend, a compatriot who is there to share in the care and the growth of their children…It helps to be at that level and not place yourself up high in the hierarchy…[and] even if you think you have the solution, it always pays to listen to the community as sometimes they have good reasons and rationales for their action.

And conversely, for those in the wider community, who had for so long seen school activity, as unconnected to their lived experience, participation on these councils made them aware of how issues confronting the school were connected to wider development challenges facing the neighbourhood. One participant[24] on a neighbourhood council commented,

[21] This funding amounted to approximately 30 million Bolívares ($15,000 USD at that time) per council. The funds were to be distributed directly from a centralised government bank and administered by a new government department known as the Ministry of Popular Participation (MINPADES).

[22] Y Medina, personal communication: 16 June 2006.

[23] M Bracho, personal communication: 16 May 2006.

[24] N Gomez, personal communication: 21 June 2006.

> We need to understand that the school is not just that of the director and the teachers—it is of the community. We as a community need to see problems of the school as problems of the community. We need to build this new idea and change the old mentalities, which saw the school as an outsider to our lives.

Initial indications were that the establishment of these neighbourhood councils was beginning to shift the traditional barriers that had prevented dialogue between schools and their community. These new forms of partnerships appeared to mark the beginning of a new era in terms of ensuring that schools, alongside their communities, '[integrate] diverse perspectives through debate' so that 'individuals leave behind their private interests and begin to develop, implement [policy] in the best interests of the 'public', 'the community' and the common good', as was envisaged under the *National Education Plan* (MCI 2001, p. 18).

Conclusion

As a cornerstone of the Bolivarian Revolution's vision of twenty-first-century socialism, projects that build and deepen democratic practice at local levels have been an increasing focus within all sectors of government activity, including education. Nonetheless, there are inherent challenges when the existing state apparatus seeks to be a cooperative partner in revolutionising a politics of participation and inclusion within a society that for decades has been marked by social stratification, elitism, capitalist economic doctrine and representative politics.

What was presented empirically in this study is only a snapshot in time, at a point where beliefs, practices and policies were just beginning to shift in response to such measures. As this chapter documents, what became clear as the Bolivarian Revolution progressed was that having citizens' voices complement existing channels of participation was not sufficient to bring about change—what was necessary instead was the provision of alternative mechanisms of citizen involvement that allowed for direct democracy to be practised and strengthened. Doing so required new forums that would allow citizens to take a more central role over discussing and changing their lived conditions. As evidenced by how communities have been and should continue to be involved in projects like PEIC and the relationship that schools initially established with their communal councils, legitimacy of these programs is increasingly tied to endogenously developed community development goals, rather than state or state-actor driven activities and structures. What began as a project to deepen the democratic participation of citizens on decisions relating to their local school has shifted to one in which this shared governance activity extends beyond the schools' walls for the betterment of their shared community.

Since 2006, when the empirical data for this chapter was collected, much has changed within Venezuela. By December 2007, the number of communal councils that were established amounted to nearly 25,000, suggesting renewed faith that citizens placed in participating in local, deliberative and direct bodies of decision-making to improve their localities. This chapter suggests that the reinvention of

citizens participating within and with their schools on matters of shared interest is a work in progress and should continue to be investigated as the movement progresses towards an enduring, institutionalised and more overt version of twenty-first-century socialism. Outside of Bruce's (2008) book, little empirical work has been done to provide evidence of what communal councils and projects like PEIC have been able to achieve in partnership with institutions like schools and how the viewpoints of participants within these bodies have shifted over time.

Ideally, what was suggested in previous sections should provide hope that the aspirations held for education as an institution that helps to breed and promote democracy, not only in what it teaches but also in how it engages citizens with its activity, are not lost. The Revolution's attempts to redefine public participation, particularly in schooling, suggest that the dominant paradigm—based on community/parent as consumer and cooperation as being one of implicit rather than explicit support—can be countered and alternatives presented. In doing so, it reinvigorates an even more central debate about what role the public should serve in public education and, more critically, who is the 'public' in public education. In the Venezuelan case, it is clear that schools are no longer to be viewed as institutions that work only with children attending them, or the parents of these children, but rather, they are expected to work as partners in facilitating and fostering community growth and development. The manner and fashion in which this is accomplished within a democratic framework will be one of interest and inquiry for years to come.

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Chapter 6
Higher Education for Socialism in Venezuela: Massification, Development and Transformation

Tom G. Griffiths

Introduction

Recent uprisings across the world, most notably in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as part of the so-called Arab Spring, highlight what some post-Soviet/post-Marxist political movements have been asserting: that history has not ended and that alternative worlds are possible (see, e.g. Douzinas and Žižek 2010). The political trajectory of these and other movements remains the subject of what are likely to be long and complex struggles, but they occur in a context in which explicit twenty-first-century socialist political movements have come to power in Latin American states with an overt liberatory and transformational agenda. In particular, countries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador are invoking twenty-first-century socialism as a project for national liberation, endogenous development, utopian goals of 'supreme happiness', and an alternative environmentally sustainable conception of society and development: *buen vivir* (living well). The role of public education is necessarily a part of such political projects, driven by global goals of achieving universal access, with equity, to quality education, and of utilising mass education to prepare citizens for current and possible future worlds.

This chapter examines the reform and attempted transformation of higher education in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The expansion of public education in Venezuela has been a key feature of the presidency of Hugo Chávez since 1999, adopting a counter-neoliberal logic of growing investment in public education, increased enrolments and decreased private costs or contributions (see, e.g. Griffiths 2010; Muhr 2010). In some ways, the expansion of schooling aligns directly with global Education for All (EFA) goals, focused primarily on achieving universal

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access for school-age children, and a more gradual move towards full-day schools providing a comprehensive program for all students (Ministerio de Educación y Deportes 2006a; República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2004). Venezuelan EFA, however, in contrast to other experiences relying on private contributions to educational costs (Klees 2008), is emphasising the provision of free, comprehensive public schooling as well as complementary public programs like meals for school students (*Programa de Alimentación Escolar*), and subsidised school materials, transport and school uniforms (Griffiths 2010). The rapid expansion of higher education has been built on similar principles, with radically opened access to free undergraduate higher education (see, e.g. Muhr 2010; Muhr and Verger 2006).

The recent massification of higher education in Venezuela is evident in frequent references to the country now being ranked second in Latin America (behind Cuba) and fifth worldwide, in university enrolment rates, as reported by UNESCO in September 2010 (see, e.g. Ramírez 2010). This expansion was reported as a 193% increase in university enrolments from 1999 to 2009, from under 900,000 to over 2 million students (Ramírez 2010). New public universities account for the bulk of the expansion, facilitated by removing internal entrance examinations and other barriers to enrolment, and expanding systems of student support (see, e.g. Egilda Castellano 2004a, on the founding philosophy of the Bolivarian University of Venezuela; and also Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela 2003). This sort of expansion in numbers brings a series of challenges that continue to play out within Venezuela, including opposition from established autonomous universities, the struggle to establish the required infrastructure and develop models for adequately resourcing and staffing the expanded system, and more fundamental questions about what higher education looks like on this mass scale in the Venezuelan context.

The massification of higher education carries commitments to the reconceptualisation and transformation of higher education, as a part of the social transformations linked to the twenty-first-century socialism project. The rapid expansion and broadened access in and of itself constitutes a transformation of historical conceptions of higher education, though this too is arguably in line with global trends (e.g. Kivinen and Nurmi 2003). A particular feature of the envisaged transformation is the intent to directly link higher education to the project of national endogenous development, under the banner of reconnecting universities to local communities, and to concrete social problems and their resolution, thus connecting theory with social practice. The discourse here is about overcoming or surpassing patterns of university institutions distributing scarce academic credentials to be exchanged by graduates for better-paid professional careers in the labour market. In its place, with reference to the Cuban concept of the country as a 'giant school', the intended transformation seeks to build students' social and political consciousness to undertake work in the interests of their local community, society and the nation (Muhr 2010; on Cuba see Blum 2011 and Griffiths 2009). Muhr (2010) describes the official concept of higher education for all in Venezuela with 'higher education being at the service of the entire society, rather than simply being a means of individual social mobility' (50).

This chapter focuses on the actual and intended transformation of higher education most recently highlighted in the Special University Education Law (LEU, *Ley de*

Educación Universitaria) that was approved by Venezuela's Parliament in December 2010 and vetoed by the President in January 2011, requesting further public consultation, debate and refinement that continue at the time of publication in mid-2012. The failed LEU reform, and the associated debate, offers insight into the struggles to redefine or reconceptualise higher education in the context of the Bolivarian twenty-first-century socialist project. To do this, I briefly set the context of the Bolivarian revolution and its educational project and reforms. This is followed by consideration of three key aspects of higher educational reform and transformation: massification, higher education for endogenous national development and higher education for protagonistic and participatory democracy to transform the state and society. Within this analysis, I note signs of global or travelling reforms (Steiner-Khamsi 2010), with respect to the first two of these reforms, and their intersection with reforms that are driven by the particular Venezuelan Bolivarian context. I conclude by reviewing these influences and drawing out currents within existing reforms and debate that seek to radically transform how university education is understood and practised, acknowledging that these are bound up in the inherently complex, and often contradictory, policies and practices of such political transitions.

Interpreting Contemporary Venezuela: Some Theoretical Inspirations

In a recent volume examining a range of centre-left political developments in Latin America (Barrett et al. 2008), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2008) outlined some unproductive debates within the political Left that lead to entrenched and polarised positions. These non-productive, polarised debates included the question of socialism as the ultimate objective of left-wing movements and parties, debate over reform versus revolution and debate about the state as principal or irrelevant objective of political and social struggle. In their place, he advocated approaches that constructively build 'depolarised pluralities' in line with the more open and uncertain positions and responses of the Left in contemporary times (255). The analysis of higher education reform/intended transformation in this chapter has been undertaken with this perspective in mind, seeking to make a provisional or conditional assessment of this reform, in context, emphasising multiple possible future trajectories and associated productive questions these raise for politically engaged academic work.

Barrett et al. (2008) also elaborated the concept of 'non-reformist reforms' or 'revolutionary reforms', within the complexity of contemporary social movements, political parties and associated social and political developments in Latin America. We can characterise revolutionary reforms as those that simultaneously deliver substantive redistribution and/or heightened recognition of diverse social actors. In addition, revolutionary reforms contribute to the construction of new forms of representation locally (and regionally) via new organisations that run parallel to existing state structures and/or radically transform the state, thus becoming 'the first step in a process of ongoing and sustained transformation in the relations of social

and political power between dominant and subordinate groups' (Rodríguez-Garavito et al. 2008: 24–25). This conceptualisation of revolutionary reforms offers a productive approach to analysing developments in countries like Venezuela in which the official, intended transition to socialism is being driven via parliamentary state power connected to parallel social and political movements.

World-system analysis is an additional theoretical perspective taken to this work. Here too I seek to avoid unproductive, polarising debates and instead draw on work from the institutionalist and realist perspectives that focus, respectively, on world-system-level cultural scripts and their influence over the construction and reform of state institutions and on the differential power relations and structural location of nation-states within a single world-economy and hierarchical interstate system (for an overview of these positions, see Arnove 2009). Such an approach explicitly looks beyond the nation-state to understand and account for particular reforms within it. This is done in terms of states' attempts to maintain and secure an increased share of world surplus value within the world-economy, via programs of national economic development (Wallerstein 2005a), a process which also involves their drawing on world-system-level cultural scripts for educational reforms corresponding to the goals of national development, nation building and citizen formation (for an overview of this position, see Ramirez 2003). Rather than debating the primacy of world-system-level cultural or economic factors in shaping national policy and reforms, they are taken as inseparable and constitutive of the current, capitalist world-system in which we live.

Finally, this chapter also takes inspiration from Wallerstein's extensive work on the historical development and trajectory of the capitalist world-system and arguments for its current crisis and transition towards an uncertain alternative system (for recent summaries of this position, see Wallerstein 2010; Wallerstein 2011). Wallerstein (2006) argues for engaged academic work in the three related tasks: the intellectual analytical work in pursuit of truth to understand our contemporary reality; the moral task of articulating more just, equal and democratic alternatives and the political task of pushing the current transition in this broad direction. From this perspective, the study of 'revolutionary reforms' in Venezuela, in the context of an attempt to articulate a viable alternative model of socialism for this century, can directly contribute to this broad agenda for engaged academic research.

Twenty-First-Century Socialism in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Social life in Venezuela has been highly politicised and polarised following the collapse of the dominant two-party (Pact of *Punto Fijo*) electoral system in the late 1980s/early 1990s and then particularly since 1998 and the first election of Hugo Chávez as President. Under his government and particularly since his re-election in 2006, a push towards defining and building a viable model of twenty-first-century socialism has intensified. The polarisation of society is thoroughly documented

by researchers like Ellner (2009) who highlight the return of class to Venezuelan politics that accompanied the breakdown of the two-party (*Puntofijismo*) system and rise of Chávez. Volumes have and continue to be written about Chávez himself (e.g. Gott 2005; Jones 2007; Kozloff 2007) and the political orientation of his government and self-proclaimed 'Bolivarian Revolution' (e.g. Boron 2009; El Troudi 2010; Wilpert 2007), as part of ongoing efforts to characterise Venezuela's 'revolution', or 'process', and its trajectory. The intent here is to highlight the dynamic nature of the process in Venezuela and elsewhere (see, e.g. Guerrero 2010: 75–94), and the complex context in which the reform and attempted transformation of Venezuelan higher education proceeds.

The political process under Chávez has and continues to be based on an explicit program of wealth redistribution, based primarily on oil revenues/rents from the state-owned oil company PDVSA, with a steady expansion of public services (e.g. health care, housing, transport, education, subsidised food programs), and public ownership of key industries (e.g. oil, electricity, water, telecommunications). This broad project, at the very least, has amounted to a radical social democratic redistributive program, particularly in its initial phase prior to the public commitments to socialism and associated policy reforms, from 2005 onwards. As I have argued elsewhere (Griffiths 2010), the Venezuelan case marks a distinctive shift from neoliberal policy under capitalism, emphasising a counter-logic of public ownership, public expenditure and services for the common good and facilitating well-being through state intervention, redistribution and, where necessary, the rejection of market mechanisms. The radial social democratic characterisation is supported by recent research highlighting a steady or increasing role of the private sector in the expanding national economy since 1998 (El Troudi 2010; Álvarez 2010). El Troudi (2010), for example, cites National Bank of Venezuela data showing the contribution of the private sector to gross domestic product rising from 65.2% in 1998 to 70.3% in 2007. Álvarez (2010) similarly points to private sector employment reducing only slightly from 84.9% in 1999 to 80.3% in 2009 (72) and a claimed 'stagnation suffered by the social, popular and communitarian economy called on to replace the capitalist economy' (71).[1] Data like this underlies assessments by high-profile left-wing academics like James Petras (2008, 2009, 2010) who have presented the process in Venezuela as 'a rupture with the predominant neo-liberal practice pervasive in Latin America over the previous quarter century', but have expressed uncertainty as to whether the changes to date amount to 'a new version of socialism given the predominance of capitalist property relations in strategic sectors of the economy and the continuing class inequalities in both the private and public sector' (Petras 2009: 4).

Alongside and underlying social democratic reforms of publicly directed wealth redistribution and social inclusion are an array of accompanying, potentially 'revolutionary reforms', directed towards constructing a form of 'popular power' (*poder popular*), built around the concept of citizens' 'protagonistic and participatory

[1] Translations of quotes from Spanish to English have been completed by the author.

democracy'. The principle of 'protagonistic and participatory democracy' rests on a critique of liberal representative democracy and is enshrined in the Venezuelan Constitution of 2000 which notes in its preamble the supreme goal of refounding the republic 'to establish a society that is democratic, participatory and protagonistic, multi-ethnic and pluricultural, in a Federal and decentralised State of justice…' (Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela 1999: 1). Article 62 of the Constitution goes on to affirm the obligation of the state to create the conditions for peoples' participation in 'the formation, execution and control of public administration', this being the 'necessary means to achieve the protagonism that can guarantee people's complete individual and collective development' (16). This concept has been a constant of the Bolivarian process and provides a foundational legal basis for more revolutionary reforms that aim to create new governance structures, practices and laws, which may fundamentally transform the state and its relationship to civil society.

An emphasis on experimenting with and developing models for popular participation in governance, whether via communal councils, communes, social missions and worker co-management in industry, is a distinguishing feature of the Venezuelan process. This emphasis may potentially be a central pillar of the twenty-first-century socialism project, setting it apart from historical experiences. For example, in a discussion of popular power as 1 of 12 dilemmas of the Bolivarian Revolution, Guerrero (2010) cites the potential of the communal councils to construct 'a new form of popular power, and a new type of State that is neither capitalist nor bureaucratic' (244). He adds, however, that there is a need to further develop both the institutional status of these new governance structures, while ensuring that their agenda and priorities are authentically driven from the ground up (see 245–247). Álvarez (2010) similarly stresses the need to transform the state and the protagonistic role of the population in the political-economy of society, to drive the Bolivarian process further. Tendencies within the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) like *Marea Socialista* (Socialist Tide), under the banner of 'Neither Capitalists nor Bureaucrats', have been an integral part of efforts to convert popular participation into popular power and decision-making, as a distinctive feature of twenty-first-century socialism (see www.mareasocialista.com).

The following sections of this chapter set out some of the major, and arguably revolutionary, reforms of higher education in Venezuela and current debate over its transformation as part of the broader political project. This work concludes with a subsection addressing the question of higher education's relationship to this intended transformation of the state and governance towards popular and protagonistic participation below (see p. 9).

The Massification of Higher Education Under the 'Educator State'

The reform of education generally in Venezuela since 1998 has been marked by an anti-neoliberal approach of expanding the provision of free, public education, from child care through to university level, with corresponding social missions for adult

education. Expanded access, with equity, to quality education for all has been a distinctive feature of Venezuela's educational reform. This policy directly draws on global trends casting education as a basic human right (e.g. as set out in the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights). This principle in turn underpins initiatives like UNESCO's 'Education for All' (EFA) against which the Venezuelan government has understandably promoted its progress (see, e.g. República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2004; Ministerio de Educación y Deportes 2006a). Education for All as a characteristic of Venezuela's twenty-first-century socialism project is reflected in both the new Constitution approved in 1999 and in the 2009 Organic Education Law (LOE, *Ley Orgánica de Educación*) which requires the state to guarantee 'the full right to a permanent, integral, quality education for all with equity of type, and equality with respect to conditions and opportunities, rights and obligations', and 'gratuity of education in equal conditions and opportunities, in all official institutions up to undergraduate university level' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009: 3).[2]

The 2009 LOE further enshrined the particular Venezuelan concept of the 'educator state' (*estado docente*), characterising education in Article 4 as a 'universal, inalienable and irrevocable human right and fundamental social obligation, and as a public good' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009: 2). The concept of the educator state draws directly on the work of Luis Prieto Figueroa (2006), first developed in 1947, which builds on the principle of education as a universal human right by specifying the subsequent responsibilities of the state for the provision of free, obligatory, public education.[3] Prieto Figueroa (2006) wrote of a double sense of obligation of the educator state to create the conditions in which universal access to quality education can be achieved and a corresponding obligation of citizens to then take part in this education (53). The concept articulated by Prieto Figueroa draws on liberal-progressive notions of public education, with references to Dewey, for example, in which this double obligation to provide and participate in public education is connected with ideas of preparing citizens who are informed about their rights and obligations as members of democratic society (Prieto Figueroa 2006: 45–47). In this sense, with reference to Aristotelian philosophy, Prieto Figueroa (2006) rejects notions of state provided education being neutral, arguing instead for an explicitly democratic education to prepare citizens for democratic social and political life:

> The school works to prepare a civic consciousness in citizens, in harmony with the prevailing political regimen of the State. A democracy must prepare democrats through their participation, equality and coexistence. The school betrays its mission if it declares itself to be neutral in the face of the essential requirements for democratic life (Prieto Figueroa 2006: 33).

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[2] In Venezuela "organic" laws set the general, normative or regulatory framework for subsequent more specific laws, in effect establishing the principles to guide the further elaboration of legislation. Given their importance, a two thirds majority in the Parliament is required to pass organic laws. The LOE of 2009 replaced the organic law of 1980.

[3] Note that Prieto Figueroa's (2006) work is a reprinting of his thesis about the educator state that was first published in 1947, and then in a revised form in 1977, with text from both appearing in the 2006 publication.

A 'Special University Education Law' (LEU) was passed by Venezuela's National Parliament in December 2010 and vetoed by the President on 4 January 2011 (see Moreno 2011). Its veto was accompanied by the replacement of the Minister of University Education, Edgardo Ramirez, by the then current Chancellor of the Bolivarian University of Venezuela, Yadira Córdova.[4] Minister Córdova cited methodological problems with the discussion and formulation of the law, resulting in some unspecified stakeholders being left out, as a key reason for it being vetoed and for the subsequent new round of public debate (see interview by Hidalgo in Ciudad CCS 2011). A renewed process of public forums, debates and discussion, under the banner of the transformation of higher education, was initiated and, at the time of this book going to press, was still underway.[5]

On the question of massification, the LEU sought to formalise in legislation the expansion that had occurred over the past decade and set the legal framework to define the structures, characteristics and systems of governance of the expanded/universal system. The LEU would have further institutionalised the idea of the educator state providing higher education for all, firmly grounded in the wider legal framework. Given this already established legislative and constitutional framework, it is likely that the revised law will maintain this basic principle. For example, Article 3 of the LEU referred to university education as a 'fundamental universal human right and social obligation' and something that was oriented towards 'the development of creative potential and the liberation of human beings and society' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010: 1). Similarly, Article 4.5 of the LEU stated that all graduates of secondary education had the right to enrol in any university, in accord with the principles of the *Estado Docente*, and so mandated that 'no University will impose other requirements or mechanisms that violate this principle' (3). Article 35 of the LEU provided more detail, specifying that enrolment in an undergraduate degree required a secondary school completion and inscription in the appropriate ministry register (22).

The question of opening access to university education is a long-standing one since 1998, with particular reference to internal entrance exams (and fees charged to sit such exams) conducted by autonomous universities to determine entry into programs. The critique of such practices is a major point of revolutionary student groups' position, this being a feature of Edgardo Ramírez's time as Minister of University Education (see, e.g. his interview with Aporrea on taking up the position in Gómez 2010).[6] The internal examination system to select entrants for limited university places

[4] It should be noted that the Education Ministries have been some of the most unstable in terms of leadership in recent years, with, for example, three Ministers of Education and three Ministers of University Education being in place during the first 12 months of the author's stay in Venezuela, beginning February 2010.

[5] Cycles of public forums were held by the ministry, universities, and institutions like the *Centro Internacional Miranda,* in early 2011, and posted to activist websites like *Aporrea* (http://www.aporrea.org/), but have reduced in frequency throughout the year.

[6] For a radical student organisation position, see the "Revolutionary Bolivarian Peumayén Front" (*Frente Bolivariano Revolucionario Peumayén)* here: http://fpeumayen.blogspot.com/.

contrasts with the approach of official, non-autonomous, universities like the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV) founded in 2004 and the National Experimental University of the Armed Forces (UNEFA), which apply minimal entry requirements and enrol large numbers as a result. For example, citing official statistics, Gomez and Briceño (2010) reported the autonomous Central University of Venezuela (UCV) as having an enrolment of 47,209 students and an accompanying budget amounting to $21,605 Bolivares Fuertes (BsF) per student.[7] In contrast, the UBV was reported as having an enrolment of 210,995 students and budget of just $962 BsF/student and UNEFA with 232,283 students and a budget of $269 BsF/student.[8] Leaving aside the debate over the disparities in funding, which, as in the report by Gomez and Briceña (2010), tend to be constructed in the pro-government media as evidence of the need to redirect public funds from the UCV to other institutions, the differential enrolment figures highlight the competing philosophies about access to higher education. In the case of the UBV, this was expressed by the founding Chancellor, María Egilda Castellano, who in an interview in 2004 observed that 'we believe that everyone is capable of learning, that everyone has talent, abilities and skills, and that the thing that needs to be done is provide the conditions in which these can be developed' (Egilda Castellano 2004a: 53). On the question of entrance exams, she described the process in the UBV in a separate document:

> the Bolivarian University does not apply entrance examinations, the students simply have to go and enrol, the only requirement is that either they have not been able to enrol in other higher education institutions, or they are recent graduates from secondary school. (Egilda Castellano 2004b: 205)

In 2011, the policy on entrance requirements and systems remained as a major point of debate, with autonomous universities continuing to apply what are sometimes described as 'voluntary' entrance exams and oppose the application of the minimal secondary school graduation requirement for entry. Aside from the polarised positions advocated by the revolutionary students movement, for example, Movimiento Estudiantil Revolucionario 2011, and that emanating from the Vice Chancellor of the UCV (DIC-UCV 2011), there are critical perspectives supportive of the broader Bolivarian process that call for a single national system of selection with differentiation for entrance into university degrees based on students' secondary school results (e.g. Valera-Villegas 2009).[9] Such positions align with established meritocratic selection systems based on students' performance within school systems. An alternative University Education Law (LEU) put forward by a commission of the Venezuelan Association of University Vice-Chancellors (AVERU) and of the UCV similarly

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[7] In early 2010, the official exchange rate was 4.3 BsF: 1 USD, so making this budget $5024 USD per student.

[8] These figures amount to just $224 and $62 USD per student, respectively.

[9] The press release from the Central University of Venezuela (UCV) cited here (DIC-UCV 2011) is misleadingly titled "The UCV will eliminate internal entrance exams", while the text of the release elaborates the position calling for their replacement with diagnostic "Evaluations by disciplinary areas" identified as Science and Technology; Humanities and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, and Agricultural Sciences.

referred to universal access to higher education, under equal conditions, 'without limitations **other than those derived from individuals abilities, vocation and aspirations**' (Comisión UCV and Comision AVERU 2010: 14, emphasis added). Within this debate, however, is a more fundamental division over how university education is conceived – as a layer or level of formal education that can be expanded in mass proportions like schooling and in which the sole or at least major factor determining entry is the sense of vocation to pursue a particular line of study of career path, or something to be accessed by some only via a process of ostensibly meritocratic academic selection.

Interestingly, Prieto Figueroa (2006) referred explicitly to educational specialisation as required to drive economic growth, but in a way that avoided becoming a system for reproducing class-based inequalities via an authentic meritocracy in which 'the only principle for selection will be individuals' skills, their vocation, and their desire to serve' (Prieto Figueroa 2006: 55). As Ramirez (2006) notes, citing the strength of the relationship globally between educational credentials and occupational attainment, 'It is clear that discrimination on the basis of educational credentials is by far more acceptable than other bases for discrimination' (437).

The idea of higher education for all with minimal entry requirements may be tentatively characterised as a revolutionary reform. This is a revolutionary reform based on a more radical philosophy and political position that reconceptualises higher education as a universal human right, a social good in and of itself and a vehicle for individuals to identify and fulfil their personal potential and vocation that includes a sense of one's contribution to the collective social good. The emphasis in this conceptualisation moves away from distributing high-status credentials that individuals convert into higher occupational positions and upward social mobility to a focus on the wider social good of more and higher levels of mass education. As discussed below, however, connections to world-system-level imperatives of national economic development, and associated cultural scripts situating higher education as a key site in realising such plans, are also at play. In this sense, the social and national benefit of the massification of higher education derives from the expanded access, more people with more education, and from an intended shift in focus that better links higher education degrees, and graduates, to the resolution of concrete social problems and associated plans for local, national, endogenous development.

Higher Education for Socialist, Endogenous, National Development

A second feature of Venezuela's higher educational reform has been a policy of directly connecting its structures and programs to planned national (social and economic) development goals. As with the commitment to educational expansion as a human right, a policy of expanding higher education in ways that align with national development goals, including to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the nation/the nation's labour force within the world-economy, directly resonates

with established global trends and purposes of higher education. This aspect of a world educational culture was summarised by Ramirez (2006) who argued that 'the human capital revolution and the celebration of the learning society and lifelong learning has led to the idea that expanded access to higher education is a win-win situation for individuals and for their societies. If anything, what is feared is the under-utilisation of human talent.' (437). For world culture theorists like Ramirez, the idea of education for national economic development and growth is explained as part of a world cultural model, or script, with local socio-economic conditions influencing the particular ways in which the conditioning world cultural framework is taken up and applied (see, e.g. Boli and Ramirez 1986: 84–86). Wallerstein's world-system perspective would arrive at a similar position in terms of the global convergence of this policy idea and framework, but locate the causal motor in the capitalist world-economy requiring ostensibly sovereign nation-states to compete for their share of global surplus (e.g. Wallerstein 2005b). Significantly, such an approach might also draw attention to the historical development of a shared ideology or geoculture across nation-states within the single world-economy, identified by Wallerstein as a shared ideology of liberalism, that included a logic of the possibility of endless, linear, economic growth via rational (including educational) planning (e.g. Wallerstein 1992, 1998).

The principle of linking higher education to human capital formation for national (independent) development also has a local basis in Prieto Figueroa's work, which continues to be a key source of educational theorising under the Chávez government.[10] His conception of the educator state, in part, casts the responsibility of the state and its education system in these terms, so as to meet the development needs of the nation. This aspect of Prieto Figueroa's work is rooted directly in the history of Latin American nations, as former Spanish colonies and then dependent states with low levels of industrialisation and low levels of the associated technical and professional personnel needed to exploit natural resources and develop national industry. This explains a critique at his time of writing of 'excessive intellectualism' in secondary schooling, citing French and English influence and conceiving this as an education for the elite with loyalty and aspirations towards these European centres and hence the identified need to connect theory with practice/applications throughout public education (Prieto Figueroa 2006: 14–15).

This aspect of mass education has been evident in educational policy generally since 1999, with a consistent emphasis on explicitly connecting students' educational preparation to plans for the endogenous economic and social development of the nation. Article 3 of the 1999 Constitution, for example, stipulates that 'Essential goals of the State include the defence and development of individuals and respect for their dignity, the democratic exercise of the popular will, the construction of a just and peace loving society, the promotion of prosperity and well being of the people…', adding that 'Education and work are the fundamental processes to achieve these goals' (Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela 1999: 2). The LOE builds on this

[10] See, for example, the extended preface for Prieto Figueroa's (2006) work written by the then Minister of Education and current Parliamentary Vice-President, Aristóbulo Istúriz.

foundation when speaking of the direct link between educational curricula and outcomes to national, endogenous development plans and goals (Articles 6.3.b and c) and cites 'the productive insertion of university graduates in accordance with the priorities of the Social and Economic development plan of the nation' (Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela 1999: 9). This idea of directing education to national development planning may be seen as an example of the country drawing on world-system-level cultural and economic scripts about education as human capital formation, taken up by elected political authorities as a part of their efforts to deliver higher levels of national economic development. These efforts must be also seen in terms of the historical distortions and deindustrialisation of the national economy, legacies of its colonial past and penetration of foreign capital and ownership as an oil-exporting state within world-economy (for an overview, see Wilpert 2007).

In the Venezuelan case, however, this seemingly standard human capital framework is accompanied by ideas of individuals' subsequent labour consciously contributing to the collective good. Here Prieto Figueroa (2006) discussed education's role in promoting national harmony and solidarity, arguing that only state control of education (the educator state) can deliver 'the massive possession of knowledge, or a harmonious conception of the world, the formation of a collective consciousness' (61). A distinctive feature in the Venezuelan case is that the instrumental nature of public higher education is tied to a particular and explicitly politicised concept of social and economic development and so to the type of citizen/graduate required to advance such goals and transform society to build twenty-first-century socialism. In the LOE and associated educational policy texts (see, e.g. Ministerio de Educación y Deportes 2006b), these goals are captured within the concept of an *integral* education. This concept invoked ideas of a comprehensive education, incorporating traditional academic subject disciplines (e.g. Spanish language, Venezuelan history and geography) alongside their physical, art, sport, cultural, environmental, communication, health and recreation education (see República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009 Article 6.2.c: 7), to be experienced by all students. In some texts, the concept of integral education moves beyond liberal conceptions of comprehensive education for all, however, to articulate the common curriculum as one to deliver 'the full development of human beings and their incorporation in productive, cooperative and liberating work' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009: 5).

On the question of higher education for national endogenous and socialist development, we also see some potential for a revolutionary reform that contributes to the transformation of social and political power and governance relationships. The emphasis on integral education, for example, can be described as a liberal comprehensive education intended to simultaneously prepare citizens/graduates to contribute to endogenous social and economic development plans that directly respond to local problems. But this is done with an explicit social and political agenda that positions endogenous development as an essential part of the project to define and advance a model of protagonistic and participatory socialism. Such potential is arguably always present and is conditioned by an underlying approach, often expressed in public debate about the LEU and higher education reform, advocating that higher education be put at the service of the society and its national development

plans. In Venezuela, however, even this more instrumental interpretation must take account of the regional transformations constructing trade arrangements and educational exchanges based on principles of solidarity and reciprocity, which do not neatly align with an exclusive focus on national economic growth within the capitalist world-economy (see, e.g. El Troudi 2010).

Higher Education for Protagonistic and Participatory Democracy to Transform Society

The concepts of mass higher education, directed towards endogenous development and towards building participatory democracy to transform society, are inherently interconnected. For the purposes of characterising the intended transformation of higher education in Venezuela, however, this overt political purpose is arguably the most distinctive and 'revolutionary' to use Barrett et al.'s (2008) characterisation. The inherently political nature of any education system has been consistently acknowledged by Venezuelan policy makers, particularly in response to opposition claims that the government is attempting to politicise schools and indoctrinate students (Gómez 2010). On this foundation, the proposed transformation of higher education builds on other legal instruments like the 1999 Constitution which commits public policy generally, and educational policy in particular, to the development of new forms of protagonistic and participatory democracy. Article 15 of the LOE, for example, cites as a core objective the development of a new political culture 'founded on protagonistic participation' and which includes strengthening models of popular power, democratising knowledge and reconstructing the public spirit (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009: 15). Developing students' capacity for 'active, conscious, protagonistic, and responsible participation with a spirit of solidarity' (15) is thus cast as an essential part of the public education purpose and a measure of students' full personal development fostered by education.

The LOE also provides some insight into how a transformed model of higher education might be expected to contribute to such goals, via the practice of participatory democracy within educational institutions. The LOE calls for popular and protagonistic participation in the management of educational centres, citing the co-responsibility of teachers, parents and the local school community in this management. The principle of promoting and facilitating social participation 'in the formation, execution and control of educational management' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2009, Article 5.4a: 11) is thus affirmed in the LOE, with details of how this is to be achieved systematically to follow in subsequent laws. The law does note that communal councils and other social/community organisations are both agents of popular education, and so obliged to promote this type of formation within the wider population, and potential agents for the strengthening of family-school-community integration (Article 18: 17).

The intended process here can be described as forming citizens to actively participate in and practice the new forms of participatory democracy and governance that are

being promoted as part of the transformation of the state towards twenty-first-century socialism. This formation or preparation of citizens is envisaged as being advanced through their experience within educational institutions that increasingly and systematically practice these principles of protagonistic and participatory democracy in their own governance and through the content of education programs that promote these ideas as part of the wider project of transforming society. Article 3 of the vetoed LEU was unambiguous in its description of higher education as an 'irrevocable public good at the service of the transformation of society', something directed to the 'consolidation of a radically democratic, socially just and equal society', a strategy to stimulate and develop transformational thinking, and 'a process of constructing a new hegemonic culture to overcome/supersede capitalist society' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010: 1–2). Chapter 5 of the LEU was dedicated to 'Participatory and Protagonistic Democracy in University Education' (36–37) and included commitments to apply this principle to the 'definition, execution, tracking, evaluation and control of the structures, plans and programs of study, intellectual creation and interaction with communities' (36); to 'academic and administrative negotiations'; and, critically in terms of public debate, to 'The conception, planning, administration, accounting and social control of the University budget, its uses and goals, as well as the resources, goods, services and patrimony of the institution' (36).

Moves to promote more democratic/participatory models of university governance highlight another contentious issue in the proposed transformation of higher education related to the election of university authorities. In universities where students have the right to vote in such elections, the vote of academics is weighted at around 40:1 such that academics maintain a majority, for example, in selecting governing authorities. The LEU proposed an equal weighting – voting parity – for students and other university workers (administrative and general staff) in such elections (Article 79: 37). This has been a consistent position of radical/revolutionary student groups and their interventions into the legal reforms (e.g. Movimiento Estudiantil Revolucionario 2011). Such a change would constitute a radical shift in the franchise for electing the authorities of university institutions, alongside a requirement that, once elected, they apply principles of protagonistic and participatory democracy in the exercise of their administration.

The creation of National Councils of University Transformation (CNTEs, *Consejos Nacionales de Transformación Universitaria*) was also proposed in the LEU as one structural vehicle for the transformed model of governance to occur, with the CNTE's to 'Establish mechanisms of protagonistic participation of the University communities and popular power organisations in the permanent transformation of university institutions, their structures and programs, as a function of the goals of the State and of University Education' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010, Article 21: 14). An additional layer was also proposed, Territorial Research Centres (CETs, *Centros de Estudios Territoriales*), with one to be attached to each CNTE as 'open academic-community spaces' to drive the proposed integration of universities and their research and knowledge production with the concrete needs of local communities (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010, Article 27: 18). The CNTEs and CETs appear in the LEU as part of an attempt to systematically incorporate popular power into

universities' activities and further institutionalise university-community links and engagement via local research projects that in turn contribute to the transformation of society. For example, the LEU called on the CETs to develop research proposals that responded directly to territorial problems, but also to explicitly develop regional and local measures and systems to promote protagonistic participation and democracy amongst populations, to encourage ethical-political reflection on contradictions between the proposed new subjectivities and values of a society in transformation and those established by capitalism, and to develop critical thinking, transdiciplinarity and eco-political theories as 'privileged forms to advance understanding of the complex relations between the economy, culture and the environment' (República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010, Article 28: 20).

At the level of formal policy intent, there is a clear link between Venezuela's system of higher education and the idea of transforming the state and society through new forms of participatory and protagonistic governance. These reforms carry a revolutionary potential, as set out by Rodríguez-Garavito et al. (2008). We can clearly see here elements of established world-system-level trends with respect to the formation of skilled labour and active citizens required for the planned development of the nation, within the context of the world-economy. These merge in complex ways, however, with the overtly radical political positions in terms of forming workers and citizens to fundamentally transform society. Connections could fruitfully be made here to the large bodies of theoretical and applied research within the critical and liberatory education fields (e.g. Allman 2010; Freire 1985, 2007; McLaren and Farahmandpur 2001), which in turn underpin much academic research within Venezuela. Importantly, real attempts are being made to promote a critical higher education that prepares students and graduates for the intellectual, moral and political tasks identified by theorists like Wallerstein as essential for the transition of the current world-system.

Finally, before moving to the concluding remarks, I want to stress the qualifications, complexity and contradictions present in the contemporary Venezuelan process. Aside from the disjuncture between policy and practice, and particularly between the establishment of laws and their application and adherence to them by public and private institutions, any number of contradictory practices and tendencies may be found, alongside ongoing corruption and *clientelismo*. In the realms of higher education, we could cite, for example, the prevalence of passive, transmission pedagogical practices; top-down and highly centralised governance structures and practices including the appointment (rather than election) of university authorities; high levels of casualisation of the academic workforce; and extremely high attrition rates accompanying the expanded enrolments in the UBV and UNEFA cited above, driven in part by inadequate funding and resources to support these expanded numbers. These things are important and consequential for the development of the Venezuelan process and its 'revolution' and attempted construction of twenty-first-century socialism. The intent of this chapter is not to dismiss these and uncritically present the official policy statements as a full representation of educational reality. Rather, the intent is to highlight the revolutionary potential of the reform process, in all its complexity.

Towards Some Conclusions

There is a strong case to be made that we are seeing in Venezuela a radical political transformation of state institutions like universities, as part of a complex political project seeking to fundamentally transform the state, systems of governance, and established notions and models of social and economic development. Evidence for this reading is particularly apparent in what can be described as 'revolutionary' or 'non-reformist reforms' (Rodríguez-Garavito et al. 2008) over the past decade. Indeed, this extends to the very act and nature of the current and officially promoted debate about the 'transformation of the university' and its relationship to twenty-first-century socialism. The massive increases in higher education enrolments in a short period, and the philosophy underlying them, represent a qualitative and quantitative shift, however problematic in terms of resources and conditions needed to sustain and consolidate this expansion and the ongoing opposition of established and traditional autonomous universities, amongst other factors. The explicit politicisation of higher education programs' content and practice is apparent via the emphasis on practising and preparing graduates to construct an alternative model of popular power and participatory democracy within their specialised areas and a general emphasis on the social and collective good that graduates' subsequent work can contribute to in the endogenous development of the nation. All of these aspects are necessarily uneven, contradictory in policy and in practice, reflecting and contributing to the wider complexity of the Venezuelan transformational project.

On another level, within the higher education reform directions, we can identify direct and indirect links to global policy trends. At the broadest level, the expansion of mass education to better produce workers and citizens for national development projects has been well established by world culture theorists (e.g. Meyer 2006). The Venezuelan higher education reforms can also be read as conditioned by the historical socio-economic development of the nation, its location as a mono-export petrol economy within the capitalist world-economy and the consequent distorted patterns of industrial development, ownership and wealth distribution in the country (Wallerstein 2010). It is this historical context that gave rise to Chávez and his political movement (Ellner 2009) and carried the critique of the historical governments' failure to deliver on the liberal promises to achieve universal school education, to expand higher education and to prepare citizens to drive forward a new conception of endogenous, national development. The world cultural and economic scripts for higher education did not change overnight with the Chávez government and continue to be drawn on in important ways to legitimise and shape the current transformation: educational expansion, as a human right and prerequisite for national development; education for citizenship; and education for human capital formation in accordance with national development planning. In the current context, however, some aspects of these take overtly socialist forms, emphasising things like an expanded public sector, import substitution and price controls, agricultural/food security, and independence.

Significant challenges lie ahead for Venezuela's expanded system of mass higher education and its intended transformation to accord with wider goals of transforming society and building twenty-first-century socialism. Debating, revising and ultimately legislating the LEU will be another step in that process, but as with other revolutionary reforms under the Chávez government, in-depth research into their implementation, innovations, successes and failures in their application is needed. Such research will further contribute to our understanding of the intended transformation, its relationship to historical socialist experiences, and offer insight into the efficacy of particular structures and practices to produce graduates with the skills and dispositions to transform society and construct a socialist alternative. As with multiple aspects of Venezuela's 'revolution', higher educational reform/transformation moves along a slow, twisted and at times torturous path. Within this complex process, mixing radical domestic rhetoric and action with global educational scripts, there are signs that higher education may be fundamentally redefined/reconceptualised. To what extent and how distinctive this is compared with twentieth-century socialist approaches remain open questions. This, and other aspects of Venezuela's reform, however, will continue to be central to research interested in contemporary socialist alternatives and the role of higher education to their elaboration and progress in contemporary times.

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Part II
Discovering Aspects of Socialist Institutions and Thinking for Transformation

Chapter 7
Slovene Socialist Early Childhood Education: Returning, Surpassing and Reinterpreting History

Marcela Batistič Zorec

Introduction

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was established soon after World War II, in 1946, under the communist government led by Marshall Tito. In 1963, it was renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), consisting of six socialist republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia) and two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the European Communist Bloc, from 1991 the SFRY began to disintegrate as a coherent political entity, involving a series of conflicts in which most of the former country's constituent republics and autonomous provinces seceded to become independent states.

After Slovenia gained independence following the fall of the socialist regime in 1991, the country introduced major reforms of early childhood education. In this period, many Slovenian educators and professionals were well aware of the need to preserve the advantages of the relatively high-quality preschools from the socialist period.[1] At the same time, however, they were very critical of the pedagogical concept of the period, which was out of sync with the professional trends in the world. In the proposed reforms, the *public preschool institutions*[2] section of the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter referred to as White Paper 1996) aimed to identify and retain the positive elements of the then existing system and its conceptualisation of education and offered various ways of replacing those aspects which prevented or impeded an increase in the quality of early childhood

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[2] The author of this chapter was one of the four authors of this section of the White Paper (1996).

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education. It took into account the recommendations of the Council of Europe and other international organisations, features of educational programmes and developmental trends in this field as well as developments of the social sciences and humanities influencing early childhood education.

Today, 15 years after the official reform has started and 20 years after gaining independence, assessments of the socialist and reform periods have almost inevitably changed. While the criticism of the pre-existing system and the will for a conceptual (paradigmatic) change was in the foreground immediately after the transition, it is now recognised that the introduction of any meaningful change should account for the historical context. Although there is a permanent need for critical reflection of systemic and curricular solutions, along with the educational practice rooted in them, this need is particularly acute in Slovenia at the present moment. In April 2011, the Ministry of Education published its reformed principles of education in a second White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (2011), which will again have a large influence on the development of early childhood education in the country.

This chapter examines the system and pedagogical concepts of preschools in the People's Republic of Slovenia and later in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia,[3] from the end of World War II to Slovenia's independence in 1991, and compares the provision of Slovenian preschools in the socialist period with that in some non-socialist contexts. Some key policy reforms of the socialist period are considered: the establishment of a unitary preschool system in the 1960s and 1970s, under the leadership of just a few experts, and the extension of this system driven by a new national law (Preschool Education and Care Act 1980) and the introduction of the first national curriculum (Educational Program for Preschool Children 1979), which was influenced mostly by theories and experiences originating in the Soviet and other Yugoslav republics. I argue that major changes in the preschool system identified with the post-socialist period actually took place before the transition to a liberal democratic Slovenia and that these changes were based on internal critiques as well as the take-up of foreign recommendations. Thus, these changes were not simply the result of a general strong will amongst practitioners and policymakers for change in the transition phase but rather had their roots in the 1980s as a result of practitioners experimenting with new pedagogies, which experiments recognised and attended in a limited manner to the need for a more radical change.

This chapter is inspired by the need for a careful 'reading' and critical interpretation of history to provide us with the starting points for well-considered understandings of and approaches to contemporary dilemmas. Such understandings provide the basis for the discussions and improvement of early childhood education in Slovenian preschools now and in the future. This historical work is important to identify and understand the historical roots of ideas that emerge and re-emerge, and in other periods or de-emphasised or sidelined, in public policy. This point is well illustrated

[3] The People's Republic of Slovenia was established in 1947, soon after the establishment of new Yugoslavia. With the 1963 Constitution, it was renamed as the Socialist Republic of Slovenia.

by the Dutch author Braidotti (cited in Bahovec 1999: 53–54), working in the fields of the history of philosophy and women's studies, who noted that 'Those who are not aware of the history of concepts are destined to repeat the mistakes that the concepts may comprise … I believe in the power of repeating, surpassing, returning, remaking and elaborating, but repeating requires memory, replacement and dedication to change in order really to be able to do things differently. If you don't know the history of concepts you're working with, if you don't know the location you're coming from, you cannot set up a positive repeating, all you do is repeat blindly … In the West we live in amnestic societies, … people no longer have memories'.

Early Childhood Education in Slovene Preschools: Building a Unified System

Due to the rapid pace of social development after World War II and the changes affecting the family, especially those resulting from mothers taking up employment, the need for early childhood education and care outside the family began to rise (Dolanc et al. 1975). Marjanović (1976) adds that in Yugoslavia, in addition to these circumstances, changes were also driven by general shifts in the conception of education.

After the war, preschool institutions fell under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Policy, which also organised an educational course for preschool teachers as part of the social-political school as early as 1945. Preschool institutions were moved under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in the following year, and in the same year, a 1-year school for preschool teachers was established at the teacher training school in the capital, Ljubljana. The legal regulation of preschool institutions in the new Yugoslavia was put into place in the years 1948–1950. Dolanc et al. (1975) note that the laws allowed preschools to potentially be set up by companies, state offices and institutions. The preschool institutions, which included care for school children after their classes, were renamed 'playing and working homes' (Pavlič 1992). In them, children were looked after during the day and for some also at night (Dolanc 1970: 674). Four years of secondary-level vocational preparation for preschool teachers and a 1-year school programme to prepare teachers' aides were established in the school year 1949/1950 (Pavlič 1992).

The People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Slovenia adopted the *resolution on the tasks of the commune and the housing community relating to children's care* in 1961 (Dolanc et al. 1975). This meant the establishment of a unitary system of early education and care for all preschool-aged children from one until seven was designed (from the end of maternity leave until they entered the compulsory school), and the hitherto existing departmental division of preschool institutions into health (nursery), educational (kindergartens, playing and working homes) and social institutions (children's homes) was abolished. The resolution delineated the basic principles of childhood education and care, the role of parents and

other social actors, as well as a unified direction and coordination between them. Self-management bodies dealing with organisational, financial and curriculum issues were founded in preschools (Ibid.). In the mid-1960s, preschools began to organise occasional activities for the wider community's preschool-aged children who were not enrolled in preschools and also for school children in the local community in the form of afternoon care. In 1965/1966, they also started the, not yet compulsory, preparation for school as a separate programme (Dolanc 1970). The Education and Care for Preschool Children Act was passed in 1971. According to the act, the tasks of early childhood education in preschools were to encourage the mental, personal and physical development of children; to prepare children for their enrolment in primary school; to oversee children's nutrition, care and health; and to ensure cooperation with parents in order to coordinate the family and the preschools' efforts to raise children (Ibid.).

The 1970s was characterised by concerted efforts to include as high a share of children as possible into organised early childhood education. These efforts included an accelerated building of new facilities, frequently with the help of local voluntary taxes (Dolanc et al. 1975). Besides education (including early education) being seen as public/state responsibility, the socialist government also encouraged mothers to take up full-time employment. It was argued that the mass participation of women in politics and economy was necessary to build socialism (Tomšič 1976). To answer working mothers' needs, local communities were considered as one of the main expressions of human's solidarity and reciprocity and therefore were invested with the responsibility to offer social welfare, care and education for children suited for contemporary needs. They were entrusted with the task of assuring the proper and holistic care and education of preschool- and school-aged children to facilitate their physical and mental development (Tomšič 1976: 302). In 1974, almost ten times (18.1% of all preschool-aged children) as many children attended preschools as in the first year after the war (Dolanc et al. 1975). Some school children also attended preschools after school, but their numbers decreased as primary schools began introducing daily extension programmes. The majority of preschool children who were not enrolled in preschools attended the 1-year or short-cycle programme of preparation for school (Ibid.). The share of children attending preschool significantly increased in the following 10 years; 38.4% of all preschool-aged children attended preschool in 1980, and by 1989, the proportion had reached 52.3% (White Paper 1996: 58).[4] This expansion did not meet demand, and there was a constant shortage of places well into the late 1980s for children whose parents wanted to enrol them in preschool. Preference was therefore given to the children of single mothers and to those identified as educationally, materially and socially disadvantaged (Education and Care for Preschool Children Act 1971, art. 27).

[4] In comparison with 12 EU countries and USA the proportion of children between four and six in Slovene preschools was quite low (i.e. 53% of 4 year children in Slovene preschools were lower than in ten countries compared). The proportion of children under 3 years was high but hardly comparable because in the majority of countries children of that age mostly attended private institutions (White Paper 1996: 60).

According to the Preschool Education and Care Act (1980, art. 23), public preschools[5] provided the education and care of preschool-aged children in full-day-care arrangement (5 full days a week) with the exception of a few who attended only obligatory 1-year preparation for school. These children only attended a part of a day and only a couple of days in a week. The preschools opened early in the morning (at 5 am) and closed in the late afternoon (about 5 pm) and could also organise day care for children aged up to 3 years in the childminder's home and could provide various other forms of educational work off-site.[6] These arrangements provided flexibility for working parents to include their children in preschools. In 1979, the Educational Program for Preschool Children (1979) (hereafter referred to as Educational Program) was adopted, representing the first programme for early childhood education at the national level, which introduced an obligatory and uniform curriculum and didactic bases for preschool work all over the Socialist Republic of Slovenia.[7] Like schools, children were placed in age-based classes to receive the unitary curriculum, although children from the age of two to six could also be placed in mixed-aged classes (Ibid. art. 29). In addition, preschools organised development classes for children with severe developmental disabilities (Ibid. art. 30).

We can see here how the Socialist Republic of Slovenia constructed a unified system, with formal provisions extended to cater for preschool-aged children, from the end of maternity leave through to their entrance to elementary school. This provision was legislated in the national Act (1980) and was coupled with the release of Educational Program, the first central national curriculum delivered in 1979. It is particularly important to understand about this period that preschool education and care of the children while their mothers worked was consistently constructed as an expression of the socialist state's concern for all the children in the local community, rather than their care being solely the responsibility of families.

The Socialist Pedagogical Concept in Slovenian Preschools: Planning and Collectivism Over Individual Differences

Analysing the dominant pedagogical concept in the socialist period, we can say that the basic ideas or doctrine remained in place until the late 1980s. After the introduction of the national Educational Program (1979), preschool education was even more highly structured and planned in advance, while catering for individual differences

[5] Private preschool institutions were not allowed in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, but nevertheless there were (and still are) unregistered people who take care of one or a few children.

[6] Children came to preschool at different times depending of their parents' work schedules, but most of them stayed in preschool for about 9 h. According to the Preschool Education and Care Act (1980) preschools provided the education and care for all the children in the local community.

[7] Each of the six republics of the SFRY had a degree of autonomy with respect to organising their own systems of 'national' education. The Yugoslav Communist party defined the basic values of education, however, such that the preschool systems and educational concepts across Yugoslavian republics were similar.

was largely not taken into account. The underlying pedagogical concept of the Educational Program (1979) had been formed, as I show later, in the 1960s. Dolanc and collaborators (1975: 9–10) cite the following bases of this pedagogical concept for early childhood education:

> Natural, friendly and relaxed atmosphere with a warm relationship between the preschool teacher and the child
>
> Activating the child as much as possible by alternating between directed and spontaneous, individual and group activities
>
> Emphasising the child's play and creativity
>
> Integrating educational areas

The content areas of early childhood education consisted of children's physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic education. Amongst the areas of intellectual education in the 1960s, authors like Kolar et al. (1969) listed 'speech development' and 'familiarising with the natural and social environments'. The Educational Program (1979) retained the same areas, but to the area of intellectual development, the new areas of 'work and technical education' and 'developing basic mathematical concepts and notions' were added. The latter is an area that has the most pronounced influence from Piaget's theory and the ideas of US compensatory programmes. In the Educational Program (Ibid.), the aims and tasks of early childhood education were worked out in details for each age group and educational area.

It is reasonable to question the extent to which the above-listed principles (Dolanc et al. 1975: 10) were in fact put in practice in the preschools of the time. While play was presented as the main activity of the preschool child within the curriculum, the main emphasis in practice was laid on the activities planned and led by the preschool teacher.[8] In the 1960s and 1970s, activities and tasks were divided into the activities based on children's individual wishes and the common directed tasks suggested by the teacher in which children participated 'collectively and, in the older age-groups, obligatorily' (Kolar et al. 1969: 41).[9] In the Educational Program (1979: 14), working tasks and free play were added to the activities following children's individual wishes and directed tasks.

The aforementioned starting point proposing that early childhood education provides as high activation of children as possible (Dolanc et al. 1975: 9) primarily referred to the concern that most of the time children should have something to do.[10]

[8] Even though psychologists stress that there is no clear-cut division between work and play, in this concept play signifies everything which is not formal learning, for example, didactic games, singing and counting-out rhymes, debates and storytelling with the help of visual prompts (Educational Program 1979: 101).

[9] Kolar et al. (1969: 41) explain that tasks in educational work with preschool children are a form of activity with the defined contents of participation, appropriate for the age of children, and are an intermediary stage between play and work, which lacks neither attractiveness nor spontaneity, but at the same time leads to realisable goals.

[10] To work was one of the ideals of the socialist ideology. As all women were encouraged to be full-time employed, one of the basic educational aims in families and in preschools was to develop working habits in children (Kolar 1977: 215–216).

Great importance was attached to planning educational work. Kolar et al. (1969) state that preparation for group tasks should include psychological, content and methodical preparation, which should be adjusted to the specifics of children's age as well as the specifics of the time, space and the differences amongst children (Ibid: 52).

Whereas preschool teachers used to plan and select activity on their own until the national educational programme was introduced, the Educational Program (1979) defined the contents and activities according to the various age groups and activity areas. As a consequence, educational work was planned by teachers at different levels: yearly, for each period (introduction period, three 3-month terms, summer period) and weekly, and they also had to write daily plans. The plans for the 3-month terms were jointly created by teachers at regional working groups, and they specified contents and aims in even more detail than the prescribed educational programme (Batistič Zorec 2003). A teacher was thus given very little opportunity to take account of the differences amongst environments and children. To provide the same or 'equal' education became more important than catering for individual differences in children's abilities, needs and interests.

The activities based on children's individual wishes were essentially not very different from directed tasks. Kolar et al. (1969) write that children had a possibility to choose an activity or materials freely at the allotted time in the daily schedule (e.g. in the morning or after nap). However, children's free choice was dominated by the preschool teacher who 'directed children's activities by distributing appropriate materials around the playroom making them available to children' (43). They add that teachers also offered '[i]ndividual tasks to develop the child's need and ability to make use of free time, while at the same time preventing idleness' (43). The Educational Program (1979) scarcely mentions those activities that followed children's individual wishes, as all the attention was given to directed tasks in line with the educational areas and age groups. The Educational Program (15) states that 'the activities based on children's individual wishes include different types of play, activities and work tasks chosen by children themselves'. At least up until the mid-1980s, the principle described by Kolar et al. (1969) was still in place in preschools. Preschool teachers prepared a selection of activities that children could choose from, but children could not acquire just any toys or materials that they desired or that had not been planned and prepared for them in advance. Playrooms were also arranged in such a manner as to allow the majority of toys and materials to be locked away in closets outside children's reach, with the exception of the toys in a few permanent playing corners.

It is evident from this policy framework that the pedagogical concept in Slovenian preschools during socialism was influenced by official socialist values. These socialist values included developing working habits early in life and privileging the collective above the individual. The contents and methods of educational work in preschools introduced by the Educational Program (1979) were prescribed by experts and were highly structured so that teacher's autonomy was very limited. We can also see, however, the presence of the then contemporary trends in early education more

broadly, found beyond socialist contexts, such as age/development appropriateness, preparation for reading and writing and the development of early mathematical concepts.

Socialist Preschooling in Comparative Contexts: Strengths, Similarities and Critique

As in other socialist countries, the policies in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia actively favoured the employment of women. As a result, and because of the tendency to provide coordinated education[11] that promoted 'the dominant ideology' from as early on as possible, a number of characteristics can be identified that typified the Slovene early childhood education. These included an intensive formation of preschool networks; a unitary and centralised system of early childhood education, which did not permit any private preschools or plurality of concepts; and the public responsibility and funding of preschools, which enabled a wide availability of preschools regardless of the financial situation of families.[12]

Compared to most European countries,[13] Slovenia had (and still has) a unified preschool system for all preschool-aged children between the end of the mother's maternity leave and the beginning of primary school. At the state level, many EU countries differentiate between the preschool care for children aged up to 3 or 4 years (usually under the auspices of the Ministry of Health or Social Affairs) and the care for children above that age, which is referred to as 'education' (Moss 1994: 8). Currently, there is clear preference from experts for the combination of both systems into unitary preschools (e.g. Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities, 2009: 125). One of the main advantages or strengths that the socialist period brought to early education in Slovenia, therefore, is clearly the unitary system of preschools. Such a system had been developed in Slovenia about a half a century before early education experts internationally began to publicly propose it as a critical or foundational aspect of creating quality systems of early child education and care.

What is apparent then is that socialist preschooling in Slovenia contained some core structural features which were increasingly acknowledged in the post-socialist period internationally as features that define good and effective practice. We see this

[11] Here, the coordination between family and institutional education is referred to.

[12] By way of comparison, let us mention the former German Democratic Republic. There, each child from the age of three could be admitted into preschool. All programs were all-day and free, and the curriculum was centrally, state controlled (Tietze et al. 1996).

[13] According to Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities (2009: 10) in the EU, only the Nordic states (except Denmark), Latvia and Slovenia currently have unitary systems of preschool education and care that includes children from the age of one through to school age.

in a wide network of relatively good quality preschools which started to grow in numbers during the 1970s, with flexible opening times that were (and remain) adjusted to the families with both parents having full-time employment. In addition, this system included general health care and basic care, the provision of four meals (breakfast, lunch and two snacks) and a nap, as well as all the necessary sanitary equipment, toys and playing materials, all under a structure of low fees based on the families' income levels.

Other aspects of the socialist system have received substantial critique, particularly the explicit ideological aspects of education, which are clear from the professional texts and guidelines of the period. At the same time, we must be fully aware that implicit (covert) ideological indoctrination is no less problematic. As Göhl-Muguai (2004, in Emilson and Folkesson 2006) states, the curriculum is always an ideological document where complex concepts are used in an unproblematised way. While the interests of the governments in non-socialist states were arguably veiled and substantiated with scientific findings and worked as a hidden curriculum (Apple and King 1990), in Slovenia ideology was explicitly stated at all educational levels, including the preschool education programme. The socialist political system's influence on preschool education was clearly evident to experts who explicitly identified this in theoretical texts. For example, Dolanc (1970: 680) declares that 'the organisation, contents and methods of early childhood education in the first post-war years were founded on the practical experiences of Slovenian and other Yugoslav republics' preschool educators, especially Croatia, as well as on Soviet preschool pedagogy'. Kokalj and Levičnik (1982: 121) stated:

> Through early childhood education we realise the general educational aim by encouraging the all-round development of personality in accordance with the values of the self-managing, socialist society, and by developing children's creativity.

Kokalj and Levičnik (1982) elaborated an argument based on the view that the world was dominated by two extremes, with direct implications for preschool pedagogies and guidelines. They noted that on the one hand, early childhood education in non-socialist contexts was seen as strictly following the developmental characteristics and particularities of children, thus was individualist in nature, without any regard for social or overtly political educational aims. Socialist aims were positioned on the other extreme, which originated in society and not the individual's educational aim, and provided the only acceptable educational guideline. The first view emphasised the role of developmental psychology and the role of the teacher, who should understand children's individual developmental possibilities, needs, desires and interests and should strive to fulfil them (Ibid: 120). In the second view, education follows a uniform, detailed and concrete educational programme with an overt social and political aim. The authors were critical of both views, declaring that 'early childhood education in the self-managing society is characterised by the attempt to take into account as many developmental characteristics, individual particularities, desires and interests as possible, and fulfil them, while simultaneously also … taking into account the interests and needs of the society' (121).

Kokalj and Levičnik's (1982) claim that the educational programme of the time made an effort to take into account both the developmental and individual characteristics

of children as well as the needs of the society is difficult to sustain. Early childhood education in the period was – as is obvious from the key documents and theoretical works cited above – unequivocally directed towards social goals and the future. Children were expected to overcome the 'shortcomings' of childhood and be prepared for work and the role of self-managers in the socialist society. Kolar et al. (1969: 129), for instance, wrote that the daily schedule

> encourages mental development, because it allows for a useful spending of free time, and an all-round development of the child, because it accustoms the child to diligence, prevents pottering around and laziness and all their consequences.

The then existing educational programme favoured the aims, contents and activities demanded by socialist ideology:

> The common integral contents of all educational activities in early childhood education, regardless of the educational area, is the formation of the child's character. No educational activity can be programmed or conducted without the conscious striving on the part of the teacher to educate children morally on the bases and moral values of our socialist self-managing society. (Educational Program 1979: 48–49)[14]

We can see from these statements that any desired balance between individualist and collectivist pedagogy was not reached, due to the overall emphasis being on planned and teacher-directed activities which aimed to form the child's character in accordance to socialist self-managing society.

Apart from the requirements for education to follow ideology, socialist countries also expressed the belief – progressive even from today's point of view[15] – that children and their education are not only the private matter of parents but an important value and concern for all members of society (Tomšič 1976; Bergant 1981). A positive consequence of the idea was the organisation of education in local communities, which was supposed to take into consideration the needs and wishes of families on the basis of solidarity and parents' cooperation in decision making (Tomšič 1976: 96). This fact, however, also reveals the paternalistic tendency of the socialist state to influence and control family life and education.[16]

In addition to these distinctive characteristics, recognised as strengths and points of critique, there were certain similarities between the Slovenian preschools of the

[14] Although the ideological aim is evident, the formation of a child's character in accordance to the ideal of adult (self-manager) in self-managing socialistic society, it also coincides with prevailing developmental thinking of the time. James (1999) talks about the model of 'developing child', the most used concept in psychological research, according to which the child is 'not yet' adult but has the potentials to become. Flaker (1990) is even more radical saying that this view sees the child as 'deviant' and the childhood as 'sickness' which has to be 'cured' by education.

[15] Moss (in Kroflič 2011: 19) criticises Anglo-American neoliberal word in which the education of young children is still often formed as a market with private provision and as business. Such thinking is just the opposite of the idea we can find in Nordic countries and (as he knows) also in Slovenia that education is seen as public good which must engage all children and their families.

[16] Bergant (1981: 95) writes, 'Within them [local communities] *control* over the life and needs of individual people could be re-established, as well as a closer *control* over the life of the youth' (author's emphasis).

period and those from non-socialist countries. The emphasis on the compensatory function of preschools in the United States of America (e.g. the Head Start Program), for example, and the spread of the ideas to Europe had an effect on the conception of the role of early childhood education in Slovenia as well. The Education and Care for Preschool Children Act (1971, art. 4) lists the acceleration[17] of children's mental, personality and physical development amongst the tasks of preschools. The Educational Program (1979) states:

> Research shows that a child's developmental possibilities in the preschool period are much greater than previously thought. Consequently, all developed societies today, both in the East and the West, devote special attention to early childhood education. (10)

As for the aim of early childhood education, to eliminate the consequences of children growing up in different social and cultural environments, Horvat (1980) thought that such a goal was too optimistic, as foreign empirical studies had already shown that early childhood education in preschools could not entirely compensate for such differences. Horvat (1986) went on to publish the results of an empirical study in which he found that the children who only attended preschool for the compulsory preparation for school achieved the same results in schooling, in terms of cognitive abilities, as their peers who attended preschool from the age of three. The primary cause for the differences was the social and economic status of the children's parents, whereas the influence of preschool was not found to be statistically significant.

Research by De Batistič (1990) shows that Slovenia's early childhood education system, until the 1980s, was centralised and presented hierarchical relationships. There was no talk of teachers' autonomy, and one of the main tasks of pedagogical leadership was supervising and guiding teachers. Circumstances were similar in other republics of former Yugoslavia, with Babić (1989: 44), for example, finding that Croatian preschool teachers in the period were in a subordinated role of implementing the prescribed programme. Aides were the lowest in the hierarchy. Besides giving them direct instructions, teachers also planned daily tasks for them. A consequence was highly similar actions of the majority of preschool teachers and a lot of routine procedures, which were copied one from another without really questioning their meaning or purpose. Preschool classes displayed the division of work into 'educational' and 'caring' tasks. The teacher primarily planned and conducted the so-called directed tasks; the aides' duties were hygiene, child minding and occasionally disciplining children. Such a division meant that education was conceived of as a fully conscious and planned process carried out by the teacher, transmitting knowledge and values to children, teaching them good manners, etc. It also presupposed that children could merely be 'looked after', put to bed, cared for, offered toys, etc., without it having any educational effect on them whatsoever.

[17] Criticism of the acceleration of development as the consequence of a wrong interpretation of Piaget's theory was first made in the 1980s. Today, the constructivist interpretation of Piaget's theory dominates early childhood education; it does not see the main aim of early childhood education to be accelerating the structural changes in the child's thinking in order for him/her to reach a higher developmental stage, but rather supporting the child's development (Zigler and Stevenson 1993).

Early childhood education during the whole socialist period was also typified by an emphasis on health and hygiene requirements. Dolanc et al. (1975: 681), for example, states that 'the living and spatial arrangements of preschools should take into account the health and hygiene requirements for children living in a group as much as possible'. Inspection services oversaw food, the activities of kitchen and professional staff and preschool spaces. Until the mid-1980s, parents were not allowed to step onto the so-called clean surfaces where children and teachers spent their time. Whereas preschools in many countries had carpets, armchairs and sofas, all the furniture in Slovenian preschools had to be made of materials that could be cleaned with water (Bahovec and Kodelja 1996: 68). In this respect, these authors speak of the medicalisation of preschools in the socialist period which lasted at least until the end of the century. They argue that order and cleanliness should of course be maintained but within reasonable bounds. Foucault (1977) perceives medicalisation as a problem of the microphysics of power; it is indirect power arising from everyday, invisible and self-evident practices and techniques of subordination, of which hygienic regulations can be a part. The issue of medicalisation was examined by Cotič (1998) who, based on an empirical study, found that Slovenian preschools would still have to critically face the surpluses of the medicalisation phenomenon, which

> represents the problematic spot where the concern for children's health and hygiene, with its rules and regulations, can turn into the mechanism of disciplining, restraining and controlling the child's body. (Ibid: 99)

This form of medicalisation is connected with state regulation and control over the preschool system and pedagogical work. Slovene preschools softened the state regulation about cleanliness through the local normative standards (Pravilnik o normativih in minimalnih tehničnih pogojih za prostor in opremo vrtca 2000) and also by giving teachers much more autonomy than they had in the past (see, e.g. Curriculum for Preschools 1999; compared to Educational Program 1979). Interestingly, in many countries recently, with the introduction of tighter and tighter regulatory measures, this process is going in the other direction towards the medicalisation of preschool (e.g. Fenech et al. 2008).

In comparative terms, we can see that Slovenian preschool education achieved positive results in establishing a unified, high-quality, low-cost provision for children. We can also find some important similarities with non-socialist preschool education. It is apparent that Slovene theoreticians from this field followed common international trends in preschool theory and included them in preschool education, but we cannot conclude that Slovene preschooling simply took a middle ground, between two extremes, taking into account both individual characteristics of children and the interests of the society, as, for example, Kokalj and Levičnik (1982) claimed. The emphasis remained on collectivism despite the introduction of more individualised approaches into the late 1980s. Critiques of the division of pedagogical work into 'education' and 'care' as separate, and the medicalisation of preschool, as a part of hidden curriculum of socialist preschools in Slovenia, are well founded.

The Functionalism and Schoolisation of Preschooling in Socialist Slovenia

If we compare experts' works on preschool pedagogy dating from the 1960s (Kolar et al. 1969) with those from the early 1980s (Bergant et al. 1982; Kokalj and Levičnik 1982) and the Educational Program (1979), we notice that they are relatively similar in the aims, contents and principles which education in preschools was based on. Since the theoretical foundations laid in the 1960s changed only slightly, the basic directions of early childhood education in the socialist period can be said to have represented a relatively unified and stable pedagogical concept. This interpretation is supported by the professional works published in the area of preschool pedagogy by some key authors as outlined below.

With respect to the perception of development within this pedagogical concept, it can be said that the early childhood education programme was founded on 'normative' psychology that emphasises age appropriateness. It was precisely defined what children in each age group should be capable of and consequently what activities were suitable for them. The notion of development was therefore close in nature to Gesell's description of developmental tasks for individual ages (in Steuer 1994). Normativism in psychology is characterised by ignoring differences amongst individuals as well as by interpreting any deviation from the norm as a developmental deficiency, which brings about the pathologisation of persons who differ from ideals and norms (Burman 1994). This phenomenon is evident in the following instruction from the Educational Program (1979):

> A preschool teacher can successfully carry out the program if he/she knows well the characteristics of the children in the group and the particularities of individual children, *especially those who in any way differ from the others*. (39 author's emphasis)

The concept of socialist early childhood education in Slovenia shows no traces of the findings of major psychoanalytical theories, for instance, the theses stating that education is more than a simple conscious and intentional process, leading to a predefined goal. According to Bahovec and Kodelja (1996: 31), Freud's notion of the unconscious, questioning the uniformity and continuity of mental life and pointing out the illusions of intentional pedagogy, was driven out of the Slovenian theory of education. Some other psychological theories of emotional and social development experienced a similar fate (e.g. Erikson's and Bowlby's theories, the theories of social learning). The absence of these theories had an ideological basis, in which the Marxist understanding of the human rejected biological determinism. In contrast, we can find many alignments between Marxist theory and behaviourist theory in psychology.

The national Educational Program (1979) was not just a framework, as claimed by its authors, but rather a highly structured and concrete document, identical and mandatory throughout the country. Under this regime, the conception of early childhood education provides a typical example of the empiricist (Bruce 1997) or functionalist (Kamenov 1987) approach to curriculum writing, which these authors relate to behaviourist psychological theory. The programme reveals certain elements

of early behaviourism, such as Watson's (in Crain 1992) instruction that the child should always sleep and eat at the same time.[18] Another distinctive characteristic is the view that the environment is crucial for the child's development, apparent in the following statement: 'If we leave children to the unbridled effects of the environment and their own spontaneous learning, very big differences in mental development will appear among them as early as in their 2nd and 3rd year. The differences are obviously not based in children's natural dispositions; rather, they are brought about by the social and family environment' (Educational Program 1979: 10). The Educational Program was founded on teacher-directed approach, leaving little space for children's initiatives or interests. Children were predominantly thought of as passive receivers who needed to be 'shaped', 'directed', 'taught', etc., with the help of pre-prepared and directed tasks.

We have demonstrated to this point that the concept of socialist early childhood education, moving into the 1980s, was primarily based on a systematic and aim-oriented educational process. More or less everything taking place in preschool had to be planned in advance, and each activity had to link to a clear aim. Thus, tasks following children's wishes were thought, amongst other things, 'to prevent laziness' (Kolar et al. 1969: 43). Directed tasks served to 'encourage common interests in children and help to create a collective, in which egotistical tendencies of individuals are *subordinated* to shared benefits' (Ibid: 43 author's emphasis). That is why they are very important means for the achievement of the goals of socialist education, since they

> prepare the child more easily for the fulfilment of his/her future tasks in the socialist society. (Ibid: 43)

The same tendency can be found in the Educational Program (1979: 9): 'With the daily preparation [preschool teachers] define operational aims, the analysis of the contents and tasks, the forms and methods of educational work. They also define their own activities and the activities of children, and foresee the necessary conditions.' Not only did the teacher have to plan her activities very carefully, she also had to anticipate what children would do or reply. The aim-oriented approach is also strongly related to a very pronounced orientation towards the future. The duty of parents was to prepare children for their enrolment in preschool, and the duty of preschools was to prepare children for the near future – primary school – as well as the more distant future, when the child would become an adult self-manager.

In a tendency similar to other didactically oriented and highly structured programmes of early childhood education that were present in the world, the concept advocated by socialist pedagogy in Slovenia could also be characterised as the 'schoolisation' of preschooling. Early childhood education adopted a number of school characteristics: the distribution of children into age-homogenous groups, the emphasis on common directed tasks and the division of educational areas in

[18] Kolar et al. (1969: 129) claim that 'the daily schedule allows normal physical development, because it defines the time for eating, sleeping…'

accordance with school subjects. The relationships amongst educational areas[19] were also strictly prescribed, and the areas were supposed to encourage an all-round development of personality. Although the principle of interdisciplinarity was professed, it was almost entirely absent from actual practice. The forms of cooperation with parents (teachers' office hours and parents' group meetings with teachers), amongst pedagogical workers themselves and pedagogical documentation, were the same as in schools. An explanation for the schoolisation of preschools can be made by reference to the inadequate theoretical conceptualisation of early childhood education as a specific area along the educational vertice, as well as the conceptual framework of the Educational Program (1979) claiming the main task of early childhood education to be the preparation of the child for school. Such an argument could clearly be made also about early childhood education in non-socialist contexts (see, e.g. Apple and King 1990). Indeed, the research carried out by Weikart et al. (2003) shows that in preschool institutions, education 'oriented towards the adult' still predominates, together with the correction of children's unwanted behaviour. In addition to that, there is only very little listening to children from the side of adults.[20]

A feature of socialist preschooling is its prescribed age appropriateness underpinned by behaviourist and functionalist theories that ignored individual differences coupled with the exclusion of some global trends in theorising of this period, such as the ideas of Freud and Bowlby. On this foundation, the Educational Program (1979) lacked a well-formed theoretical conceptualisation of early childhood education, leading to an identifiable schoolisation of the curricular and pedagogical practices.

Internal Critiques in 1980s: New Spaces for Preschool Practice

Critiques of the collectivism, schoolisation and the hidden curriculum emerged from inside Socialist Slovenia that brought some changes in thinking and practice in the 1980s. These important critical insights opened up spaces for teachers to take more autonomous actions, to follow their observations of children and take into account individual children's needs and interests. These critiques foreshadowed the direction that later reforms of preschooling instituted.

[19] The Educational Program (1979) stipulated in more than one place what tasks (and how many times a week) the preschool teacher should carry out. For instance, once a week a directed musical task should be done for children above the age of five, in which three or four activities should be integrated (Ibid: 124).

[20] When a colleague and I visited the Faculty of Education in Madrid (Spain) a couple of years ago, we witnessed a much higher degree of schoolisation (i.e. the absence of any specific preschool doctrine) than Slovenia has ever known both in the education of preschool teachers and in the preschool we visited (which had been introduced to us as a high-quality one).

Soon after the introduction of the Educational Program (1979), some psychologists expressed their doubts about how much the programme took account of the modern findings of cognitive psychological theories. For example, Marjanovič Umek (1980) raised some critical remarks about the educational programme, related to the child's cognitive development. According to Marjanovič Umek (Ibid.), educational work should not foreground the productivity aspect or spur on development (with, for instance, teachers wanting children to give back expected answers); rather, it should encourage

> the enrichment of the child's development with the aim of achieving the maximum level of the formation of all the potentials and abilities which are typical of and specific to particular ages or only begin to form at those ages. (Ibid: 29)

She concluded by asserting that through the appropriate organisation of the environment and stimuli, the preschool child should be provided with as many opportunities as possible to make the first discoveries and arrive at some understanding of the world. According to the same author, the most suitable method for that is play, for which the child is highly motivated and where he/she also reaches the highest levels of mental activity, while at the same time cognitive components become interwoven with the emotional and social components of the child's development as well.

Criticism of early childhood education also appeared in other Yugoslav republics where a similar educational concept was established. Based on her research, Pešić (1987) concluded that compensatory programmes had led to the uncritical schoolisation of preschools. The author found that preschool teachers saw the prescribed programme as the learning material that needed to be taught, which means that directed tasks in preschools were highly structured, verbal, frontal, pre-planned and dependent on the season of the year. Studying directed tasks in Croatia, Špoljar (1987) also uncovered the dominance of frontal teaching, the limitation of communication and movement, which discouraged children's motivation, curiosity and initiative. Moreover, teachers tended to treat children as passive and dependent beings. Miljak (1988) reproached early childhood education programmes in Croatia for their imitation of primary school programmes and a lack of a theoretical foundation. Miljak also added that preschool aims and tasks were declarative, whereas the contents were unrelated to children. The programme showed a tendency for teaching as the only way of learning, which

> utterly disregards the importance of children's own activity during the formation (not acquisition) of knowledge, the development of cognition and an interactive view of the process. (Ibid: 167)

Answering these critiques, coupled with a generally more relaxed take on curriculum prescriptions in practice, some teachers in some preschools began to question and rethink their practices. This was particularly the case in those preschools where the director was more open to changes. These teachers started to accommodate individual differences of children in their delivery of the Educational Program (1979) and allowed a space to fulfil children's needs and interests (Batistič Zorec 2003). For example, with the author and her colleague's leadership, an experiential

preschool programme was developed in Trnovski Pristan in the mid-1980s that provided teachers and children with more autonomy and incorporated both structural and theoretical changes into how preschools were run at the time. This was not only encouraged by the director but she also contributed finances from the budget to support the project (Batistič Zorec 2003). As early as in the 1980s, changes in practice started to take place in a few other preschools also; this culminated in the publication of the new Curriculum for Preschools (1999) after Slovenia gained independence.

Conclusion

Re-researching preschool education in Slovenia in the socialist period gave me a new view on this topic.[21] A decade ago, I mostly saw the faults of the pedagogical concept of preschool education in the socialist period. Now, after two decades of post-socialist reforms, I am much more aware of the fact that in many aspects the socialist preschool education system left a unified, socially embedded and publicly valued system and that this legacy positions early childhood education in Slovenia as amongst the best in the contemporary world.

In my earlier work, I have strongly criticised the ideological basis of education and explicit indoctrination of children, because I shared the will with others to undo the oppressive aspects of the system and democratise early childhood education. From a contemporary viewpoint, the tendency to ‘form’ children’s personalities in order to make a ‘new man’ (change the world) can appear as rather naive – but is this not the aim of most pedagogical reforms starting from the progressive education movement (Steiner, Dewey and so on) through to the present? It seems that in socialist education, there was more political propaganda than ideological pressure. Zadnikar (1993: 76) says that political propaganda is not ideology because it is always conscious and understood as what it really is: manipulation. He argues, counter-intuitively, that it was only in post-socialist Slovenia that schools became ideological in the ‘real’ meaning.

The importance of studying and restudying the history of socialist preschool education cannot be overstated. One of the main values of Slovene preschools in socialism was to reduce social differences with solidarity and responsibility of the communities. Tomšič (1976: 309) wrote that the problem of social differentiation can be solved with different payments of the parents for their children in preschools and with the political aim that in the future all the generation of preschool children will attend preschools. Her writing strikes a chord with the words of respected

[21] Eight years ago, I wrote my doctoral thesis on the same topic (Batistič Zorec 2003), and the invitation to write this chapter gave me the opportunity to rethink my positions and arguments and put them in the contemporary context. I have tried to follow what Bradiotti (in Bahovec 1999) said ‘the power of repeating … requires memory, replacement and dedication to change’, and so I continue to evaluate history in order to know the complexities of the present.

contemporary theorists. Moss and Urban (2010: 56), for example, are of the view that education is a public good and responsibility, and they recommend that most children enter the early educational system at least on their third birthday. I hope that this work, amongst others, highlights that 50 years ago in Slovenia we stressed and incorporated into the educational system values that now seem prevalent almost everywhere and that many states aspire to but also struggle to achieve.

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Chapter 8
'People's Education for People's Power': The Rise and Fall of an Idea in Southern Africa

Martin Prew

Introduction

The cry of 'people's education for people's power' resonated across the Southern African region during the 1980s as a call to transform education systems recently liberated from the colonial powers in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe and still to be liberated in Namibia and South Africa. It appeared at that time, in the 1970s and 1980s, that as Southern African countries approached independence through the barrel of the gun, a series of socialist states would emerge. However, this did not occur. These states strengthened capitalism, and the revolutionary rhetoric either died or became increasingly orchestrated to rally popular support for increasingly conservative policies (see Babu 1981; Astrow 1983). Marxist-Leninist theorising indicated that settler capitalism, as a branch of imperialism and monopoly capitalism in 'backward economies', would face internal contradictions which would be exploited by the national petit bourgeoisie which would use the peasantry and proletariat to gain power and then betray them (Lenin 1973; Marx and Engels 1969). This may explain the changes in these states, or this backtracking might indicate the difficulties inherent in pursuing a socialist policy in an increasingly hegemonic neo-liberal capitalist world. This chapter will examine this failure to root socialist societies in Southern Africa within the context of education.

Progressive transformation of the education systems in the Southern African region was a key demand of the liberation forces and was intimately woven into the liberation rhetoric and programmes. Because of the desire for education amongst the peasantry, particularly during these struggles, liberation education was seen as a key ideological vehicle to popularise the liberation struggles towards gaining power for the black leadership of the national democratic liberation movements. Liberation

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education rejected the prevailing colonial Western school systems in these Southern African colonies and appeared to present alternative education models founded on explicit socialist and progressive ideologies.

This chapter analyses the liberation struggle in South Africa, led by the broad left alliance under the African National Congress. This struggle is used to illuminate similar liberation movements in other countries in the region, particularly ZANU in Zimbabwe, MPLA in Angola, FRELIMO in Mozambique and SWAPO in Namibia.[1] These other countries all developed a variance on 'people's education' and 'liberation schools' in their liberated areas, or in friendly allied states, with much more consciously socialist ideological underpinnings than the ANC.[2] These movements' liberation schools generally had a strong emphasis on liberating and transforming their societies by drawing inspiration – at least in part – from the discourse of Soviet and Chinese 'scientific' socialism. However, post-independent Southern African states failed to live up to the promise these ideas had offered. Rapidly, after independence, as neocolonial capitalist modes of production established their dominance, the alternative education models were marginalised by an adaptation of the colonial education system based on neo-liberal orthodoxy. It appeared that the liberation struggles had used the promise of liberatory education to gain popular support in their bid for power but, once in power, had turned away from such promises and exploited the lack of class consciousness amongst the peasantry and working class to impose a capitalist neocolonial economic order (Turok 1987).

Education and the Liberation Process in Southern Africa

The African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, in its Freedom Charter asserted that the aim of education is 'to open the doors of learning and culture to all' (African National Congress 1994:2). The organisation set education as a critical element in the liberation process, driven by variants on its cry of 'people's education for people's power'. As the new democracy started to take shape in the 1990s, there was a real sense of hope within progressive circles in South Africa that there would be a break from the past and a meaningful progressive education system would be created generating a new type of awareness for citizens while also transforming the social and economic reality. As Mzamane Nkomo (1990) stated,

[1] ZANU – Zimbabwe African National Union; MPLA – People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola; FRELIMO – Front for the Liberation of Mozambique; SWAPO – South West Africa People's Organisation

[2] The ANC's attitude to socialism has always been equivocal. While it drew inspiration from the socialist bloc and many of its cadres were trained there, Thabo Mbeki could still state strongly in 1984, 'The ANC is not a Socialist party. It has never pretended to be one, it has never said it was, and it is not trying to be' (Gumede 2005:123). Mandela makes this same point in his autobiography (Mandela 1995). However, a key partner of the ANC, the South African Communist Party, pursued a socialist agenda and had an important impact on the thinking within the ANC, in its schools and amongst its cadres.

> Education for development and disalienation in South Africa must be built upon this majority culture which is accommodating, dynamic, and capable of use in mass mobilisation for liberation and development. (p. 365)

Earlier, Zwelakhe Sisulu (in Unterhalter 1986: 3) of the iconic Sisulu family had asserted,

> We are no longer demanding the same education as Whites, since this is education for domination. People's education means education at the service of the people as a whole, education that liberates, education that puts the people in command of their lives.

The liberation movements saw education as part of the overall struggle, in which 'schools were the most important terrain for the struggle towards people's power' (Wolpe quoted in Christie 1991: 274). In South Africa, the struggle around education took a number of forms inside the country from the 1976 Soweto Uprising, which was triggered by enforced use of Afrikaans in black schools, to the class boycotts of the 1980s under the slogans 'liberation before education', 'liberation now, education later' and 'the year of no schooling' (Christie 1991; Frederikse 1986). The Soweto Uprising and the subsequent class boycotts took place largely outside the control of the ANC. This was graphically illustrated by the ANC countering the student led call for 'liberation before education' with its own slogan of 'education for liberation' (Fiske and Ladd 2004). This slogan was supplemented by an argument from within the ANC that 'schools must be taken over and transformed from within' (Father Mkatshwa quoted in Christie 1991: 272).[3] Outside the country, the ANC had more control over how the education message was linked to the liberation struggle through its schools in the camps and the message it put out through ANC propaganda.

Liberation education was imbued with progressive or scientific socialist beliefs that all citizens should have equal access to education and skills so that they can take up any role in society, assist the society in achieving its modernising development objectives, develop an appropriate revolutionary character (which rejected race, ethnicity, religious orientation and regional identity and espoused class and international solidarity) and play a full role in transforming a class-based society to one based on merit and the people's will (Samoff 1991). Parallel with this belief in the various liberation struggles, there was a considerable emphasis put on linking 'liberation' education, agricultural production and socially valuable labour in a creative developmental education dynamic. This tendency in Southern Africa was specifically grounded in an interpretation of Soviet or Chinese communism and supported with an explicit socialist rhetoric. As Youngman (cited in Alexander 1990: 65–66) states,

> the linking of learning to production and political action is the key to the unity of theory and practice that socialist pedagogy seeks to achieve.

Recognising that the majority of people in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana and parts of South Africa were rural peasants, the Chinese communist

[3] Father Mkatshwa was a leading member of the internal ANC and United Democratic Front and became deputy minister of education after the 1994 election.

model with its North Korean offshoot was seen as relevant by Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), FRELIMO of Mozambique, MPLA of Angola and SWAPO of Namibia, as well as other liberation movements in Southern and Central Africa. These movements adopted much of the Chinese socialist rhetoric, which glorified manual and particularly rural labour, and in so doing affirmed the roots of most of their constituency. In the region, the cause of linking rural labour and education, or education with production (EWP), was particularly espoused by Patrick van Rensburg, through his Foundation for Education with Production.

In Botswana, where he was based, van Rensburg focused on primary school leavers from rural areas and created the brigade system. This was aimed to close the gap between school education and the postcolonial society's economic reality. Through a mass-based radical pedagogy, the brigades intended to teach rural youth self-sufficiency and self-employment so that they could take control of the social, political and economic forces, which influenced their lives. In reality, in Botswana the focus was on developing 'socially useful' skills rather than on social and economic transformation and to enable self-employment rather than contribute to the revolution. Despite this reality, the philosophical rooting of EWP, as in the idea behind Soviet polytechnics, lay in the belief that true liberation requires the individual to be consciously able to marry the intellectual and physical part of their productivity in socially useful labour or, as Jansen puts it, to unite 'vocationalism, productive activities and self reliance' (1991: 80). Merging these ideas, however, created a dialectical and practical dilemma in many of the liberation movements, because agricultural and manual activities were associated in the students' minds with a conservative tradition emanating from the mission stations, where pupils were expected to labour as part of developing a Christian character. This tradition links labour to the idea of appropriate education for black people and therefore to a Verwoerdian reality where all people have their assigned but different places, Africans being at the bottom (Fiske and Ladd 2004). The more radical policy intent of EWP sat uncomfortably alongside the more conservative mainstream experiences of similar policies, which brought manual labour into the school. I will demonstrate this uneasiness later through examination of the mainstreaming of EWP in the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and in Zimbabwean schools after independence.

The Value of Education to the Liberation Movements

Full and equal access to education was a key feature of all the anti-colonial liberation struggles in the Southern African region, represented by intellectual and revolutionary leaders such as Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Eduardo Mondlane, Agostinho Neto and Marcelino dos Santos. These men acted as powerful and persuasive educated revolutionary role models. In their hands, resistance to colonial rule and a transformed education system were inextricably tied together.

Free and open access to adult education and schools was a key demand of many of their constituencies, as access to education under the colonial and settler regimes had been restricted and colour based. An expectation that the liberation forces could meet this demand once in power was a powerful inducement for villagers to engage with the liberation struggle, according to Tongogara (a senior ZANLA commander).[4] He recalled,

> So you find most of them [the rural people] come up [to the liberation fighters] because they have no land or because they are deprived of education. Those are some of the reasons that compelled them to come and join the fight. (cited in Martin and Johnson 1981: 89)

There was social pressure for unfettered access to schooling and literacy by peasants and the urban proletariat in all of these countries. This focus on education and its link to liberation was emphasised in the ANC's 1955 Freedom Charter; in ZANU PF, FRELIMO and MPLA propaganda of the 1970s and 1980s; and in many of the speeches of the leadership of these movements. The 1955 Freedom Charter succinctly stated that '[t]he doors of learning and culture shall be opened', before going on to assert that '[e]ducation shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children' (see: www.anc.org.za). Similar sentiments were common across the region during the era of struggle during the 1960s–1980s. What was less often stated was what the *purpose* of education should be after liberation.

The promise to open access to education for all was a powerful weapon in the propaganda war with the colonial and apartheid regimes. This call was given unlikely support in the 1980s from politically conservative institutions like the World Bank. However, the liberation movements went further by asserting that access to education was intimately related to the people gaining political and economic control. The relationship was based on the belief that peasants and workers must be able to engage in analysis of their objective reality to be able to fully understand the oppressive nature of colonialism and to exert their class interests. It was also believed that they needed to internalise the character of the 'new person' that postcolonial reality would demand in order to effect the social and possibly economic revolution that was expected to accompany liberation. For this to occur, literacy and political awareness, through a radicalised or liberatory model of education, were considered essential.

What Alternative Models Existed to the Colonial System of Education?

What has been most distinctive in each of the Southern African countries under analysis is how quickly socialist or liberation thinking on education was shed by the liberation movements once they got into power, however strongly they argued for it, sloganised it and promised it during the struggle. This is reflective of a tendency that

[4] ZANLA, or the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, was the military wing of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Union.

Samoff (1991) notes across many fragile 'transition' states. He argues that in Africa nationalists used notions of imperialism, class and class conflict and popular mobilisation to attack colonialism, but in power,

> once (the) new leaders began to attach content to their socialist rhetoric, the anti-colonial national front dissolved. (1991: 4)

Such an argument casts doubt over whether there were workable alternative systems of education available to the liberators to model their innovations on. In deconstructing this assumption, the following section explores two known and available alternatives to 'Western' schooling for Southern African states on reaching independence in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. These were the liberation school model and the traditional indigenous African education model, each of which is discussed below.

The 'Liberation School' Model

The promise of full access to schooling and education was given a reality in the so-called liberated zones which the liberation armies established once they had 'liberated' a large enough area and had installed an alternative administrative structure to the displaced colonial one. This was a feature of the liberation wars in Angola and Mozambique in the late 1960s and early 1970s and in Zimbabwe in 1979–1980. 'Liberation schools' were one of the first institutions to be set up in these liberated zones, as well as in the camps of the liberation forces set up in friendly states across the region. Similarly, although the ANC never liberated areas of South Africa, it set up the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in Tanzania and had schools in its camps, where many ANC cadres' children and young exiles fleeing South Africa gained their schooling. There were a number of reasons liberation movements set these schools up despite the challenges they faced, not the least being the lack of materials and teachers (ZIMFEP 1991). The main reasons for making this effort are neatly summarised by Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, the president of FRELIMO and the first Mozambican to receive a doctorate, when he stated,

> We have always attached such great importance to education because in the first place, it is essential for the development of our struggle, since the involvement and support of the population increases as their understanding of the situation grows; and in the second place, a future independent Mozambique will be in very great need of educated citizens to lead the way in development. (Isaacman and Issacman 1983:93).

Isaacman and Isaacman (1983:94) point out that the liberation schools 'helped to instil a new set of values'. This became the conscious basis for South Africans, Mozambicans, Angolans, Namibians and Zimbabweans to form a new national identity which celebrated their culture and history rather than denigrating it or divorcing children from their social reality, which was what usually happened in colonial schools (Babu 1981). In addition, many of the liberation school teachers were overtly socialist and ensured that political education was foregrounded.

In general terms, political education involved a basic understanding of the necessity for the struggle, its nobility, and an understanding of its political aims, which were generally couched in socialist terms of liberating the means of production, particularly the land, and returning them to their rightful owners – the African peasantry and proletariat (Isaacman and Isaacman 1983), while also forming the 'new person' (Samoff 1991).

Liberation schools were characterised by volunteerism. Anyone in the community or camp who was literate volunteered, or was directed, to teach children during the day and adults in the evening (ZIMFEP 1991). This, in zones where schooling had been very limited such as northern Mozambique, could involve grade 3 and 4 children teaching the younger children and adults. Mondlane, realising the importance of teachers and medical personnel, gave new FRELIMO recruits the choice between these two options or becoming a fighter (Christie 1989). In Zimbabwe and South Africa, there was a cadre of teachers who had crossed the front line into the liberated zones and camps, sometimes with large numbers of their school children. This happened, for example, with students from Mount Darwin area who crossed into Mozambique to join ZANU or had found themselves in those liberated zones as the front lines moved (Martin and Johnson 1981; ZIMFEP 1991).

The liberation schools in some countries found themselves educating large numbers of children. By 1970, FRELIMO schools were educating over 30,000 children (Isaacman and Isaacman 1983), and by 1974 there were 200 liberation or 'bush' schools in the liberated north of Mozambique (Sellstrom 2002). The SWAPO schools in camps in Angola and Zambia had about 25,000 students in 1983 (Cohen 1994), and similarly, by 1979 there were nearly 30,000 children in 9 schools in the ZANLA (those of ZANU) camps in Mozambique taught by over 700 teachers. This meant that classes and schools were large with about 43 children to a teacher and with an average school size of over 3,000 children.

The rationale for the schools established in the liberation army camps was twofold. They were intended to occupy and educate children of the liberation fighters and those who had joined the liberation struggles as children (and there were a surprising number of these particularly in the later years of the liberation struggles in all five countries) and to educate adult fighters who had never had a chance to attend school or had dropped out early. Often these schools began as fairly ad hoc systems and became so again when large influxes of new refugees arrived, but as camps became more settled environments, so too did the schools become more established (ZIMFEP 1991).

The ZANU camps in Mozambique emphasised creative education, with significant time spent on learning through drama and singing (Martin and Johnson 1981), building on the oral tradition in Shona and other local cultures, along with academic subjects and EWP. Mutumbuka, head of education in the camps and later minister of education in Zimbabwe, stated that the aim of liberation education was to create new people and imbue the students with socialist consciousness, particularly through political and cultural education and EWP, which was considered as 'a key tenet of socialist pedagogy… [and in which] production was integrated into the lessons' and through the experience of communal living in the camps

(ZIMFEP 1991: 10). A particular innovation was the development of a research unit in the ZANU camps that informed the writing of appropriate textbooks and the conceptualising of productive projects. It also trained teachers, and in 1979–1980, just before the end of the war, it began to develop schools in the liberated zones and draw up some educational ideas for a postcolonial Zimbabwe (ZIMFEP 1991).

SOMAFCO: The Model Liberation School

SOMAFCO, the most famous of all the liberation schools, was established in 1978 by the ANC in Tanzania.[5] It was created for the children of exiles and the increasing number of South African children who had escaped South Africa after 1976 and were consciously seeking a different form of education (Morrow et al. 2002). SOMAFCO in many ways encapsulated the essence and challenges of liberation schooling. As the South African deputy president stated at a SOMAFCO Trust event: 'from the day when SOMAFCO was established in 1978 the link between education and the struggle for freedom further crystallised' (SOMAFCO Trust (2010), 03/09/10).

SOMAFCO, in line with the broader liberation education model, was greatly influenced by the Brazilian liberation educator Paolo Freire and his assertion that there are two types of education: one driven by the language of the oppressor which conditions the learner to accept the ethos of domination and so mental enslavement and its antithesis being education for conscientisation, critical reflection, liberation and revolutionary transformation, taught in the language of the people where possible (Freire 1972). The liberation schools, and SOMAFCO in particular, were also very influenced by the concept of education with production (Lubisi 2008). Education with production (EWP), as planned in SOMAFCO, required the development of a range of vocational or commercial skills alongside an understanding of the production processes and the social, cultural and economic context in which work takes place. Significantly, SOMAFCO became a complex settlement with farms, schools, factories, administrative buildings, housing and social institutions. However, Morrow et al. (2002) explicitly state that

> All these, and other units, were intended to play a broadly educational role in that they were meant to be integrated into the system of 'education with production' which was, at least on a rhetorical level, the foundation of the ANC's education thinking. (Morrow et al. 2002:158)

SOMAFCO's curriculum included academic- and production-based learning as well as celebrating the cultural background of the children and inducting the children into the history of and the ideas represented by the ANC (Teacher Freda and Teacher Anna 1987). The primary and secondary schools' aims were broadly

[5] It was named after a young ANC student leader and martyr, Solomon Mahlangu, who was executed by the Pretoria regime in 1979.

progressive and even socialist in intent. They attempted to redefine social relations in a way that negated power differentials based on class, gender and race and posited an alternative democratic and egalitarian mode of schooling and existence. The teachers, who were a collection of prominent South African and foreign educators, believed that they were trying to develop the 'new person' (Morrow et al. 2004: 58) who would need to be responsible, critical, self-confident, patriotic and cooperative, with initiative and self-discipline. Pedagogy, therefore, included exploration, research and questioning to raise critical individuals. While many of the teachers were socialists, there were fundamental differences in approach to the education enterprise (Morrow et al. 2004). Some teachers saw SOMAFCO as a space to experiment with A. S. Neill type concepts (Neill 1960) including democratic, individualistic and open schooling. Others, who came from the South African and Soviet systems, were more authoritarian and hierarchical in their thinking and wanted 'revolutionary' discipline and structure with an emphasis on community. This cohort of teachers innovated in the subject matter and tended to disregard the architecture of learning. For example, O. R. Tambo, the president of the ANC, took a strongly authoritarian line when he exhorted students 'to qualify, to do your work, to pass your examinations' (Teacher Freda and Teacher Anna 1987: 13–14). These pedagogical differences inevitably led to tensions and disabled the development of a uniform pedagogy.

EWP was integrated into lessons across the two SOMAFCO schools. The primary children planted an orchard, maintained gardens and made lampshades and other artefacts for their dormitories as part of specific subjects. This happened, according Morrow et al. (2004), in order to impart 'the dignity of labour' rather than to deliver an explicit political ideological orientation through pedagogy. At secondary level, after visits by van Rensburg, the students were divided into brigades and assigned manual work alongside their teachers, including agriculture, carpentry, building and vehicle mechanics. While the ideas of EWP incorporated the value and dignity of manual labour and the importance of socialist/Marxist political formation and preparation of skilled workers, EWP was not successful as a model for liberation schooling in SOMAFCO for a number of reasons. These included, first, a perception brought from South Africa that manual labour is demeaning and reinforces the master-servant nature of the society. Second, there was a lack of trained technical teachers and a tendency amongst some teachers to set manual labour as punishment. Third, Tanzanian workers who worked in these productive units resisted students' involvement in the factory and farm. Finally, there was a general belief amongst learners that EWP got in the way of studying and getting a scholarship to study overseas. It is clear from teacher and learner accounts presented in Morrow et al. (2002, 2004) that the school failed to underpin the idea of EWP adequately by supporting it with the available socialist theoretical framework. After some years, the brigades stopped functioning, and manual labour became a voluntary activity or something to be practised collectively only on special days.

In 1980, a curriculum and development unit was established to develop a 'genuine curriculum for liberation' (Morrow et al. 2004: 81–82). The curriculum was deliberately different from that prevailing in South Africa at the time and emphasised

mathematics and science, encouraging learners to consider careers that were closed to blacks in South Africa, such as engineering. They were also taught subjects such as 'history of the struggle', 'development of societies', agricultural science and typing, as well as the work of Marxist and African authors in literature. This was an attempt to combine political orientation, curriculum content and EWP.

Even though SOMAFCO was the ANC's flagship of South African liberation schooling, and the conditions would appear to have favoured a transformational socialist education model, it failed to systematically link schooling with the skills and class consciousness that were needed to make the liberation struggle one for a socialist state. The school appears to have been ambivalent about implementing more politically progressive forms of education, with the failure of a progressive form of EWP to take root, a failure to introduce overt political education and more globally the lack of an articulated alternative education philosophy to the prevailing neo-liberal one. This may reflect the ANC's ambivalent relationship with socialism and the broader difficulty in defining and developing a socialist schooling model as a distinct alternative to the 'Western' capitalist schooling model (see, e.g. Griffiths and Williams 2009). SOMAFCO did not have any direct influence on the post-1994 education system in South Africa.

Traditional Indigenous African Education Models

There was another alternative to the Western schooling model: that of indigenous precolonial education approaches. The liberation schools themselves drew to some extent on the community-based education that had been a feature of traditional African life in most societies across much of the continent going back centuries (Ntuli 1999).[6] Indigenous African knowledge systems and pedagogical modes have been posited as an alternative to 'Western' schooling or, more often, as an adjunct to 'Western' schooling as 'an important step towards sustained economic, cultural and social development' (Suliman 1990:162). However, he also points out that generally across Africa,

> modern general school education is replacing the traditional indigenous educational systems, rather than supplementing them. The result is literate people who may know how to read books but do not know the ways of nature; people who are alien in their own surroundings, unable to maintain a harmonious relationship with the fauna and flora around them, to respect the balance of give and take. (1990: 162)

Education and culture are profoundly linked in traditional African society with a focus on lifelong learning which involved the engagement between the individual

[6] Generalisation about 'African culture' is dangerous as it stems from a colonial era conflation of African cultures, but it is still common in the literature, which further tends to reflect a tendency in educational institutions to present African culture as 'devoid of any epistemological content' (Odora Hoppers 2001: 75).

and the community and nature as she/he grew up and, at certain key age points, involved specialist educators who taught specialist knowledge. Prominent Kenyan academic Micere Githae Mugo (1999: 213) emphasises that traditional education and culturalisation teach,

> self-definition/naming, self-knowledge, self-determination, and the acquisition of general knowledge and skills. These lead to the cultivation of true consciousness which nurtures creativity, perpetuation, development and invention, plus all other forms of human endeavours that lead people to the highest point of self-realisation.

Mugo (1999) makes the point that under colonialism traditional knowledge and culture were either adopted by the colonial power, if it served their purpose, or erased. She argues that if Africa is to break away from a 'Western' paradigm of education and 'decolonise the mind' (wa Thiongo 1990), it needs an indigenous definition of education. The difficulty is clearly one of drawing on the past while ensuring that Africa does not become a backwater of archaic knowledge and practice. It is for this reason that Mugo (1999: 225) defines African education as,

> a system of knowledge, theory and practice, informed and shaped by a content and form that are definitive of African space as well as the indigenous experiences of Africa's people… literacy should not be privileged over that from the orate tradition… and should equip the learners with technological skills needed for modern development… One proven model of achieving this synthesis is education with production.

Various writers and politicians, such as Mashamba (2011), draw on another important tradition, which Mugo (1999) summarises as the need for African education to 'instil a democratic culture in which dialogue, gender and age meet in conversation' (p. 225) and where sustainable development with a focus on the whole person is the ultimate aim, rather than a limited fit to the world of work. In other words, education should not be about schooling in strict age cohorts in preparation for paid employment but rather connected to its traditional, communal activity designed to develop the skills needed to live, operate and cooperate in one's society. It is not, therefore, about education for capitalist exploitation; it is about education which feeds off and drives a new economic order, which in essence is a form of African socialism where environmental knowledge is celebrated (Mashamba 2011) while identity, the knowledge of what it is to be an African, is defined and asserted (Ntuli 1999).

The liberation movements drew on this same heritage of traditionally rooted educational models to promote societal transformation towards African socialism through some of their education activities, such as EWP and the all-night 'pungwe' meetings conducted by ZANLA guerrillas during the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. These played the role of community education sessions (Frederikse 1982). Rural communities would be brought together by the guerrillas to share intelligence and sing and chant before developing into political lessons, which were structured with lecture notes in the vernacular prepared by ZANU's Publicity and Information Department (Zvobgo in Frederikse 1982). This would lead to discussions on the history of colonisation as well as the nature of the settler economy, the community's grievances, development and what policies ZANU would implement once in government. These involved community members of all ages learning together

and debating and making meaning together, as well as singing liberation songs and slogans and dancing. These pungwes drew on the tradition of community education where learning is a shared activity, transmitted orally with use of stories, narrative, song and dance, involving all ages and genders.

However, there was almost no attempt at the end of the war, or even in liberated zones, to mainstream this form of political education and present it as a viable alternative to school-based education. It remained a particular function of the liberation war as a way of countering the propaganda spread by the colonial regime and of ensuring that the peasantry understood what the struggle was about from the liberation fighters' viewpoint. The only influence such traditions had on postcolonial schooling was to create space for an argument about 'Africanising' the 'Western' model of schooling. This involved policy decisions around wider use of the vernacular in the classroom, introducing a limited form of EWP and school feeding into schools through the development of school gardens, and the adaptation of the curriculum to allow the teaching of African history and particularly the history of the national liberation struggle (Steiner-Khamsi and Quist 2000). This was seen as part of the Africanisation and modernisation of schooling which Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah in particular promoted and which had resonance in all the post-liberation Southern and Central African states. Ironically, as Steiner-Khamsi and Quist (2000) discuss, the integration of manual labour and use of the vernacular were common elements of schooling in missionary schools earlier in the century, which had often been criticised by the black elite as being anti-African and anti-modern.

This recreation of the past, which traditionalists posit as an alternative to Westernisation, capitalism and the borrowing of external models, has been harnessed by African nationalists in the name of modernising and indigenising education. However, this fostering of the past has been seriously contested by some African socialists. Babu (1981), for example, criticises Tanzania's President Nyerere, and by inference other members of the African progressive bourgeoisie and other sectors of the national liberation movements, for positing traditional society as egalitarian, democratic and based on social and economic equilibrium. He argues that this is not accurate and that this tradition represents particular relations of production related to a particular mode of production, which has irrevocably passed. In other words, Babu (1981) argues that this focus on traditional indigenous education is ahistorical and anachronistic. In contrast, Cabral argued that there was nothing innately contradictory between building socialism and selectively embracing traditional culture, as long as that culture is not based on divisive ethnicity (cited in Alexander 1990).

Post-independence Education

In the last section, we have seen that there were alternative systems of education available to the liberated states after independence. However, these were largely ignored, and the education systems in post-independence states in Southern Africa remained structurally very similar to those that already existed and which had

long served the colonial regime. At the same time, education has been increasingly commodified in each of the Southern African countries. This has been exemplified through the expansion of private schooling (Centre for Development and Enterprise 2010) and the increasing of user costs of education even as schooling is made 'fee-free' (South Africa Department of Education 2003). At the same time, there has been a continuation and even deepening of the inherited bifurcated, unequal but parallel public education systems in each of these countries.

Postcolonial Schooling System

The post-liberation period has seen schooling take on an increasingly class (rather than race) character. The children of the new and colonial elites, the bourgeoisie, attend schools with highly qualified teachers, with state of the art equipment and high levels of academic and sport success (Bloch 2009; Chung 1988; Zvobgo 1987). In contrast, the peasantry and urban working class tend to find that their liberation involves their children's access to education being compromised by poor quality education. Teachers are often poorly qualified and are frequently absent, there are high levels of violence attached to the school, and the schools lack libraries, laboratories and computers (Bloch 2009; Prew 2003). In short, their experience of schooling and their likelihood of succeeding and accessing a professional or highly skilled job are poor, and at the same time, the preparation they receive to be self-employed or at least for being useful members of society is weak.

The failure, and possibly the unwillingness, to fundamentally transform the mainstream colonial education systems on taking power is exemplified by the ministers of education appointed after independence by the liberation movements. In Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique, the post-independence ministers of education were arguably political 'lightweights'. In fact in South Africa, Professor Sibusiso Bengu was even of somewhat doubtful party loyalty, and his main value to the ANC seemed to be his Zulu origins and his IFP/ANC constituency in a troubled province.[7] For whatever reason, it was clear that the first post-election governments across the region were not going to spend a lot of energy on transforming the education system. This was a deep shock to many commentators at the time, particularly in South Africa, as the ANC pre-election statement on education, the '*A Policy Framework for Education and Training*' or '*Yellow Book*' (African National Congress 1994), had put a marker down indicating the ANC's apparent transformational intentions in the education and training field. The ANC had assiduously researched and defined

[7] The IFP or Inkatha Freedom Party was the 'ruling' party in the KwaZulu Bantustan and so is seen as having supported apartheid. However in 1994, in order to hold the election the ANC brought the IFP into government. Bengu's past in both the IFP and ANC and his Zulu and academic background were thought to have led to his appointment as a Minister, in what was seen as a symbolic gesture to the IFP by the victorious ANC.

policy for the education sector, building on the NECC's National Education Policy Investigation process (National Education Co-ordinating Committee 1993). The ANC deployed some 300 researchers across the country to undertake research, which would feed into the statement.

The *Yellow Book* is the clearest and most well articulated of all Southern African liberation movements' statements in education at this period. It emphasises the following principles:

- Integration: Of schooling and training in a single articulated system aimed at transforming the 'apartheid labour market' and empowering people to meet their basic needs and democratise society.
- Free: Education would be open access and free to all for the first 10 years of schooling.
- Inclusion and representation: with students being represented at all levels of the system, including higher education, in direct relation to their demographic strength.
- Skills for transformation: The schooling and higher education system would be specifically tasked with providing the skills needed to drive 'national and provincial reconstruction'.
- Social development and economic empowerment: These were to be the key aims of a revised further education and training system which should massify access.
- Open learning pathways: The curriculum at every level, but particularly at further education and adult education levels, should promote lifelong learning and so multiple entry and exit points.
- Community-centred learning: Schools – and particularly farm and rural schools – should be 'Community Learning Centres' providing 'after school activities linked to the social, educational, health and recreational needs of the community, linked to rural development projects' (p. 103). Adult basic education must be 'linked to broader social and economic development projects' (p. 88).
- Curriculum reform: The school curriculum should be reformed so that it 'empowers learners for social, economic and political participation' through 'individual development (moral, intellectual, aesthetic, psychological); knowledge about work; [and] social participation' (pp. 97–98).
- Early childhood provision: The focus is on enriched play- and activity-based curriculum, which builds on the child's own knowledge and experience in his/her community.
- Active learning: Teacher training and in-service training need to encourage active learning through teachers who are 'competent, confident, critical and reflective' (p. 51).
- Development of indigenous technology capacity: Education institutions 'must ensure that students and workers engage with technology through linking the teaching of science and mathematics to the life experiences of the individual and the community' (p. 84).

The *Yellow Book* is remarkably coherent, considering that it drew from 'trade unionists, teacher and student activists, researchers, academics, officials from the

old education departments…(and) leading educationists in South Africa and abroad' (Centre for Education Policy Development 2003: i). It presents a broadly progressive vision of transformational education and training which draws from both the mainstream school tradition and the liberation movement tradition. The aspects which were new to the South African system and drew on liberation, progressive and socialist thinking include the focus on community-based learning, curriculum reform to empower learners, developing skills specifically needed to transform the society and economy and on teachers encouraging children to think for themselves and problem solve. Previous curricula for black education, according to Nkomo (1990), had explicitly aimed at the economic and social repression of the majority population. The *Yellow Book* also includes some principles of the traditional indigenous education experience by drawing on indigenous technology along with community education which taps into the strengths and traditions of rural and peri-urban society.

However, within 2 years of the *Yellow Book* being published, the South African Schools Act (Department of Education 1996) was promulgated. It had the effect of institutionalising the status quo with emphasis on schools being able to set their own policies and fundraise in their community while being governed by a school governing body with majority representation from the parent body. Although it created the space for progressive pro-poor funding mechanisms to be put in place (South Africa Department of Education 1998), given the past skewing of funding towards former white schools and the relative wealth of their communities, the pro-poor funding norms (South Africa Department of Education 2003) and even the fee-free education introduced in 2007 for schools serving poorer communities have failed to correct historical inequalities between schools.

In South Africa, there has been little attempt to build on the legacy of people's education, EWP or the SOMAFCO experience. A few private and trade-union-related institutions such as Khanya College continue to provide a small number of youth with a political and developmental education which is broadly in line with people's education, or 'education for liberation' (www.khanyacollege.org.za). However, the very isolation and distance from the mainstream system of these progressive institutions illustrate the extent of the ruling elite's rejection of these models. This development led van Rensburg (1999: 68) to ask,

> if the radical approach to education and training by the ANC in exile was lost in the baggage of the exiles coming home… What did happen to the idealism, reform and revolution?

Zimbabwe was more serious, on the surface, about pursuing a socialist path at independence, so it is worth pondering on what happened in that country in the post-independence period. Following independence, Zimbabwe's government launched the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP) (Chung 1988; Jansen 1991). In 1980, ZIMFEP created 8 schools across the country, each one with its own farm. These were announced as pilots for a new national system based on the liberation schools, scientific socialism and the concept of education with production. Its genesis came through a hybrid of three main strands drawn from Chinese and North Korean socialism, the regional concept of education with

production and liberation schools. The ZIMFEP schools were meant to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy, development science, political economy and debating and EWP, alongside undertaking farming, as well as providing jobs for their graduates through generating cooperatives. However, the other 6,000 schools, which were conventional primary and secondary schools utilising the 'Western' model, predominated. No new ZIMFEP schools were opened after 1980. Over time, ZIMFEP schools were marginalised, were underfunded and were mainly used to show international solidarity visitors that the revolution had not died and that Zimbabwe was serious about following a scientific socialist route. In fact they illustrated, through their very isolation, the opposite, and that ZIMFEP's 'experimentation… has so far had little impact on the mainstream of education… (it) will remain a counterculture' (Chung 1988: 128–129).

Even attempts in Zimbabwe at introducing reforms to make the curriculum reflect scientific socialist societal aspirations, particularly through integration of manual and academic education, foundered by the early 1990s. Jansen's (1991) five element framework posits that a socialist curriculum aims:

1. To develop a socialist consciousness amongst students
2. To eliminate the distinction between manual and mental labour
3. To adapt subject matter content to the indigenous cultural context
4. To foster cooperative learners and productive development strategies as part of the school curriculum
5. To increase opportunities for productive employment (Jansen 1991: 79)

Although Jansen (1991) claimed to see most of these elements present in at least one syllabus in Zimbabwe (that for political economy) and in EWP, these initiatives did not last into the 1990s.

In the other countries in the region, any vestiges of the liberation schools are just that, remnants of the historical struggle. Even EWP, whether set within a radical Africanist political discourse, as in Zimbabwe, or a more mild one at its zenith in the 1980s in Botswana, is rarely talked of today.

The mantle of radical education reform has been revived in recent years by mass social movements, such as the Global Campaign for Education and Equal Education, which grew out of the Cape Town townships as a student led protest movement (www.equaleducation.org.za). In South Africa, there is some lip service paid to liberation modes of education thinking. For example, alternative forms of education have reappeared under the banner of 'people's power through people's education'. These are influenced by educationalists who were prominent in the late 1980s education discussions, such as Graeme Bloch and Salim Vally. However, the links to liberation education are tenuous, and the drive is much more global than local. It is worth noting that the attitude of the post-liberation governments to social movements with an education agenda is one of suspicion and concern. It appears that any form of people's education or mobilisation around education is now seen as dangerous, often by the same people who promoted these principles only a short time ago.

Why the Liberators Became Converts to Neo-liberal Education

For the liberation movements in Southern Africa, with their professed socialist and progressive ideologies, education was presented as the vehicle for social and economic transformation on taking power. However, there is almost universal agreement that education has failed to play that role and that decades after independence Southern African states still have academically oriented, iniquitous, bifurcated systems, which have changed little since the colonial period. As Samoff (1991) states,

> Schools continue to identify, segregate and socialise the elite of the next generation… with few exceptions they have not, however, created the new person, the visionaries and architects and carpenters and masons of social transformation… nor have they become the foundation for constructing the new order. (p. 21)

There are two main explanations that dominate the postcolonial discourse as to why the new education authorities after independence perpetuated the academic and divisive colonial education systems they had inherited rather than transforming them for social, economic and political reasons.

The first, which draws on a left-wing analysis, maintains that the liberators were never truly committed to a socialist or even socially progressive transformation of their societies. This discourse maintains that the leaders of the liberation movements used education as a convenient base on which to build popular commitment to the struggle (Mugo 1999; Astrow 1983). This failure to establish an alternative progressive or transformational education system can be explained in a number of ways. A Marxist interpretation would suggest that there is an innate contradiction in what Lenin called 'bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries' (Astrow 1983: 215), claiming to be fighting to establish socialist systems in dependent backward capitalist environments. This historical anomaly was clarified when the national petit bourgeois elements leading the liberation movements took power and set about making things as comfortable as possible for themselves, as Marx and Lenin both predicted (Astrow 1983). This would explain the perpetuation of the dual education systems with highly differentiated outcomes and the failure to implement EWP or any other transformational element of liberation education. This position argues that it became increasingly clear that the class interests of the national petit bourgeoisie were in direct contrast and conflict with that of the proletariat and peasantry. Hence, as Zvobgo (1994: 95), a Zimbabwean educationist, notes,

> Far from becoming an instrument of economic engineering and social cohesion, education has continued, under African rule, to promote social class structures inherited from colonialism and to enhance the economic advancement of a few privileged citizens.

If we follow this argument, then we conclude that the leaders of the liberation movements cynically used the promise of educational transformation as a hook to bring the rural and urban poor into the struggle. Once that had been achieved, the professed aim of using the education system to drive socialism, national development, social and economic transformation and improvement was quietly dropped.

The second explanation, which more closely reflects the predominant nationalist view, is that circumstances forced the hand of the liberators and left them no policy option but to follow the neo-liberal consensus, and that even if they had wanted to follow a socialist model, there was no existing one to draw on for inspiration (Samoff 1991). The most benign analysis would suggest that the liberation movements were guilty of poor post-independence planning and naivety in believing that the established education system would roll over and let itself be transformed. This discourse argues that on gaining power the liberation movements faced many nodes of resistance to change – from parents (both black and white) who defined school success purely in academic terms and so resisted any form of vocationalisation of education that EWP promised, to sabotage by civil servants of plans to implement changes and the innate resistance of schools and the education system to any form of change in their bureaucratic operations. To tackle this resistance, the liberation movements would have needed to plan the post-independence system carefully with a clearly defined alternative education and training model and been prepared to make radical decisions on structures, access and redress to ensure equal access for all children to a transformed system. SWAPO, with Swedish aid, managed to develop a small number of independent boarding schools inside South African occupied Namibia (Sellstrom 2002); however, these did not present an alternative ideological model. ZANU arguably planned better than most of the liberation movements for the post-independence system and created a school of administration and ideology in Maputo to train middle-level administrators. However, it was only established months before the 1980 election, as were the ZIMFEP schools in the liberated areas (ZIMFEP 1991), so they had little impact. In South Africa, the National Education Policy Investigation and the Yellow Book processes in the early 1990s created an alternative foundation for the education system, but this was not implemented in a concerted fashion and so also failed to dent the hegemony of the neo-liberal reality.

Even if planning had been better, the impact of the hegemonic hold that the UN's millennium development goals and the push towards Education for All held over the international education arena would have been hard to resist. This is particularly so as the donor funding for education over the last 20 years has been predicated by a requirement to respond positively to these international imperatives. This would have made it difficult to use education as an ideological base from which to transform the societal values and economic structure (Chung 1988).

Conclusion: The Death of the Idea?

The 'idea' was that liberatory education or 'people's education for people's power' would be the lever for the transformation of the colonial societies that the liberation struggles in Southern Africa were fighting. The liberation schools, developed during the struggle, generally exhibited a progressive, and in some cases an overtly socialist, engagement with the education of guerrilla fighters and their children in their

camps and liberated zones. Many of these schools drew on traditions of precolonial community education as well as consciously developing EWP, teaching Marxism and explaining the armed struggle, and teaching learners to be conscious, politicised citizens empowered to transform the economy and society. Other schools, in particular SOMAFCO, grappled with these approaches but increasingly provided a conventional education allowing its students access to universities anywhere in the world. It failed to provide a comprehensive socialist or even progressive alternative model to the 'Western' schooling system predominating in South Africa. Other liberation schools also failed to create a comprehensive alternative progressive education model.

The failure to develop comprehensive socialist education systems in advance of gaining power may be rooted in the limited nationalistic self-interest of the liberation movement leaders who became the new ruling elite, or the lack of a clearly defined socialist version of the 'Western' education system. The key differences between 'Western' schooling systems and those that prevailed in the Soviet bloc were in spirit, purpose and access rather than in form. Soviet schools looked like 'Western' schools; children dressed in uniform and were taught by adults in age groups – it was hard to see the difference. Capturing and implementing the difference when faced with all the other challenges would have been difficult, although those tasked with transforming the colonial systems after independence argued that they had transformed these systems, with open access, revised curricula, elements of EWP and so on. However, it is now acknowledged that these changes did not amount to transformation and the prevailing ethos and purpose of the colonial education systems survived the political changes largely intact with the consequent failure to meet expectations and the development needs of the newly independent states. This situation was compounded by the dismantling of the twentieth-century socialist states in the early 1990s, as South Africa and Namibia gained independence and as Mozambique and Angola finally achieved internal peace, and the increasing hegemonic status of Western neo-liberal education systems. Both these processes meant that presenting an alternative education system intended to achieve socialist transformation would have appeared to international observers, funders and even citizens as counter-intuitive and anachronistic. The result would have been the drying up of external funds. None of these states, following liberation, wanted or could implement such a programme of education transformation, and so these societies remained largely untransformed.

It seems therefore that the liberation movements' belief in education's role in social and economic transformation mutated, at least ideologically, into neo-liberal orthodoxy with a determination to use the education system to generate skills to meet labour market needs and an instrumentalist national development plan, rather than being the key to transforming the societal and economic order in the countries they had liberated. The revolutionary rhetoric used during the struggle, which promoted education as a key to achieving 'people's power' and generating the 'new person', was quietly set aside. As a result, progressive liberation-type schools, where they survived, became marginalised political showpieces.

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Chapter 9
Democratic Aspects of Communist and Post-communist Schooling in Central and Eastern Europe

Laura B. Perry

Introduction

The global resurgence of political democratisation that occurred in the early 1990s brought about many education reforms in central and eastern Europe.[1] Schooling in the communist era was highly centralised and prescribed, affecting all levels and aspects of the education system, such as curricula, textbooks and funding. After the end of communism, the main approaches for democratising schooling were to decentralise and diversify the education system and to make schools more open to the participation of parents and communities (Cerych 1997). Despite these reform efforts to democratise their education systems, many Western commentators and scholars maintain that schooling in the region continues to be undemocratic (Perry 2005, 2009a, b).

In this chapter I will argue that, despite these claims, the education systems in the former communist countries of eastern and central Europe, both under communism as well as after it, embody many democratic aspects. First, I will discuss the main organisational and pedagogical features of the education systems of eastern and

[1] I have adopted the suggestion of Timothy Garton Ash (1990, p. 131), the most noted chronicler of the fall of communism in the region: "…if we can no longer talk of communism we should no longer talk of Eastern Europe, at least with a capital 'E' for Eastern. Instead, we shall have central Europe again, and… eastern Europe with a small 'e' and, above all, individual peoples, nations and states." Similarly, I have decided to write western Europe with a small "w". Using the lower cases puts the emphasis on geographic regions rather than social constructions that reify stereotypes of "Eastern" and "Western". As shown by Wolff (1994), "Eastern Europe" is an invention that serves as an inferior "other" to the West, rather than an accurate geographical grouping. Indeed, geographical divisions in Europe are problematic for a number of countries. For example, Germany is characterised as belonging to either central or western Europe.

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central Europe as well as the main reforms that have occurred since the early 1990s with the beginning of democratisation. I also include some other European countries for contrast and context. I will then briefly describe a framework for conceptualising democratic education. Next, I will show how many aspects of schooling in the region, in both the communist and post-communist eras, embody democratic values. I will conclude by critiquing some commonly held assumptions in the research literature about the undemocratic nature of schooling in the region.

Throughout the discussion I will draw on examples from ten post-communist countries from eastern and central Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. This group contains all of the former communist countries that have become fully integrated into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the two main European supranational organisations. I have omitted countries that have not been integrated into these supranational frameworks, primarily because their experiences in the post-communist era have been very different and would make the analysis more complex. These countries include most of the Balkan countries, Russia and the former Soviet republics. Detailed examples in the analysis come primarily from the Czech education system, which I have studied extensively (Perry 2001, 2005).

Features of Communist European Education Systems

In this section, I describe the main organisational and pedagogical features of communist education systems in eastern and central Europe. This era spanned from approximately 1948 (post-World War II) until late 1989 or early 1990. The era was defined by one party rule, in which the communist party was also the state. The communist party/state controlled all aspects of the economy as well as most other social institutions, including education. It is important to remember that mass schooling had been long established in these countries before communist rule. Many aspects of schooling during the communist era, therefore, were inherited from the pre-communist era.

In terms of curriculum, the party/state decided the content of what would be taught via a national curriculum developed by a centralised ministry of education. Central authorities created textbooks, and schools were required to use them and other state-approved instructional materials. Marxist-Leninist ideology was pervasive in the humanities and social sciences, and Marxist-Leninism was also a required subject as the main form of civics education. Teachers were not required to be party members, but schools typically had a party representative (often the Marxist-Leninism teacher) who would ensure that curriculum was being taught according to party guidelines.

Teaching styles were traditional and pre-dated communism. Teachers had a high level of subject training and expertise (Cerych 1997) and were generally held in high regard by students, families and the general public (Nagy 1998). Relationships between students and teachers were respectful. Classroom teaching was teacher-centric

and whole-class instruction was the norm. Teachers followed textbooks and typically provided regular formative assessments of students' learning, which were noted in a student "passport" that required a weekly signature from a parent. Very little attention was paid to differentiating the curriculum to individual needs and perceived abilities. Rather, the entire class was expected to keep up with the pace of instruction, which was often brisk. The curriculum objectives were very clear to students, parents and teachers, and the standards were high. This approach to teaching was not unique to the communist countries of Europe; indeed, it was and still is common in many parts of Europe as well as Asia.

Compulsory schooling typically lasted 9 years (primary plus lower secondary) and was conducted in a comprehensive "basic" school. Most students attended their local school, and everyone was taught the same curriculum. This curriculum was considered the basic, foundational knowledge that every citizen, regardless of their future occupation, was entitled to learn. Ability grouping, either within or between classrooms, was rare. In some countries, such as East Germany and Czechoslovakia, communist authorities lengthened the pre-communist basic school from 4 or 5 to 8 or 9 years. Delaying the age at which students are selected into different institutional tracks was seen as the best way to reduce educational inequalities between social classes. This belief continues to be held by many education researchers and policymakers, including decidedly non-communist organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Some countries, however, retained the pre-communist tradition of early selection. For example, students were sorted into different institutional tracks at 10 years of age in Lithuania and 11 years of age in Bulgaria and Romania.

After basic school, most students continued to upper secondary schooling. As in most other European countries, secondary school systems in the communist era were *differentiated* (Kotasek 1996; European Commission 2003), not *comprehensive* as is common in English-speaking countries. This differentiated model has been common in Europe since the rise of mass schooling and predates the communist era; all of the selected countries had this model before communism, kept it during communism and continued to keep it after communism. There were two main types of differentiated secondary education among the selected countries: the tripartite model, common in central Europe, and the polytechnic model, common in the Baltic countries and eastern Europe. The tripartite model is comprised of three types of schools: *gymnasia*, which offer highly academic general education geared toward preparing students for continuing studies in higher education; technical schools, which offer mixed vocational and general education along broad career streams, such as commerce, health sciences, tourism and information technology; and vocational schools, which specialise in the skilled trades. The Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia all had this model, in common with other central European countries such as Germany and Austria. The polytechnic model or dual model had two separate schools and educational paths: general academic (*gymnasia*, *lycea*) and technical/vocational. Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had this model, as do Finland and other Scandinavian countries. In both models, different educational streams were offered in different institutions.

In all of these countries, access to general academic education at the upper secondary level was limited to approximately 20–25% of a student cohort.

Many of the communist education systems had very high levels of educational attainment compared to other European countries (Cerych 1997; Heyneman 1992; von Kopp 1992). Czechoslovakia had one of the highest secondary school attainment rates in Europe (Program Phare 1999). Data from Barro and Lee (2000) showed that average years of schooling per person, a common way to measure educational attainment within and across countries, were higher in Czechoslovakia than in 11 other European countries, including the UK, France and the Netherlands.

In terms of funding and governance, the state funded and operated all schools. Private schools – that is, schools funded and/or operated by non-government authorities – were prohibited. All schools were funded by budgetary transfers from the central authorities (at either the state or national level), as was and continues to be common in most parts of the world. Thus, there was a relatively equitable distribution of resources among schools and across neighbourhoods, districts and regions. Students typically did not "choose" a basic school, enrolling instead in the local neighbourhood school. At the upper secondary level, however, school choice was the only option since students applied for admission to a school and institutional track of their choice.

Features of Post-communist European Education Systems

After the regime change in 1989–1990, all of the countries in the region changed many structural aspects of their education systems. The primary objective was to democratise schooling by removing the state's monopoly. This resulted in four main measures: (1) granting more autonomy to local and regional educational authorities, (2) allowing the establishment of non-state schools, (3) giving parents and students more choice in selecting an education path and (4) removing Marxist-Leninist ideology from the curriculum (Cerych 1997). The overall thrust was to allow more stakeholders to participate in educational decision-making through a process of partial decentralisation.

One of the main decentralisation efforts has been to lessen the state's control of official knowledge via the taught curriculum. Thus, non-state publishers are now allowed to write textbooks, and a much wider range of perspectives are permitted. Schools have a greater possibility to select non-mandatory subjects, to choose textbooks and teaching methods and to alter the hours mandated per subject. Schools have the right, within specified limits, to alter the national curriculum to meet local needs and interests. Allowing the establishment of private, non-state schools has given parents an opportunity to select a school that espouses non-mainstream educational philosophies (e.g. Montessori or Steiner). The state still has a fair amount of authority as well. All of the countries have retained a core, national curriculum, administered by the Ministry of Education or some other national education body, and in this way they are similar to most other countries in Europe (and indeed the world).

Other than removing the state's complete control on the curriculum, life inside the classroom has not changed dramatically throughout the region (Roberts 2001; Vastatkova and Prasilova 2011). Teaching and learning practices have not changed much, in large part because there is little perceived need that they should (Cerych 1997). Some education researchers from the region have suggested the goals of education should focus more on concepts and application and less on facts (e.g. Program Phare 1999). Mastery of the taught curriculum remains the main focus of teaching and learning.

All of the post-communist education systems have retained a differentiated upper secondary school, but there have been some reforms. Countries that under communism sorted students very early, such as Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania, have increased the age at which students are differentiated, in line with the commonly held belief that differentiating students at a later age promotes the quality, equity and efficiency of an education system (Schleicher 2009). Interestingly, however, not all countries have opted to delay differentiation. For example, the Czech education system has reverted to its pre-communist Germanic heritage of allowing students to self-differentiate after 5 years of schooling, a practice which approximately 10% of the current student cohort exercises (Mateju and Strakova 2005). Similarly, after unification, the former East German states reverted back to an early age of differentiation to align with Western Germany, which had never given up this practice (Ertl and Phillips 2000).

While differentiated secondary schooling is common all over Europe, national education systems vary in the proportion of students who attend general academic institutions. In the Scandinavian countries, up to two-thirds of students attend such institutions, with the remaining third attending vocational/technical institutions (Eurydice 2011). In the ten selected post-communist countries, however, the proportion of students in general academic institutions is much smaller. For example, approximately 25% of students attend such institutions (Eurydice 2011), slightly higher than the 15–20% that attended gymnasia and lyceum in the communist era. This proportion has remained stable throughout the communist and post-communist eras in all countries except Poland, which has reformed its education system in the last decade to increase the proportion of students in general academic institutions (Schleicher 2009).

All of the selected post-communist countries allow parents and students a fair amount of school choice with the public sector. At the primary level, students may attend any state school of their choice, although students from the catchment area receive priority if there are not enough seats (Eurydice 2011). At special profile primary/lower secondary schools and all upper secondary schools, students may apply for admission to the school of their choice. Approximately two-thirds of other European countries have a similar system of open enrolment.

While private schooling is now legal and is even subsidised by the public purse, the proportion of students who attend private schools is very small. For example, the proportion of students who attend non-government schools is less than 3% in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland and Slovenia; Hungary and Slovakia have higher but still small proportions, around 10% (OECD 2010b: 224). Rather than serving as

a mechanism for social exclusion as is common in countries such as France or Australia, private schooling in the region is primarily about offering alternative or non-secular educational experiences. This certainly does not rule out the possibility, however, that private schooling may take on more of a social exclusionary role in the future. The other function of private schooling, especially at the secondary level, is to provide an academic, university-preparatory education for students who did not pass the admission standards of public gymnasia.

The quality of secondary education among the ten post-communist countries as measured by international tests of student achievement is comparable to other European countries. On the reading section of the 2009 cycle of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Estonia and Poland scored above the OECD average (as did Finland, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland), Hungary scored around average (along with the US, Sweden, Germany, France, Denmark and Portugal), and Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania scored below the OECD average (along with Italy, Austria, Spain and Israel) (OECD 2010c). As can be seen from these results, the performance of the selected education systems varies considerably, as does the performance of their European peers.

Democracy and Education: A Conceptual Framework

Democracy is a complex and broad concept that defies simple definition. A minimalist definition of political democracy is electoralism, a system of governance based on universal suffrage and regular elections between multiple parties. Liberal democracy broadens the definition of electoral democracy by including the concept of civil liberty. According to the liberal democratic view, liberty is essential for ensuring that no groups are denied access to participation. Conflating electoral with liberal democracy is problematic because the former can obscure marginalised groups' lack of access to participation in democratic decision-making processes (Schmitter and Karl 1991). Liberty, however, gives groups the opportunity to demand access and further their interests. Diamond's (2003: 35) definition of liberal democracy contains, in addition to a variety of citizen protections and controls on the state, the following liberties:

- Cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups (as well as historically disadvantaged majorities) are not prohibited (legally or in practice) from expressing their interests in the political process or from speaking their language or practicing their culture.
- Beyond parties and elections, citizens have multiple, ongoing channels for expression and representation of their interests and values…
- There are alternative sources of information (including independent media)…
- Individuals have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration, and petition.

- Citizens are politically equal under the law (even though they are invariably unequal in their political resources).

Thus, we see that this conception of substantive political democracy requires that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, pursue their interests, express their culture and religion and have access to a diverse array of information.

Key concepts that arise from the above definition are equality, participation, choice, diversity and freedom of expression. In a previous work, I have elaborated a framework based on these key concepts that can be used to examine the "democratic-ness" of any given national system of education or practice (Perry 2009b). The framework contains the following key concepts: equality, participation, choice, diversity and cohesion. Education systems can be said to be democratic inasmuch as they provide equitable opportunities and promote social mobility rather than reproduce inequalities; allow a broad range of stakeholders (students, parents, community leaders, teachers, etc.) to participate in educational decision-making; allow families to choose a school that best respects their worldview and best meets their child's needs and aspirations; acknowledge and celebrate the uniqueness of individuals, cultural groups and communities, and respect the right of minorities to speak their language and express their religion, culture and worldview; and promote social cohesion, integration and harmony within the larger society. These key concepts are aligned with the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Article 26 of the declaration lists three main rights in regard to education. As can be seen, the declaration focuses in particular on equality in education, cohesion and choice:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Tensions exist among these key concepts. For example, education scholars have argued for decades that choice can erode equality (see, e.g. Ball 1993; Gewirtz et al. 1995). Similarly, Gutmann (1999) has argued that citizens have a right to control their schools and participate in educational decision-making, but that this right cannot be used to discriminate or repress future citizens (i.e. students). This means, for example, that democratic means cannot be used to limit some students' educational opportunities and outcomes or impose the majority's worldview or ideology on a minority group of students.

Education systems also vary in the way that they realise the democratic concepts. Each concept is broad and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For example, some countries may promote equality by providing the same curriculum to all students (this is the rationale given for a national curriculum by Scandinavian countries), while other countries may believe equality is best achieved by providing differential learning opportunities. Similarly, particular practices can be seen as either democratic or undemocratic, depending on the concept used to evaluate it. For example, a national curriculum could be seen as democratic inasmuch as it provides equal access to knowledge despite family background or geographic location. At the same time, however, a national curriculum could be seen as undemocratic because it reduces the diversity of knowledge offered to students or because it reduces the ability of teachers to participate in educational decision-making.

Thus, assessing whether a particular education practice or system is democratic or not, and in which ways, is complicated and problematic. It is often more realistic to say that a particular practice or system is democratic in *x* ways and undemocratic in *y* ways. After a careful and nuanced examination, it may be possible to say that some practices or systems are more democratic than others. The problem, however, is that many commentators and even researchers are not always prepared to conduct such nuanced examinations. Instead, they revert to ethnocentric and unsupported claims about so-called democratic or undemocratic aspects of education.

Scholars such as Said (1978) and Wolff (1994) have shown how stereotypical claims have been used to create an inferior "other" in other regions and in other fields. As I have shown in earlier work (Perry 2009a), similar claims have been used to portray schooling in eastern and central Europe, both under communism as well as in the post-communist era, as an inferior "other" to schooling in the "West". This ethnocentric claim is justified by arguments that portray schooling in the region as undemocratic. Careful analysis reveals, however, some weaknesses in the argument. In the following sections, I provide some examples.

Undemocratic Schooling in the Region: Myths and Assumptions

In previous work, I have analysed in detail English-speaking scholars' assumptions about the undemocratic nature of communist and post-communist schooling (Perry 2009a). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these assumptions in depth, I will provide a few examples here. These assumptions primarily revolve around pedagogical practices and the differentiated system of secondary schooling. In this section, I outline some of these assumptions and then show why they are problematic.

A common perception among scholars from outside the region is that post-communist education systems are insufficiently democratic because of the pedagogical approaches that are used. For example, it is often asserted that teachers and the overall school climate are authoritarian, that instruction is too teacher-centred

and passive, that there is too much emphasis on memorising facts rather than developing cognitive skills such as problem-solving and analysis and that students are not taught how to express their opinions and respectfully listen to others (see Perry 2009a for a comprehensive analysis of these perspectives). Some scholars (see, e.g. Kubow and Kinney 2000; Tibbits 1994) then further assume (but rarely prove with empirical evidence) that students in the post-communist countries are passive and unable to think creatively or critically, solve problems, express their opinions or be tolerant of others.

The first assumption to be critiqued is the notion of "authoritarian teaching". While the teacher typically holds more authority in schools in the post-communist region than in English-speaking and Scandinavian countries, assuming that schools did/do not promote democratisation, or even that they promote authoritarianism, is yet to be substantiated. Hence, the conclusion that schools are authoritarian is debatable. The very term "authoritarian" is a loaded one carrying strong connotations. It could be argued that relationships between students and teachers in eastern and central European schools are formal or respectful rather than "authoritarian". Historically, the atmosphere in American schools was also more formal than it is today, yet most people do not believe that the USA was less democratic in the past. In fact many scholars make the opposite claim, namely, that American society is becoming less democratic (Bellah et al 1996; Putnam 1995). Similarly, teacher-student relationships in many European and East Asian countries are correspondingly formal, yet no one argues that these countries or their schools are undemocratic.

Many scholars, both from within as well as beyond the region, believe that teaching methods in eastern and central Europe should focus less on raw facts and more on application and higher-order thinking skills (see, e.g. Svecova 1994). This assertion becomes problematic when scholars simplistically assume that students in these countries, either under the communist or post-communist regimes, do not possess the ability to be critical or analytical. This assumption implies that schools are the only place young people learn to be critical; only subjects in the humanities and social sciences develop critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving and logic; and students can develop critical-thinking skills only in schools that utilise pedagogical methods that foster discussion, analysis and debate.

Insight into this assumption is provided by a study conducted by the International Social Survey Program in 1994 that examined international opinions about child-rearing (Vecernik and Mateju 1999: 344–345). One of the questions of this study asked, "What is more important in preparing children for life?" Respondents were given two choices: "to be obedient" and "to think for themselves". Only 8.6% of the Czech respondents answered that obedience was more important; other countries with similarly low proportions on this question included East Germany, Norway and Sweden. In Bulgaria, the UK, Poland, Russia and Spain, 20–30% of the respondents answered that being obedient was more important, whereas 30–50% of respondents in Hungary, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands thought being obedient was more important. The survey results show that the overwhelming majority of parents from one post-communist country (the Czech Republic) believe in a non-authoritarian style of child-rearing. When viewed in conjunction with the survey finding that the

majority of Czechs are satisfied with their education system (Legatum Institute 2010), we can infer that Czechs believe children need to learn how to think independently, but perhaps that families rather than schools should develop this skill. The results also show large cross-national variability and no clear association between communist past and likelihood of responding in a particular way.

Second, assuming that the typical pedagogical approach in the selected countries is unable to develop democratic skills neglects the possibility that analysis, synthesis, evaluation and logical reasoning can be developed through subject areas other than civics and history and through methods other than discussion and debate. Literature, foreign languages, mathematics and science are subjects that promote higher-order thinking skills such as creativity, logic and problem-solving (Bollag 1999). Similarly, whole-class instruction is much more common in the post-communist countries than in English-speaking countries, yet it is mistaken to assume that this type of instructional technique only utilises rote learning and memorisation, the so-called "lower-order" thinking skills. Curriculum and instruction experts who have systematically studied the "teacher-centred" instructional techniques common throughout eastern and central Europe have discovered that students often outperform their English and American peers in analysis, logic and problem-solving (Calder 2000; Hatch 1999; Andrews 1997; Graham et al 1999; Elliott et al 2001; Slater 1999; Ungaro 1992). Thus, we should not assume that students in the selected countries do not have higher-order thinking skills simply because their classroom learning environments are different.

Finally, assuming that schools in the selected countries did/do not teach critical thinking exaggerates the degree to which "higher-order" thinking skills are taught elsewhere. Researchers have shown that many schools, especially those which serve minority and working-class communities, are more likely to focus on drill, repetition, summary and comprehension than on any of the higher-order thinking skills (Cuban 2003; Haberman 2005; Kohn 1999; Anyon 1981). Pederson and Coogan's (2000) study of three high schools in a large American city found that only a minority of the students (primarily white and middle class) received civic instruction that promoted analysis and critical thinking. The majority of the students (primarily minority and working class) received civics lessons that focused on the importance of obeying the law.

In addition to pedagogy, some scholars contend that differentiated secondary schooling is undemocratic because it tracks students into different educational paths, only some of which are high status or lead to pathways for university education. Since education is the primary means for social mobility, differentiated secondary education is seen as undemocratic because it provides some students with greater opportunities for mobility than others. The argument that comprehensive schooling is more equitable than differentiated schooling has a long history and much support within the research and public policy community (see, e.g. Schleicher 2009). A superficial acceptance of this argument has a number of weaknesses, however. It neglects the fact that schools in comprehensive systems often sort students by ability, even at a very young age. Primary schools in countries with comprehensive

systems (which include English-speaking countries) commonly sort students by ability groups within classrooms and within schools, and middle and high schools usually sort students into rigid and separate tracks that offer varying degrees of academic rigour and access to high-status subjects (Gamoran 2000; Oakes 2000). Since student academic achievement is strongly correlated with a family's socio-economic background, this practice effectively reinforces and maintains social reproduction from the earliest grades (Hallinan 2000; Gamoran 2000; Oakes 1990, 2000). This is in direct contrast to primary schools in the selected countries, which provide (and provided during the communist era) an undifferentiated, comprehensive curriculum, with little ability grouping within classrooms or schools.

Second, the assumption that differentiated secondary education is inequitable and therefore undemocratic is problematic because it overstates status differences between the types of schools. Unlike schooling in countries with comprehensive systems, technical schools enjoy relatively high status in the selected countries, especially those that have a Germanic heritage (Vecernik and Mateju 1999; von Kopp 1997; Mateju and Rehakova 1996); these schools also offer pathways to tertiary education. Vocational education is lower in social status than gymnasia or technical schools, but this does not mean that the people who attend them are automatically placed in an inferior social position or that their future opportunities are circumscribed. Third and most importantly, the argument is weak because it neglects the fact that most other countries in Europe also have a differentiated secondary education system. Few argue, for example, that Dutch or Finnish schools are undemocratic.

While gymnasia are elitist in the sense that they selectively provide high-quality academic education to students (based on entrance examinations), they are no worse than the financially selective private college preparatory schools of the UK, the USA, Australia and many other countries. In countries such as the USA or Australia, such schools tend to be socially exclusive private schools that charge high fees or public schools located in wealthy districts that are restricted to families who have the financial means to live in the community (Edwards 2006; Lamb et al 2001; Rumberger and Thomas 2000; Tate 1997). One could therefore argue that gymnasia in the communist/post-communist countries are (and were) paradoxically more democratic because they are (and were) more meritocratic. They offer motivated and able students, regardless of their family income, a challenging course of study that in many other countries only privileged students can enjoy.

While I have been critiquing some commonly held assumptions, it would be equally naïve and ethnocentric to deny that the education systems of the selected countries have no undemocratic aspects. The ability of schools in these countries to select students has led to a very strong relationship between social background and academic achievement (OECD 2010a). This is because students from privileged social backgrounds typically enjoy more support at home and school to pursue general academic education (Bourdieu 2000; Sewell and Hauser 1980). A high level of school choice may also be increasing school segregation and heightening differences in learning environments between schools (Strakova 2010).

Democratic Schooling in the Region

Schooling in the region, in both the communist and post-communist eras, has a number of democratic features. Using the conceptual framework outlined earlier, I discuss in this section the features of schooling in both eras that can be characterised as democratic. Equality in education was the dominant democratic concept during the communist era. In the post-communist era, equality of opportunity and inputs (resources, funding) remain important, but choice and diversity have been further developed.

Equality in the selected countries is pursued by providing all students the same core curriculum at the compulsory level. The objective is to provide all students, regardless of financial resources or geographic location, the same body of knowledge. Central authorities also monitor private schools to ensure that their students are receiving equivalent forms of education. State control over the curriculum has been loosened slightly in the post-communist era, with more flexibility for schools to modify timetables and introduce optional subjects. This approach is not unique to the selected countries. The Scandinavian countries also have a core national curriculum, with the same equity rationale (Eurydice 2011).

Equality in the selected countries is also pursued by equitably distributing resources among all types of schools. These education systems have a history of funding and resourcing schools from a central authority and budget, and this has not changed in the post-communist era. Centralised funding minimises differences in resources among schools. This is in contrast to the non-centralised funding approach in the US, which leads to differences in school funding by up to 400% when comparing the poorest districts in the poorest states with the richest districts in the richest states (Biddle and Berliner 2002).

Diversity and choice are promoted in the selected education systems through differentiated upper secondary education that comprises a large variety of institutions that offer different educational offerings. After students have received a comprehensive educational foundation in compulsory schooling, it is commonly held that educational offerings should be diverse and offer adequate choice to provide students the best opportunity to develop their diverse talents and aspirations. Differentiated secondary education has a long tradition in the region that pre-dates even the communist era. Most European countries have a differentiated system, and in this regard the selected communist/post-communist countries are similar. While differentiated secondary schooling has the potential to erode equity, it is commonly perceived by educators and the general public as a parental and student right to educational choice, as Ertl and Phillips (2000) have shown for Germany.

Diversity and choice are also promoted by allowing the establishment of non-state schools, a reform that was introduced in the post-communist era. In these countries, the state is the primary provider of education, but not necessarily considered always the best or only provider. The state in these countries therefore subsidises non-government schools while at the same time regulating them and holding them accountable to the same standards as government schools. This policy reduces the social exclusivity of many private schools while retaining the high standards and status of public schools.

All ten countries in the post-communist era grant students significant cultural and religious freedom of expression in two ways. First, like the great majority of their European peers, they provide state subsidies to non-state denominational schools. These subsidies are substantial enough to ensure that students are able to receive an education that respects their faith without incurring a financial penalty. Second, state schools may provide optional religious instruction to students who so desire it. Such instruction typically occurs after the normal school day and may include whatever faith(s) that the students or community desires. On the one hand, the post-communist countries are similar to their EU peers in their allowance for religion in government schools (France is an exception). On the other hand, the post-communist countries differ in that no country mandates religious instruction nor privileges any particular faith, not even devoutly Catholic Poland. By contrast, most European countries require religious instruction in government schools, and most of these, especially the Nordic countries and Germany, privilege Christianity (see Eurydice 2011). Schools in these western and northern European countries are required to provide instruction in different faiths such as Judaism or Islam if requested, but as Simel (1996) has shown, this practice is frequently perceived by minority students to be exclusionary and therefore arguably inequitable and undemocratic. It is likely that their heritage of totalitarianism has made educators, policymakers and the general public in the post-communist countries more sensitive to the dangers of the state mandating that all students be exposed to a particular worldview or ideology.

Conclusion

Democracy comprises a constellation of key values, none of which are inherently more important than the other. Moreover, these key values sometimes clash with each other: localised curriculum or school funding favours participation, but often promotes inequality. Due to their unique cultural and historical traditions, education systems balance these values in different ways. Countries often approach the same value differently as well. For example, the right of parents to participate in their child's education means different things in different countries. In English-speaking countries, this right to participate typically involves participating in school events and decision-making (fundraising, parent committees, volunteering in classrooms, etc.) and is facilitated by rich communication networks between the school and parent. While this type of participation and communication network between the school and parents is less common in eastern and central Europe, other forms of participation and communication are much more developed than elsewhere. For example, it is (and was) common for teachers in eastern and central Europe to provide frequent and detailed feedback to parents about their child's progress. In this way, parents in the selected countries are better able to be involved with their child's learning because they are more informed than are parents in other countries.

The democratic legacy of European education under communism was a commitment to equality in education, advanced through three mechanisms. The first mechanism consisted of a comprehensive basic school that provided a common curriculum to all students, regardless of the financial resources of the family or the location of their residence. Moreover, this core curriculum was provided without ability grouping within classrooms or schools. The second mechanism comprised a system of secondary schooling that offered able and motivated students a high-quality general academic education, again regardless of family circumstances. The third mechanism was the use of a central authority to ensure an equitable distribution of funding and resources across schools.

In the post-communist era, the selected countries have retained their commitment to equality and have kept more or less intact all of the mechanisms outlined above. At the same time, however, they have endeavoured to further democratise their education systems by allowing more diversity and choice. Diversity and choice have been advanced by allowing the establishment of non-government schools, many of which embody alternative philosophies and worldviews. They have also been advanced by allowing different religions and worldviews to be expressed in public schools without imposing any one ideology or worldview on all students. These reforms have allowed the educational systems of eastern and central Europe to reach a level of democratisation that is unique and noteworthy on the world stage.

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Chapter 10
The Comprehensive School and Egalitarianism: From Demystification and Discreditation to Global Ascendance?

Olga Bain

Introduction

The current focus on the role of egalitarianism in advancing academic excellence has been brought about by the international comparisons of educational achievement, measured either by performance in school curricula in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) or by the development of life skills in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Importantly, the extent of societal inequality is found to be significantly correlated with a lower level of average student achievement. Furthermore, national educational structures themselves play a role in promoting or hindering disparities in performance. Statistically, across educational systems the low variance in student achievement within schools and the low variance in achievement between schools translate into more equitable student performance. Conversely, high variance in the above two may indicate the segregation of low-performing and high-performing students in different types of schools and/or in ability grouping or tracking within schools. The consistently top PISA/TIMSS performing nations turn out to have more equitable educational structures, including comprehensive schools for all.[1] Medium-high-performing nations are not as equitable as the top ones, and among these there are several East Central European nations that have shown increasingly inequitable student performance over time. It is noteworthy that these post-socialist nations once relied on comprehensive schools but in more recent times have tended to abandon the comprehensive school model. This chapter reviews major dilemmas posed by comprehensive schools vis-à-vis excellence of achievement and equality of distribution of educational achievement and attainment.

[1] See the reviewed literature later in the chapter.

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It further discusses the origins of comprehensive schools, research on how the 'egalitarian comprehensive school' was constructed, demystified and discredited in the countries formerly under socialism and the extent to which these nations differ in the level and inequality of their educational structures and student achievement today. Will inequitable educational structures ultimately hinder the academic achievement of the post-socialist societies? Alternately, will more equitable school structures, such as the comprehensive school for all, become the new 'global ideal'?

Do Comprehensive Schools Present a Dilemma: Egalitarianism Versus Excellence?

Comprehensive school is an English term that may or may not have direct correlates in other languages but that translates educational policy-wise into a school with non-selective admissions, no tracking or streaming of students for instruction and the concept of one school with one curriculum for all. Thus, comprehensive schooling is strongly linked with egalitarian educational policies.

The provision of the comprehensive school is generally supported by egalitarian educational policies and mass schooling in industrial modernised societies. Hence, the issue of its relationship with excellence is often raised in a dilemma-like manner: it is either equality of access or excellence in achievement, but not both. Adam Gamoran summarised the two major sides of this relationship as follows: (1) whether tracking or grouping leads to increased overall level of achievement in schools (the issue of *productivity*) and 2) whether the absence of tracking or grouping leads to more equitable distribution of achievement in the school (the issue of *equality*) (Gamoran 1992a).

Based on research in the UK and the USA, Gamoran (1992a) reported little or no evidence to support the first claim primarily because the gains of high-track students get offset by the weak performance of the comparatively large numbers of low-track students, but the effect of tracking and grouping on equality is substantial as this achievement gap increases from grade to grade. School performance is found to be linked with social inequality outside the school and in particular to racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of students. Thus, tracking and grouping are found to contribute to the stratification of students based on these characteristics and also to the perpetuation of their achievement gap (Oakes 2005).

Gamoran's research maintains that ability grouping is not based on 'ability' but on measured or perceived performance, and depending on how it is used for instruction, it may both improve average school performance and reduce the performance gaps between groups, particularly if such grouping allows mobility between tracks as opposed to rigid track assignment over time and across subjects, and if it is moderately inclusive of students at school as opposed to high or low inclusiveness in high tracks (Gamoran 1992a, b). Student mobility across such groups, however, may be hindered, even when permitted by the system, by de facto different levels of instructions in these groups. Jeannie Oakes has found in her research on grouping

that it is difficult for students to move from a less rigorous instructional group to a more rigorous instructional group, thus stigmatising and segregating the lower group (e.g. non-college bound, remedial) students (Oakes 1985).

Differential instruction is generally believed to attend to different students' needs by adjusting assignments to developmental, motivational and other changes in students' capacities for learning and by recognising differences in students' aptitudes for different subjects (Slavin 1987, cited in Gamoran 1992b). However, differential instruction is not necessarily possible or successful only under tracking, grouping or school type assignment. Mixed-ability instruction has proved quite successful in this regard. Instruction in homogeneous groups, on the other hand, is typically credited for the perceived ease of instruction but not necessarily credited for the performance improvement. Conversely, there is considerable research evidence that an academic focus and rigour in the non-college-bound tracks, such as in Catholic schools in the USA (Gamoran 1992b), produces higher individual student achievement and a lesser gap between the college- and non-college-bound tracks when controlling for student socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite these findings, instruction responsive to individual students' needs is more often than not associated with structural organisation of students in schools, such as tracking, grouping or assignment to different types of schools. The equality-excellence dilemma may also be flipped so that comprehensive schooling may be perceived as under-serving high achievers. However, research findings related to cross-national student and school data, as will be discussed below, provide support for the arguments that the equity-excellence dilemma may be a false one and that comprehensive schools may realise both excellence in achievement and its equitable distribution among its students of various backgrounds.

Expansion and Equality of Inclusion

Equality of educational inclusion, or access to educational opportunity, appears to be linearly related to the extent of the system expansion. Indeed, approaching universal access to a certain level of education extends educational participation to nearly all. According to the analysis using world culture theory, the explosive expansion of educational systems in the 1970s worldwide resulted from the spread of ideas about the role of education in societal modernisation following the end of WWII (e.g. Ramirez and Boli 1987). The diverse rates of educational participation across national educational systems, however, are not under scrutiny in this theory. To understand the differential rates of enrolment growth, the research on the role of educational structures and policies and the state's ability to impose and enforce restrictive or inclusive educational policies and structures have redirected the focus to more complex models of educational expansion and equality (e.g. Archer 1979; Hage and Garnier 1992; Raftery and Hout 1993).

One of the well-known alternative models of educational enrolment expansion is the model of maximally maintained inequality (MMI). It recognises the persistence

of socio-economic disparities that prevent individuals from seeking and accessing education at various levels: only when the education demand of the privileged socio-economic groups becomes saturated will further expansion of the system open up access to the disadvantaged groups, thus decreasing socio-economic and other inequalities in educational access and attainment (Mare 1980; Raftery and Hout 1993; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993; Beller and Hout 2006). Inequality persists and is maximally maintained when such saturation is not reached. A recent study across fifteen higher educational systems confirmed the MMI theory having found that expansion to the point of saturation was associated with the declining inequality in eligibility for or transition to higher education. Important exceptions are the two diversified and deregulated systems of higher education of Japan and Taiwan, where inequality declined without saturation primarily because college enrolments expanded at a much faster pace than the rate of eligibility for higher education. In the case of the UK, the inequality did not decline despite saturation: higher education enrolment was very high among those eligible, but little expansion was observed for the period (Arum et al. 2007: 17–18). The study also probed the effects of institutional differentiation on inequality of access and participation in higher education and tested a 'diversion' hypothesis of redirecting lower socio-economic strata students from elite higher educational opportunities and status versus an 'inclusion' hypothesis (Arum et al. 2007). It found that binary systems, as opposed to diversified or unified systems, tended to divert students of lower socio-economic backgrounds away from higher education as a whole and away from its elite first-tier institutions.

Some studies differentiate between inequality incurred by socio-economic background/class (as measured, e.g. by occupational status of parents and family income level) and inequality incurred by cultural capital resources (Bourdieu 1977) (as measured, e.g. by parental education, possession of cultural resources at home, such as the number of books at home, PC and others). The impact of cultural capital is often found to have a greater impact on an inequality gap than the socio-economic criterion, although often measures for both criteria are used as either independent or as composite variables.

The general effect of socio-economic and cultural background on educational access and attainment is found valid for the socialist countries as well as market economies. For example, research on higher education attainment showed inequality in participation by parental occupational backgrounds, parental education and residence (e.g. urban vs. rural) in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries (Avis 1976; Koutaissoff 1976; Gerber and Hout 1995; Gerber 2007; Matějů et al. 2007).

Does the relation predicted by the MMI theory between family background and educational attainment hold the same strength across national educational systems? Most studies are designed to investigate educational stratification in one country with little prospect for comparing the results cross-nationally. Michael Hout (2007) in his recent study analysed data from 25 nations using the data from a survey that was designed for a cross-national analysis and that used a common battery of questions and common sampling procedures—1999 International Social Survey Programme. Hout's study confirmed the MMI hypotheses for market economies by

finding that inequality decreased if the expansion reached the point when the educational demand of the privileged groups was met, or saturated, and at the same time higher education became more prevalent.

The analysis by Hout (2007) also included cohort data from eight countries formerly under state socialism, where the respondents completed higher education prior to 1989, that is, during the socialist period—the Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia. The data for these educational systems during the socialist period included in the study did not support the MMI hypothesis: inequality based on family backgrounds was much lower than expected, given the rates of participation in higher education. That is, family background as a measure of educational and sociocultural capital was only weakly related to educational attainment in the socialist countries, indicating the role of the state in lowering inequalities of access to education vis-à-vis family backgrounds. The highest expansion of post-secondary socialist education in Russia (the post-secondary enrolment rate of about 40 %) and Latvia (25 %) was yet associated with the lowest effect of family background on educational inequality. In other words, disparities based on the effect of sociocultural capital were mitigated by other factors in these countries, contributing to the decrease of inequality of access to higher education.

Furthermore, in East Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with post-secondary enrolment rates of age cohorts between 10 and 15 % at the time, the effects of family background on educational attainment were much lower as compared with the market economies included in the study at similar levels of post-secondary education expansion (Hout 2007). Especially striking was the weakened effect of sociocultural background on educational attainment in East Germany as compared with West Germany: the probability of completing higher education for individuals in East Germany was 51 % higher than for individuals of similar sociocultural background in West Germany. In other words, for every two West Germans who obtained higher education, three East Germans of similar sociocultural background would most likely have completed higher education, while higher education enrolment rates in both countries were similar.

The analysis by Hout fills a significant gap in inquiries about the strength of the association between family background and educational inequality. These findings are important for shedding light on the weakened association between socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and higher education attainment in the socialist countries as compared with market economies. Does one expect a change in the strength of this association with regard to the post-socialist nations with emerging or maturing market economies? With the increasing income inequality and decline of a welfare state in post-socialist societies, socio-economic factors in this association are most probably becoming more prominent. It remains to be seen whether cultural capital is mitigating or further exacerbating inequalities in educational access and attainment. Important questions also concern the role in the distribution of educational opportunities played by the changing educational structures and the overall understanding of education where comprehensive lower secondary school may, or may no longer be the central part.

Origins of Comprehensive Schools

The progenitor of comprehensive schools was the movement of mass systems of popular education that were state-supported and state-directed. Beginning with the 1860s, such systems began to spring up across Europe and North America: they were heralded by the French Revolution's rational ideas of children under paternal care of families and the state, they were advanced based on Rousseau's educational philosophy, and they were spurred on by the nineteenth century industrialisation, urbanisation and the need to establish a new value system to compensate for the weakened traditional values and family structures (Glenn 1988; Gutek 1995). The establishment of state-supported popular elementary schools, such as the common school movement in the USA (Glenn 1988) and 'folk schools' elsewhere, was followed by the enactment of laws requiring compulsory attendance by every child. Both these measures contributed to the increased literacy rates of the populations.

The link between educational expansion and educational equality, such as equality of educational opportunity, has become one of the primary objects of educational research. The twentieth century saw efforts to simultaneously seek expansion and equality in the USA, under the welfare states in West Europe, and in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe then under the influence of the Soviet school model. The Soviet model assumed one school for all and, in particular, a removal of barriers that hindered lower socio-economic classes, who were previously excluded from such opportunities, to obtain education at higher levels.

After the end of WWII, the movement of comprehensive high schools with no selective entrance exams and a core general education curriculum became dominant in the USA following the 1958 Conant report. It inspired Labour Party politicians in the UK to start the largest expansion of comprehensive schools in the country in 1965. The comprehensive school reform movement spread across Europe in the 1960s and 1970s (Levin 1978). One important dimension for comparing these reforms is the extent to which the comprehensive school movement became system-wide and system-deep. In the USA, tracking was preserved in comprehensive high schools bringing students of various socio-economic backgrounds together in one environment, which was deemed integrative (Gutek 1995). Additionally, across the USA today, selective private schools and selective public (magnet) schools continue to function as an alternative to non-selective public comprehensive high schools. In the UK, the comprehensive school movement was less systematic, allowing the local educational authorities and districts greater say in whether and how to implement the plan. Although the comprehensive system sought to replace the tripartite school system, that is, selective placement of children at the age of 11–12 (11 plus exam) into *grammar, secondary technical* and *secondary modern schools*, some areas in England retained selective grammar schools in addition to new or merged comprehensive schools or did not implement the policy at all. Moreover, despite the completion of comprehensive reorganisation announced in 1976 and renaming schools as comprehensive schools, considerable differences between and within schools persisted. As Cheung and Egerton explain referring to Heath's (2000)

findings: 'Comprehensive reorganisation probably shifted the focus from access to school types to competition for more academically successful comprehensive schools' (Cheung and Egerton 2007: 218).

Similarly, the policy of creating comprehensive schools (*CEG collège d'enseignement général*) in France in the 1960s and in Germany (*Gesamtschule*) did not become one common educational opportunity for all school-age children. In Germany, comprehensive schools failed to replace the tripartite school system. They are not alternatives but rather themselves part of the differentiated school system and are subject to 'a dual "creaming process"' losing both high-achieving students to *Gymnasien* and low achievers to *Hauptschulen* in the hierarchically selective differentiated German school system that starts selecting children as early as at the age of 10 (Leschinsky and Mayer 1999: 25). Comprehensive schools in Germany

> have to coexist as alternative schools for regionally varying minorities of pupils alongside a selective system: in most cases afflicted by 'creaming' and social segregation, held in poor esteem by the public and more or less abandoned by educational research and policy making. (Gruber 1998: 245)

In Austria and German-speaking areas of Switzerland, comprehensive schools were rejected (Gruber 1998). In France, comprehensive school reform had a considerable impact on the expansion of secondary school enrolment and especially on the increase in recruitment of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, thus supporting their aspirations for upward mobility and higher levels of education (Hage and Garnier 1992). The latter finding is especially illuminating concerning the role of relatively restrictive educational structures on higher educational aspirations: educational structures that make it prohibitive or more difficult to access higher levels of education suppress or override the impact of other factors that elevate educational aspirations. The youth are less inclined to try and enter higher education knowing that they have a lesser or no chance of being admitted. These lowered aspirations due to the educational progression restrictions are not responsive to the higher earnings that higher education completion promises or to the labour market situation (e.g. contraction of traditional jobs or growing availability of knowledge intensive jobs). The comprehensive schools policies in 1950–1960s France are reported to have raised students' expectations and to have 'had an impact on the proportion of children from the working class going to the more prestigious tracks' as a result of unleashing 'the pent up demand in the relatively closed French system' (Hage and Garnier 1992: 169).

In contrast to these reforms that effectively positioned comprehensive schools alongside selective school types in a mixed pattern, school systems in Scandinavian countries are often referred to as being more firmly established and universally accepted by the politicians, the teaching profession and the public (Levin 1978; Gruber 1998). In the case of Finland, the comprehensive school was extended up to students' age of 16 and through the entire lower secondary education level as one common school for all children. This structural feature of the educational system in Finland is at least in part behind Finland's consistent stellar success in educational enrolments, completions and student performance on the international assessments such as TIMSS and PISA.

Research on Comprehensive Schools in Socialist Countries

Unified Labor School, as the basis of the Soviet school model, was proposed by the People's Commissar of Education Lunacharsky in 1918 as a comprehensive school, a school of universal general education, where children of workers and peasants may realise upward social mobility. It was defined as 'the whole system of normal school from kindergarten to university… a single unbroken staircase… All children must enter the same type of school and begin their education alike, and all have the right to go up the ladder to its highest rungs' (as cited in Fitzpatrick 2002: 31–32). As Sheila Fitzpatrick observed, this school 'combined Binet's concept of *l'école unique*—a single primary school for children of all <social> classes—with a repudiation of the tsarist educational system, under which graduation from one level did not necessarily qualify the student to enter the next, higher level of education' (32). The *Unified Labor School* also excluded the early vocational specialisation of the previous system, and in this sense it was not professional but polytechnical. It sought to expose youth to different skills of productive labour and based teaching on the activity method. The labour principle meant, first,

> 'an active, mobile and creative acquaintance with the world,' and second, 'the direct wish to acquaint pupils with what will be most necessary to them in life… with agricultural and industrial labour in all its variety' (cited in Fitzpatrick 2002: 32).

With the expansion of educational opportunities first at the primary level and then at the lower secondary education level (7 years of schooling in 1939, and 8 years of schooling, or completion of lower secondary education, as compulsory and universal, was reached in 1958), the Soviet education was poised to provide 10 years of compulsory education at the beginning of the 1970s (Tomiak 1985). With an increasing number of students of various backgrounds passing through the educational pipeline, the screening filter was placed prior to the transition to higher education, specifically at the multi-institutional tracks of upper secondary education with only one track (upper secondary general school) most immediately granting eligibility for higher education as opposed to vocational training institutions and advanced technical schools. Although in principle, graduates from other types of school could proceed to higher education, only a small proportion of them did so.[2] The diverse educational trajectories at the upper secondary education level effectively served as a bottleneck to sort out students' eligibility for higher education. Although this screening was based on achievement and, therefore, on merit, the achievement level was significantly mediated by sociocultural background. With the increasing absence of lower socio-economic status groups entering higher education, the state enforced some affirmative action policies, such as one-year-long

[2] For the 1929–1979 cohorts' sample of 4,809 Russian respondents in Theodore Gerber's study (2007), only 17 % of those who graduated from post-secondary technical educational institutions (SSUZ) entered higher educational institutions (VUZ) after the mandatory three years of work in their profession. And only 15 % of those who graduated from vocational schools (PTU) went on to some kind of post-secondary education, 13 % of them entering SSUZ.

university courses of preparatory education specifically for working youth to ease their entry into higher education.

The influence of the Soviet school model on primary and secondary education in Central East Europe is said to be: the significant ideological control and propaganda in social science curricula and extra-curricula with the detrimental impact of alienation in individual-school relations; strong discipline-based curricula and authority imparted to a teacher; advanced professional training of teachers, the emphasis on math and sciences; the prevalence of group teaching methods over individual approaches; knowledge and application-centred curriculum and less orientation to problem-solving skills in unfamiliar situations; centralisation of the state control and monitoring over the educational system; considerable expansion of education at all levels especially through near universal access at the secondary educational level and a comprehensive school of general education for students of all backgrounds based on a national curriculum (Bronfenbrenner 1970; Eklof and Dneprov 1993; World Bank 1995; Alexander 2000 and others). However, the educational structures and the number of years of schooling by school type were far from uniform across the former Eastern Bloc countries.

The Soviet school appears primarily to reward effort rather than to recognise ability, although schools for talented children in arts, dance and music were a long-standing tradition in Russian education (Alexander 2000). Additionally, a large and free-of-charge network of out-of-school classes and programmes according to children's interests in sports, music, drama, technical invention and the like was widely available. Such options were less available in rural areas compared to urban centres. National Olympiads in mathematics and physics started in 1961 and 1962, respectively, seeking to identify talent in these disciplines and nurture it in math and physics classes and boarding schools of upper secondary education affiliated with universities (Tomiak 1985). The demand from parents and teachers for a more differentiated approach to child learning led to the proliferation of schools and classes with in-depth studies, such as in mathematics, physics and foreign languages in the 1960s–1970s. The educational authorities did not appear to see the conflict between the two approaches (Alexander 2000): one approach was based on the fundamental assumption that all children can learn equally well irrespective of their abilities and on the application of Vygotsky's earlier discovery that educational methods can accelerate or impede this learning process, and the other approach assumed that higher-ability-level children blossom when segregated in special schools or classes. There is not much research into how and how well Russian schools under socialism catered to both goals. Teachers taught heterogeneous-ability classrooms and in many cases applied mixed-ability methods. Yet there is anecdotal evidence that schools either 'levelled' each child to an average by focusing on the low-performing students or, on the contrary, catered only to best-performing students.[3]

[3] The author witnessed a heated discussion in the 1993 conference session at Columbia Teachers' College between the two parties providing such opposite views based on their own experience and intuition rather than on the systematic data that could be generalised.

Most research on Soviet educational inequalities focused on inequalities in transition to and in completion of higher education. During the early years of socialism, higher education access policies were deliberately regulated to ensure that the youth with less privileged status were fairly represented or even overrepresented as a reversal of former inequalities. The first 'rabfacs' (workers' faculties) recruited youth among workers and peasants in 1918 to prepare them to enter higher education so as to provide access to the previously discriminated groups without lowering standards of higher education admissions and without discriminating against other groups in the admission process through special admission quotas (Fitzpatrick 1979). These policies have a striking resemblance to the workers' preparation courses recreated in the 1970s when the authorities recognised the disproportionately low representation of students of working class backgrounds in higher education (Koutaissoff 1976). George Avis (1976) summarised the Soviet studies of the 1960s–1970s that revived educational sociology during the political 'thaw'. These studies highlighted the persistence of disparities by parental occupational status, parental education and residence (across various republics of the Soviet Union and in the urban–rural divide across all the republics) in the USSR as a de facto inequality in higher educational access and aspirations as opposed to the legal goal of achieving equality of participation in higher education. The study of the 1929–1979 student cohort survey indicated that as the Soviet social structure matured, the effect of intergenerational educational upward mobility might have decreased (Gerber and Hout 1995; Gerber 2007). A similar conclusion is developed for the Czech Republic by Petr Matějů who compared the cohorts during the period of 'rigid socialism' between 1948 and 1964, 'reform of socialism' between 1965 and 1974, the period of 'normalisation' after the 1968 suppression of reforms in Czechoslovakia up to 1989 and the post-socialist period of 1990–1999 (Matějů 1993; Matějů et al. 2007). Similar to Theodore Gerber's study of Russia's cohorts, Matějů observed in the Czech data increased gender parity in participation and completion of secondary and higher education, the prevalence of cultural backgrounds over socio-economic class in their impact on higher education attainment and decreased effects of socio-economic class. A considerable disadvantage towards completing higher education, which only one group of students from families of non-skilled and semi-skilled manual workers faced, developed by the late socialism years as the societal structure matured (Matějů et al. 2007). As the elites formed and matured, they passed on the cultural advantage that became the basis of their self-recruitment for higher education. Additionally, Gerber tested the reported role of political selection, such as that based on a father's membership in the communist party, in the Soviet higher education admissions (Shlapentokh 1990) and found that for the data he analysed, the political effect on tertiary education entry was positive, but statistically insignificant and much smaller as compared with the effect of sociocultural background (Gerber 2007). Similar findings are reported for Hungary, at least in the early socialist period, indicating the role of the revolutionary state in reversing the unequal higher education participation and in the social transformation of the nation (Hanley and McKeever 1997).

Findings on the equality of access and completion of secondary schooling in countries under socialism are often reported alongside the main focus on access and

completion of higher education in a pipeline perspective. The expansion of secondary education enrolments provided more qualified applicants to enter higher education. The provision of universal lower secondary education and the prevalence of the sole provider of lower secondary education by comprehensive schools in socialist countries were behind the expansion of enrolment to higher educational levels. Diversified educational options at the upper secondary level, however, channelled persistent inequalities by cultural and socio-economic status. The officially proclaimed social equality of access to higher education under socialism turned out to be a myth worthy of unmasking and exposing.[4] Post-socialist educational reforms have been driven in the early period by agendas of rejecting the socialist schooling, first of all, its preoccupation with 'moulding new people' and not allowing for autonomous personality development, its ideological control and distortion of social science curriculum, top-down centralisation, and teacher-centred instruction. The educational reform agenda in post-socialist countries during the early transition years was remarkably similar and targeted areas in need of immediate correction, such as de-ideologisation, depolitisation, de-statisation, decentralisation, diversification, differentiation, humanisation and humanitarisation (Eklof and Dneprov 1993; Birzea 1994; Cerych 1997). While there was a preferred interest in the varied individual educational needs, new types of schools and programmes responding to this growing demand were established. In many post-socialist countries in the early years of reform, the number of years of compulsory schooling was lowered following the shift to a more individualistic educational philosophy, justified by a discourse of providing more options to individual students to continue education or enter the workforce. Overall, secondary education enrolments decreased during this period (Matějů et al. 2007; Gerber 2007) given the chaotic developments and reassessed risks in societies at large and in part due to the lowered expectation to continue education at the no longer compulsory upper secondary level. In the past decade, educational systems in post-socialist nations became more different relative to each other. What happened to the common comprehensive school, which extended through the lower secondary level in these systems, and in large part—at least in terms of educational structures and patterns—is responsible for weakening the impact of socio-economic status on educational attainment in the countries formerly under socialism? Data coming from the recent cross-national surveys, such as PISA and TIMSS, can provide some insights in this regard.

PISA Studies

Renewed attention has been recently garnered to egalitarian educational policies and structures, such as non-selective comprehensive schools and the absence of tracking or streaming, through the cross-national data from PISA surveys, administered by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and

[4] As equality on paper, or "statistical justice" (Štech 2008).

TIMSS, administered by International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). A growing number of formerly socialist countries have come to participate in both surveys. Starting from the first PISA surveys of 2000 and after that every three years, 15-year-olds are tested on mathematics, reading and science scales with a particular subject area focus rotating each time. TIMSS started in 1995 following the tradition of science and mathematics assessment of 4th and 8th grade students by IEA since the late 1950s. Without getting into the discussion about how student performance is defined and measured in each survey, it should be noted that a high correlation was reported between PISA and TIMSS study results for 15-year-olds and 8th grade students, while the difference between the two surveys has been attributed to the focus on curricular proficiency in TIMSS and on the life skills in PISA, respectively. It is noteworthy that Central and Eastern European and Asian countries are reported to perform better on TIMSS than on PISA, whereas Western countries perform better on PISA. The overall explanation of the variance has been attributed to curriculum balance and years of schooling (Wu 2008).

The age of surveyed students in PISA (and the approximate grade in TIMSS) is important in that it is the age of finishing lower secondary educational level, which is compulsory in many educational systems and where comprehensive schools are prominent in the national systems that chose this option.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the way achievement assessment is standardised in PISA and TIMSS, the data from these surveys allow us to explore several relationships (and their variation across countries) relating to the role of the social inequality in the society at large and the impact of educational structures on inequality of achievement, such as:

a. Whether socio-economic inequality is a strong predictor of the level of overall achievement and of inequality of achievement distribution
b. Whether more egalitarian school structures and policies lead to overall higher achievement of students
c. Whether more equitable distribution of achievement relates to educational policies and structures, such as integrated school systems based on common comprehensive schools versus differentiated school systems based on assignment to different types of schools or tracks within them.

A recent analysis of the PISA 2006 data for OECD countries has shown that egalitarian societies have higher average achievement, higher percentages of very highly skilled students and lower percentages of very low-skilled students, while the reverse was shown for less egalitarian countries (Condron 2011). That is, more egalitarian affluent societies may have it all: they boost achievement levels of their students and produce a greater number of high-achieving students and fewer lower achieving students than less economically equal societies. The economic inequality was measured by Gini coefficients based on disposable income after taxes and transfers, that is, gauging the level of income inequality that remains after societies' economic policies have had their impact. A simulation analysis was further conducted to predict achievement levels for the United States when Finland's level of income inequality was imposed on it, having resulted in an increase of the average math score by 25 points, the biggest boost when compared to imposition on the

USA of Finland's GDP per capita, or level of income inequality and GDP per capita combined. The reverse was shown true—Finnish achievement declined most when it took on the US level of income inequality (Condron 2011).

A number of studies put to test the observation that higher achievement levels in PISA and TIMSS cross-national data are registered in more integrated school structures as opposed to differentiated ones (Dupriez and Dumay 2006). These studies find that integrated systems provide a common comprehensive school for all for a longer period of time and postpone separation of students by their performance level into tracks or separate educational pathways as differentiated systems do from an early age on at the lower secondary education level: 'the principle is to allow schools sufficient time to counteract differences in the cultural resources of pupils' family and to give each pupil real opportunities of success before operating any kind of selection' (Dupriez and Dumay 2006: 244). In effect, integrated school systems tend to delay the impact of differences in cultural capital on students' performance and attainment. Following previous work, Vincent Dupriez and Xavier Dumay assert that both integrated and differentiated school systems are part of the respective cultures: these cultures are reflected in certain structural characteristics but also in the cultural projects and the overall conception of the role of school in society. Dupriez and Dumay developed an index of inequality of educational opportunity associated with educational structures and patterns based on such indicators as grade retention, shortness of common educational structures and the extent of segregation between schools and found there was a specific effect of educational structures on achievement independent of societal income inequality levels. Furthermore, by comparing age cohorts, they showed that integrated school systems relying on a common comprehensive school tend to reduce inequalities of cultural resources on achievement over time as opposed to differentiated school systems that aggravate gaps in achievement between cohorts (Dupriez and Dumay 2006).

OECD (2007) analysis further explored the country variations in achievement level vis-à-vis the economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) of students—on an individual student level, and as an indicator for schools. The resultant socio-economic gradients addressed the relationship between family socio-economic and cultural status and academic achievement in two different ways. National educational systems vary in the steepness or flatness of gradients, indicating high or low mediation of achievement by socio-economic and cultural family resources, in the strength of gradients and in differences in between-school and within-school variance of student performance. The latter indicates inequalities associated with early tracking or school assignment and overall inequalities of achievement as mediated by socio-economic and cultural inequality in the larger society.

As one of the studies concluded,

> nationally comprehensive systems of schools tend to produce narrower social differences in intake and outcomes. Systems with more differentiation lead to greater gaps in attainment between social groups. (Gorard and Smith 2004: 25)

Would this newly revived conception of comprehensive schooling become a new 'global idea'? And how do post-socialist educational systems, which previously relied on comprehensive schooling, fare today regarding equality of educational opportunity and achievement?

PISA Studies and Variation in Policies and Structures in Select Post-socialist Countries

The number of countries participating in the OECD administered PISA surveys have gradually increased since its inception in 2000. This permits comparative research in cross-country variation with country as the unit of analysis. In the 2009 survey, the most recent survey for which the results are available, fourteen former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union participated, while in 2000 only five post-socialist nations conducted the survey (see Table 10.1 and Appendix for listing the data for all participating countries in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009 PISA surveys). For student performance on a mathematics scale in PISA 2009, nine of the former socialist countries scored above the mean and six below the mean. When compared with the OECD average, two of these nations scored statistically significantly above this average, four statistically significantly not different from it and nine statistically significantly below the OECD average. The country mean mathematics scores ranged between 512 in Estonia and 331 in Kyrgyzstan. Achievement in mathematics and reading are highly correlated, so only performance in mathematics has been selected for discussion here. Additionally, the focus here is specifically in inequality/equality of achievement at lower secondary educational level. In the PISA studies, students are assessed at 15 years of age, that is, at the end of the lower secondary education level in most countries, which is often considered as compulsory. In contrast, upper secondary education may remain more differentiated leading to increasing inequalities in eligibility and access to post-secondary education opportunities, and this deserves a separate analysis.

The Appendix presents data on student performance on the mathematics scale in all countries that participated in the PISA 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009 surveys: score means, total variance, between-school and within-school variance as a percentage of the OECD average total variance. Variance as a percentage of the OECD average gives a more immediate sense for readers of the comparative magnitude of these three statistics. *Within-school variance* indicates differences in performance achieved by individual students within schools; *between-school variance* refers to differences in performance achieved by schools. When between-school variance is considerably larger than the within-school variance, that is, within-school student performance is more homogeneous than among the schools, this implies some sort of segregation of students either by assignment to different types of schools, tracking or self-selecting students by residence, catchment areas or choice often associated or made by families of similar socio-economic and cultural characteristics. It is characteristic of differentiated school systems. Low *between-school variance* represents a more equitably distributed educational opportunity of achievement and is typically associated with integrated comprehensive school systems. So the impact of educational structures may be more closely observed in the magnitude and differences of these statistics. *Total variance* reflects the impact of educational structures in school systems as well as the influence of the other factors in their

Table 10.1 Mean scores, between-school and within-school variance in student performance (SP) on a mathematics scale PISA (2000–2009) in PISA participating post-socialist countries

Country	Math mean score 2000	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Math mean score 2003	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Math mean score 2006	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Math mean score 2009
		1	2	3		1	2	3		1	2	3	
Estonia									515	77.8	19.2	57.8	512
Slovenia													501
Slovak Republic					498	98.6	41.5	58.0	492	107.3	54.5	57.3	497
Poland	470	117.8	63.2	53.3	490	94.7	12.0	83.1	495	89.8	13.3	78.1	495
Czech Republic	498	101.2	40.9	61.1	516	99.8	50.5	55.2	510	127.5	77.1	64.2	493
Hungary	488	108.9	54.0	54.7	490	95.4	49.0	47.3	491	99.0	74.0	39.7	490
Latvia	463	125.7	33.8	92.4	483	90.2	20.6	71.0	486	82.1	18.4	63.9	482
Lithuania									486	96.7	32.0	67.2	477
Russian Federation	478	127.6	45.5	81.9	468	98.9	29.7	69.1	476	96.4	27.9	71.0	468
Croatia									467	83.6	32.7	52.4	460
Serbia					437				435	100.7	44.5	61.3	442
Azerbaijan									476	27.8	19.9	15.0	431
Bulgaria									413	122.4	62.9	60.0	428
Romania													427
Kyrgyzstan									311	90.1	37.9	51.5	331

Source: OECD (2001, 2004, 2007, 2010a, b)

Countries listed in a descending order of mean achievement scores on a mathematics scale for 2009

1—Total variance in SP expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries

2—Total Variance in SP between schools

3—Total Variance in SP within schools

Statistically significantly above the OECD average

Not statistically significantly different from the OECD average

Statistically significantly below the OECD average

totality. Given the salience of socio-economic and cultural characteristics in explaining the total variance as it is found in previous research studies, the relative magnitude of total variance in student performance may serve as a proxy of the overall socio-economic and cultural inequality.

There are essentially three possibilities in educational structures with regard to equality of achievement distribution:

1. More equitable non-selective systems based on one comprehensive school for all up to at least the upper secondary educational level, or 16 years of age
2. Selective assignment of students to different types of schools prior to the age of 15 years old
3. Mixed structures using tracking or ability grouping parallel to non-selective comprehensive schools

Looking at the top performers over the years, the two educational systems of Finland and Korea consistently stayed at the top. The high-performing countries, with students performing above the OECD average, are mostly countries with comprehensive school systems—Finland, Korea, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Estonia, Denmark, Iceland and Sweden. They tend to have total variance lower than the OECD average and smaller between-school variance. They demonstrate that more equitable comprehensive school systems contribute to overall high achievement of students and the more equitable distribution of achievement among students of various backgrounds. Moreover, the proportion of high-achieving students on a standardised assessment is higher, while the proportion of low achievers is lower in these school systems. In the group of medium-high-performing countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Switzerland have differentiated school systems with tracking of students to different school types prior to the age of 15. Of these three, only Switzerland stayed high in the group, while the Netherlands, Belgium and the Czech Republic mean scores in mathematics slid down over time with the accompanying increase in inequality of achievement between schools and increased homogenisation within schools in the Netherlands, and significant overall increase in inequality of achievement in Belgium schools (increase in total variance). Medium-high-achieving school systems are those with traditionally differentiated school types, such as in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium. They do not score at the top, that is, it might be more problematic in these school systems to increase overall achievement levels, and the proportion of low achieving students stays significant or increases.

Looking at the post-socialist countries' PISA performance (Table 10.1), one might notice that, in most of these nations, between-school variance in student performance is relatively low. Thus, schools do not appear segregated into low-performing and high-performing schools reflecting most probably their legacy of comprehensive schooling. There have also emerged exceptions from this pattern, particularly, in several Central European nations of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Hungary. Several countries show high levels of total variance (such as the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic, Serbia and 2000 Poland) indicating at an increasing overall inequality of performance. Students performed at or above the

OECD average in only six of the post-socialist nations, and performance in nine post-socialist countries is below the OECD average.

From the point of view of the impact of policy change, two post-socialist educational systems of the Czech Republic and of Poland stand out as contrasting cases. In the post-socialist Czech Republic, the policy of comprehensive schools at the lower secondary level was reversed, and the age of tracking to different types of schools was lowered to 12 years (Greger 2006). PISA math student performance results show that Czech student performance was slipping over time since 2003 after experiencing a temporary boost relative to 2000 (see Table 10.1), that inequalities in student achievement between schools grew over time (the highest for OECD and overall registered between-school variance in math achievement of 77.1 % in 2006) and that general inequalities of educational achievement also increased over time. Furthermore, between 2003 and 2009, Czech students showed the highest reduction of the number of high math performing students (level 5 and above) by 6.6 % and second highest increase of the number of low math performing students (level 2 and below) by 5.8 % (OECD 2010b).

The increasing inequality in student achievement associated with the policy reversal towards a highly differentiated school system is perhaps most stark in the Czech lower secondary education. Yet, similar trends apply to schools systems in Hungary and the Slovak Republic (with these comparisons based on the data from the PISA surveys). This tendency might indicate a policy shift in these countries towards pre-WWII school structures that shared similarities with Austria and Germany. This shift may be equally indicative of the radical departure away from the educational ways and patterns under former socialism and of the current intense search for national and regional (within the EU) identity (Bain 2010). As this policy reversal may reflect the society striving for renewed reference points, it also may become more of a cultural project. Highly differentiated school systems with separate tracks of schools, such as in Germany, may be in fact highly unequal in educational opportunity and achievement, but are culturally constructed and perceived domestically as a unique and positive way of cultivating talent, a matter of national pride, and perceived to allow permeability (*Durchlässigkeit*) (although most transfers occur from a more prestigious to a less prestigious school type rather than vice versa) and especially respectful of high-level skills in all trades and professions (Phillips 1995; Wilde 2003). More data and further analysis will be needed to confirm this hypothesis.

Poland presents another case of the impact of educational structures and policies on student achievement. In Poland, lower secondary education was integrated into nine years of comprehensive schooling at the elementary and lower secondary levels (*gimnazjum* at the lower secondary level) for all students up to 16 years of age and thus postponing for one year the choice between general and vocational curriculum at the upper secondary level as compared with the previous system under socialism that comprised eight years of comprehensive schooling. This change was coupled with curricular reform and increased decentralisation of educational supervision and resulted in not only an increase of country performance on average but also a decreased inequality of educational achievement between schools and overall

decrease of inequality of achievement (total variance). This reform was initiated in Poland in 1999, and thus, the PISA assessment captures the pre-reform baseline (the 2000 cohort of 15-year-olds was not yet affected by the reform) to the effects of the ongoing and completed shift to the comprehensive school system at the lower secondary level (2003, 2006 and 2009 PISA surveys). The OECD showcased Poland in a special study focusing on the impact of the reform on the achievement level and its more equitable distribution in 2010 (OECD 2010c).

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the comprehensive school—as a non-selective educational institution with common curriculum for all students without student separation in tracks, or streams, or ability groups—from the perspective of excellence of achievement and equality of distribution of achievement and the relation of educational expansion to equality of educational opportunity. Further, it contrasted integrated school systems, based on a comprehensive school for all, to differentiated systems that select students into different school types. It further established, based on PISA and TIMMS analyses, that mixed school systems, where differentiation coexists with comprehensive schooling by design, tradition, resistance to reform or impact of political and societal factors, are not as successful in the equitable distribution of educational achievement as comprehensive school systems with one school for all are.

With the results of the globally influential OECD PISA assessment surveys and also the TIMSS surveys conducted by IEA being more frequently referenced at national, world, regional, professional association levels, the idea of comprehensive schooling has been revived in the recent years. The recent rigorous research studies showed that the comprehensive school may 'have it all'. It achieves excellence in achievement, raises student achievement more equitably irrespective of student socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, creates a greater number of high achievers and lowers the number of low achieving students.

In post-socialist countries, comprehensive schooling at the lower secondary educational level was once a signature feature, but, as schooling under socialism received its due criticism, it was largely demystified and a more individualistic philosophy of education underpinned reforms in the post-socialist nations. The ideologically untainted success of comprehensive schooling improving achievement and its equitable distribution, according to the recent cross-national student assessment comparisons, further validates unified school systems over mixed or differentiated models. The effects of the Czech and Polish educational reforms, lowering differentiation into academic and vocational tracks to the beginning of the lower secondary level in the Czech case and postponing it by at least one year to the beginning of the new upper secondary level in the Polish case, are captured in the PISA performance data and are instructive in highlighting the advantages of comprehensive over differentiated schooling systems.

The evidence in favour of comprehensive school systems over differentiated school systems continues to accumulate, its case grows stronger, and its support by such increasingly influential and trusted global players as OECD and possibly IEA is expanding. In this context, would comprehensive schooling become a new 'global ideal'? This new revival of the comprehensive school agenda is curiously promoted by global, regional and national agents outside of the post-socialist world, helping it to appear unbiased and credible. It remains to be seen how this message is going to resonate within national educational systems of the post-socialist nations in the future.

Appendix

Mean scores, between-school and within-school variance in student performance (SP) on math scale PISA (2000–2009)

Country	Math mean score 2000	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math mean score 2003	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math mean score 2006	Variance expressed as % of avg variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math Mean Score 2009
		1	2	3			1	2	3			1	2	3		
Japan	557	m	m	m	Finland	544	81.1	3.9	72.2	Finland	548	78.2	5.8	72.4	Korea	546
Korea	547	84.2	34.1	50.7	Korea	542	99.3	42.0	58.1	Korea	547	102.9	41.9	61.9	Finland	541
New Zealand	537	111.7	20.0	91.8	Netherlands	538	91.9	54.5	39.5	Netherlands	531	93.7	58.5	33.9	Liechtenstein	536
Finland	536	74.8	3.4	71.5	Liechtenstein	536	114.2	c	c	Switzerland	530	113.8	39.4	70.0	Switzerland	534
Australia	533	95.5	16.3	78.5	Japan	534	116.3	62.1	55.0	Canada	527	87.4	18.2	69.9	Japan	529
Canada	533	84.1	14.8	68.8	Canada	532	88.7	15.1	72.6	Liechtenstein	525	103.5	c	c	Canada	527
Switzerland	529	117.1	46.0	69.8	Belgium	529	121.7	56.9	66.7	Japan	523	97.2	52.8	46.4	Netherlands	526
United Kingdom	529	m	m	m	Switzerland	527	111.0	36.4	70.2	New Zealand	522	101.8	15.7	86.8	New Zealand	519
Belgium	520	122.1	64.5	61.4	Australia	524	105.1	22.0	82.3	Australia	520	92.1	19.7	72.4	Belgium	515
France	517	w	w	w	New Zealand	523	110.0	20.1	90.9	Belgium	520	133.4	69.4	62.4	Australia	514
Austria	515	102.4	57.5	53.9	Czech Republic	516	99.8	50.5	55.2	Estonia	515	77.8	19.2	57.8	Germany	513
Denmark	514	85.2	12.7	73.2	Iceland	515	94.5	3.6	90.9	Denmark	513	85.5	14.9	72.8	Estonia	512
Iceland	514	82.6	4.4	78.4	Denmark	514	96.4	13.0	84.1	Czech Republic	510	127.5	77.1	64.2	Iceland	507
Liechtenstein	514	107.5	c	c	France	511	w	w	w	Iceland	506	92.8	8.5	85.3	Denmark	503
Sweden	510	102.3	7.7	94.7	Sweden	509	103.3	10.9	92.7	Austria	505	115.7	69.5	54.5	Slovenia	501
Ireland	503	81.9	9.3	72.7	Austria	506	98.4	55.4	49.5	Slovenia	504	95.5	74.0	47.9	Norway	498
Norway	499	99.0	8.7	90.3	Germany	503	108.3	56.4	52.6	Germany	504	116.2	55.5	36.9	France	497
Czech Republic	498	101.2	40.9	61.1	Ireland	503	83.9	13.4	71.2	Sweden	502	95.1	14.1	82.4	Slovak Republic	497
United States	493	104.5	33.0	73.2	Slovak Republic	498	98.6	41.5	58.0	Ireland	501	80.4	15.5	65.4	Poland	495
Germany	490	114.3	59.5	56.2	Norway	495	98.1	6.5	91.6	France	496	w	w	w	Sweden	494

Hungary	488	108.9	54.0	54.7	Luxembourg	493	98.1	31.1	67.6	Poland	495	89.8	13.3	78.1	Czech Republic	493
Russian Federation	478	127.6	45.5	81.9	Hungary	490	95.4	49.0	47.3	United Kingdom	495	93.6	20.1	69.7	United Kingdom	492
Spain	476	96.4	16.8	78.8	Poland	490	94.7	12.0	83.1	Slovak Republic	492	107.3	54.5	57.3	Hungary	490
Poland	470	117.8	63.2	53.3	Spain	485	90.8	17.2	70.1	Hungary	491	99.0	74.0	39.7	Luxembourg	489
Latvia	463	125.7	33.8	92.4	United States	483	104.9	27.1	78.3	Luxembourg	490	104.5	33.2	70.6	Ireland	487
Italy	457	95.7	41.7	57.7	Latvia	483	90.2	20.6	71.0	Norway	490	99.3	10.7	88.6	Portugal	487
Portugal	454	97.8	29.0	67.7	Russian Federation	468	98.9	29.7	69.1	Latvia	486	82.1	18.4	63.9	United States	487
Greece	447	139.0	65.8	77.2	Italy	466	106.5	56.8	52.0	Lithuania	486	96.7	32.0	67.2	Italy	483
Mexico	387	81.7	41.3	41.8	Portugal	466	89.0	30.3	60.0	Spain	480	94.6	14.8	77.0	Spain	483
Brazil	334	112.4	42.1	73.0	Greece	445	101.8	38.8	68.0	Azerbaijan	476	27.8	19.9	15.0	Latvia	482
OECD average		100.0	32.4	68.6	Serbia	437				Russian Federation	476	96.4	27.9	71.0	Lithuania	477
					Turkey	423	127.4	68.6	56.5	United States	474	97.1	26.4	68.6	Russian Federation	468
					Uruguay	422	115.4	53.5	68.6	Croatia	467	83.6	32.7	52.4	Greece	466
					Thailand	417	78.2	30.3	51.0	Portugal	466	98.7	33.1	65.6	Croatia	460
					Mexico	385	84.9	29.0	44.8	Italy	462	109.0	59.1	54.0	Israel	447
					Indonesia	360	75.4	31.6	39.5	Greece	459	101.9	46.5	65.2	Turkey	445
					Tunisia	359	78.0	32.8	44.9	Israel	442	137.7	56.9	83.6	Serbia	442
					Brazil	356	116.3	49.2	59.8	Serbia	435	100.7	44.5	61.3	Azerbaijan	431
					OECD average		100.0	33.0	67.4	Uruguay	427	118.6	47.5	69.2	Bulgaria	428
										Turkey	424	104.5	54.7	47.9	Romania	427
										Thailand	417	79.9	29.8	52.0	Uruguay	427
										Romania	415	84.6	43.4	40.7	Chili	421
										Bulgaria	413	122.4	62.9	60.0	Mexico	419

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Country	Math mean score 2000	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math mean score 2003	Variance expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math mean score 2006	Variance expressed as % of avg variance in SP across OECD countries			Country	Math Mean Score 2009
		1	2	3			1	2	3			1	2	3		
										Chile	411	92.7	58.2	46.4	Thailand	419
										Mexico	406	87.4	31.0	42.2	Montenegro	403
										Montenegro	399	86.8	20.9	62.6	Argentina	388
										Indonesia	391	77.0	33.0	33.3	Jordan	387
										Jordan	384	82.9	19.6	60.5	Brazil	386
										Argentina	381	122.6	60.9	59.2	Colombia	381
										Brazil	370	101.8	52.2	46.6	Indonesia	371
										Colombia	370	93.3	35.8	61.0	Tunisia	371
										Tunisia	365	101.7	48.1	53.0	Qatar	368
										Qatar	318	100.3	60.5	53.5	Kyrgyzstan	331
										Kyrgyzstan	311	90.1	37.9	51.5		
										OECD average		100.0	36.8	64.6		

Source: OECD (2001, 2004, 2007, 2010a, b)

1—Total variance in SP expressed as % of average variance in SP across OECD countries

2—Total Variance in SP between schools

3—Total Variance in SP within schools

Statistically significantly above the OECD average

Not statistically significantly different from the OECD average

Statistically significantly below the OECD average

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