

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **The Intractable Dominant Educational Paradigm**

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On a recent research project in Ethiopia I was often reminded by proud Ethiopian educators that they were one of the only African nations never to have been colonized (other than a brief occupation by the Italians) by the West and therefore did not suffer from many of the post-colonial educational legacies as did other African and third world nations. Yet, when one visited their pre-collegiate schools and their universities there was little that one could call “Ethiopian” about them. In fact, they appeared remarkably like schools one would visit almost anywhere else in the world, only poorer. Where traditional features did exist (i.e. the teacher institutes) they were rapidly changing them to more contemporary, recognizable organizations (teacher colleges). They closely followed what Tyack and Cuban (1995 ) call the “grammar of schooling”. More to the point, they were seeking to more closely emulate schools in the West, especially the United States (although one prominent educator expressed interest in learning more from China’s educational experience). And, when pressed further as to why they wanted to emulate these dominant models from the North, the answer almost invariably came back “so we can develop like them.” They were following a variant and seeking to more closely emulate what here we are calling the “dominant educational paradigm.”

It is doubtful that there would ever be agreement among social scientists and other scholars that there is one dominant educational paradigm that can be observed, dissected and analyzed. In fact the argument can be made that multiple paradigms perhaps linked by common threads can be found in various settings that themselves are quite different. Nevertheless, when one steps back it is possible to discern trends and patterns in the history of formal education, and in light of theories of social change and concepts of development, we can see that certain assumptions came to be accepted to the point that we can trace a history in the development of a paradigm. After all is said and done, this paradigm came to dominate in most respects the enterprise of formal education as it has developed world-wide especially after WWII. Elements of this dominant paradigm and other paradigms of course have existed since humans began to structure learning in an institutionalized manner, but since the late 1940's a template has emerged that is instantly recognizable wherever one goes in both the so-called developing and developed world.

It is the intent of this chapter to trace some of that development, to provide the broad outlines of this paradigm, and illustrate how entrenched it has become. There is no effort here to "prove" that this is the case but rather to put forward some ideas about the relationship between education and social change/development that will help us understand why there appears to be such homogeneity in the basic structure of education world-wide, and with globalization, ever increasing similarities. While scholars such as Cummings (2003) have convincingly argued that there are several distinct "institutions" of education, the over-arching paradigm as described herein remains very constant.

It is not clear when one can say formal schools developed but they surely existed in antiquity in China, India, Greece, Rome, Egypt and no doubt elsewhere. The rise of formal

schools to serve the state also seems to be well established early in history (Fagerlind, 1989 p. 35). But the link between formal schooling and economic and social development was not well established or accepted until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when as Fagerlind (1989, p. 40) notes: “This conviction [education contributes to economic growth] was to become more widespread throughout the West such that by the end of World War II, education was seen as the *most important*, and indeed an essential engine for both the “take-off” into industrialization by the less developed countries, as well as for the transition of the already developed countries to post-industrial stages” . It is here that we will begin our story, looking at some concepts of development that have become widely accepted, how education came to be seen as a panacea for all manner of social problems, how the now dominant paradigm spread throughout the developing and developed world, and where we are today.

## **I. Concepts of Development**

Notions of social progress, forward movement, and social change have characterized the intellectual history of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars sought to understand in a more or less grand manner, how societies change and develop. Various efforts have been made to categorize these theories and here we will concentrate on only a few of the more influential of these grand theories as they all contributed to providing the underlying theoretical rationale for what we are calling the dominant educational paradigm.

Later theories of “modernization” applied to the nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East all owe something to earlier thinking about evolution. Darwinian theories of complexity and dominance contributed to social scientists’ notion of unilinear development. Sociologists such as Levy (1967: 190) perhaps said it best: “We are

confronted—whether for good or for bad—with a *universal* [italics mine] social solvent. The patterns of the relatively modernized societies, once developed, have shown a universal tendency to penetrate any social context whose participants have come in contact with them. . . . The patterns *always* penetrate; once the penetration has begun, and they *always* change in the direction of some of the patterns of the relatively modernized societies.” This line of thinking has been applied to the institutions of education and the implications are that for the past several decades notions of forward progress and educational change seem to be linked and explanatory notions such as functionalism, systems theory, and neo-evolutionary theories have been prominent among theories of social change and in discussions of educational change and reform. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) point out thirty years later, American educators and policy makers at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century certainly had ingrained in their thinking the notion that progress in education was axiomatic to social progress in general. There are many variations under the general rubric of evolutionary theories and the interested reader can go to Applebaum (1970) for an extended discussion. But it is enough to point out here that belief in forward progress and the essential role that education plays in that progress has been an important theoretical building block for what has become the dominant paradigm.

Another theoretical perspective that influenced functionalism, systems theory as well as cultural lag theory, and human ecology theory, is equilibrium theory. Imbedded in it is the notion of homeostasis, or uniform state. Homans (1950:303-304) describes it as “the state of the elements that enter the system and of the mutual relationships between is such that any small change in one of the elements will be followed by changes in the other elements tending to reduce the amount of that change.” In other words, the system will seek to go

back into equilibrium. Many scholars and practitioners of educational reform will find familiar the idea that no sooner is a reform introduced than the educational system finds a way to modulate it. Or as Applebaum (1970: 67, 72) states, equilibrium theory and its other expressions “has a conservative bias against endogenous structural change. . . nothing new and unique, no important transformations, ever happen in the normal world of equilibrium theory.”

This may be another example of the inappropriate application of natural science theory to the social sciences or as Radcliff-Brown amusingly stated: “. . .an animal organism does not, in the course of its life, change its structural type. A pig does not become a hippopotamus. . .on the other hand, a society in the course of its history can and does change its structural type without any breach of continuity” (Applebaum 1970). The influence of equilibrium theory on the thinking of educational policy makers, scholars, and political figures can be assumed to have stunted the ability to think “outside the box” in any real way. It helps us see why numerous educational reforms fail. It has influenced a whole generation of social scientists (Davis, 1949, Ogburn, 1922, Parsons, 1951, 1966).

The change theories discussed above all tend toward stability as a central goal. Conflict theory, on the other hand, coming out of a Marxist tradition, sees just the opposite. In this view, systems are inherently unstable and in fact, the desire for social stability, for non-change, actually produces the conditions for rapid and dramatic change, as elements of the social system struggle to transform themselves. While much of early Marxist theory has been rejected, elements of conflict have been retained. Scholars such as Dahrendorf (1959, Aron (1966), Brinton (1952), Kerr (1954) (the eventual architect of the California Master Plan) Coser (1956) and others, while operating outside the mainstream of sociology

nevertheless revived the notion of conflict as a driving force for social change. The focus shifted to interest group conflict and illustrated the inherent tensions within systems. Education along with other elements of the social system could also be seen as a dynamic force, coming into conflict with the more conservative social forces thus contributing to social change. A dialectical view of social institutions allowed for the possibility of both minor and major social change. In the end, conflict theory did not effectively challenge the dominant paradigm so well represented by the previous theoretical approaches.

What remains are the grander theories of social change, of the rise and fall of civilizations, the processes of growth and decay that have been exemplified by Spengler (1969), Sorokin (1947) and to some degree Weber (1964). But it is the more focused theories of social change referred to above that have most illuminated attitudes toward educational change and have buttressed the bulwarks that have been erected against systemic change.

Sometime after WWII a more specifically developmental literature emerged seeking to explain how and why nations develop and grow, usually expressed in economic terms. Rostow's (1960) stages of growth was perhaps one of the most well known theories of this type. It represented a kind of teleological concept of development shared by certain Marxist theories. Rostow saw all societies progressing through five stages: traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take off, drive to maturity, and finally, the age of high mass consumption. Each stage has its own educational character which works closely with the unseen forces that propel the society to the next stage. Thus it is difficult to think of alternative educational systems than the ones predetermined by the stage of growth each society finds itself in. There have been many criticisms of this approach in recent years but

even back in 1959 economists were recognizing the limitations of this vision and the propensity for lack of innovation and change (Sen 1959). Yet, one can still find thinking of this kind among policy-makers today (the current absolutist belief in the need to pass through “democracy” before any development can take place).

Parallel to these ideas, “modernization” theory in general began to emerge. This was an optimistic view of development characterized by “the need to achieve”(McClelland 1961) and measured by Inkes and Smith’s (1974) “modernity scale,” among other such views. There was general agreement that in order for a society to “develop” certain common values had to be held, (such as the need to achieve) and acquisition of these values could be planned for and acquired through such social institutions as schools, if they were not already present as a result of one’s cultural background. Formal schools were the best institutions in which this could occur with a planned curriculum, disciplines, units of study, graded classrooms, testing, and evaluation.

The curriculum in particular became a pillar of support for the dominant paradigm. The role of the formal and informal curriculum within the dominant paradigm was an essential part of the substructure that prevented alternative ways of viewing “education”. Without going into the origins of prevailing systems of the structure of knowledge (an enterprise that took Randall Collins (1998) over 1000 pages to come to terms with) suffice it to say that course identification, organization, presentation, content, and prioritization came to be identified with and support the goals and objectives of the dominant paradigm and itself to become impervious to change. The perennial concern as to what knowledge is worthwhile, the appropriateness of teaching patterns, and assessment have been argued over the years (from Dewey to Apple) yet fundamental patterns of curriculum at both

precollegiate and collegiate levels are readily recognized worldwide, with little or no debate or discussion.

The basic proposition was that there was a causal link between five sets of variables: modernizing institutions (i.e. schools); modern values (schools promote these); modern behaviors (school graduates exhibit this), modern society, and economic development. This proposition of causality further entrenched and contributed to the dominant paradigm.

All of these theoretical perspectives and the sub-theories they propagated, contributed to the development and shoring up of what we are calling the dominant educational paradigm. Evolutionary, equilibrium, structural-functionalism, modernization, human capital, Marxist, dependency, liberation and other such theories all viewed education as a central force for change and saw *formal* schooling as one of the, if not the principal agent of social change. They went hand in hand with a series of policy initiatives that were being discussed world-wide and a more fully developed formula of the relationship between education and national development.

## **II. Education as Panacea**

By the end of WWII and through the 1950's and 1960's the belief that education was the most important factor in development, was well entrenched among academics, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners as well as agencies such as UNESCO, OECD and others. Not that education was a crucial factor but that it was *the most* crucial factor. The theoretical and practical belief in this causal link was so high and the evidence so weak that my colleague Don Adams (1977: 300) referred to it as “one of the most romantic tales of the



century.” Yet it persisted and became central to the thinking of many in the field of education and national development, and a major component of the dominant paradigm.

A convenient starting point for this paradigm is 1948 with the Declaration of the Basic Rights of Man by the United Nations (UN). The belief became widespread that in order for many nations to achieve their “basic rights” in the midst of great inequalities in economic development, the gulf between the rich and poor nations of the world would have to be bridged: education was the sector of society that would do this.

This belief was best summed up by none other than President Truman who declared in his Point Four:

“Fourth, we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions that approach misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people.” (Mountjoy, p. 9)

Apart from language that is no longer used (e.g. “primitive”) this statement could have been made yesterday. The key point was that “knowledge and skills” were what was needed and while he did not specify formal schools as the principal mechanism to achieve these goals, others in the development world did. With major organizations like the UN and political leaders like President Truman backing these kinds of development efforts, it is not surprising that the 1950’s and 1960’s were dubbed the “development decades”, in which the enlightened, developed nations, the rich nations, would band together to solve the problems of the less developed world, largely through the importation and adaptation of Western economic and social models, especially formal schooling. The rebuilding of both Japan and

Germany after WWII was evidence to many that investment in education and manpower would allow other “devastated” nations, in the less developed world, to achieve remarkable growth. The “hardware” (physical plant, cities, etc.) could be utterly destroyed but if the “software” (human talent and a belief in learning and knowledge) remained or could be nurtured, anything was possible.

Gradually, the architecture of the dominant paradigm became clearer. Essentially a Western model, it stressed the relationship between investment in education and the economic development that would take place as a result. It was, as several critics noted, overly optimistic. By the late 1960’s it was already recognized that problems existed with this approach. The expansion of formal schooling resulted in many cases in a shortage of qualified teachers. Competing economic pressures on other sectors resulted in wastage and the inability of schools to retain students. The inappropriateness of the curriculum became apparent, and an increasing imbalance between rural and urban development emerged. Women’s education lagged behind as did that of minorities within systems with a dominant culture. Finally, higher education was not training for development but rather for the bureaucracy and high professions (Adams and Bjork: 1969).

The novel part of the development decades was the degree to which development came to be defined as primarily economic development, which came to be seen as the providing of capital and training for human resource development. As Tuqan (1975: 23) notes: “It seems to follow from this that if schools and other higher institutions of learning are to be assigned the task of filling the manpower gap, the development of society will in turn follow from formal schooling. Educational aid and methods [for formal schooling] thus came to occupy a significant place in the development effort.” This in turn created rising

expectations, in which education played a central role. Myrdal spoke of the “Great Awakening”, in which most nations of the world would move toward freedom and national growth with education playing the central role (Myrdal 1957).

The populations of most Asian developing nations came to see the role of “developer” as simple: mobilize substantial resources, transfer them to the developing nation which would then encourage them to exploit their own resources to the maximum. Development was seen as a straight forward and powerful process and, as one scholar noted, “. . .the accompanying intense propaganda regarding the potency of development aid . . . induced the belief that this aid would lead straight to prosperity for all” (Tuqan 1975: 24). A series of bi and multilateral agreements were entered into by many nations, the net result of which was to make people “more development minded”. As education was touted as being one of the main routes to the better life, it was not surprising that “the consumptive capacity for schooling grew out of all proportion to the concomitant increase in its productive capacity” (Tuqan 1975: 25). As newly independent states began building for the future, the modern bureaucratic sector became the main source of employment for the newly educated. A very powerful vested interest in the furthering of formal schooling had been created.

The main component of this dominant educational paradigm formula (investment in education = economic growth) had much to recommend it. The human capital theorists were on some solid ground in this respect. But even in the midst of this optimistic view, studies were demonstrating that the formula was not entirely true either. Questions were raised about what kind of education was appropriate, at what levels, the quality and nature of instruction, the appropriateness of the curriculum, the nature of the tracking system, the limitations of the formal lock-step system, as well as other issues (Fagerlind 1975). In other

words, several studies pointed out the simplistic and in many cases, inaccuracies of the formula--investment in education = economic growth--yet educational policy makers and aid and technical assistance agencies continued to promote this idea uncritically and ministries of education and government bureaus continued to blindly accept it and poured funds into the formal system without much consideration of educational alternatives.

Another component of the dominant paradigm was the idea that years of formal schooling = greater learning which in turn = more income. Again, data can be marshaled to support this thesis but there are also data to show that formal schools are only a part of this equation. Studies conducted from the 1960's through the 1980's demonstrated convincingly that a great deal of learning and cognitive development takes place outside the formal school and in some cases, more appropriate and significant learning takes place in this context (Resnick 1987). Yet this sector always took a back seat to the formal system if it was allowed in the car at all. Formal schools and more of them was the order of the day for most developing nations. By the mid-1980's educational expansion at all levels characterized "education and development".

Finally, along with this entrenched belief and deepening expansion of the formal school system came what Ronald Dore called the "educational displacement phenomenon" (Dore 1976). The "diploma disease" became linked to the job market and the increasing demand for education and credentials. As the number of those receiving various levels of educational credentials rose, requirements for jobs expanded accordingly and credentials, degrees, became screening devices resulting in the over qualification of many for the available jobs. As the formal system expanded, the cost of education rose, and the demand for credentials grew. A parallel expansion occurred in the educational bureaucracy to

support, manage and plan this system, and thereby resulted in an increase in those with a vested interest in maintaining or growing the dominant educational paradigm. An industry had been built and options for imagining any alternative to the formal system declined. It was not until 1999 that a Nobel Prize caliber economist would question this developmental model and suggest some major alterations in the dominant paradigm (Sen 1999).

To sum up, by the mid 1980's several features of this dominant paradigm had become entrenched such that alternatives were difficult to imagine. Observations of formal schooling included such features as:

- An authoritarian relationship as the core of the teacher-learner interaction
- Teachers are insecure due to poor pay and lack of training
- Teaching methods do not benefit from knowledge about cognitive psychology and child development
- Teachers discourage discussion and questioning and adhere to textbooks
- The main function of schooling is to select entrants to the next educational level
- The selection is through a highly competitive examination system which requires the reproduction of rote learning rather than critical thought; tracking becomes a permanent feature
- The main activities of the formal school system are directed toward preparing pupils for these examinations
- The student and parents are preoccupied with certificate-status rather than with the essence of what is taught (Tuqan 1983; Oakes 1985)

Each of these features of the formal educational system, taking place at first in just a few countries, eventually would spread world-wide.

### **III. The Paradigm Spreads**

As Cummings notes (2003), educational expansion is a complex matter and no single experience dominates the history of formal school expansion. He notes that in his “core” nations (Japan, France, England, Prussia/Germany, US, Russia) educational expansion took place differentially and for different reasons. And in the colonies that these nations occupied, the pace and method of expansion was imitated, thus spreading across the world. The key point here, however, is the underlying belief in the utility of the formal school which became the dominant belief system. As indicated above, human capital theory was perhaps one of the theories most responsible for this enchantment with formal education and development (Schultz 1961, Denison 1962, Becker 1964). There was general agreement among this group of economists that for economic development to take place two factors were essential: 1. Technological improvements; 2. Development and expansion of formal schools. These beliefs lasted unchallenged until the mid 1980’s.

It is useful to once again look retrospectively to examine the context in which this paradigm expanded. By the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, the notion of economic development being linked to manpower development, formal schooling contributing to that growth and promoting national unity, external aid as essential, growing demand for schooling and therefore educational expansion, all were accepted as truisms in the developed nations. This was the model that was consciously promoted to the less developed nations. To this end, four international regional conferences were held in the 1960’s each of which promoted variations on this model to ministers of education and other educational policy makers in the region.

In 1961 in Addis Ababa, the “Conference of African States and the Development of Education” was held. Among the recommendations made to participants from Africa was the goal of establishing universal and compulsory formal education for six years by 1980. Certain minimum educational enrollment ratios and years of schooling were based on UNESCO recommendations (UNESCO-ECA 1961). In Asia a similar conference was held in Karachi which became known as the Karachi Plan. In 1962 a follow-up meeting was held in Tokyo which focused on the future needs for secondary and higher education, and agreement that by 1980 expenditures for education should reach 5% of GNP for participating nations. A conference in Santiago covered a similar agenda for Latin America. Thus, a process that had begun in the 1950’s had been enshrined and validated by several international conferences which set ambitious quantitative targets for enrollments, school levels, achievement, expenditure as a percentage of GNP and all based on the assumptions of the previously developing paradigm, linking formal education with development and economic growth. Very few questioned the validity of the approach or suggested alternatives (The Needs of Asia 1961).

Establishing a formal school system for economic development was not the only priority for leaders of newly independent nations. They were also concerned about national unity. A major task was to build nations out of diverse populations. Differing ethnic groups, castes, linguistic groups and other groups threatened to disrupt the social fabric of the new independent nations. Education was seen as the principal way to mold heterogeneous populations into more homogeneous groups with common mores and values. Education for national integration also became a rallying cry in the 1960’s. In many nations, education had to shift from its colonial goals of socialization and training of administrators to producing

specialized skills and technocrats for the expansion of agriculture and industry as well as other skilled professionals (especially medical, education and planning).

The critical role that formal schools were to play for national integration and upward mobility evolved as James Coleman noted in 1965 (358) somewhat as follows: “When an essentially static society marked by widespread illiteracy and a predominance of ascriptive criteria moves toward a dynamic and modernizing society where education is the principal criterion of upward mobility and stratificational position, each successive wave of better educated persons presents a challenge to its predecessor.” Coleman refers to this as “generational discontinuities” and it helps to explain the sense of investment that political and other leaders had in the formal schooling system. They themselves were products of this system and many became bureaucrats and educated civil servants that managed and reproduced it.

The school was also expected to perform a much more active role in socialization of the child than was expected in the West. As Coleman (1965: 22) further notes: “[in the West] . . . the school had only a modest socialization task to perform. . .in the developing countries today schools are expected to carry a much heavier load of socialization. . .whatever they accomplish, they will make a proportionately larger marginal effect upon the lives of the residents. . .than do most schools in the West.” He is suggesting that the effect of formal schooling was intensified in developing nations. The route to better jobs, moving from rural to urban areas, gaining admission to the civil service and politics, and traveling abroad all depended to a large degree on whether or not one was “schooled”.

The juggernaut of the dominant paradigm did not go unchallenged. In the 1970’s, spurred on by books such as Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1970), a number of scholars



challenged the formal school and all that it stood for. Illich made the argument as to why we must disestablish the formal school: “The pupil is . . . “schooled” to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is schooled to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work . . . Not only education, but social reality has become schooled” (Illich 1970: 1). He suggested replacing educational “funnels” with educational “webs” and, foretelling the internet and blogs, proposed replacing formal schools with learning webs so that a new educational approach would “. . . provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and finally furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known” (Illich 1970: 75). For the first time since Illich wrote this over thirty years ago the internet makes an “educational web” way of learning feasible and indeed many are learning precisely in this way; outside the formal educational structure. Illich’s ideas as well as those of others in the nonformal and alternative education movement were quickly pushed off stage as the dominant paradigm continued to roll forward.

In Chapter 10 of this book, Farrell discusses the strengths of educational alternatives. Indeed, during the 1970’s and 1980’s a number of innovative and in many respects successful efforts were launched to provide an alternative to the formal, lock-step system of schooling. In China, *minban* schools (now back in vogue but in a different form) provided local, community practical training for realistic rural development and Freirean schools in

Latin America focused on empowerment and consciousness raising. Throughout much of the developing world, radio education, worker and peasant colleges, women's cooperatives and a host of other alternatives were proposed and enacted but none really succeeded in challenging the formal system. By the 1980's they had either been transformed into the formal system or had been marginalized altogether. Farrell points out that several innovative efforts have been reintroduced and once again are demonstrating that it is possible to offer meaningful, transformative education outside the formal system but one once again one worries about the future of these efforts. Nevertheless, these efforts are worth watching closely as perhaps being elements or steps toward a new paradigm.

By the late 1970's and through the 1980's and 1990's scholars such as Hans Weiler (1978), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and others challenged the belief that education was a panacea. While not denying the links between formal schooling and productivity they questioned the degree to which this dominant paradigm was promoting the interests of certain social classes and questioned whether or not social inequities were being altered by the formal system. A number of competing theories during this period were openly critiquing the dominant paradigm: deficit theory, dependency theory, varieties of conflict theory, neo-Marxism among others. Scholars were finding that educational reformers had underestimated the inflexibility of the formal educational system to adapt to change or the larger global forces at work. Finally, holding the system together--a bureaucratic glue of rules and regulations--was an entire industry of certification, accreditation and evaluation.

#### **IV. Where We Are Today**

This brief recap of educational developments since WWII has obviously left out many important events, decisions, policies and critiques. And, one could debate many of the propositions and interpretations presented above. Nevertheless, writers and observers from a variety of perspectives and periods have reached similar conclusions regarding the structure and dominance of formal schooling. Writing more than thirty years ago, Illich (1970: 74) concluded, perhaps overdramatically: “In other words, schools are fundamentally alike in all countries, be they fascist, democratic, or socialist, big, small, rich or poor. This identity of the school system forces us to recognize the profound world-wide identity of myth, mode of production, and method of social control, despite the great variety of mythologies in which the myth finds expression.” More recently, Tyack and Cuban (1995: 7) stated more prosaically: “Over long periods of time, schools have remained basically similar in their core operation, so much so that these regularities have imprinted themselves on students, educators, and the public as the essential features of a ‘real school’”.

Somehow, we all know what a “real” school is when we see it. Most of us have attended one or more and everyone has an opinion and is an “expert” on education and schooling. And, we resist activities that presume to be “educational” but do not resemble “real” schools. Thus, the rise and fall of the educational alternative movement all over the world. Most nations now invest heavily in constructing mass education, formal systems, lock-step with the usual three levels. It is hard to find a nation anywhere (including such places as North Korea) where this dominant model is not immediately recognizable. And, in the context of globalization, the homogenization of the “real” school, whether it be a pre-school or research university, appears to be a world-wide phenomenon.

Stromquist (2002: 1) notes that while many believe globalization has effected primarily the political-economic context while leaving space for national and cultural differences, it in fact has had a powerful impact on local values and mores, “. . .moving us toward greater homogeneity” especially in the realms of values and power. The dominant paradigm really is dominant now in most spheres of life including values so that “individualism and competition are highly dominant values, with little space left for contestatory and liberatory thought.” In the author’s own multi-national study of values education (Cummings, Tatto, & Hawkins 2000) it was found that dominant values of individualism, entrepreneurship, and self-direction were found as pre-eminent in such disparate political, economic and cultural settings as Taiwan and China, the US and Russia.

World-wide forces have historically shaped educational change so what is happening in the globalized era is not necessarily new (see Deane Neubauer’s chapter in this book) but globalization has added a much more powerful dimension to the further alignment of schooling with the dominant paradigm. Carnoy (2002: 2) suggests: “It is true that education appears to have changed little at the classroom level in most countries . . .teaching methods and national curricula remain largely intact. Even one of the most important educational reforms associated with globalization, the decentralization of educational administration and finance, seems to have little or no effect on educational delivery in classrooms, despite its implementation.” Globalization assures the spread of the dominant paradigm while at the same time altering it to suit the needs of the globalized economy. Demand for education is even more intense as nations (still important policy actors even in the midst of globalization) seek to attract foreign capital by producing the kind of skilled human resources demanded by the new economy. Correspondingly, in order to provide for comparable educational

products, evaluation, testing, and other measures and standards have become more universal and ubiquitous. Accountability is the order of the day. Because of parallel trends in reducing the state share of educational expenditures (decentralization) information technology is being utilized to increase the quantity of education at lower cost. Some interesting paradoxes have been the variation that remains within the more conventional state. Once again, Carnoy (2002: 6): “. . .policies prescribed by the same paradigm but applied in different contexts produce different practices—so different in some cases—that it is difficult to imagine that they were the result of the same policy.” Thus, the variation that exists within the dominant paradigm leading some to conclude that innovative and radical change is actually occurring.

This can lead us to ponder several propositions as we contemplate where we are with respect to educational change:

- Educational restructuring and reform is not occurring from democratic, national development policy deliberation, but rather from external processes and pressures linked to economic globalization, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the increasing commodification of knowledge.
- There has been a shift toward a global standardization of educational curricula and credentials that goes beyond former efforts of colonization
- Educational policy makers have sought to improve national competitiveness in the global market place by changing their educational systems and the role of the state

with respect to:

- Education Provision
- Education Financing
- Education regulation

- Globalization has forced a new language on educational policy makers, with terms such as:
  - Privatization
  - Marketization
  - Corporatization
  - Strategic planning
  - Decentralization
  - Branding
  - Accountability
  - Assessment
- Globalization has forced the shift of higher education from being a cultural institution to being a service institution
- GATS has redefined education such that it is now treated as a commodity, similar to soybeans, and therefore can be exported to nation states thereby competing with national systems

These are just a selection from many that could be made. But they illustrate the point that globalization has profoundly affected how we navigate in the education world, it has even more firmly entrenched the dominant paradigmatic reliance on formal schooling and allows for little substantive change of the basic system of “real” schools. Even Cummings (2003) who has persuasively argued the case for differentiation notes that nevertheless, there is great pressure toward homogeneity, toward a dominant convergence of a particular kind of schooling. Schugurensky (2003) goes even further and argues that for higher education there

has been a convergence unprecedented in the history of those institutions, leading under globalization to what he calls the “heteronomous” model.

So, what can we expect in the way of alternatives to this well entrenched paradigm? Innovative development economists like Sen (1999) have captured the attention of some reformers by suggesting that we can make a distinction between the more traditional, dominant, human capital approach, and that of what he calls “human capability as an expression of human freedom.” Sen (1999: 292-4) acknowledges the power of the dominant paradigm when he states: “. . .through education, learning, skill formation, people can become much more productive over time, and this contributes greatly to the process of economic expansion . . . this can add to the value of production in the economy and also to the income of the person who has been educated.” But he goes on to say that education should and can do more; that it can help people to have “the freedom to achieve more” and it is this focus on development for freedom that offers an alternative to the more linear dominant paradigm that we have been discussing. Or, as Sen notes, a way of going *beyond* human capital to include social change and see the change power of education.

But this is not necessarily a new argument and even Sen acknowledges is not a true alternative. Rather it shifts the focus from the mechanical formula of “more education = development” to a consideration of education for development and freedom. Not much has been heard of Sen’s optimistic outlook, however, since his book was published six years ago. In fact, he somewhat contradicts his argument earlier in the book when he discusses the contrast between India and China, noting that China, with fewer social and political freedoms, has outperformed India. He attributes this to China’s earlier investment in basic

health and education which have now paid off even as China turns to the market. India is still struggling with these basic health and educational issues (Sen 1999: 42).

Scholars such as Stromquist (2002) are not sanguine about the possibility of significant alternatives to the dominant paradigm. The effect of globalization, if anything, has further solidified the dominance of the paradigm we have been exploring. Power differentials have changed, decision-making has shifted from national educators to other actors (corporations, central governments, international agencies) and this has resulted in a relentless attack on experimentation in the public schools as well as schools that choose to go about business as usual; any reshaping of education that is occurring is at the behest of business corporations, the market, and less from what educational research tells us. Most “reforms” are shallow and aimed at the reduction of public costs for education rather than better schools or any alternative to the present formal system. Those “alternatives” that have been touted have resulted from an emphasis on privatization, charter schools, and voucher programs benefiting the wealthy.

Nevertheless, as Farrell points out in Chapter 10, innovative nonformal and alternative educational efforts have continued largely through the efforts of NGO’s and other local initiatives. Some of these programs offer very promising insights for educators worldwide yet little educational research is being conducted on this sector and the promise it might hold for the future.

Educational reforms in the US and elsewhere have been perennial yet as these authors argue “the basic grammar of schooling, like the shape of classrooms, has remained remarkably stable over the decades. Little has changed in the ways that schools divide time and space, classify students and allocate them to classrooms, splinter knowledge into



‘subjects’ and award grades and ‘credits’ as evidence of learning” (Tyak and Cuban 1995: 85). This template applies to all levels of education, from precollegiate to the most advanced graduate work. Variations exist to be sure but it is a well-established model which has resisted change over the decades.

We have these two issues, the “why” of education, which is the theoretical rationale for why we conduct schooling the way we do (the first part of this chapter) and the “method” of education, which has flowed from the why. We can see what has driven this “system” and we can see the method in which it has been implemented, a method or “grammar” that has been almost impervious to change and reform of any significant shape or form; we certainly have not witnessed a paradigm shift to match those found in other social sectors and professions. Despite the increasing complexity of the globalized world, formal education has trudged forward, in a unilinear fashion as has most of the thinking about *how* to think about it. The dominant paradigm reigns yet paradoxically, globalization, while further strengthening its position, has created a consciousness about its features and a resistance to its supremacy that may lead to more proactive reforms that will form the basic building blocks of a paradigm shift. What seems certain, however, is that if a paradigm shift in how we think about and practice “education” does not begin to take place in the near future, development as we know it will no longer proceed in even the most highly developed nations.

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