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OPEN FILE

THE CONTROL OF DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL

GUEST EDITOR:
ALFREDO FURLAN



INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

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ERRATUM

In *Prospects*, vol. XXVIII, no. 3, September 1998, page 404, first paragraph, the second sentence should read:
'The difference between academic freedom *and the freedom of an individual researcher* is that in the first case...'

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VIEWPOINTS/CONTROVERSIES

NEW THINKING

ON EDUCATION

Michel Crozier

A new approach to the main tendencies and problems

We simply must adopt a new approach to education. The assumptions on the basis of which education was developed during the main surge of post-war reconstruction have long been overtaken. The wave of enthusiasm that bore the West along in the 1950s and 1960s now appears no more than a misdirected and ineffective, albeit generously inspired, illusion. We thought then that we could rebuild the world and that education was the universal key to make that possible. The truth is we did not change the world. It changed itself, and rarely in the way we wanted.

We have to admit our failure, not with a view to throwing in the towel but rather so that we can better apprehend our responsibility in relation to the major developments we are faced with, and especially the problems that confront us. In fact, we have to change our philosophy. What we must do is not to try to build a new, ideal world, but to help men and women—in a world that has undergone radical change and that is moving ahead without any pre-established plan or vision—to cope with the problems that they now have to face and for which they are very poorly equipped by present-day education.

This means not so much that education has to be adapted to the world as it is, but rather that human beings must be given the ability to respond to the prob-

Original language: French

Michel Crozier (France)

Sociologist. Has spent most of his career heading the sociology department of organizations which he founded and which he has run for thirty years at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Professor at the University of Nanterre (1967-68), Harvard University (1967-70) and the University of California (1980-90). Directed advanced sociology studies (DEA) in political science for twenty years. His works include the internationally renowned *The bureaucratic phenomenon* (1965), and the more recent *La crise de l'intelligence* (1995) [The intelligence crisis]. Awarded the Tocqueville Prize in 1997.

lems that our world thrusts at them. They will thus become actors more responsible for the changes they will have to engineer themselves and which we cannot anticipate. What they need is not missions and objectives, but tools to help them analyse, choose, co-operate and implement their responses to emerging problems.

To guide us, there are three major strands in the development of human societies which I feel are of basic significance: greater freedom of choice for the individual; the complexity of human knowledge; and the ascendancy henceforth of relational considerations over hierarchical rationality in human activities.

Learning to be free

Teaching people to be free will be the fundamental challenge that education will have to face in the future. Everyone agrees that priority should be given to freedom as a value. What is often forgotten is that freedom, the only value that is conducive to personal development, is also a burden. Although there is no doubt that the school system should prepare the individual to assume this burden, it is not managing to do so at present, insofar as it retains an underlying passive approach, geared to accepting constraints rather than mastering the responsibility of choice.

In today's world, where a very strong, not to say overpowering connection has been established between success at school and the early opportunities of working life, school education is becoming 'counter-productive' from the point of view of preparing people for a working life. This working life imposes more and more choices and independent forms of experience, and forces them to reconsider their assets.

The school system still does not teach people either how to choose, or how to know and assess themselves in the light of those choices. The marking system encourages repetition for the sake of pleasing, rather than developing self-knowledge and self-testing. Decisive choices are imposed and made too early on, and the more irreversible those choices appear, the more anxiety they generate. A rational approach counsels caution. Children are learning neither to weigh up their own capacities, nor to recognize their own qualities and desires, nor to find new ways to experiment. Above all, they are not learning how to assume responsibility, or how to learn from their mistakes by themselves. These are the ways to forge an active identity.

How can the school system be changed so that it provides young people with what they need to become active, working people, at ease in the much more open, much less repressive, but also much more anxious world we live in, or which is round the corner? This time the blame lies with the way the school system is organized. Far greater responsibility must be given to teachers and school principals, who are the only ones who can organize the way children learn about freedom.

This would of course imply fewer restrictions imposed by the central system, particularly in terms of option streams and contents, as well as more opportunities for experimentation, but on the other hand a much greater effort of evaluation, not controlled from outside but based upon self-assessment and real experience.

Far greater attention should be paid to troublesome neighbourhoods, not as at present for the sake of restoring normality and peace, but because it is there that the sense of unhappiness becomes most acute as the price paid for freedom. It is there-

fore that kind of area that will offer the best chance of trying out new solutions. Drug addiction, delinquency and the 'lost' feeling all reflect the burden of freedom which we are unable to cope with and even less able to teach.

The challenge of complexity

Learning about freedom is part and parcel of acquiring knowledge. We were all too easily led in the past to think that it was enough to impart so-called basic knowledge for youngsters to be equipped for life, according to their personal capacities. In fact, change has been accelerating at such a rate that the problem we are facing is no longer how to acquire knowledge but how to master its complexity. Individuals are increasingly free in an incoherent world whose complexity they are unable to apprehend.

How can we prepare young people to face a world cluttered with a chaotic and even contradictory mass of information, which draws them into a deepening whirlpool of confusion? We must now accept that it is more important to develop reasoning skills than to acquire or accumulate knowledge, since such skills help to master not only the complexity of science and technology, but also the problems of life in society.

The present schooling system provides poor preparation for the times ahead, which are complex and puzzling for the average person. It is torn between the fundamentalism of the traditional approach, and an irresistible, demagogic drive towards an ever-greater intake and accumulation of knowledge designed as a means of keeping up to date with advances across the whole spectrum of learning. The fundamentalist approach is now obsolete. Because it is too linear, too causal and therefore too hierarchical, it imposes an unbearable burden on teachers and prevents them from understanding systemic determinants and hence from following complex reasoning. It also prevents any ordering of knowledge that needs to be memorized, thereby making it impossible to reduce either the quantity of such knowledge or its degree of confusion, whence the absurdity of encyclopaedic curricula that are so ill-adapted to children's real capacities.

We now need a new pedagogy of learning, and this will require a fresh approach. It has to be much more carefully thought out, not so much concerning content in an encyclopaedic sense, but rather, looking ahead, to the usefulness of content from the point of view of learning, and especially of developing a reasoning ability. What matters is what is learned and the ability to make use of the knowledge acquired by linking it to other knowledge and other forms of reasoning.

This new pedagogy must become one of the prime tasks of teachers, who must be allowed enough time, enough freedom to experiment and enough means to develop more effective co-operation in local training and research centres.

The rise of relational factors

Post-industrial society will be increasingly governed by relational considerations. The top immaterial tasks are, of course, in essence relational. Although inventions are often made by one person, they happen in a relational context, and practical outlets will be found for new concepts derived from inventions only through a relational

system, which is effective not only at the top but also in the middle echelons, and especially in the actual hands-on activities, which are increasingly dependent on relational intelligence.

The school system absolutely must develop this intelligence and these abilities. In the tradition that we have such difficulty relinquishing, very little attention is given to developing co-operative attitudes among children or between children and adults.

The first problem is the ability to listen. Acquiring this ability and the analytical skill that will make it both effective and fascinating is surely what is most lacking at present. We still react to a listening problem by thinking that it stems from the originator and that the answer is clearer speech, whereas the first step is to listen better. A person who is able to listen to others will then be able to ensure that speech becomes an act of communication. For that person, listening will constitute the first gesture of respect and tolerance that will open the way to democratic dialogue.

The present school system forces children to listen passively and fails to teach them the discipline involved in active listening. Pupils therefore acquire a passive, hierarchical listening ability. They only listen to the teacher and do not learn to listen to each other, and therefore to discuss in a spirit of tolerance.

This type of learning is more important than a knowledge of institutional mechanisms, to which civic instruction is often restricted. It is easy to organize and gratifying, if it is given the right priority. It can then serve as a basis for developing an ability to sort out data and images, and to make some sense of the media maelstrom.

Education systems

All these problems that will need dealing with are primarily of concern to the teachers. The teachers in turn, however, are dependent on very restrictive institutional systems, which induce passive attitudes.

It is the systems themselves that will need redirecting, since they profoundly condition not only the content of what is taught and the methods used, but also the cultural models of life in society that will mould future adults.

Some very serious thought has to be given to this matter, at all levels—and particularly at the grassroots level—by teachers and by training colleges, and of course by educational authorities in the seat of government. It has to be recognized that laws and decrees establishing the role and duties of teachers are not enough to bring about the renewal of systems that are so ill-suited to the tasks we mentioned above. The teachers themselves will have to reform education, in the light of all the debates that will have to take place, in the light of the renewal of training institutions and especially in the light of continuing training, which, because it facilitates a new co-operative approach, must be accepted as vital. One possibility, for instance, would be to set up local meeting places for continuing training and research, where teachers from a dozen schools could meet for working sessions in retraining, pedagogical research and evaluation. The objectives of these centres would be to create a movement that could provide teachers with new motivation in their responses to relational problems and to the emerging problems of complexity and freedom.

OPEN FILE

**THE CONTROL
OF DISCIPLINE
IN THE SCHOOL**

INTRODUCTION

TO THE OPEN FILE

Alfredo Furlán

If one were to set out on a journey through a number of countries to identify the most serious problems facing school systems today, one would soon realize that, in all these countries, the maintenance of discipline is crucial, especially in secondary-level institutions. One of the authors invited to contribute to this open file remarks that the issue of discipline acts as a mirror reflecting the most fundamental characteristics of the crisis of purpose currently afflicting educational institutions. This problem is thus complex and many-sided, and it is surprising that so little attention has been devoted to it in academic works on education.

This open file reviews the problem of school discipline. We believe that, without being exhaustive, it will shed light on some important aspects of a set of problems which are beginning to cause great controversy. We are convinced that research on these problems must adopt a multidisciplinary perspective, while giving an impetus to practical efforts aimed at transforming living and working conditions in schools, for pupils, teachers and school workers alike. We hope that the publication of this open file will encourage such undertakings.

The maintenance of discipline has been a function of school ever since it came into existence. It could be said, after Durkheim, that the gradual development of schools from places of residence into institutions of learning was to avoid disturbances created by students as they moved from one teacher in one part of town to another in a different part of town. It was thought to be easier to control them within a single location, which would offer all the facilities needed to occupy

Original: Spanish

Alfredo Furlán (Argentina)

Having graduated in education sciences at Cordoba National University in Argentina, and obtained a PhD in the same discipline from René Descartes University (Paris V), the author teaches school organization and didactics in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and is currently working on the curriculum research project of the Iztacala campus interdisciplinary research unit. He has published works on the theory and practice of curriculum planning and the organization of teaching in schools, and a number of essays on the theory of education. For the last three years he has been investigating the problem of discipline in schools.

young people's time productively. The very creation of schools as educational structures was thus linked with the idea of discipline and keeping students under closer supervision.

Discipline is still an important issue. Very few educational authorities can avoid it altogether, even though they may be reluctant to deal with it explicitly because of the authoritarian connotations and traditional associations with punitive measures, including corporal punishment.

Those in charge of schools, however, have always known that considerable effort must be invested in maintaining order, because the work of education, and to a great extent the public image of the school, depend upon it.

Educational literature places discipline in a range of different conceptual frameworks. It is variously thought of as: the central task of education; an optional extra to be used occasionally; the best method of providing moral education; a fundamental requisite of all educational activity; a construct enabling each individual to interact with others; and lastly, a direct consequence of the system of sanctions imposed by the establishment.

There is evidence that we are witnessing an increase in indiscipline in schools, especially among adolescents in secondary schools. There is also a feeling that it may be taking new forms: in many places there is concern at the increase in violence and the sale and consumption of drugs, problems which go beyond the educational institutions.

The explanations given by teachers and academics have not been based on a large body of research on the subject. Interpretations based on the general situation are presented, drawing attention to factors outside the system, or to a possible crisis in the sense of purpose of schools in the face of changing cultural and social circumstances. Some explanations adopt a structuralist approach which perceives the disciplinary function of the school as a means to 'standardize' members of society.

One certainty is the concern felt by education professionals, governments and international organizations, churches, employers and the public at large. Personally, I consider that although those of us who are involved in university-level study and research on education have approached the subject in a number of different ways, our understanding of the complex of problems expressed in these 'symptoms' is still far from satisfactory.

Hoping to encourage an international 'state of the art' review of the subject of discipline in schools, we have invited a number of researchers to contribute to this open file by approaching the issue from different angles.

- David Turner, in his text 'School reform in England: the function of norms relating to "discipline"' suggests that it is fundamentally important to place the problem of discipline in the broader framework of the educational reforms which began in 1988. He bases his argument on the fact that the word 'discipline' refers both to a subject that is taught and to patterns of behaviour, which is an invitation not to separate the issues. He describes the reform which, for the first time, established a compulsory national curriculum and standardized performance tests

of pupils, and comments on its impact on the work of both primary and secondary school teachers. He identifies the type of pupils most adversely affected and provides statistical evidence showing that the number of expulsions has risen in recent years. We could say that Turner analyses the relationship between certain educational policies and cases of indiscipline in the English context. Although he takes a general view, interesting details are given on what goes on in schools.

- Mariano Narodowski, in his article 'The system of warnings for misbehaviour used by secondary schools in Argentina', argues that school discipline is a key to understanding the relationship between knowledge and power in schools, and seeks to analyse the effects of certain disciplinary procedures, and particularly the warning system referred to in the title of his article. Without losing sight of the historical overview, and on the basis of his own research, he analyses what is happening in educational establishments and what pupils actually learn. He critically reviews the innovations introduced on a trial basis in some school sub-systems whereby school councils (*consejos de convivencia*) replace the traditional system of sanctions. Narodowski strictly confines himself to studying the issue of discipline in schools, focusing on the system of sanctions most often used to achieve it.
- In the third article, Alfredo Furlán draws on recent and ongoing research to point to an increase in indiscipline in secondary schools in Mexico and suggests ways of studying the approach of teachers to the problem. He also refers to research aimed at understanding the behaviour of students from the psycho-cultural standpoint. The author argues that educational theorists and researchers have neglected the problem of discipline and suggests that this situation must be remedied.
- The article on the observance of rules and construction of values in the daily life of secondary schools was written by Ana María Cerda and Jenny Assaél from Chile. Continuing an earlier study of disciplinary regulations, the authors look at the problem from the point of view of young people from less privileged backgrounds. They take the example of a secondary school which has no clear sense of institutional purpose, where the written rules are regarded as pointless by a significant number of teachers and where the pupils find ways of keeping in the system with minimum trouble.
- Rosario Ortega Ruiz, from Spain, contributes an article entitled 'Indiscipline or violence? The problem of bullying in school', in which she suggests that discipline involves conventions, norms, customs and values which are developed in each school community and applied to guide internal social interactions. She points out that relations between pupils, often a closed book for teachers, have a tremendous formative impact. She focuses on ways of dealing with violence among young people, setting it within the framework of the school as a system for living together, and implying that the problem needs to be approached with some sensitivity. Lastly, she reports on a series of very interesting empirical research projects being carried out in her country, which involve measures taken to reduce the incidence of bullying among pupils.

- In his article 'Discipline seen from below', Bradley Levinson adopts a different approach to youth cultures altogether. In the United States of America the eternal preoccupation with class management and instilling effective discipline has been overtaken by violence and undisciplined behaviour, mainly in inner-city secondary schools. The current view that pathological conditions in the external environment are a model is called into question by the author, since it does not take account of the views of pupils or the role of schools in coping with conditions that give rise to violence and indiscipline. Levinson provides a bibliographical review of ethnographic studies (published between 1983 and 1996) of the behaviour of pupils in secondary schools, and without suggesting that school practice is totally responsible for indiscipline, he attempts to show that violence and bad behaviour by pupils are creative responses to the conditions in which education is provided, which range from arbitrary and authoritarian teaching styles to the reification of knowledge and race, not to mention class and sex discrimination. Although these responses may seem irrational to teachers and school administrators, they can be seen as meaningful and even justified in specific circumstances (for example, in the light of experience of family and community with a particular social and ethnic structure and also from a gender perspective). Reading and comparing these different articles will stimulate the process of reflection in which we invite all readers of this open file to engage.

SCHOOL REFORM IN ENGLAND:

THE FUNCTION OF NORMS

RELATING TO 'DISCIPLINE'

David A. Turner

Discipline in schools in England

The word 'discipline' carries a number of distinct and separate meanings: the *Longman dictionary of the English language* (1984) identifies five different, but interconnected, meanings. These include 'a subject that is taught, a field of study', 'training and instruction that corrects, moulds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character', 'punishment' and 'orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behaviour'.

The second half of the 1980s saw the introduction of many reforms in the English system of education, and the concept of discipline, and concerns about discipline, are central to an understanding of those reforms. The 1988 Education Reform Act is, by general consent, the centrepiece of that programme of reform, and the most significant reshaping of the education system since 1944. Although it does not mention the word, discipline, in the sense of 'a subject that is taught, a field of study', is of central importance. The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced a national curriculum, built around and legitimated by a number of core subjects—English, mathematics and science—and a number of other specified subjects—history, geography, technology, music, art and physical education (Bash & Coulby, 1989, p. 56).

Although entitled the Education Reform Act, in many ways it is better understood as a reaction than as a reform. The 1944 Act had imposed upon parents

Original language: English

David A. Turner (United Kingdom)

Departmental research adviser on education and community studies at the University of East London. Teaches comparative and international education and professional studies in education at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Research includes studies of the funding of education in an international context, and the history of progressive education. Chair of the finance committee of the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, and chair of the Great Britain Section of the World Education Fellowship. He is also honorary secretary of the Association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences. E-mail: D.A.Turner@uel.ac.uk

the obligation of ensuring that each child received an education 'suitable to his age, aptitude and ability either by regular attendance at school or otherwise' (Maclure, 1965, p. 223). The Act therefore reflected and stimulated a broadly progressive approach to education in which the needs and desires of the individual child were paramount. Such a child-centred approach had been advanced in a number of government reports before the Second World War, and continued to be part of official policy until the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967 (United Kingdom, 1967).

By the late 1980s, a Conservative government had come to the conclusion that there was a serious lack of discipline in schools. While this concern covered all meanings of the word 'discipline', the proposed remedy was to introduce or reaffirm the centrality of subject disciplines to the educational process. The national curriculum was intended to achieve this.

Along with the formal introduction of specified subject areas into the curriculum, a matter that had previously been left to the discretion of headteachers to decide, the Department for Education and Science introduced a number of other measures. In particular, a series of research programmes were commissioned to set benchmarks—standards of performance that could be expected of children at the ages of 7, 11 and 14. Standardized performance tests at these ages were established to ensure that there was a nation-wide database showing how well children performed in practice, compared with these established standards.

The tests, rather than the national curriculum itself, provoked a strong negative response on the part of teachers and their unions, and the Secretary of State for Education appointed an independent committee to review the workings of the national curriculum and testing. One of the main complaints of the teachers had been that the time needed to administer the tests, and the complex bureaucratic procedures associated with them, would require so much time that effective teaching would be reduced. The independent inquiry supported this contention, to the extent that it found that the burden of assessment was excessive, but the final outcome was a system of testing that broadly conforms with the Secretary of State's original intentions.

The final step in this process was a requirement that schools publish the results of the standardized achievement tests. Using the rhetoric of promoting parental choice, the Department for Education and Science insisted that test results should be made available to parents, so that they would have sufficient information to inform their choice of schools for their offspring. This final measure was designed to make the schools responsive to the pressures of market competition, and to recognize that they would be held accountable, through a failure to attract new students and hence to secure resources, if their performance fell far below the level of their neighbours. The whole process of specifying target levels of achievement, of testing and of publishing the results in 'league tables' was directed towards the improvement of discipline, in the sense of an 'orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behaviour'. What is less clear is whether it was the discipline of teachers or of students that was the main preoccupation of successive Secretaries of State.

School subjects

The overall effect of the 1988 Education Reform Act was thus to define a national curriculum, the basic outline of which was very clearly specified in terms of subject disciplines. Before 1988, a school's curriculum was locally determined. National legislation did not impose a curriculum, and decisions were notionally made at the level of the local education authority. In practice, however, local education authorities generally devolved decisions relating to curriculum issues to the school level, and curricula were decided by headteachers in consultation with their staffs.

The one exception to this highly decentralized model was religious education, where national legislation placed a responsibility upon the schools.

From this *de jure* account of the school curriculum prior to 1988, it is easy to conclude that there was no uniformity of curricula across the country, and that a situation of more or less total anarchy prevailed. Yet that would be completely mistaken; the curricula of schools demonstrated a remarkable uniformity across the country, and it is possible to give a general account of what happened in schools without too much difficulty, and without introducing too many inaccuracies. The curriculum was not specified in law, but was governed by the deeply held beliefs of teachers, which were, to a major extent, uniform.

In primary schools, teachers saw their main purpose as to provide a general education and to give the child an opportunity to develop his/her intelligence (although intelligence was held to be predominantly genetically determined). As a result, the subject matter of lessons was not deemed to be terribly important. Children would expect to be introduced to the basics of reading, writing and mathematics, along with a general knowledge of history, geography and nature study. These would not necessarily be taught as subjects, but might be approached through integrated study and/or projects.

At the transfer to secondary school, the curriculum changed dramatically, with the child being introduced to a rigid timetable, defined entirely in terms of subject disciplines. Typically, a child would study a timetable that included mathematics, English, combined humanities (or separate subjects of geography and history), combined science (or much less frequently biology, chemistry and physics), a foreign language (usually French), a manual subject (woodwork, metalwork or domestic science) and physical education, with approximately one half-hour each week devoted to religious education and music.

At around the age of 13, children would select the subjects that would form their curriculum leading to examinations at the age of 16 for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Again, there is a distinction to be made between the *de jure* and the *de facto* implementation of this phase. In theory, this 'guided choice' permitted a wide variety of choices, and an almost limitless permutation of various subjects. In practice, timetable constraints and teacher expectations as to what constituted a balanced 'educational' diet led to a rather limited range of selection in predetermined timetable options. In most schools, a pupil would have been study-

ing six or seven subjects at this stage of his/her education, in addition to religious education and physical education. These six or seven compulsory subjects would have included English, mathematics, a science and a humanities subject.

From the age of 16–18 the young person would typically have selected two or three subjects to study to 'Advanced level'. Again, the range of choice was highly restricted by timetables and teacher opinion as to which subjects went well together. Typically, the pupil was making a choice from about eight groupings of subjects: physical sciences, biological sciences, modern languages, English language and literature, humanities with an emphasis upon either history or geography, fine arts and, with increasing rarity, classical languages. Combinations that were not exclusively 'arts' subjects or 'science' subjects were exceptional.

One might ask where the much-vaunted freedom of the headteacher to set the curriculum found expression. Occasionally, and it has to be said that it was *very* occasionally, a headteacher used his or her freedom to create an entirely novel way of fitting these standard curriculum requirements into a school timetable. One of the major practical difficulties is finding small amounts of time for subjects such as music or religious education, when most of the timetable is handled as blocks of science or humanities. Some schools used a six-, seven- or eight- day timetable rather than the usual five-day timetable in order to create increased flexibility. One headteacher had no religious education in the timetable, in spite of its being a legal requirement, but every year the school took one week out of its normal timetable and devoted itself full time to religious issues.

As these examples make clear, headteachers did not use their freedom to develop novel curricula. Instead they used their freedom to provide the standard educational diet within novel administrative settings—one week of religious education in a school year is a very similar proportion to one half-hour lesson each school week. Headteachers were as tightly governed by deeply held educational norms as they could have been by a legally enforced national curriculum.

The English school curriculum was fairly uniform across the country and, at least at the secondary level, was defined in terms of traditional academic subject disciplines. In spite of periodic efforts to broaden the curriculum or to include vocational subjects, no English school introduced the range of subjects that one might have expected to find, for example, in an American high school or in a secondary school in Mexico.

Where diversity did find expression was *within* the boxes defined by timetable subjects. That is to say, what counted as 'physics' or 'history' or even 'mathematics' might vary considerably from one school to another. Teachers were free to choose from quite a wide range of examination syllabuses, and could therefore shape their subject to their own or to their pupils' interests. For example, a physics teacher might choose a syllabus that was more or less demanding in terms of its mathematical requirements, a chemistry teacher might choose a syllabus with more or less organic chemistry in its content, and a history teacher might choose among syllabi that placed an emphasis on ancient history, medieval English history or modern European history.

Equally important, a teacher was free to define the order in which the subject was taught, and to use the sequencing of material to build up the 'logic of the subject' as he or she thought fit. It was technically possible, therefore, for a pupil of 'history' who changed schools every year to study the history of the Greeks and Romans in every year of his/her school career, without ever acquiring a broader perspective. While such cases were probably apocryphal, the disadvantages of curriculum flexibility at this level must be clear where pupils and their families are mobile, as they are in an industrialized society.

Against this background, one can see that the impact of a national curriculum has been slight, and at the secondary level almost negligible. For the most part, the 1988 Education Reform Act merely provided a formal structure and requirements that reinforced what was happening anyway. Although it required that information technology be introduced in schools, the recent technological revolution meant that this was a development that was likely to happen with or without recourse to the law.

The introduction of targets and testing at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 has helped to impose a more uniform sequencing on instruction, but teachers still have a good deal of latitude in organizing their work. In secondary schools, the most likely long-term impact will be to inhibit innovations that break away from the framework of subject disciplines. In the future it will be harder to introduce programmes, similar to those which can be found in many American high schools, that are not conceived in subject terms—film appreciation, driver preparation, computing for business, and so on. On the other hand, curriculum development in England and Wales before 1988 does not leave one with the impression that teachers were eager to take advantage of such opportunities for reform.

The changes introduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act have been more noticeable in primary schools. The national curriculum forces teachers to think of their classroom processes in subject terms—a style of thinking that was previously confined to secondary schools. On the other hand, teachers retain a good deal of flexibility with regard to how to meet the stipulations of the national curriculum, and there is no indication that primary schools are introducing rigid, subject-based timetables. In general, primary-school classrooms still use integrated approaches and project work.

Overall, therefore, the national curriculum introduced in 1988 reinforced a range of attitudes that were by no means alien to teachers in England and Wales. The new measures reinforced the importance of the subject disciplines, which had previously dominated curriculum development in the secondary schools anyway. The main objections of teachers were two-fold: the time required for testing detracted from the time available for teaching, and the extent and detail of the attainment targets started to have implications for the programmes of study and teaching that the teachers could employ. Reform of the national curriculum since 1988 has addressed both of these issues, by reducing the amount of testing, and leaving teachers with a national curriculum that was compatible with their traditional beliefs.

It would be possible to conclude that the 1988 Education Reform Act and the national curriculum it introduced have had minimal impact on what has happened in the schools of England and Wales. But this would be a mistake. In order to understand their actual impact, one needs to look at the other meaning of 'discipline'—control over pupil behaviour.

Conduct and behaviour

As noted previously, secondary schools in England and Wales retain a curriculum that is structured in terms of subject discipline, and that is deeply conservative in the national setting. Broadly speaking, this is a curriculum pattern that has remained unchanged since 1944.

At that time, pupils who stayed on in secondary school to the age of 16 took the General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'Ordinary level' examination. This was an examination that was designed to record and certificate the performance of the top 20% of the age cohort in each subject. Passing a number of these examinations was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for attending university. Since, at that time, less than 5% of the age cohort attended university, an examination that could be passed by more than 20% of pupils would have been regarded as lacking in discrimination.

Over the post-Second World War period, as the percentage of pupils destined for university rose to the present 30%, and as the age of compulsory schooling was raised from 14 to 15, and then 16, an examination system was needed that would cater for the needs of a much broader range of pupils. The eventual outcome of a series of reforms was the GCSE examination. The syllabus of these new examinations, along with most of the subject-based assumptions concerning assessment, bear a striking resemblance to the GCE 'Ordinary level' examinations of forty years ago. Assessment methods and marking schedules have been adapted, however, to accommodate the wider range of abilities that are to be evaluated by the examinations. In effect, the examination system has been adapted to suit 80% of the age cohort, rather than the 20% previously catered for. But almost no effort at all has been put into fundamental redesign of the system.

Something between 20 and 40% of the population would enjoy the study of educational material based on subject discipline organization, either because they found it intrinsically interesting, or because they could make the intellectual leap to connect subject material to broader, everyday concerns. Another 40–60% of the population could be persuaded that the pursuit of subject-based knowledge was extrinsically valuable, because it led to qualifications that were valued by employers, or could be coerced into the study of it by teachers using the full range of rewards and punishments available to them.

But somewhere between 5 and 20% of the age group could not see the relevance of subject-based knowledge to their everyday lives, and reasoned, probably correctly, that what happened in school was not an adequate preparation for their life after school. Moreover, they recognized that they were not the segment of the school population that was most likely to inspire educational reform.

Teachers and pupils found ways of accommodating the needs of this group of pupils, or rather they sought ways of making sure that this group of pupils did not interfere with the education of other pupils. Programmes for 'non-academic' pupils were devised. Vocational education schemes were put in place. And when all else failed, teachers and schools ignored non-attendance at school by troublesome pupils, even though attendance was a legal requirement.

Overall, this relatively small percentage of the age cohort has been the worst served by the failure to reform education in the United Kingdom, and by the attempt to provide a traditional, academic education for a growing proportion of the population. Although universities have been able to diversify their educational offerings, and to accommodate 'second chance' education for adults re-entering the academic system, upper-secondary schools have been much slower to reform.

While all of this may be reprehensible, it took the 1988 Education Reform Act to turn it into a major problem. Before 1988, many schools had found informal ways to deal with this situation. Essentially, teachers benefited by letting these pupils 'drop out'. Although the age of compulsory schooling was 16, it was generally possible for those pupils reaching the age of 16 early in the academic year to leave before the GCSE examinations took place. If they did continue to attend school, the intellectual demands made of them would be minimal. Few schools would energetically pursue pupils who truanted if they were expected to be disruptive when they did attend school.

The result was that a small percentage of pupils finished their school careers at the age of 16 with no examination passes, no qualifications and not very much positive to say about their educational experiences. Teachers were unlikely to feel particularly bad about this situation, since avoiding the problem allowed them to concentrate on those pupils who would benefit from more attention and whom they enjoyed teaching. And the parents of these pupils were those who were least likely to value education or to seek out contact with schools and teachers. To all intents and purposes, constructive absenteeism was a practical solution to the fact that the curriculum had not been adapted to the needs of non-academic pupils.

This situation was radically transformed by a system that required all schools to publish their examination results, and that made it possible to draw up league tables of successful schools. Resources were now going to depend upon the school's profile on a variety of performance indicators, an obvious and negative indicator being the percentage of pupils on the school roll achieving no examination passes.

This combination of elements brought teachers into direct confrontation with those pupils, predominantly over the age of 14, who had concluded that school had nothing to offer them. Whereas previously teachers had adopted a range of strategies designed to minimize confrontation with this group of pupils, league tables were conceived to ensure that no group of pupils was ignored. Indeed, this was part of the explicit purpose of testing and league tables—to ensure that all pupils were entitled to an acceptable minimum standard of education.

Faced with this situation, schools needed to develop approaches that achieved one of two effects. Either they had to find ways of ensuring that this group of

pupils achieved examination success, or they had to find ways of excluding them from the calculation of examination results at the earliest opportunity. Since the widely applied norms concerning the school curriculum and the lack of radical reform made it difficult to follow the former route, the most cost-effective strategy has been to seek to exclude these pupils from schools. This may sound like an exaggeration, and clearly, to the extent that schools cannot exclude all low achievers, it is a caricature. However, the atmosphere of confrontation, and the need of schools to exclude the least malleable of their pupils, are reflected in the fact that official exclusions have increased every year.

TABLE 1. Number of pupils permanently excluded from school in England, by year

Year	Number of exclusions
1989/90	0
1990/91	2,910
1991/92	3,833
1992/93	8,636
1993/94	11,181
1994/95	12,458
1995/96	13,581

Source: Castle & Parsons, 1997, p. 4.

At the same time, there has been some concern that the figures relating to official exclusions reflect only part of the story. The rules governing exclusions are very specific, but a number of commentators have argued that there is, in parallel with the growth in official exclusions, a growth in unofficial exclusions (Stirling, 1992). Although, of course, this should not be happening, it is in line with previous practice, in the sense that there was a tendency to deal with unmanageable pupils by unofficial means, normally finding a mechanism whereby they could be ignored.

Coincidentally, at the same time as confrontation has increased between the teaching profession and non-achieving pupils, teachers have lost one of the prime weapons in their armoury of control, namely corporal punishment. Because of a ruling of the European courts, corporal punishment has been made illegal in the United Kingdom. In fact, this change is symbolic rather than practical. Corporal punishment was not as widely practised as one might suppose from the importance that many teachers attached to its retention. It was rarely used on female pupils, and it was rarely used on non-achieving pupils who actively confronted the authority of the education system. In both cases, exclusion was a much more likely response than corporal punishment. In this teachers were realists, and they were unlikely to use a punishment that could only have negative effects in the long run. From any perspective, exclusion, rather than corporal punishment, was the punishment of last resort.

That said, it should be noted that the symbolic position of corporal punishment and, more particularly, that of its withdrawal were significant. At a time when there was growing confrontation between schools and disruptive pupils, teachers were bound to feel the withdrawal of any sanction as an indication that their position was being undermined by their political masters.

Overall, therefore, the concerns of the profession about discipline and control have been growing. Although these concerns relate to only a tiny minority of those pupils in secondary schools, the only indicators that we have suggest that the problems are growing. Additionally, there is no obvious policy available for making improvements. One policy that was to all practical intents and purposes useless, but which appears to have been psychologically important to teachers, has even been removed. In these circumstances, one feels that there is a growing sense of crisis as regards the issue of discipline in English schools.

Conclusions

Over the past decade, issues of 'discipline', in the related senses of a subject of study and a pattern of behaviour, have dominated debate about educational reform in England and Wales. Especially in secondary schools, subject disciplines have traditionally provided a firm structure within which the curriculum has had to fit. If anything, this has been reinforced in the past ten years as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

This year, as in a number of previous years, examination results have shown a slight but distinct improvement over those of the previous year. This has prompted, again as in previous years, a media discussion as to whether standards have slipped, and whether the purity of subject disciplines has been maintained.

The strongly subject-based curriculum has never been able to cater for all pupils, and a very small, but growing, percentage of pupils are engaging in processes of direct opposition to being forced into schooling that is not suited to their needs. For the most part, having a portion (between 1 and 5%) of difficult pupils is one of the irritations of a teacher's life, but well within the range that professional teachers can cope with. Chance, and a tendency of a market system following league tables to concentrate such pupils in a few schools, have between them produced one or two spectacular examples of schools where discipline has become a major problem, and where demoralized teachers have been unable to control the pupils in their charge.

In these cases, which have commanded national media coverage, the national Department for Education and Science has insisted upon intensive inspection to discover what has gone wrong, and either demanded changes designed to produce improvements or closed the school altogether. High levels of media attention have not been necessarily instrumental in bringing about an improvement in the behaviour of difficult pupils, but they have ensured that discipline in schools has been a matter of public debate.

On the whole, in spite of the attention of television and national newspapers, such problems in the behaviour of pupils remain minor and marginal to the more

important questions. However, there are some worrying features to this small, but growing, problem. And strongly held beliefs about the subject nature of a sound education prevent a serious review of curriculum provision. As a result, there is no available policy response that is likely to improve the situation.

A traditional, subject discipline-based curriculum has never successfully catered for all the young people in any particular age cohort. When the United States introduced a mass system of secondary education (the first country to do so) it broadened the curriculum at the same time, so that all members of the school population could find some educational content that was relevant and of interest to them. In the United Kingdom, the attempt has been made to increase participation in secondary education to the point of universality, without any parallel reform in the principles that govern the curriculum. If anything, a conservative educational policy has re-emphasized those traditional principles.

In the absence of curriculum reform, the only possible response to those who reject this traditional education has been an increase in repressive measures and control. This has not been successful, and is unlikely to be.

I hope that I have not overemphasized the difficulties that teachers face in England. It would be a mistake to follow the line presented in the more sensational parts of the media, and conclude that the whole education system is in crisis. There is, however, a general principle that needs to be drawn from this account of the system in England and Wales. When one part of an education system changes and other parts do not change, problems are bound to arise from the mismatch between the various parts of the system. In the case of England and Wales, over a period of fifty years the system has expanded to accommodate 100% of the population, rather than around 20%. Over that period, fundamental curriculum reform has been minimal, and in particular the dominant thinking about the curriculum in terms of subject disciplines has not been challenged. An education that suited 20% cannot be made suitable for 100%.

The problems that this produces are worthy of serious attention, even if they are relatively minor on any practical scale.

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THE SYSTEM OF WARNINGS FOR MISBEHAVIOUR USED BY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ARGENTINA

Mariano Narodowski

For over fifty years, the maintenance of discipline in the secondary schools of Argentina has been based on written warnings for misbehaviour. The system was instituted under Decree 150.073/43 of 1943. In these schools, attended for the most part by adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18, this approach has become the norm. However, in the last few years, it has been vigorously challenged, thus stimulating a rigorous analysis of teacher-student relations and the various forms of punishment used in schools.

The question of school discipline lies at the root of knowledge-power relations in the school system. The adoption of particular ways of enforcing discipline influences the knowledge transmitted in schools not because of political doctrines or guidelines, but above all because of day-to-day interrelations in each institution and confrontation at the personal level between its members. To study the effects of these approaches to discipline therefore helps us understand what is actually learned in schools.

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Mariano Narodowski (Argentina)

Holds a doctorate in education and is titular professor at the National University of Quilmes. His main fields of interest are the policy and history of education in a multicultural perspective. He is Secretary of the Argentine Society for the History of Education and sits on the editorial committees of several scientific journals. Has published articles in Argentine and international journals as well as a number of books: including in particular *Infancia y poder, la conformación de la pedagogía moderna* [Childhood and power: how modern teaching conforms] (1994) and *La escuela Argentina de fin de siglo: entre la informática y la merienda reforzada* [The Argentine school at the end of the century: between computers and supplementary school meals] (1996).

The system of warnings is based on a series of straightforward principles involving the sanctioning of any misdeeds committed by a student (i.e. acts considered as 'breaches of discipline') by a proportional number of reprimands or 'warning' points contained in a 'warning report'. These reports, giving the name of the offender, the reasons for the punishment and the disciplinary measure taken, are then sent to the student's father or guardian for their information and signature. When a student accumulates 25 warning points he or she is suspended from school, and has to take a comprehensive examination before he or she can be readmitted as a student. At the beginning of each school year, students receive their own allowance or 'credit' of warning points. If they manage not to amass more than 24 warning points during a given school year, their slates are wiped clean and they are thus allowed to start the new school year with no warning points.

Another significant feature of the system is the person responsible for issuing warnings. School assistants and teachers may only 'request' that a student be warned; it is the head or director of the school who decides whether or not a student should be punished and how many warning points should be given. The student is only notified verbally concerning the punishment (although the 1941 Regulations do not even provide for such notification). In reality, the reports containing the warnings are sent to a student's father (or tutor), who is the only person to know that a punishment has been imposed. According to the Regulations, the number of warnings must be 'proportional to the misdeed committed', but as there is no pre-existing 'table' listing the number of warning points for each type of misbehaviour, the decision concerning which punishment will be imposed is left to the judgement of the head of the school.

The idea of punishment expressed in the system of warnings

Despite the important role played by the system of warnings or reprimands in secondary schools, few educational studies have sought to understand how such schemes operate (Gómez, 1996). This author has carried out research that resulted in the publication of a book and some articles (Narodowski, 1993; 1995). The research consisted in reviewing 14,226 warning reports issued in two separate periods between 1976 and 1988. The first period covers eight years of a military dictatorship (1976–83) which had imposed a repressive educational policy (Kaufmann & Dobal, 1997); the second period covers five years (1983–88) which saw the introduction of a new educational policy under the democratic government of President Alfonsín. The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are as follows:

- The same proportion of punishments were imposed during both periods. Indeed, the number of warning reports issued clearly increased from 1984 on, although some of the reasons for punishment changed. For example, reprimands for untidy appearance, long hair or grubbiness, typical during the dictatorship, gradually disappeared. The existence of repressive police and military controls outside school resulted in fewer reprimands within schools; however, from 1984 onwards,

the reverse appears to have happened, and schools, once again, began to impose discipline within schools.

- There is no evidence that such warnings or reprimands stop misbehaviour at school. The study showed that the number of warning reports per student rises as they progress through their school careers. For example, more reprimands are issued to students in their last year of secondary education than in their first: if reprimands did put a stop to instances of indiscipline the result would be the opposite, with many warnings issued at the beginning (until students 'learn to behave properly') and few towards the end of their school career.
- The main reason for punishment is 'disrespect', but the number of warning points given varies according to the injured party: the more senior his or her position in the school, the greater the number of warning points. For example, disrespect for a 'preceptor' (non-teaching assistant) costs the offender between three and ten warning points the 'tariff' for showing disrespect for a teacher rises to fifteen or even twenty warning points, while showing disrespect for a figure of authority (tantamount to 'parricide') is penalized twenty-five points and results in immediate suspension. The points system is based on the principle of absolute authority. During a school year a student can show disrespect for an assistant about seven times, only two or three times for a teacher and practically never for a figure of authority.
- The system of reprimands identifies adolescents as the sole instigators of conflictual incidents. Warning reports almost invariably refer to cases of disrespect, insults or aggressive behaviour and the conflict is always blamed on the student, who ends up suffering the consequences.
- The system of warnings, when used effectively, permits a system of misbehaviour *à la carte*: for example, with a credit of twenty-five points, a student may be caught smoking in the toilets twice during the school year, 'show disrespect for an assistant' once, 'throw objects around' once, or else 'play truant' once, 'answer back to a teacher' once, 'smoke in the toilets' once and, let us say, 'make a noise in class' once during the school year. All these phrases are quoted from actual warning reports.
- The number of warning reports concerning matters relating to classwork or studies is significantly low (less than 1% of all reports issued). The system does not penalize faults connected with the course of studies.
- The system of warnings quantifies the various categories of misbehaviour: punishments are cumulative, and this encourages forms of calculated behaviour that are highlighted in our research and find expression in the following tactics:
Saving warning points: Many more warning reports are issued between September and November (the last term of the school year) than during the first term. When students are asked the reason for this, they reply: 'We keep warning points for the end of the year, for students' day' or 'At the end of the year I can't stand it any more and I hang on to warning points and days I can skip in order to hold out' (Narodowski, 1993).

Co-operation: according to students, when some act of indiscipline takes

place and teachers look for someone to blame, the real culprit frequently does not own up, and someone who has accumulated few warning points takes the blame instead—one way of taking maximum advantage of the stock of warning points allowed to each student.

In this sense, it can be said that the system of warnings reflects the maxim 'he who can pays', literally, since each student (or group of students) 'pays' from their stock of warning points for the misdeeds that might be committed in the school.

Our research led to the conclusion that the learning process set in motion by the system of warnings is not related to school discipline (the warnings do not, in fact, put an end to indiscipline), but to the actual practices generated by such a system. What students learn can be characterized as:

Risk calculation: based on the possibility of operating in a field in which human activity is expressed quantitatively.

Authoritarianism: through the inculcation of a sense of authority that is based on bureaucratic power. It is always another person who is the victim, never the guilty party; the person in authority is never guilty, or even partly to blame. The legitimacy of individual teachers is not derived from their work or performance as such, but from their position in a hierarchy of power relations, and the way to consolidate that hierarchy is precisely to highlight a given sphere of control.

These arguments suggest that the system of warnings is not an instrument that can be used for other purposes. It is doubtful whether it is compatible with the rational and autonomous elaboration of rules for students or with the view that conflicts arise from situations created by both sides (to a greater or lesser extent) and are not resolved by identifying an adolescent as being solely responsible for the problem.

From discipline to co-existence

While the system of warnings is still in force in a large proportion of secondary schools in Argentina, there have been a number of more or less successful attempts to modify it or find an alternative. Such attempts have their origins in the profound changes that have affected the Argentine system of education over the last decade, and in the accusations made by teachers, educationists, parents and students that the authoritarian nature expressed in the system of warnings is incompatible with a democratic society.

The first serious attempt to modify the system took place in the mid-1980s, when the Ministry of Education decided to set up special councils for harmonious co-existence (*consejos de convivencia*) in secondary schools. These bodies were composed of teachers and students who worked together and sought to ensure that reprimands were issued to students who misbehaved. In other words, the warnings or reprimands were not abolished but the dynamics of the punishment were changed: instead of leaving the power of decision in matters of discipline to the head of the school, responsibility was transferred to different levels of the education system. Nevertheless, research conducted at the time in three schools in Buenos Aires (Baquero & Narodowski, 1987) showed that the reprimands administered by the *consejo de convivencia* did not qualitatively differ from previous practices, though there was

a change in the number of warning reports issued. In other words, the calculating and authoritarian patterns of behaviour continued because the *consejo de convivencia* used the same parameters for punishment as had been used in the past. However, the effort was not in vain as councils were set up in many schools, resulting in the scrapping of the system of warning reports in some of the schools.

But the most important attempt to change the system took place in the mid-1990s, when the Buenos Aires municipal authorities officially abolished the system of warnings and replaced it by the *consejos de convivencia*. This initiative raises the following question: is it possible to abolish by legislation practices that are so profoundly rooted in schools? In fact, the logic and tempo of policy-making differ from those of formal education, and many teachers were on the verge of being deprived of one of the basic discretionary instruments for structuring their relations with students in disciplinary matters (Narodowski, 1995).

With respect to the first objection, it may be said that changes in education, if they are to work, must take into consideration the way educational institutions actually operate. This calls for medium- and long-term efforts to help schools consolidate new concepts of justice in a wider context in which the normal system of justice is suspected to be corrupt; there is no way that mere regulations could prevent conflict in secondary schools.

As for the second objection, it could be said that, although the system of warnings or reprimands does not provide a solution to indiscipline in schools, it does however constitute an educational tool for many teachers in their classroom relationships. Used in combination with marks as a form of control, the warnings are employed by certain teachers when they clash with their students. The official abolition of this instrument may backfire if it is not replaced by something else: it may lead, firstly, to an improper use of marks as an alternative to warnings, and, secondly, to a feeling of unease and powerlessness on the part of teachers, who would find it necessary to readjust their work to the new situation.

The reader may find these two objections difficult to understand in the light of research findings on punishments. If the system of warnings is a disgrace that inculcates an authoritarian view of authority and encourages students to adopt certain calculated tactics, then the definitive abolition of the system of warning points would be a welcome development.

To answer this question it is necessary to distinguish between the evidence of academic research and the policy as it is actually implemented. No-one aware of the perverted nature of the system of warnings can believe that its abolition is something that can be achieved by a decision of the sort described above. On the contrary, it is highly probable that action of that kind would unintentionally reinforce the system. The question is not whether the system of warnings can be replaced but what are the necessary conditions for its replacement.

From political authority to classroom practice

Clearly, the interference of the legislative authorities in the daily life of schools has not provided solutions to the conflictual situations that arise. As we have seen, it is

highly probable that the dynamics of power relations in schools will triumph over political designs since the mentality found in schools is quite unlike that of policy-makers, educationists or legislators.

This appears to be understood by legislators in Buenos Aires, who are beginning to debate a new law that will seek to end interference by external authorities in disciplinary matters at school, and which will offer educational tools to schools to deal with their problems. The idea is to offer schools an opportunity to develop their own regulations and the appropriate technical instruments needed for that purpose.

This new law will create a system intended to enhance the autonomy of schools while maintaining the necessary control by the State. The idea is that schools should create their own system of harmonious relationships (*Proyecto Escolar de Convivencia*, PEC) incorporating: (i) a common core sanctioned by the National Constitution, the Constitution of the City of Buenos Aires and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child; and (ii) the cultural characteristics particular to each school. The State will oversee the arrangements for the submission of each PEC, make sure that it is consistent with the general principles, and approve and monitor its implementation. In addition, the State will offer technical and educational assistance to any school submitting a PEC.

At the same time, the new law seeks to remove the question of school discipline from the judicial or legal field and to bring it into the educational and social sphere. For these new systems to be successful, it is important to enlist the various parties in the school and harness the initiative of school heads and teachers to help achieve an educational approach to the regulation of social relations in school. At the same time, such legislation should not be an end, but should be rooted in the wider process of improving the quality of education and the formation of active and responsible citizens.

In short, this project would fill a gap in existing legislation, not by interfering in the daily life of schools through laws that seek to control the day-to-day details of teacher-pupil relations, but by offering appropriate tools to enable schools and all parties involved to work out their own framework for harmonious relations.

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DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN THE MEXICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM: THE SILENCE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE

Alfredo Furlán

Discipline and indiscipline

Each time we attempt to define this problem we wonder which word to use: discipline or indiscipline. Teachers often consider the two to be inseparable, two sides of the same coin. They usually conceptualize the problem as follows:

- Discipline is all the measures taken to enforce the set of formal or informal rules governing an institution. In common parlance, discipline means the personal behaviour of individuals who wish to conform with social, legal and other norms.
- Indiscipline is, therefore, conduct which does not conform with established norms and involves actions that break the rules.
- Discipline: showing due respect for the provisions and rules established by the institution.
- Indiscipline: a breach of the established provisions and rules arising from an attitude of rebellion or refusal.¹

Authors of books on the subject intended for practical application in the schools generally favour pragmatic solutions. Watkins and Wagner, after demonstrating the wide range of incidents that can be considered as examples of indiscipline, go on to say:

The foregoing explains to some degree the existence of circular definitions which, nonetheless, are sometimes useful. For instance, Lawrence, Steed and Young define conflictual behaviour as something that has a negative effect on the teaching process and/or implies a serious

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Alfredo Furlán (Argentina)

Page 535 contains a biographical note about the author.

disturbance of normal school life. Conflictual behaviour is behaviour which gives rise to conflicts. These seemingly circular definitions have the advantage for us of drawing attention to the decisive role played by context in deciding what is or is not acceptable and of not denying the relative nature of such judgements.²

Traditional writers have generally tried to provide definitions that establish the parameters for assessing what is an act of indiscipline and what is not. They have offered definitions in which the principal criterion can be respect for authority, morality, work or harmonious interrelationships. The issue, it must be acknowledged, is complex. The word 'discipline' is also used to describe the divisions and subdivisions of academic knowledge. Etymological study and genealogical research are a very useful way of broadening our understanding of this semantic dilemma.

It might be argued that the relationship between discipline and indiscipline is not symmetrical. While the former refers to a complex system of dynamic and functional balances between the actions of the various members of an institution, the latter refers exclusively to events. That is why we speak of 'systems of discipline' rather than 'acts of discipline', and conversely, of 'acts of indiscipline' and not 'systems of indiscipline'. To provide the missing symmetry we use metaphorical terms such as 'climate' or 'atmosphere', which can be used with both discipline and indiscipline. The difference is that when thinking about discipline we focus on the institution and its rules and customs. When thinking about indiscipline we focus first of all on the behaviour of individuals, especially students. It would be absurd to make such a sharp distinction between the terms when dealing with the subject in a more comprehensive way.

Although the theme of this open file is 'discipline', we have chosen in this article to focus on indiscipline. Our material tends to emphasize the problem of violence, but this does not in any way represent the totality or even the essence of what is experienced as indiscipline in secondary schools. We shall make this contrast clear when we discuss the students' view of the *cultura del relajo* (derision).

Crisis, indiscipline, moral education and democracy: a discourse in the making

In Mexico in recent decades there has been substantial growth in the coverage of the education system, especially by primary and secondary schools (three years of lower-secondary school and three years of upper-secondary school).³ Beginning in the 1970s, quantitative growth was accompanied by major modernization projects in various areas: encouraging administrative decentralization, changes in the curriculum at nearly every level, development of technology and alternative systems (lower-secondary distance education, for example), changes in training institutions and in the system of hiring teachers, and, recently, the introduction of a system of end-of-year examinations or regulated access to the next level. Criticism may perhaps be levelled at the low level of funding, the approaches used or the absence of continuity and self-correction of many of these initiatives, which when put

into practice had very little impact. Still, the magnitude of the efforts made is admirable.

Nevertheless, educators, mass media professionals and the public are at present generally of the opinion that despite the efforts made, and over and above considerations of their relative success or failure, the education system has failed to pay adequate attention to the large-scale transformations that have been taking place at the same time in the world at large.

These transformations, which have been the focus of a considerable effort of understanding and conceptualization since they began, include the new 'rules of the game' in the world marketplace, the social consequences of the application of neo-liberal policies, the new communication and information processing facilities, the expansion of marketing strategies to influence the consumption patterns of children and adolescents, and steps towards democratization. To those transformations, the importance of which varies according to the point of view of those interpreting them, must be added the increasingly acute problem of corruption, the growing power of the mafias associated with drug trafficking and auto theft, and the increasing insecurity in our cities and on our roads.

These are very serious problems, but it must be acknowledged that this kind of enumeration creates a confused background for perceptions of the present situation, suggesting that the notion of 'crisis' may be the key to a diagnosis. The production of sweeping statements about the crisis reflects the enormous complexity of the task of analysis and a predilection for generalized views that, although important, provide a context for (rather than open up) fields of investigation.

In December 1996, Gilberto Guevara Niebla, director of the excellent journal *Educación 2001*, began his editorial statement as follows:

Of all the miseries afflicting us, perhaps the most scandalous is the breakdown of collective morality. Corruption, violence, the violation of human rights, ... the gutter press, drug trafficking, difficulty in reaching a social consensus, the degradation of the environment, poverty, mistreatment of indigenous and socially marginal people—all this points to a breakdown of national ethics. There is, however, no question that the breakdown in public morality must be linked to flaws in the institutions responsible for moral education: the school and the family.⁴

Despite the fact that the concern for discipline is as old as schools themselves, during periods of crisis acts of 'indiscipline' are reinterpreted as symptoms. If staff notice an increase in disorderly conduct among students they attribute it to the problems listed above, especially the increase in violence, insecurity and drug consumption, social scourges of which there is abundant evidence.

Once we acknowledge the existence of flaws in the education structure, the way is open for envisaging possible remedies. Structural analyses of the ways in which schools operate are giving way to studies of the social context, the majority of which are associated with calls for responsibility and 'moral education'. Although this reaction is typical of a conservative approach to education, it is supported in all kinds of other sectors. In Mexico at least, among those calling for the 'return' of moral

education, the Catholic Church's voice rings loud as it wages a campaign to reintroduce religious education in schools. This initiative is filling the gap left by the lack of response by the State and education professionals to the exposure of educational communities to ever-greater risks.

In an essay published in the review *Nexos* in August 1997, Guevara Niebla comments on this situation:

Despite the important role played by the schools in moral education and the formation of personality, it must be recognized that this issue is very seldom discussed. Our basic education is predominantly intellectual. Teachers are concerned with knowledge and while they may at times concern themselves with behaviour—order, discipline, courtesy—they rarely think specifically about the moral values they should be encouraging in their pupils, still less their students' personality. In reality, our teachers know very little about moral education, for the simple reason that it is not taught as an academic discipline and gives rise to little debate. Schools are the scene of moral problems and conflicts: children who lie, acts of disrespect or violence, racial, sexual and social discrimination, abuse of vulnerable children, theft—difficult situations which are generally resolved by teachers in the light of common sense. Nevertheless, schools offer very little in the way of theory or concepts that could provide clear guidelines in this area for teachers. Teachers know much more about discipline. When a young teacher starts out, the first demonstration that he or she 'can do' the job is the ability to keep the students under control. In the schools 'good teachers' are those who know how to keep their class working in a quiet and orderly way, while 'bad teachers' are those whose pupils are disorderly and noisy, breaking the school rule of silence.⁵

We come now to the heart of this article: the problem of discipline today, the views of those concerned and the theoretical and practical contributions of education science and research.

Visible images: violent surroundings

Because there has thus far been no systematic cataloguing of acts of indiscipline, we present a selection of incidents reported in various sources in an effort to provide an overview. Our purpose here is to encourage awareness of the complexity of the issue.

When acts of indiscipline cross a threshold that is not easy to define, they are transformed by the press into a matter of public concern. We have noticed that this happens mostly in small towns where primary and secondary schools are a constant focus of press attention. Nevertheless, articles on the subject also appear in the national press, as in this example:

The sale of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes has increased in the pre-university and undergraduate establishments at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and in state secondary schools and post-secondary colleges in the conurbation. In impoverished areas, we see vandalism, violence, inhaling of toxic substances, dropping out and absenteeism.

Micher Camarna assured us that, after ten years' work, on-campus supervision of stu-

dents was adequate. However, 'it is not possible to control the area around the campus and this makes our work much more difficult'.

According to the head of upper secondary school No. 55 of the state of Mexico, vandalism and insecurity are a fact of life in the areas around the schools in the conurbation; young people who drop out of school for various reasons become members of groups or gangs.⁶

This article is interesting for several reasons. It presents statements from the directors of various upper-secondary schools; they are aware that the problems are caused by the external social environment but also recognize that the education provided does not prevent them from recurring. They group together various phenomena: drugs, absenteeism, gangs. Without denying that connections may exist, their simple enumeration indicates a lack of specific studies that could identify cases on empirical grounds. It also shows that the point at which the press takes an interest is located on the margins of school responsibility, namely where violence and criminal activity begin.

Another source from which the concerns of educators may be inferred is the internal documents of the educational establishments themselves or of co-ordinating agencies. The following example comes from the agency co-ordinating a pre-university system in a state in northern Mexico.

This document was prepared in response to the concern expressed by both the teachers and the administrative authorities of the college after the regrettable events of 20 April, during which a young student from the Villa de Seris establishment died, and also because of previous events, fortunately not fatal, which led to a review by the college's administrative authorities and teaching staff of the institutional relations among students, teachers, principals, parents and society in general.

There is felt to be an urgent need for clear definition of the rights and duties of students as well as of standards of behaviour and personal conduct for students on the college grounds and outside them, as long as they are wearing the school uniform, on a study trip or acting as an official representative of the institution. Finally, the sanctions to which students who fail to observe the rules expose themselves need to be clearly defined.⁷

This case is typical: the authorities are reacting to 'regrettable events' that have become 'public knowledge', demonstrating the ambiguous response to which these thorny problems give rise. Nevertheless, afterwards, the authorities did take much more comprehensive measures than the 'regulation response' called for in the text cited above. Analysis of the surroundings of various establishments made them realize that many of the problems arose there; for instance, carrying weapons is standard practice in some parts of the region; gangs are becoming an increasing feature and pupils feel increasingly exposed when they leave the college. Despite all that, the problem was, as might be inferred from the text cited, addressed in all its complexity, including its educational aspects properly speaking, and the college took responsibility for creating a positive social climate that might reduce the impact of external influences.

In addition to establishing the level of indiscipline that attracts attention outside the school, one might expect there to be internal thresholds that would vary enormously

from one school to another. It would be very useful to investigate the structure and functioning of the minimum threshold required to attract the attention of educators.

Visible images: violence and delinquent behaviour inside the schools

The examples presented in this article all concern upper-secondary schools. At this stage in the educational process the line separating indiscipline from delinquency is extremely fine. Here, for example, is a paper written recently by Elda González Cuevas:

In the pre-university classes at the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, the problem of school discipline has become so acute in recent years that it was described as a fundamental problem during the various internal evaluation meetings held in the upper-secondary schools preparing students for university entrance. There, students and teachers alike expressed their concern about the acts of vandalism and the increasingly violent atmosphere in the schools.

The university authorities have also become more aware of this problem, first, as a result of the increasingly numerous complaints about it from the schools themselves, and, secondly, because year after year the institution spends thousands of pesos to refurbish and buy furniture for upper secondary schools. This ongoing destruction of university property is a clear indication of the magnitude of the discipline problem in the upper-secondary schools, although it is only one of the signs or symptoms.

Despite the complaints from the schools and the educational authorities' acknowledgement of the growing discipline problems in upper-secondary establishments, the question of school discipline still receives scant attention. Nonetheless, some steps have been taken, from the elaboration by the Office of Upper-Secondary Schools of regulations to be applied in the schools to the setting up of security arrangements on school premises under which students have to wear identity badges and school uniforms, and security guards are posted at the entrances to schools that have repeatedly been the scene of conflict.⁸

González Cuevas describes daily life in certain upper-secondary schools:

(a) Vandalization of school buildings and furniture

Broken doors, broken chairs, twisted ventilators, walls that have been covered with graffiti or even knocked down are part of everyday life for pupils, teachers, auxiliary staff and administrators.

It is not unusual to see a pupil scribbling on walls or blackboards or to see someone throwing chairs or a schoolmate's satchel from the second floor of the school building. It is not uncommon for examinations to be suspended because some intractable student has set off a firecracker or released a smoke bomb making it impossible for anyone to remain in the classroom. Or someone wedges the classroom door shut to prevent a lesson or an examination from being held.

This kind of behaviour is interpreted by the teachers as rebelliousness and indiscipline due—according to one interviewee—to the 'increasing dominance of the culture of violence in the children's families' or to the fact, as another interviewee points out, 'that these human beings are at a critical stage in their lives. Young people are by nature rebellious; it is nor-

mal for them to be seeking an identity and to want freedom, and they express this in various ways They harm themselves more than anyone else, but of course these outbursts also upset the life of the school and the way it operates'.

(b) Fighting among students

Recently there have been two fights between pupils at the school, on two different occasions. The first was during the last week in November. Two pupils were involved. A morning-shift monitor explains: 'One boy started hitting another and the other boy, who was wearing a large ring, hit him on the head. He caught him on the back of the neck, and the boy had to be taken to the Red Cross to have three stitches put in'.

The second incident occurred a week later in one of the two school yards, near the cafeteria. A number of boys were involved this time. Juan and Manuel were the central figures, with other pupils not identified by the school authorities. Juan and Manuel were setting about each other. In the heat of the moment Juan went into the cafeteria and got hold of a kitchen knife. The situation did not get out of hand as the two boys were controlled by the crowd around them or by someone who intervened. A few minutes later, Manuel was attacked again; according to him, Juan jabbed a pencil into his shoulder. It was not clear who had attacked Manuel. Juan denied it and both boys were sent to the principal. What actually happened is not clear.

According to the teachers, situations like these occur frequently, as do other, less serious incidents which, nevertheless, disrupt the life and good order of the establishment.

Before the university's security programme was instituted, there was often violence between pupils and outside gangs. The gangs would come into the school and beat students up. Often armed with sticks, iron bars, chains and even guns, they attacked pupils with impunity, sometimes in front of the teachers. This type of incident is much less common now.

(c) Attacks on teachers

A third type of violence in the schools is between pupils and teachers, the students being the attackers and the teachers the victims. Pupils' behaviour towards teachers is often calculated to do more than relieve tension or cause hilarity. Aggression against teachers can take various forms. In this regard, one of the interviewees said: 'Teachers might bring a pupil to the principal for throwing stink bombs or because they have come to the front of the class and insulted the teacher or even challenged him to a fight'.

In addition to this type of situation, there have been two cases of physical attacks on teachers, about two years ago. In the first case, a class teacher was attacked by a student. One of the interviewees commented: 'Another very regrettable case was the attack on Mr Aispuro, which was quite unprecedented and affected the whole school deeply'.

The teacher's injuries had required four stitches, and he said that the Red Cross doctor who saw him had commented: 'If he had caught you a few centimetres lower down, you might have been killed. Luckily you were struck on the bone (pointing to his head) and nothing happened'.⁹

The above text focuses explicitly on violence, which is the most visible and painful aspect of the problem of indiscipline at the higher-secondary level. It is this kind of incident that becomes 'common knowledge' in the school and sometimes in the area around it. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. While incidents that do not involve violence often go unnoticed, they are no less significant. Thus, in addition

to the 'less obvious violence' to which the last paragraph of the text quoted refers, much remains to be investigated in the area of non-violent forms of indiscipline.

Indiscipline in other upper-secondary schools

At a workshop on discipline problems held in 1996 and attended by teachers, counsellors and administrators for pre-university schools in northern Mexico mentioned earlier we were able to collect very useful material on other common problems. Noteworthy among them were: breaking into school; late arrival; failure to attend lessons although remaining on school grounds; refusal to observe rules, reflected mainly in styles of speaking and dressing; bad language; rebellious attitudes; apathy; poor work habits; and graffiti.

Among the serious problems were: lack of respect for teachers; use of alcohol; carrying of knives or guns; destruction of school property; possession and use of drugs; physical and verbal attacks on staff.

A survey of other institutions would certainly reveal other types of discipline problems. While the above list is not exhaustive, it may, with some reservations, be regarded as applicable to the majority of schools at this level.

It should be kept in mind that each type of problem, serious or less serious, represents a field that calls for specific research. It is important to try to differentiate between each type of problem because, as was pointed out earlier, there is a tendency to string them together in sweeping generalizations made for effect, reflecting failures of conceptualization and a feeling of impotence within the profession that hinder progress in these difficult times rather than detailed knowledge of individual circumstances. This is a complex problem, which may be viewed from various angles and interpreted in various ways, and it is important to bear in mind the particular characteristics of each school involved and of each case or event considered.

To illustrate the various analytical possibilities offered by this theme, we provide a brief overview in the following material. The responses of teachers and school administrators at a workshop when asked to describe the most disturbing case of indiscipline during their teaching career provided some very interesting information. Here is a selective summary of the replies given:

The most disturbing case for me was student misbehaviour in the school bus. They refused to exit from the front door even though they had been told to do so. For me, the most disturbing thing was that someone had already explained the rules to the pupils and they refused to pay attention to them, risking their own lives and those of the others. They also tried to divert the attention of the school authorities away from their own actions by placing the blame on a teacher.

In my short experience as a teacher, I have seen two very disturbing acts of indiscipline. First of all, making fun of physical disabilities or deficiencies of schoolmates or teachers over which they have no control. Another type of behaviour which disturbs me very much—although it may not exactly be regarded as indiscipline—is the rejection of schoolmates because of their low social or economic status.

The most disturbing form of indiscipline for me is the repetition of an act in order to ridicule the teacher's warnings.

Students acting irresponsibly by leaving empty food containers around. The vulgar language used by the women students, who, in this respect, could be said to outdo the men.

The students' behaviour in the toilets, scribbling on walls and doors. Kisses plastered everywhere (walls, doors, mirrors). Smeared walls in the toilets.

I have observed more acts of indiscipline outside than inside the classroom. But I remember my first day in a class on documentary research: I asked the students to write down their names on a sheet of paper which I could use for the roll call. Because I didn't know the students, I was reading out the roll; but I was embarrassed and stopped after reading out 'Pancho Villa'.¹⁰

This material presents a really curious range of 'disturbing' behaviour and draws attention to the need to find ways of understanding the attitudes that the school in some way 'creates' in its staff. It is interesting to note that only in a minority of cases did the 'disturbing' behaviour cited by the workshop participants correspond to acts that they themselves and the rules define as serious. Teachers' responses to students' behaviour is an inexhaustibly rich source of material for anyone wishing to study the problem of discipline. This is even more true today, when cultural differences between the generations seem to exist on so many planes. This is an aspect that surprises the teachers themselves, when they are genuinely interested and committed to finding new strategies, as was the case with our colleagues in this pre-university system. Together with them we discovered problems whose existence we would never have suspected.

The *cultura de relajo* (derision)

In Mexico there is an excellent study by Claudia Saucedo on the *cultura de relajo*, carried out at a CONALEP school (vocational education at the upper-secondary level). The study of student cultures is of inestimable importance for the understanding of discipline problems and has, generally speaking, not been widely investigated. Not only is little interest shown in discipline problems, but also research into pupils' views is only just beginning.

We reproduce below a long extract from Claudia Saucedo's work:

While the teacher is correcting the pupils' workbooks at her desk, five boys stand around her to see what marks she will give them. In the meantime the rest of the boys in the class, laughing and amusing themselves, make an interesting spectacle: one of them fishes papers out of the wastepaper basket and throws them at the others; three or four boys hit each other's arms to see who can take the most punishment; another boy is smoking and blowing the smoke into the face of a schoolmate who gets irritated; five other boys are lolling back in their chairs, laughing their heads off at their classmates' antics. The teacher raises her head to ask for silence. The students comply but shortly after waves of laughter start again.

In a reading class the teacher asks for the synonyms of certain words. A chorus of voices shouts out the answers: 'synonym for old?' 'elderly, ancient, vegetarian'; 'synonym for pick-pocket?' 'Isaiah, Miss!' And laughter, including the teacher's, fills the room.

Another classroom with a strict, serious teacher. He writes on the blackboard and dictates. The rule is that anyone who misbehaves will be sent out of the classroom. Nevertheless,

in one group the girls pass notes to one another, laugh quietly, put nail varnish on and do each other's hair.

Many more examples of this kind of situation could be given, in which the pupils' laughter is a constant feature.

Several times I have found the word *relajo* being used by pupils to describe this kind of situation. It is quite a common term in Mexico, and according to Portilla (1996),¹¹ it means behaviour which puts an end to seriousness, with a switch to joking, sarcasm and teasing, which in a group can make for a particular kind of social situation. Strictly speaking, this definition does not elucidate the term *relajo* but only suggests synonyms for it. To understand this kind of concept we must study in greater detail the cultural practices to which it refers, the contexts in which it is used and the individuals who establish these practices. Assuming that among Mexicans *relajo* is a common practice that reflects social animosity, the present paper proposes to analyse how this practice is structured among adolescents in a specific context such as the school.

Relajo is not an end in itself or a goal to which young people aspire. Rather, it is a type of social relationship in which great emphasis is placed on the importance of a youthful attitude, as in the following assertions: 'It is very important to have fun, to fool around; if not, you haven't lived and what a wasted life!'; 'I learned a number of things from my friends, the most important is that I was a grind and studied too much, and since I met them I realized that I too need to have a good time'.¹²

In schools with adolescent pupils it is not uncommon to hear the teachers say things like: 'We have to make lessons interesting'; 'Young people get bored easily—we have to liven our lessons up'; and 'Boring teachers do not understand how restless young people are'. For their part, the students agree that they are not yet fully responsible or adult enough to be serious most of the time. In this line of reasoning, the need for fun is strongly associated with adolescence. The fun expressed in *relajo* is not merely a set of behaviour patterns that develop in opposition to school discipline but behaviour enabling adolescents to define themselves and the relationships amongst themselves.

The approach used in the Saucedo study is influenced by her position on discipline and, as she herself acknowledges, her methods of operation. Attention is focused on understanding the intersubjective meanings involved in this set of statements from the viewpoint of the adolescent. The ethnographic angle coincides with a particular psychological approach in focusing attention on understanding firstly the point at which the meanings shared by a group of actors converge and secondly the developing subjectivity of the actors as young people (that is, as subjects).

The work of Elda González Cuevas previously mentioned combines an ethnographic approach to collecting and presenting evidence with an interest in understanding the institutional context, as defined by the observations of the teachers. She was a teacher and has worked on technical teams responsible for co-ordinating the upper-secondary school system.

This juxtaposition of different viewpoints certainly offers food for thought.

One point should be made clear before continuing: in Mexico there is a wide variety of upper-secondary schools, many of which are successfully coping with the problems discussed in this article. Study of the factors involved in such cases

would be extremely useful. Research in this area, however, is as limited as it is in the field that concerns us at the moment.

Pedagogy and discipline

The issue of discipline has been a component of pedagogy (understood as the production of studies on the development and improvement of education) ever since education has been provided in schools. The two works that can be considered to have introduced modern pedagogy, with its focus on schools, are the *Ratio studiorum*, written by the Jesuits at the end of the sixteenth century as a manual for their schools, and the *Didactica magna*, written by Comenius in the middle of the seventeenth century. Until the middle of the twentieth century most of the great writers on education were practically obliged to deal with the question of discipline, and this was certainly the case in Mexico. The following are excerpts from classic works in Mexican educational theory, written at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century:

It suffices to say that discipline consists essentially in the subordination of individual acts and movements to group norms to make clear its fundamental importance in the schools; it guarantees good order on a permanent basis and in so doing provides the basis for the educational process.

The enormous importance of discipline in schools is quite clear from what we have said: it not only ensures order and useful work in the classroom but also builds foundations for the future by preparing individuals for life in society. The idea is to instil a genuine subordination that can make personal independence compatible with social solidarity, since in all life's circumstances man has to obey and know how to obey—his commanding officers in the army, his foreman in the workshop, the law in daily life and his representatives in society. Naturally this necessary subjection, while the enemy of all constraint, does not impede freedom, which in this case is ensured by a healthy discipline since that in itself serves the purpose of education, which, at all levels, strives always to shape free individuals.¹³

Ruiz had no hesitation in attaching fundamental importance to discipline both on grounds of order and as a method of training young people. In more muted tones than the powerful prose of Ruiz, Professor Abraham Castellanos published in 1909 a collection of texts, the third and final part of which related to discipline. According to Castellanos:

The value of good physical discipline cannot be denied. But modern education does not stop there. We may assume that good discipline is the result solely of pupils' fear of their teacher, their fear of punishment. In this case once they leave school these young people will probably forget their good habits and discipline and if that is what happens, it cannot be said that the discipline has been successful.

To achieve really good discipline it is not enough to preserve order under the direct influence of the teacher. Young people must, when they go out into the world, maintain the good habits they have acquired in school. To achieve discipline in this ideal sense an ethical and aesthetic education is needed whose influence on the boys will never be erased.¹⁴

While expressing reservations, our pedagogical 'forebears' addressed the issue with vigour. At that time, supported by various arguments, educators assumed that disciplining young people in school had a positive educational function. Despite the fact that other countries had already begun laying down the postulates that would gradually develop into the 'learn from doing' approach, educators concerned with the organization and direction of the school system, while striving to rationalize teaching and respect pupils' dignity, were always concerned with discipline. It might be said that they accepted the need for it, realizing that it did not develop spontaneously, that the school structure alone did not guarantee discipline, any more than teachers' natural authority and charisma, gifts which were not always bestowed on the majority of the members of the profession. In teacher-training colleges this was a matter that was not left to chance, but was always dealt with explicitly in manuals for primary and secondary school teachers.

For various reasons that need to be investigated, a veil was gradually drawn over the question of discipline by education specialists. They focused attention instead on the interests of the child; the orientation of the curriculum was changed by new methodologies, new subjects and a new emphasis on the rights and dignity of the child. The intelligentsia denounced the repressive nature of schoolwork and a curious phenomenon occurred: university courses on pedagogy and education science created from the 1950s onwards produced graduates who regarded teachers and schools in general with suspicion. At the beginning of the 1960s, teacher-training colleges dropped their lectures on discipline. There was, instead, an increasing use of planning techniques that claimed to provide better control over the learning process and that overemphasized assessment. Of course, none of this was accompanied by any substantial change in school organization; in the meantime, social, economic, political and cultural changes were clearly transforming the nature of the subjects involved at every level of education.

Let us now return to the situation referred to in the first part of this article: although discipline continues to be a key issue for teaching and administrative staff and although we have apparently entered a new phase of increasing indiscipline, sometimes involving actual violence, there is a marked reluctance to address the subject, which those involved find it difficult to discuss. The administrative authorities do little or nothing to deal with this difficult situation and we education specialists have stood by practically mute.

Despite the change in the attitude of the teaching profession towards the question, the basic argument that obedience to authority is a necessary and positive part of learning to be independent is far from clear. The prevailing opinion among education specialists is fairly well presented by Gilberto Guevara Niebla:

As one often hears, discipline is a habit imposed from above. Rules are respected because of the threat of external coercion and rarely viewed as something that children may discuss, question or even create themselves. In fact one can say without exaggeration that schools often look more like prisons. Foucault has said that the spatial layout of schools and prisons reflects the same type of social control. Visiting schools in Mexico, the thought frequently occurs to us that the perverse architects who built them must have studied with Jeremy Bentham, the inventor

of the famous panopticon: square rooms of the same size in a series of lines, with all the doors on the same side; classrooms organized with parallel lines of desks facing the teacher's desk. According to Foucault, this approach originated with modern mass education and was inspired by the principle of discipline and control. If we follow the teachings of Piaget or Kohlberg, we would have to conclude that this type of education (or creation of discipline through external control) does not produce the free citizens and active subjects of a democracy but subordinate creatures, passively obedient to authority and the prevailing norms.¹⁵

While the author remains cautious, shielding himself with the conditional 'If we follow', it is clear that he reflects the sentiments of a group that includes us. But the graduation from heteronomy to autonomy is much more complex than this deceptively simple juxtaposition implies. In a very thought-provoking passage the late lamented Cornelius Castoriadis, an intellectual who called most insistently for the 'self-creation' of independent individuals in independent societies, wrote that 'the entire history of the Greek Western world can be interpreted as a struggle between autonomy and heteronomy', and added: 'In a democracy, the people can do one thing and must know that they must not do another. Democracy works on the basis of self-limitation and is thus ... a regime of freedom'.¹⁶ This complex problem was the central theme of the work of such outstanding thinkers as Norbert Elias and Hannah Arendt, among many others.

Without wishing in any way to diminish the sense of unease created by the authoritarianism and regrettably widespread violence to which pupils in our schools are subjected, we must engage in serious reflection on and investigation of this subject to try to overcome our tendency to simplify.

The need to encourage study of this subject

Very little research has been carried out in Mexico on the subject of discipline. It did not rate a separate chapter in the 1981 overview and in 1993 it was dealt with under the heading 'Students and policy', in the part concerning students. Only two studies were mentioned, one involving four cases at the primary-school level (Barba et al.) and another examining students' perceptions in a lower-secondary school (Guzmán).¹⁷ Two bachelor's degree theses have come out since, by Pineda and Zamora, and by Noyola, and three master's degree theses mentioned the subject in passing (Cerdeña, Saucedo and Gómez).¹⁸ Among these, only two were produced by specialists.

The lack of research on the question of discipline is as glaringly obvious as the importance of this problem in schools today. There is an urgent need for many more education specialists to devote themselves to study of this subject, and the same is true of social, legal, humanities and health specialists. The magnitude and complexity of the questions at stake call for a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary debate on the subject, in which controversial opinions could be expressed. The contrasting views of people who approach the subject from different angles are extremely stimulating, as we have seen in the brief extracts presented in this article.

But everyday problems of this kind need to be dealt with, and teachers in the

line of fire cannot wait for academics and researchers to join them before taking action. They must develop their own strategies by exchanging ideas amongst themselves and, above all, by talking with their students and other groups involved, especially parents. We university specialists in education must accompany teachers and learn with them, while our laborious research machinery comes to life. We should recall that the father of scientific sociology, Emile Durkheim, believed that educational science should not stand passively by, waiting for its own scientific foundations to be established. It need not be afraid to take action, for it already has a variety of reflective and analytical tools at its disposal.¹⁹

Notes and references

1. Documents for a workshop on school discipline problems organized in 1996 by the author for the teaching staff of the pre-university college of the state of Sonora, Mexico.
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SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND THE BUILDING OF VALUES IN THE DAILY LIFE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Ana María Cerda and Jenny Assaél

Introduction

In the context of a hierarchical and authoritarian education system, school discipline has and continues to be an important issue affecting daily teaching practices in primary and secondary schools in Chile.

We have been doing some research in this area to gather data that may be of use in approaching the issue. The aim was to uncover the conceptions of school discipline and rules that underlie teaching practices and to study the soundness of educational planning in terms of the type of norms and values that are emphasized in schools.¹ As to national-level conflicts over expulsions from secondary schools in Chile, we are conducting a study on disciplinary rules from the viewpoint of human rights.²

To understand the matter more fully we have to approach it not only from the perspective of the teachers and the institutional framework but also from that of the youth culture of children from less privileged backgrounds. We are currently carrying out this research and present our preliminary results in this article.³

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Ana María Cerda (Chile)

Professor of history, geography and civic education; lecturer in educational science research. She has been a researcher with the Programa Interdisciplinario de la Educación (PIIE) (Interdisciplinary Education Programme) since 1978. She specializes in educational ethnography and advanced training for teachers.

Jenny Assaél (Chile)

Psychologist; researcher with the Interdisciplinary Education Programme since 1980. She specializes in educational ethnography and advanced training for teachers.

To describe the institutional structure of secondary schools and how young people relate to it, one has to get inside the system of day-to-day relations in schools. This provides a pointer to how the institutional structure is imposed as the 'official culture', in a dialectic relationship with the culture of young people in which they construct spaces of differentiation where traits of the youth culture emerge more or less overtly. In this relationship between the institutional system, school discipline and youth, mediated by the world of teachers, the ways of experiencing and negotiating the rules are diverse and complex.

In the secondary school under study, the written and approved rules are apparently meaningless to a great proportion of teachers. Furthermore, there are rivalries and serious power struggles among the teachers, who assume various roles. In the absence of a shared assignment, the rules are enforced by teachers in a whimsical and self-serving manner, resulting in an everyday institutional space in which lax discipline goes hand in hand with the wielding of abusive and arbitrary power.

In this somewhat anomic environment, pupils learn different ways of relating to power and authority; at the same time they develop a set of strategies for circumventing the rules and coping as well as possible within the system.

During this process and in their relations with their peers, and with adults, the youngsters are simultaneously engaged in building their own values system, shaped by a permanent tension between acceptance, rejection and defiance of the values that they see as governing the institutional world of the school.

Lack of a shared assignment and consequent power struggles

We chose to study internal functioning by listening to the experiences of young people enrolled in a polytechnic school in a popular urban neighbourhood of the capital. While boasting a distinguished history as a pilot school promoting the interests of an upwardly mobile social class, it is nowadays considered to be in crisis. In fact it is regarded in the community and by various authorities as a dumping ground.⁴

The head teachers feel that they are in a deteriorating situation where a lack of resources is coupled with the arrival of weak pupils expelled from other schools. In addition, the principal feels most of the teachers have no real commitment to teaching. The teachers, on the other hand, feel that the principal is not a good manager. So do the pupils, who say that he is not fully committed and, worse still, that he is, more often than not, absent from school.

The image is that of an institution in decline: mutual perceptions of a lack of commitment and of deterioration; loss of direction and absence of educational planning; imprecise norms and roles that are not shared but determined instead by personal interest; power struggles, authoritarianism and arbitrary rules. This is the everyday environment for schoolchildren.

CLASHES OF INTEREST AND POWER BARGAINING

In a context of educational drift where many teachers have lost the sense of what it means to teach, the desire for power is given a freer reign with the result that the arbitrary use of power, power struggles and various forms of bargaining become more patently clear to the pupils.

These practices are part of daily life and are played out in power micro-spaces in which the participants are jockeying for power.⁵ For example, in a typical third-year class, the way the various actors react to a conflict between the pupils and the religion teacher reveals clearly that school principals, teachers and students have diverging interests and attitudes.

According to the school rules, pupils may, at the start of the year, be excused religion classes providing they have a signed authorization from a parent or guardian. In contravention of existing rules, third-year pupils refused to attend the religion classes, and sought an alliance with their head teacher to achieve this objective.

The head teacher agreed to support them and, for the sake of having the rule relaxed, took the matter to the school principal, who authorized her to tell her pupils that they did not have to attend religion classes. She so informed her class, warning them that 'if the religion teacher asks you, tell him that you requested it'.

A few days later, the religion teacher comes into the classroom and a girl speaks out:

PUPIL: Teacher, there are only three pupils in religion class [*defiant smile*].

TEACHER [*irritated*]: That's not true.

PUPIL: Yes it is. We spoke to our teacher and she spoke to the principal.

TEACHER: Look, the point is that your teacher is anti-religious. She was already like that with other classes. She got a low rating from the teachers' council.

PUPIL: That's not true, since they congratulated her because of us.

[*The teacher calls the school inspector.*]

INSPECTOR: What's going on here? You should know there's a rule about the religion classes.

PUPIL: Our teacher already got the principal's permission to excuse us religion classes.

INSPECTOR: Tell her to come and see me. Anyway, the rules say that it's the parent or guardian who decides whether or not a pupil goes to religion classes.

Two months later, the conflict is still unresolved. Only three pupils have enrolled to study the subject. The rest have sought to be excused from attending the class. The religion teacher threatened his pupils and demanded that they all attend his lesson. The pupils refused and the teacher again calls in the school inspector.

When the inspector enters the room the pupils quieten and sit down. Shouting, the inspector, orders them to go with the teacher to the classroom where religion is taught and then leaves.

The teacher holds a roll-call. The pupils answer in a surly manner. Two of them are absent because they are in the library. Their classmates intercede for them. The teacher is adamant: 'They have to be in the classroom if they want to be counted as present'.

The teacher asks the pupils to follow him to the religion classroom. Some put up resistance, including María, who makes remarks about him.

A few days later, several pupils are smoking in the classroom. Suddenly they all put out their cigarettes. Someone mutters: 'Here comes old Sandoval!'. The inspector-general appears. He looks at them, takes a piece of paper from his pocket. Reading it, he goes up to María and says: 'Follow me to my office'.

María protests, holds out her hands and says: 'Have a smell; I don't smell of cigarettes'. The inspector shakes his head: 'Come with me'. María leaves with him. The rest of the group remains silent. Back from the inspector's office, María explains: 'It was because I didn't go to the religion class. They sent me to get my parents'.

The interests of the teachers, pupils and administrators come into play in a network of relationships where various forms of power are used and where individuals each use their own resources and influence to achieve their ends.

The pupils not wanting to attend the religion classes call upon the nearest teacher, their head teacher. She, being chiefly interested in staying on good terms with her class, turns to the highest official in the school — the principal. Although the pupils have indeed broken school regulations by failing to produce prior written consent from their parents to be excused from religion classes, the principal decided to excuse any pupils not wishing to attend the class.

What the teacher of religion, for his part, wants is to have plenty of pupils in his class, regardless of whether or not they are interested in the subject. Failing to exercise his power vis-à-vis the pupils, particularly as they are backed by the head teacher and principal, he turns to one of the highest authorities in the school: the inspector. To get his way, he has no qualms about questioning the professional competence of his colleague in front of the class. The inspector, whose main task is to ensure compliance with the rules, invokes the law and imposes his authority, which is greater than that of the principal himself. This conflict reflects the existence of special interests, a lack of co-ordination among the authorities and backbiting between adults more than any real concern for education.

THE POWER AND AUTHORITARIANISM OF THE INSPECTORS

Inspectors are expressly empowered to ensure that discipline is upheld in their assigned areas and classes, in which they are pitted against teachers and other inspectors.

Inspectors maintain their authority by affirming and defending their areas and functions with no other apparent purpose than to demonstrate power, and do not hold back from using their power in arbitrary manner and meting out frequent punishment. This is clear from the following episode, which is a good illustration of many everyday situations.

We had been speaking with one of the heads of a grade about the possibility of interviewing him and his group. The inspector-general had given his permission. Furthermore, we asked and obtained permission from the teacher before the pupils were taken from the classroom. Yet, as the pupils were going downstairs for the interview, the schoolyard inspector sent them back until the end of the lesson because

he had not been consulted. The inspector had overridden the orders of the teacher and the inspector-general. Afraid of the possible consequences of disobeying the inspector, the pupils returned to their classroom even though they had not been breaking any rule.

TEACHERS' DESIRE TO DIFFERENTIATE THEIR ROLE FROM THAT OF THE INSPECTORS

Faced with the arbitrary acts of authoritarian inspectors, teachers try to move closer to their pupils by distinguishing their role from that of the inspectors. Teachers, especially young ones, sometimes try to build alliances with their pupils against this imaginary repressive power. But at the same time, these same teachers frequently assert their authority, thus creating a conflict with pupils declining this double role.

ROBERTO [very annoyed]: Who does he think he is, the creep? After all, he's only a teacher.

JOEL: Why was he going around being a nuisance over there?

RICARDO: He thinks he's an inspector, the creep!

Thus, for all their efforts to contrast their educational role and the monitoring function of the inspectors, the ambiguous role played by some teachers is called into question by pupils, as can be gathered from the following dialogue:

TEACHER: Let's see. Who, in your opinion, are those with authority in this school? I mean those enforcing the rules and discipline, and punishing you when you disobey.

FELIPE: The inspectors give the orders here.

MANUEL: But the teachers spend more time with us.

JUAN: But the inspectors throw their weight around more often!

PEDRO: But it's the teachers who send us to the inspector's office!

While recognizing the role of the inspectors and their power to enforce the rules, the pupils are also aware that the teachers hide behind the figure of the inspector to maintain classroom order and discipline. In this case the teacher initiates a dialogue in an attempt to show his pupils that he is different from the inspectors. But the pupils remind him how the two functions are interchangeable.

Caught between amnesia and inconsistency, the rules lose their significance

In this educational institution, lacking a shared purpose and ruled instead by personal interests and power struggles, academic discipline is marked essentially by inconsistent rules coupled with an institutional 'amnesia' that merely exacerbates the relative nature of the rules.

The inconsistency of the rules is reflected in the failure to apply sanctions and in a climate of laxness. It would appear that, in this general drift and lack of commitment, both teachers and inspectors 'forget' to apply particular sanctions. The

pupils readily spot this 'amnesia' on the part of the authorities and so realize that the rules are meaningless and the punishments arbitrary, and that what they have to do is risk breaking the rules and trust in such forgetfulness.

Inspectors and teachers usually display 'amnesia' when it comes to informing a parent or guardian that a pupil has done something wrong. The rules say that parents must be summoned in the event of specific misconduct and formally notified of the occurrence.⁶

This is in fact the situation even in more serious cases, as for instance when pupils make off during school hours. Such truancy is referred to as escaping or breaking out, or similar language with a legal or penitentiary connotation making the incident sound more serious as if it were a transgression of the law.

Yet, for all the official stance, the pupils' experience or observation is that there is a certain amnesia about informing parents or guardians, so that rule-breaking becomes a triviality.

The adults' act of 'forgetting' to apply procedures or sanctions is also influenced by the fragmentation of tasks between inspectors and teachers and by their power struggles that eclipse purely educational concerns.

Thus, in response to some behaviour by the pupils, the teacher notes in the class book what took place and what should be done about it. Warnings and punishments are a matter to be handled subsequently by the inspectors.

The pupils know that the class book is a channel of communication between teachers and the chief means they have of recalling their tasks.⁷ They also know that 'amnesia' exists. Hence pupils habitually intercept the class books and erase the record. To the extent that what is not recorded ceases to exist, both misbehaviour and retribution are also expunged. Since the same disregard engulfs them, they become irrelevant to the process of education.

As the pupils see it, the irrelevance of the rules is heightened by the inconsistent and arbitrary way in which some of them are applied. The matter of personal appearance is a case in point:

JOEL: They discriminate against you too. So, instead of saying: 'Right, from the start of the school year no one is allowed in with long hair', it's not like that - I had my hair cut but some get in with long hair.

ROBERT: They don't apply the same standards to everyone.

RICARDO: They begin at the start of the school year and they bug you about everything - your hair, the way you dress. And then after a couple weeks or so they stop bothering you, even if you haven't had your hair cut. Then at the end of the year they come back with the same thing. Because they don't all take the same line.

JOEL: If they want to enforce that rule they should go ahead.

ROBERTO: And stick to it and that's that. But no, they keep changing it. And that makes you want to rebel.

RICARDO: Yes. It's the same in the fourth year. There they let you wear your hair a little longer because it's the last year and they won't be seeing you any more. It shouldn't be like that either.

The pupils see that sometimes the authorities want things one way and, at other times, the same situation is of no concern. They also consider it inconsistent that the rules are not applied equally to everyone. This makes them angry because it undermines justice.

The pupils do not question the existence of rules. What they object to is their inconsistent application since it implies discrimination and injustice. They also feel that the authorities justify their demands with contradictory logic.

In terms of injustice, the pupils object to differential treatment by the teachers when it results in discrimination. They believe that teachers and inspectors are prejudiced against particular pupils they call to heel while letting others flout the rules.

It appears therefore that the rules are less important in terms of the educational guidelines they might offer than as a tool for punishing those not living up to each teacher's expectations of what constitutes a good pupil.

Pupils would also like the rules to be applied consistently. They regard it as arbitrary that the rules are enforced one day and vigilance is relaxed the next. It would seem, therefore, that pupils need the limits and ongoing control of what is established by others — the authorities — without necessarily finding such constraints meaningful.

DECADENCE AND CORRUPTION

As can be gathered from the following incident, corruption is never far away when individual interests predominate over a lack of shared institutional goals:

JUAN: And we even drank here in the classroom, with the teachers, no kidding! [*They look at the tape recorder.*] Pérez, wasn't it?

DIEGO [*loudly*]: Who cares about Pérez?

JUAN: He's an old guy who comes only on Wednesdays and Fridays and who walks around with a mobile telephone and a gun and is always bothering us.

HUGO: Mr Military Rule!

PACO: He thinks he's a soldier, the ass!

JUAN: We were going to have a test and he said: 'Okay, but if you bring a porno video and some booze, I won't give it you'. And since we were in the last room in the back, in the workshops, they showed the video, drank coca cola and brandy and had something to nibble...

PACO: With the class's money [*laughs*].

INTERVIEWER: Was the whole class there?

HUGO: Everyone. No one was absent.

The pupils were reluctant to recount that episode because they knew perfectly well it broke every rule in the book. They felt guilty because they had got the teacher to agree to drop the test in exchange for the little party.

This account of a situation so remote from, and at odds with, what education should offer young people, and which everyone is aware of but ignores or keeps quiet about, shows the level of anomie and corruption into which a 'decadent' academic establishment can fall and the types of 'learning' situations which adolescents

can be exposed to. In these situations, it comes as no surprise that young people gain a particular idea of what it is to exercise power. To them holding a position involves accepting arbitrary and abusive behaviour, and the idea of power at the service of common interests is absent. It is hardly surprising then that pupils also resort to using various strategies involving power and negotiation to achieve their own interests.

Strategies to avoid conflict with the authorities

Against this background of power struggles and divergent interests and an absence of meaning, what becomes most important for pupils is their relationship with their peers and staying on at school in order to acquire a social role and status denied to unemployed school drop-outs. In order to stay at school and avoid conflict with the authorities, pupils develop different strategies to keep some spaces for themselves, circumvent certain rules and avoid getting caught.

LEARNING TO BE CRAFTY

By learning to be crafty, pupils can, with the help of various ruses, do as they please without knuckling under or being found out. Subterfuge is common among pupils as a way of avoiding being caught, and avoiding punishment when they disregard certain rules, especially in matters of grooming and dress. For example, when someone is checking for long hair at the school entrance, those with long hair stay away. Pupils also learn how to alter their marks without being found out, so that many feel that it is not difficult to make a good showing at school.

JUAN: After the middle fourth my parents want to take me to Viña. But I wanted to stay because I knew that here I can get through the fourth without any problems. If I had gone to Viña, everything would have been more difficult as everything's straight.

LUIS: This school is very disorganized.

JUAN [*interrupting*]: Recently, for example.

ROBERTO: I put down eight top marks!

LUIS: Yes he did, and one for me!

JUAN: Don't worry. It's really easy to get on here [*laughs*]. I had three top marks and gave myself four more!

LUIS: You have to be careful you don't get caught.

This dialogue shows that the pupils are well aware that they do not have to work hard and learn very much to obtain a good paper qualification, even one with flying colours, to get them through school. In addition to the minimal demands on learning, marks can be falsified as teachers can also suffer from 'amnesia' when it comes to marking and assessing pupil performance.

THE USE OF VARIOUS FORMS OF POWER

Pupils also learn that if they have any type of influence, such as a contact with a person in authority or the backing of their parents or guardians, they are unlikely to be treated as arbitrarily as their classmates. They learn to use various forms of power to avoid punishment for rule-breaking.

Some pupils realize that taking on certain institutional roles, such as participating in official student organizations, gives them certain freedoms not enjoyed by their classmates. Hugo relates that one day he arrived late and was stopped and asked for an explanation by the inspector. 'I was at the National Youth Institute', he answered, and the inspector let him through.

Pupils and their parents or guardians know that a good way of countering arbitrary acts and making them feel secure and protected is by maintaining contacts with higher authorities. For example, pupils who have some contacts within the municipal authority, which hires inspectors and teachers, enjoy a level of impunity and are treated differently from the majority of their peers lacking such leverage.

FELIPE: Last year, when García [*the inspector-general*] arrived, he had it in for me and every day he would stop me. Either because of the tie, the hair, or because I was late. Those days my hair was down to here [*points to his shoulders*] but I was very tidy, wearing a tie, my badge and all that, and my hair tied back [*increasingly upset*]. But the old jerk pulled me aside everyday and hassled me. And there were others who came to school with long hair, no tie, but the old jerk had it in for me. Until one day he said to me: 'Listen, you. What hole did you crawl out of?'. And then I got furious and told my old man what was going on. So the next day my old man came here and made out to him that he worked for the city in the education department and that if he continued to bother me, he'd mess things up for him with the mayor. After that he stopped hassling me and today I come to school any way I want.

This account of harrasment and resorting to 'pulling strings', including the 'buying off' of some inspectors and teachers was frequently noted. For example, one pupil had no problems for a year because, as he himself admitted, 'I brought perfumes from my aunt's place to last year's classroom inspector, so I could do whatever I wanted'.

In this atmosphere of complicity, where part of the adult world is not entirely consistent, pupils experience and use their contacts with those in power in order to get what they want, and in the process also prepare themselves to act this way in society.

In this setting where having power and contacts is of the utmost importance in countering arbitrariness, pupils are obliged to make alliances with their teachers and other individuals with more influence than them to guarantee their protection and defence. This reduces the likelihood of punishment and expulsion. In such adverse circumstances, where adults are generally at loggerheads with rather than listening to the young, finding a protector is a key defence strategy.

PEER SOLIDARITY

Students also develop systems of mutual protection. In response to punishment that they regard as unfair, they close ranks to protect an allegedly guilty party, even though they may be unjustly accused themselves.

MARIO: It's unfair here. I know that the maths teacher has something against Pedro. Sometimes when Pedro wasn't talking at all, she would say: 'Rivas!', and Pedro would answer 'Señorita, I'm not doing anything'. Then she would say: 'Rivas, you were talking. Out you go!'.

DANIEL: Seriously, because if he tried anything else, he was in for it. And you shouted, didn't you?

PEDRO: Yes, I did.

DANIEL: But this time the old bag thought it was me and said: 'Okay Daniel, leave the room'. But I didn't tell her 'No, it was Pedro', so I got kicked out of class. And the teacher gave me a bad mark.

Sticking together therefore becomes an important tool for combating the arbitrary use of power by teachers, especially in situations of high risk for any particular pupil.

In this respect, pupils learn to evaluate and respond to such situations by defending their peers even at the risk of being unjustly accused or blacklisted themselves.

This survival strategy teaches pupils the value of protecting their peers and developing solidarity.

How pupils survive at school

Faced with arbitrariness and inconsistent rules, pupils develop various strategies, as described above, and learn different ways of surviving in school and how to establish contacts with people who wield power.

We used the term 'survival' because a great many young people are haunted by the prospect of expulsion and seek merely to muddle through as best they can for the sake of a graduation diploma.

In their quest to survive, pupils devise various strategies to remain at school, and these reinforce particular attitudes in their relations with others and foster the development of certain significant values in their training.

Attitudes among pupils range from those who do every bidding of the authorities to those who openly rebel against an arbitrary system they consider unfair.

LUIS: Be like me, keep out of trouble.

PEDRO: You can't say 'Be like me, keep out of trouble' because if you see an injustice being done to you, you're not going to keep your mouth shut.

LUIS: I hardly ever get unfairness. I've never seen it; okay, there's been plenty of unfairness against my classmates; I know you go out and defend them, our classmates, but me, no. I keep quiet and that's it. All I want is to get out of school. I'm here to study and that's all, but I want to get out.

PEDRO: We all want to get out. But I stick up for my classmates. At least that's my style; I'm not going to be shoved around by someone who's thicker than I am and got to be inspector just because he's a buddy of the principal.

This dialogue reflects different strategies for surviving at school. One is represented by Luis: he prefers to keep out of harm's way because studying is his top priority. His main interest is to finish school as soon as possible. So he keeps a low profile and holds his tongue when he sees injustice, even though he recognizes it and appreciates others who defend their ideas, rebel or act out of solidarity with their peers.

The other approach is that of Pedro, who refuses to accept injustice and arbitrariness and is willing to defend himself or his schoolmates. He believes that no amount of wanting to stay on in the school can justify a submissive attitude although he, like Luis, has an interest in finishing school.

Rebellious attitudes and the courage to counter arbitrary acts threaten survival in school. The rebellious attitude of some like Pedro jeopardizes their survival at the school.

Thus, while those students who bravely denounce the inconsistencies of the authorities manage to assert their rights, they are usually labelled troublemakers, which in turn threatens their school career.

FELIPE: The other day we were lining up after break and I always wait until the last because I'm the smallest. The inspector grabbed me by the ear and said 'Get in line'. I raised my hand against her and she started shouting: 'This child hit me. He is insolent'. And she took me to the inspector's office. The inspector-general said: 'If it'd been me, I'd have punched you on the nose. You're going to be expelled'. And they sent me home. Up to that point, they had won. But I told my dad the whole story. And we went to speak with the principal and we won. The inspector-general and the inspector were reprimanded and they let me go back in.

RAÚL: In this school, you need pluck to stand up to the inspectors. I've had a lot of trouble with this inspector, but I've always stood up to him, I've never been afraid of the inspectors. So I got suspended. Sometimes, according to the inspectors, I'm the most disorderly, but in any case you have to stand up to them sooner or later.

INTERVIEWER: And how do you do that?

RAÚL: With logic. For example, the other day the maths teacher put out a notice that because of my disrespectful behaviour I was no longer allowed in the classroom. According to her I had changed my seat and gone to sit next to her. I sat next to her because I couldn't understand the maths lesson and wanted to understand it better. And she misunderstood and said that I was always bothering her. The inspector called me to his office. I was not allowed to give any explanation and he wrote 'conditional' on my record. I said: 'May I speak?' and he said to me: 'No, you may not, you are going to be suspended'. So I held my tongue and went to see the school counsellor and explained the situation. She spoke to the inspector and he said to me: 'You have to go to the maths teacher and apologize'. And I apologized to her and that resolved the problem. If you get the better of him, he begins to hate you. And he watches you the whole time to see what you're doing, hoping you'll do something wrong so he can throw you out of school.

Young people who behave in a courageous and defiant manner in the face of arbitrary behaviour by teachers will sooner or later pay the price. It makes them more vulnerable in school because some teachers, and above all the inspectors, consider

them a threat to their arbitrary exercise of power. The least submissive pupils and those who defend their rights are more likely therefore to invoke the law, but run the risk of being expelled.

HYPOCRISY AS AN AID TO SURVIVAL

It becomes clear in talking with pupils that hypocrisy is seen as an essential practice for getting by, both at school and in society, even though it does not match their ideals; in fact hypocrisy is not valued and is even criticized. In any event, one has to learn to be hypocritical in order to gain social acceptance and avoid discrimination.

Resisting and refusing to accept hypocrisy is seen by pupils as a way of defying the system. However, they also know that such an attitude is sometimes necessary for survival.

Following a teacher's demand that pupils come to an examination formally dressed, which many cannot, this dialogue took place:

INTERVIEWER: You came without a suit? Why didn't you wear a suit?

JULIO [*laughing*]: Because he's rebelling against the system, that's why.

JUAN: I didn't want to wear a suit either but since they were going to mark the test, and my marks are not too hot so far ...

RINO: So you have to keep in with the teacher.

JULIO: Yes, that's why I have to be a hypocrite. Just like I walk into the classroom and say: 'Good morning, teacher, how are you?'. Even if I don't feel like being that polite.

The lesson appears to be that if you strictly observe the rules, do not speak out against arbitrary practices, are hypocritical and do not air your ideas, and do what you are told even though you disagree, you are likely to have an easier time in school.

Between impotency and humiliation

Faced with the power and arbitrary practices of the authorities, pupils do not feel that they are recognized as having rights of their own.

They see the abuse of power as part of a daily ritual which ranges from shouting to public humiliation. The young feel that some adults, especially the inspectors, act as if they were 'gods in high heaven' and are bent on proving their superiority: 'How are you going to put yourself on their level?'. They explain that when they reprimand them: 'They can't speak like normal people, they always have to shout'.

These relations based on power make pupils insecure. They feel it is difficult to develop the type of personality that would enable them to progress socially and feel more at ease with others. This sentiment is reflected in the two following statements: 'One person becomes all shy when other people come into the room, staying quiet and not knowing what to do'; and 'they should teach you more self-confidence'. Moreover, pupils feel that when they try to express their views no one listens to them:

JUAN: When it comes to saying what *you* want, too, the thing is that here you've no say at all. You can't ask for what you want because as soon as you do the oldies treat you as though you were a revolutionary.

EUGENIO: And if someone says anything to them, or answers back, that causes problems, and they say you don't have enough respect for them.

JUAN: Just imagine, you go to the inspector's office to complain and no one pays attention to you. Who's going to bother to go to the inspector's office?

EUGENIO: Who's right, the teacher or the pupil?

JOSÉ: Here it seems like they don't believe what you say. I can feel it, that they don't believe you, that is.

[*The pupils describe various conflictual situations where they went to the inspector's office and each time the inspector decided that the teacher was in the right.*]

EUGENIO: We should form a pupils' union.

The very need to create a body to negotiate with the authorities shows how defenceless, vulnerable and powerless pupils feel when they are neither heeded nor respected.

But, apparently, the situation in which pupils are most defenceless is when they are humiliated by the authorities, for example when they are punished in front of their peers. The school authorities frequently do this to set an example or as a punishment to ensure that there is no further misbehaviour.⁸

Confronted with these abuses of power, pupils develop a sort of resignation because they feel overwhelmed by such domination.

SAÚL: It's like fighting against your father. Your father is always going to be right; you have to do as you're told and that's that, even if you're right or, I don't know ... the inspectors act like that and they can suspend you or expel you from school. They've got power over us. [*The other pupils say nothing.*]

The power of the inspector's office, which is responsible for discipline and monitoring, is so great, in the eyes of the pupils, that they project it to the relationship between inspectors and teachers. Thus, as they see it, the teachers feel vulnerable and intimidated by the inspectors' power.

JUAN: Teacher Hector doesn't stick up for us; keeps his mouth shut as though he's scared of the other teachers.

HUGO: He's scared of the inspectors too.

JUAN: I think that Hector's scared of getting thrown out. Last year, he was finished, everyone knew that he was going to be fired, but since they were short of a teacher, he got to stay.

HUGO: You know what happened? He went and painted the kitchen and the dining room.

PEDRO [*ironically*]: They're exploiting your teacher.

HUGO: That's why he stayed. I think he's sharp, that teacher — he did it so they wouldn't fire him.

JUAN: It's because he has to work.

PEDRO: He's still living with his parents [*laughs*].

JUAN: Maybe this teacher doesn't stick up for you because if he does the director will turn against him.

DIEGO: The teacher can't be hostile to anyone — it's not his way.

According to the pupils, this teacher had been threatened with dismissal and was too afraid to defend them. They saw him as fearful, individualistic and capable of ingratiating himself with the authorities, doing them favours or volunteering for work to avoid being dismissed. However, missing in this perception of the teacher's attitudes is the fact that in the municipal education system, it is difficult to dismiss a teacher under contract. On the other hand, the threat of suspension or expulsion is real enough for the pupils, so that they feel quite defenceless before the authorities and seek survival methods similar to those they project in the conversation about the fearful teacher and how he contrives to hang on.

This particular school, which serves a working class neighbourhood, demonstrates the basic problem of educating youth from these social sectors, where the educational model, in the context of current realities, is in crisis.

The 'value of learning' at school is being lost, giving way to various forms of 'survival' that the actors seek and try out: survival bound up with maintained identity for teachers on the one hand and, on the other, the quest of working class youth for a place in society — their place as learners.

This situation gives rise to a fragmented meaning of the school where all the participants strive individually, using various strategies and devices setting great store by competition, power struggle, peddling influence, hypocrisy and arbitrariness. As a result, the sense of community and school standards lose their importance.

It seems that it is only when pupils and teachers come together in a common effort to reconstruct the meaning of school that its standards and system of discipline can be refashioned as the cornerstone of tomorrow's democracy.

Notes

1. Aranguiz, G.; Cerda, A.M.; Guzmán, I. 1991-1993. *Los problemas de disciplina en la escuela: la visión de los docentes* [Discipline problems in schools: the teachers' perspective]. Santiago, Chile, ONDECYT.
2. Cerda A.M.; Donoso P.; Guzmán I. 1996. *Los reglamentos de disciplina en la cultura escolar desde la perspectiva de los derechos humanos* [Disciplinary rules in the schools from the viewpoint of human rights]. In: *Biblioteca Básica para la Educación en Derechos Humanos* [Basic Library on Human Rights Education]. Corporación Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, Santiago, Chile, Vol. 1.
3. Assaél J.; Ceballos F.; Cerda A.M.; Guzmán I.; Sepúlveda R. *Contenidos valóricos y normativas que construyen los jóvenes en el espacio escolar: un estudio etnográfico* [Youth values and norms in the school context: an ethnographic study]. Santiago, Chile, FONDECYT. (Investigación FONDECYT No. 1971181.)
4. In Chile the term 'dumping ground' is generally used for schools providing poor-quality education and, in each community, tending to absorb children expelled from the other schools on either academic or disciplinary grounds.
5. Ball, S.J. 1987. *La micropolítica en la escuela. Hacia una teoría de la organización escolar* [Micropolitics in school. Towards a theory of school organization]. Barcelona, Paidós.

6. Such notification involves having the parent sign the class book, which is a legal document, to prove that he or she has been told of the pupil's behaviour. Thus in the event of expulsion or a recommended change of school, parents cannot say they were left in the dark.
7. The class book is the official document for each class and contains the pupils' performance, conduct and attendance, and the planning and execution of the syllabus for each subject.
8. In 1997 there were many complaints in Chile of incidents of mistreatment and humiliation in secondary education.

INDISCIPLINE OR VIOLENCE?

THE PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN SCHOOL

Rosario Ortega Ruiz

What do we mean by school discipline?

Formal education is frequently questioned. It always was and is to be hoped that it always will be, since that will signify a civilizational concern with education and its improvement, to which questioning is essential. Sometimes our questions directed at education were so much broader in scope that no reply was possible; that was true of the 'break-off' theoretical movement that bluntly stated that 'education had died'—a defeatist pronouncement by any reckoning, which we should not regard as prophetic. Therefore, we are going to assume that constantly questioning education is a means of trying to improve it.

The issue we propose to discuss is discipline, possibly the most complex matter of all those implicit in education, both theoretically and practically. But what do we mean by discipline? Who are 'we'? Who is being addressed? Educational analysts and theorists? The policy-makers concerned with funding and directing education in towns and regions? Local education authorities? Teachers and others occupationally involved in education? Do the pupils themselves have any say in the matter? Above all, what level are we talking about?

If our questions refer to education in its broadest sense as a socio-political exercise, some detachment is probably needed from the day-to-day doings of actual classrooms and schools, so as to ensure that the stance is not too local in scope and hence inappropriate for many of the communities and populations that will be receiv-

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Rosario Ortega Ruiz (Spain)

Professor of Educational and Developmental Psychology at the University of Seville. Directs the research team 'Grupo de Investigaciones Psicopedagógicas' (Plan Andaluz de Investigación) and is in charge of the project 'Sevilla Anti-Violencia Escolar: SAVE (SEC-95-0569 Plan Nacional I+D)'. E-mail address: ortega@cica.es

ing the message and whose cultures include dissimilar conventions and values. But if we assume that, quite apart from the benchmarks of educational analysis and evaluation, all educational practice in school presupposes a teacher-pupil interface, the matter of discipline takes on a radically different character. Thus, in everyday life in classrooms and schools, discipline has to do with the conventions, rules, customs and values that are brought into play by social interaction within each educational community.

Furthermore, discipline is able to act as a mirror, reflecting or not what constitutes interaction. So where such educational harmony prevails, whatever the cause, nobody thinks about discipline. At most, it is discovered that success is perhaps as much a matter of good school organization as of the goodness of the people involved; in which case the watchwords tend to be well-trained teachers, efficient social organization, correct use of available resources, well-designed objectives and programmes, appropriate assessment methods and so on. Discipline becomes an educational matter and is expressed in negative terms—indiscipline or lack of discipline—when something or a lot of things at once are not as they should be at school.

Organization of harmonious co-existence at school and the peer system

Schoolchildren organize their social lives around prior tenets and sequences of activities devised by teachers, in the common belief that such patterns are conducive to learning. The result is that the social organization of the school not only serves for acquisition of the knowledge and skills it seeks to impart, but also gives rise to systems of communication, power sharing, interpersonal habits, and emotions and feelings that contain more than just objective information. A complex world of values, some explicit and others implicit, lies across the spheres of co-existence in school. During the educational process, the life of interpersonal relations pertains to social settings in which the young have different types of relations, two of which deserve mention: relations with teaching staff and relations with schoolmates. The relationship with teaching staff is fundamental for many universally known reasons that we shall not go into now, but the relationships pupils form among themselves are no less important and have been called peer relations (Hartup, 1979).

Explicit discipline, meaning the establishment and enforcement of rules, affects relations between teachers and pupils and the relations of all with curricular content and methods, namely work and activities. But it does not affect, at least not in the same way, the relations that pupils form among themselves. Those relations, which are spontaneous, are also set around conventions that are not clearly defined because, for one thing, teachers seldom manage to get right into the social system that peers create for themselves.

The relations that schoolmates establish among themselves during daily life at school are quite often a closed book for teachers and the educational authorities. A mistaken and excessive belief in personal autonomy, or a mere lack of interest in non-instructional processes, has cast a veil of ignorance over the emotional

and affective relations between students and how they get on together because all this takes place just outside the range of vision of adults. The issue has been ignored, or the assumption made that the best way to deal with it is to make use of the rivalry generally arising among pupils, particularly when competition is a key factor in academic work, as is frequently the case (Johnson, 1981). As a result, until very recently, at least in our cultural environment, educational science has given scant attention to peer relations either in their instructional aspect (Coll, 1984) or in their socio-affective and moral aspect (Ortega & Mora-Merchán, 1996).

In designing curricula very little attention has gone to peer relations and much less to the affective aspects. The teacher/pupil pattern has been prioritized to the point where, in practice, it has become the sole means whereby schools pass on the information, attitudes and values they seek to implant. Obviously, however, a large part of the information, attitudes and values acquired in school derives from the complex and virtually unknown peer system. But the pupils, who are not always given a say in drawing up rules, systems for regulating activities or the decisions and schemas relating to discipline, very quickly learn non-explicit but effective laws for mastering the scarcely analysed and little-understood field of interpersonal relations.

Peer systems set the seal of approval on some social behaviour patterns seen as specific to each generation, which convinces those concerned that it is their own and most genuine social reference system (Hartup, 1978). Children therefore set great store by the interpersonal events that take place between them, which is also logical since the activities systems characteristic of the developed Western world—which are those being imposed universally—are based on a model in which each individual works surrounded by peers and only occasionally consults people of another status. Schools are no exception in this respect, proposing as they do sequences of activities and tasks that make pupils see themselves as equals before teachers and other educational agents, who are perceived as belonging to other social statuses. In this way the peer microsystem becomes a uniformizing referent for pupils made up of keys of organization, communication and power that acquire considerable symbolic relevance for each boy and girl attending the school.

Grouped together in classrooms and playgrounds, pupils constitute a psychosocial entity that deserves to be regarded as such, since the relations within it give rise to phenomena that significantly influence the socialization process. They are settings in which uniformity of social status, the variety of roles, the form of communication, and the conventions and rules established encourage particular processes of personal development and hamper others.

The day-to-day social interaction of schoolmates includes behaviour patterns and attitudes that, when at one with or relatively close to the moral values considered right by society, can provide schemas that reaffirm a child's sense of personal security through an awareness of belonging to a reference group. But when the behaviour patterns and conventions substantially depart from the values of society, the social environment of the peers can become far more problematic as regards social-

ization. In this respect it is worth exploring in greater depth one of the social schemas learned in the peer group environment and which ethologists call the dominance/submission model.

Schoolchildren and the social schema of dominance/submission

The dominance/submission schema, as part of the socialization process, should be fitted into a framework of social reciprocity allowing the two protagonists to explore control respectively over their own acts and over those of the schoolmate. This permits experience of mastering the distribution of social power in its two aspects: imposing and obeying. In the dominance/submission schema, protagonists should experience equality of opportunity for carrying out the two extremes of behaviour concerned. Practical experience of reciprocity in this pattern shows negotiation to be the reasonably better path to social agreement.

If, on the other hand, this model involves the excessive dominance of one over the other and one of the youngsters is excessively subjugated by the stronger or more able schoolmate through abuse of power or the random imposition of unfair rules, that youngster will grow up under the influence of a perverted model making for dependency and insecurity. Similarly, the youngster who becomes accustomed to excessive domination and control over the other will grow up with the impression of wielding absolute power as a result of greater strength, brutality or social power. Both models are very negative and dangerous for the socialization and moral development that schools should provide.

Fortunately, this arrogance-humiliation model is not the most common. Usually pupils find their own positive social spaces in which spontaneous activities and games enable them to engage in dominance/submission patterns in a socially healthy way. Children's games, particularly physical contact games and role playing (Ortega, 1994a, b, c), are good examples of the natural employment of this social pattern involving discussion of who should take the lead in an activity, negotiations over power and control, or who should give the orders and who obey, given the circumstances. By means of play, peers negotiate over intentions, attitudes and social behaviour involving social power and submission to some extent. In this way, from early childhood, through play and other joint activities, youngsters learn how far they can go in the dominance/submission schema, symbolically and in practice, which enables them to control their own aggressiveness and set limits to the rough or violent impulses of others.

Sometimes, however, for various reasons, the peer group relations system is formed on a dominance/submission schema that includes ethically flawed and unjust conventions in which the power of some and the enforced obedience of others become inflexible rules that personal immaturity makes hard to resist. Protected by their isolation, these rigid rules for assuming and maintaining power and control take various forms, but typically one person is always dominant and the other dominated, one person controls and the other is controlled, one person exercises more or less

abusive power and the other has to submit to rules born of no agreement or participation and clearly prejudicial. The problem is one of social abuse or arrogance: a type of interpersonal linking that is clearly perverse and frequently found in closed institutions with very rigid discipline, such as prisons and the armed forces. Relatively speaking, this type of linking also occurs to some extent in schools. It is an old problem distinctively termed 'bullying' in English (Smith & Sharp, 1994) and otherwise going by such periphrases as arrogance and ill-treatment among schoolmates (Ortega, 1994a, b).

An in-depth investigation of the problem of bullying reveals that besides the individual characteristics of the actors, which is a decisive factor, and their earlier experience in the family, its occurrence is influenced by a combination of factors related as much to the organizational culture of individual schools as to the micro-culture of interpersonal relations between schoolmates, possibly because the latter defy the official culture to some extent but remain inside the informal climate of harmonious co-existence.

Is violence in schools a problem of discipline or of social harmony?

Research into bullying and violence among pupils began in the Scandinavian countries in the 1970s. The suicide of three adolescents, who explained their decision by making publicly known their anxiety at feeling persecuted and intimidated by some of their schoolmates, had an emotional impact on Swedish society. Very soon afterwards the educational authorities commissioned exploratory studies on the extent to which such problems existed in schools. The work done in Sweden was followed up by the Norwegians, with a general investigation into the problem covering the entire school population (Olweus, 1978).

In this field of research in Europe, Olweus (1973) is generally cited as the pioneer of empirical work, having to his credit the longest and most comprehensive study on the subject. Nowadays it is possible to find a wide-ranging bibliography of research on the problem, which the Scandinavians, emphasizing its social nature and its occurrence in adolescent gangs or mobs, call 'mobbing'.

A long list of studies (Olweus, 1978, 1979, 1991, 1993; Arora & Thompson, 1987; Roland & Munthe, 1989; Ahmad & Smith, 1990; Besag, 1991; Smith & Thompson, 1991; Smith & Sharp, 1994) has brought us conceptually closer to the problem of bad interpersonal relations among peers. Today we know that between 5–15% of school-children are affected by the most violent forms of bullying. Other less severe but more common forms of bullying and victimization, reported by between 25–35% of pupils, involve verbal and psychological ill-treatment, such as insults, threats, ridiculing, social isolation and malicious gossip, petty theft and damage to belongings. Youngsters call such action 'picking on someone' or 'making someone's life impossible'.

Much of this type of behaviour occurs outside the teacher's area of supervision, which makes it impossible to detect, while in other instances it is a feature of daily life in classrooms and playgrounds. Some of these behaviour patterns are confused

with problems of discipline, disruptiveness and lack of attention to academic work, because overbearing youngsters are sometimes also that way with their teachers, and victims sometimes display contradictory and ambivalent behaviour, possibly out of fear.

Overall, the problem becomes incomprehensible to teachers, who usually perceive it as a general hostility towards academic activity. Indiscipline and violence, which are two different problems, may thus come to be seen as part of a complex whole when schools are not clear about their systems of organization, communication and rules. In our opinion, the problem of poor interpersonal relations cannot be simply treated as a problem of discipline, but to avoid confusion we have to be clear as to the nature of each thing.

Discipline refers to the system of norms with which an organization provides itself, and the obligation or otherwise of each member of the social group to comply with certain conventions that, to be accepted, must have been democratically drawn up and critically reviewed by all members of the community. Can this be said to be the case with disciplinary norms at school? Certainly not always in all schools. Pupils have often had no hand in drawing up their schools' codes of conduct, or in organizing groups or planning activities; nor are they aware of the functional problems that complying with norms entail, nor have they been shown the reasonable and democratic path to settlement of the conflicts generated by the dynamics of interaction. Hence discipline becomes a problem for schools and one that particularly affects teachers. One reason for this is that pupils have neither had a hand in drawing up the rules nor been given any say in how power is exercised or the school organized. As a result, they are quite indifferent to such major issues as good and evil, what happens when someone breaks the rules, what is the purpose of the rules and so on. Beyond actual discipline, but possibly linked to it as part of the general system of co-existence, is the problem of bullying among schoolchildren. Teachers often confuse the two, which sometimes tends to give the school a chaotic image.

When a pupil lacking in social skills, or owing to special circumstances such as being a newcomer at the school, having a physical defect, belonging to another culture, or simply being a high academic achiever, becomes a butt of the animosity of one or more schoolmates and ultimately a victim of their bravado, threats or physical or psychological attacks, a social situation of vulnerability and insecurity develops that harms relations among the pupils. If such behaviour persists and the victim is unable to cope with the problems caused by the bully, the situation deteriorates into a living hell for the victim and gives the bully the all clear for persistent overbearingness and impunity. When such situations are allowed to continue, the roles of submission and dominance become more deeply entrenched, increasing the psychological fragility of the victim and the brutality of the bully. Sometimes the bullying is directed towards other pupils, or there is an increase in anti-social acts, which obviously leads to more conflict and tension in the school. If teachers have no means of finding out about pupil relations, or interpret these problems solely in terms of disruptiveness, their understanding of the overall state of social interac-

tion will be sketchy and inaccurate and will lead them to regard the situation as chaotic and believe that the problem is one of general indiscipline.

However, the problem of bullying is not so simple and leaves many outstanding questions. For example, there is no unanimity about the influence of personal characteristics, the temporary or situational and the structural; we do not know whether more or less participation by social support groups on behalf of either the bully or the victim does more or less to help. There are no clear indications of just how serious the problem is and what the determining factors are; whether it is the type of bullying or the fact of its persistence or a combination of both, coupled with how much support goes to the victim or how much social stigma attaches to the bully. We do not fully understand the real importance of the family as a background of psychogenetic factor either in the violence streak or in the tendency to let oneself be victimized. We are still unable to assess the short- and long-term consequences of having been a persistent victim or bully. Finally, we lack ways of discovering what factors have to do with schools themselves—as communities where people interact and engage in academic work—serve to aggravate or alleviate such problems.

In addition, where educational practice is concerned, although research on bullying among schoolchildren is always accompanied by proposals for educational intervention, we lack analyses clarifying the sociocultural nature of the problem or, at least, its connection with the systems of interaction that exist in schools. Many questions thus remain open. How does the climate of socio-emotional relations in a school influence the appearance of problems of violence? What is the affect of, *inter alia*, the organizational system, school rules and their execution?

In short, we still do not have a proper conceptual framework for fully interpreting the psychological, institutional and social nature of the problem of violence at school. It is particularly difficult to distinguish problems of bullying from those to do with disruptiveness and indiscipline that are harboured by the institutional complexity of how education is organized. Emotional instability, lack of incentive in academic work, lack of attention, and fear or personal disorders become interconnected with the deep and complex processes of social linkage among pupils, all of which adds to the difficulties teachers have in making the purpose of disciplinary rules, conventions and school work understood, which are often far removed from pupils, who, if they feel cold-shouldered in the decision-making process, may also feel excluded from what it signifies. All this produces an image of social problems at school that confuses teachers since, being caught up in the school's institutional complexity, they tend to draw conclusions that are self-exonerative or simply ineffective, when not actually damaging to their professional self-esteem.

In Spain, the pioneering works of Vieira, Fernández and Quevedo (1989) and Fernández García et al. (1991) followed, among others, by those of Cerezo and Esteban (1992) and our own—Ortega (1994*b, c*) and Ortega and Mora-Merchán (1996, forthcoming)—have all contributed significant information on aspects of bullying, such as how common it is in Spanish schools, forms of bullying, psychological profiles of the pupils involved, and the differences between girls and boys in regard both to their tendency to become involved in such problems and to their differing attitudes.

While working on the current phase of our project, on preventative intervention against bullying among peers, we have found that teachers have great difficulty distinguishing the problem of poor interpersonal relations among their pupils from problems of disruptive behaviour, unwillingness to work, indiscipline and general antisocial behaviour. From observing the psycho-social climate in classrooms and schools, we have found that in schools achieving harmonious relations through co-operation attentive to the various points of view of the actors concerned—pupils, teaching staff and families—and possessing flexible systems of discipline, there is less violence among pupils. On the other hand, schools with high levels of violence tend also to have serious organizational and disciplinary problems, teachers regarding the pupils as undisciplined. This is the type of school where the most serious cases of disruptiveness are a chronic problem and the most common recourse the expulsion of the most troublesome youngsters.

Ecological analysis of social interaction and the problem of bullying in school

To understand complex psycho-social phenomena such as violence and discipline in schools, one needs to use a conceptual model that permits interpretation of the facts as something extending beyond the individual focus. For our part, we have adopted the sociocultural model as a theoretical frame of reference and the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as a concrete approach to analysing the interpersonal microprocesses that take place in schools and classrooms, which we hope will be useful both for analysis and for remedial action. We are therefore analysing bullying as a phenomenon that occurs inside a microsystem of interaction—that of peer groups at the same school—which is surrounded by other social systems that are equally interactive and significant regarding the former because they exert notable influence on it through their conventions and rules, ways of exercising power, channels of communication, and so on. The microsystem of interaction, in turn, influences the general functioning of the school itself as a community to which one belongs by contributing a factor made up of complex processes of peer relations of which teachers are very often unaware. All of this may provide one of the keys to interaction between the problem of violence and that of discipline.

We attribute prime importance to day-to-day harmonious living and its conventions and what they come to mean for each individual in the complex process of socialization that takes place in compulsory education. The concept of harmonious living is used here in its widest sense to mean the whole range of factors that contribute to furtherance of the individual and social lives of all members of the community. Some of these factors are well defined, such as hierarchical power structures, the formal existence of means of communication, and the distribution of space and time; other factors, such as all those referring to non-explicit conventions, spontaneous anti-democratic habits, abuse of power or arrogance towards others, lack of objectivity, and evaluating the behaviour of pupils and situating it in a social context, are less well defined. The complex ensemble of all of these is governed by

the disciplinary regime, but also by the codes pupils use to construct their own system of conventions.

In turn, each school can be seen as a community based on co-existence and greater or lesser co-ordination between the three psychosocial elements of teachers, pupils and families. The co-ordination of these three social systems on the one hand and, on the other, the systems of activity of their members is what constitutes the day-to-day socio-affective life of each school. The convergence of these basic systems gives rise to normative and disciplinary codes to which each pupil has to adjust in order to be educated. Their convergence is marked by numerous codes of social dominance, power and submission that are of importance to pupils in organizing their own microsystem.

Schools as systems of harmonious co-existence—levels of analysis

From the conceptual perspective described above, we have established two levels of analysis: that of interpersonal processes, meaning interaction between personal subsystems, and the level of activity processes to which development of the curriculum gives rise. The conjunction of the human level and the activity level gives us a complex but coherent view of how good relations at school are organized. It enables the daily processes that take place at school to be interpreted both more accurately and more relevantly.

The first level of analysis involves describing and understanding the construction of the various processes relating to communication, roles, power, status, feelings, attitudes and values within and between each of the personal subsystems, which to a great extent is what educational organization and disciplinary systems are all about. For example, a school community comprising a team of similarly trained teachers with an accepted balance in their respective roles, with an evenly objectified style of communication, with formal procedures for making rules, settling disputes and so on, and assuredly enjoining discipline reasonably open to criticism and modification is one thing. Quite another is a school community where teachers are devoid of team spirit and lack any proper understanding of the roles and functions of the different subgroups and individuals, where the vehicles for communication and the exercise of power are not well known to people, and where there is no room, time or procedure for elaborating rules, making discipline explicit and settling disputes. Obviously, between the two extremes lies a whole range of schools displaying different combinations of the characteristic factors considered at this level of analysis. The same applies to the subsystem we have called the pupils and to the model of relations between schools and families.

Having a clear conceptualization of the relevant elements in each of the personal subsystems and those that refer to their interaction provides a frame of reference regarding the nature and functions of interpersonal relations at school. Having a clear idea of this frame of reference enables one to analyse the psycho-social phenomenon of poor relations in such a way that the analysis itself leaves open, for

teachers and researchers, ways of bringing to bear procedures and instruments for prevention and re-education if conflictual processes are detected at any of the levels and suspected of leading to bad relations in the peer microsystem. Additionally, when one has a clear idea of the system of co-existence in a school, the nature of the disciplinary system can be discerned, and it becomes obvious whether it is an authoritarian, rigid and excessively hierarchical model where a sizeable group—the pupils—has no say in the matter; or whether, on the contrary, the voice and the social position of every group contribute to the elaboration of disciplinary rules. Although there is assuredly no pure model of a disciplinary framework in any actual school, the mere tendency is enough to indicate to which disciplinary system individual schools incline.

The second level of analysis refers to the activity systems adopted by the educational community in pursuing the objectives of the curriculum. Everyone knows that teaching and learning can be carried out in different ways: a more individualistic model focusing on personal achievement; a more neutral model seeking to ensure that pupils fulfil their individual potential alone and with help from teachers; and a co-operative model aiming for dialogue and the joint building of knowledge.

A close look at the activity systems providing support for teaching and learning indicates how likely it is that the actual performance of tasks introduces factors that upset harmony and build up a climate conducive to violence. A school that goes in for competitive learning with emphasis on individual achievement and assesses academic performance hierarchically tends to make academic esteem the benchmark of personal and social esteem. Such schools may quite well promote rivalry and social competition and facilitate confrontation and aggression, what with the inevitable clash of interests. On the other hand, a teaching and learning model that encourages the sharing of tasks, where plans are negotiated, procedures and shared goals discussed, and where outputs are not assessed on a rank-ordered and individual basis, may make pupils better able to understand the other's point of view, to put themselves across to others and to empathize. Where the latter model is employed we should expect a social climate that, by helping to settle conflicts of interest through discussion and negotiation, avoids problems of violence.

The problem of bullying among pupils

For our part (Ortega, 1997) we have come to believe that research on peer relations at school, and particularly the study of conflictual relations, aggression and violent acts among schoolchildren involves working at different levels at once and in a complementary fashion. First of all, and given that this is a complex problem about which we still know too little, theoretical reflection is required to interpret it, to identify the factors involved and the forms it takes, and to put forward hypotheses as to its causes and effects. Secondly, preventive educational programmes are called for in schools to preempt problems of violence.

A first descriptive study (Ortega, 1992) covering five schools, which confirmed that the level of bad relations in schools in southern Spain was comparable, in almost

every respect, to the general trend of European studies, prompted us to attempt a more extensive study based on a larger school population (Ortega, 1995). It was found that some 15% of pupils in the last cycle of compulsory primary and in compulsory secondary education (10–16-year olds) were often involved in episodes of bullying among their peers, on either the giving or the receiving end. A good many more (about a third) said they had experienced occasional bad relations.

With the data our research produced, we are carrying out an educational project called 'Proyecto Sevilla Anti-Violencia Escolar (SAVE)', which has two objectives. The first is to forestall bullying among the main body of pupils by improving interpersonal relations and general harmony. The second objective is to reduce existing problems through a programme of direct work with pupils already involved in this type of problem as victims or bullies of their peers, or whose social situation puts them at risk of becoming involved.

The referents or models underlying the SAVE project are the Scandinavian model of Olweus (1987, 1993), Roland and Munthe (1989), and the Sheffield project model (Smith & Thompson, 1991; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Cowie et al., 1994; Cowie & Sharp, 1996). The Sheffield project and its philosophy of a general educational policy against violence in schools has been of use both in confirming our ecological perspective and in enabling us to assume that we should be trying to establish modular programmes that allow each school community to feel involved in curriculum changes and in setting its own pace for dealing with bullying as a school problem. This model postulates that it is the actual incorporation of the different human sectors of the community—teachers, pupils and families—in the practicalities of harmonious co-existence in schools that should gradually raise personal awareness of the nature and consequences of the problem of violence. It is believed that when something positive is done to improve mutual relations, the problem of bullying is shown in its true light as aberrant behaviour to be stamped out. The intervention model adopted by the SAVE project involves a series of educational measures designed to operate in regard both to interpersonal processes and to activity systems.

The educational project starts off from an exploration of the problem of bullying among peers by means of an anonymous questionnaire in which the pupils are asked for information on such matters as whether they are happy in the school, whether they have friends or stay on their own in the playground, whether they are being bullied and, if so, how and since when, and so on. The attitudes and ideas that such problems induce in them are also explored and ways of putting an end to the problems assessed. In addition, the SAVE project looks into the ideas, attitudes and prejudices of teachers in each school in order to come up with an education project keeping the problem in check.

Once the first exploratory phase has been completed, the broad findings of the study are communicated to the teachers concerned to give them an idea of the extent, differences and specific features of the problem in their schools. When the teaching team and, as appropriate, pupils' families are in possession of this information, they decide whether they wish to set up a teamwork project to improve interpersonal relations and prevent violence in school.

If the teachers decide to carry out an educational project against violence, each school must collegiately address its own work project in the same way as, in general, it assumes its own curriculum. The project offers each school a package of measures from which it can either select the whole lot, in which case it applies the entire model from the outset, or take one of the four modular programmes that go to make up the package. In the latter case it is hoped that teams will gradually become interested in implementing the other programmes, since they are all complementary.

At the time of writing, the project is underway in ten schools in Seville and we hope it will continue for another two full academic years. It will then be evaluated. For now we can say that, from an initial evaluation after six months, the early indications are positive in several respects. What we would most like to draw attention to now is the change that teachers say they have seen in how they address pupils and how they perceive problems of discipline and disruptiveness. Most teachers speak of a change with special reference to how they themselves understand the socio-affective position of the pupils and try to give more thought to their own interpretations of disruptive and violent acts.

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DISCIPLINE SEEN FROM BELOW:

STUDENT RATIONALES

FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

IN THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

Bradley A. Levinson

Introduction

In the United States of America, the perennial concern with 'managing' classrooms and creating effective 'school discipline' has been overtaken recently by more urgent discussion of school violence and gross student misconduct. The news media regularly run reports about such problems, while administrators and policy-makers struggle to find ways to address them. Instances of misconduct, said to be on the increase, actually comprise a range of behaviours. Teachers report great difficulty in keeping students on task, as students fidget, speak out of turn, cheat, daydream, leave the classroom, pass notes or banter with classmates. Meanwhile, incidents of vio-

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Bradley A. Levinson (United States)

Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina (1993). Assistant professor of education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University. Conducted long-term ethnographic fieldwork at a Mexican secondary school, and is presently working on a manuscript, *We are all equal: student culture and identity at a Mexican secondary school and beyond*. Research interests include the comparative study of student culture in relation to school practices, popular culture and national identity. Published *The cultural production of the educated person: critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice* (with D. Foley and D. Holland, 1996), as well as articles in several journals. E-mail: brlevins@indiana.edu

lence and intimidation now occur with alarming frequency (Lawton, 1993; Miller, 1994). Students are less likely to respect each other or their supervising adults. Fights break out more often, and some turn deadly as students bring knives and guns to school. As witnessed by a recent series of multiple school killings, even random and revenge shootings are on the rise. Teachers are not immune from such violence. They have been threatened, injured and even killed in a number of well-publicized cases (Lawton, 1993; Portner, 1994).

There is no consensus about the extent or urgency of these problems, though until the recent rural school violence most people thought that they were concentrated in the secondary schools of poor urban areas. Some authors claim that school violence and student misconduct are no worse now, proportionally and relatively, than they were at other times of heavy immigration, school expansion and social upheaval in the history of urban schools in the United States (Ralph, 1992). Others claim that incidents of violence and misconduct have indeed increased, but not enough to warrant a redirection of limited educational funds for preventive or punitive measures. Still others suggest that violence is epidemic in our schools, and nothing but a radical and concerted effort will improve the situation.

Not surprisingly, there also exists a range of positions regarding the general causes of, and solutions for, such problems. The reader should be aware of the admittedly schematic manner in which I present these positions: conservatives tend to blame the breakdown of the traditional family and the absence of moral vigour and personal responsibility in community life. They advocate a 'get tough' approach with firm discipline and 'character education' in the schools (Bennett, 1988). Liberals tend to blame the lack of public support to remedy growing poverty and desperation, claiming that conditions both in and out of the school do not permit students to concentrate and achieve in school (Kozol, 1991). More evenly distributed social spending, job creation and compensatory educational programmes would go a long way toward solving these problems. Finally, radicals suggest that a racist and capitalist system creates a selfish, competitive ethos in and out of schools, which alienates many students from the knowledge or credentials available in schools. They advocate a fundamental restructuring of political and economic arrangements and a radical democratic pedagogy (Apple, 1993).

In addition, few are clear about the relation between various types of minor misconduct in the classroom and major eruptions of violence. For some observers, all these anti-social behaviours form a continuum linked by a common disregard for school knowledge and authority. For others, they must be viewed as separate and often unrelated behaviours with distinct causes. Yet, regardless of these discrepancies, virtually all observers would agree on one thing: the quality of life in many schools has been degraded by instances of misconduct and violence, and this has negatively impacted students' learning.

The discussion of violence and misconduct generally has been guided by what Stinchcombe (1964, p. 181) called the 'doctrine of adolescent inferiority', in effect the prevailing 'common sense' knowledge of teachers.¹ According to this doctrine, the adolescent students served by secondary schools, as they undergo a fragile process

of forming identities and developing interactional skills, engage in confused and irresponsible behaviour. Adult educators and researchers, charged with the task of operating schools, must construct normative standards for the control and management of this behaviour. Students should be guided and regulated by standards established by adults, so they might come to imitate those adults. In this conception, neither educators themselves nor the organization of the school can be seen as responsible for the occurrence of violence or misconduct. Rather, such misconduct occurs because students bring to the school unhealthy, ill-formed and perhaps even irrational attitudes and behaviours. The source of misconduct is located entirely outside the school, and educators must develop ways to manage, redirect or remedy the behaviours originating in a source they cannot control. This view expresses itself in a variety of explanations that educators regularly give for student misconduct: broken families or troubling relationships create emotional turmoil that makes classroom concentration difficult; poverty and hunger distract students and make them apathetic; gang activity and the sale of drugs bring the spectre of violence into the school; children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or other learning/emotional disabilities do not get the treatment they need and act inappropriately in class. In recent years, the most popular and urgent explanation for misconduct implicates the increasingly stylized violence and rapid-fire editing of television programming. Teachers complain that too much television watching destroys students' attention spans and encourages violent impulses.

There is certainly more than a grain of truth in these explanations, but they do not tell the whole story. They only explain behaviours that have psychological, medical or socio-environmental determinations outside the school; their model is one of external pathology. Perhaps most importantly, they neither entertain the student's perspective nor conceptualize the school's role in actually generating forms of misconduct. They thus omit crucial elements of a more holistic understanding of student behaviour.

In order to foster this broader understanding, I shall briefly review several book-length ethnographic studies of student life in secondary schools in the United States published between 1983 and 1996.² My selection is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to present a range of studies that attempt to recover the students' perspectives on institutional life. Ethnographic studies, characterized by long-term observation and intensive, unstructured interviewing, have the virtue of documenting and contextualizing the 'native's point of view' (Geertz, 1983)—in this case, that of secondary school students. By presenting the students' perspectives and the interpretations that authors make of them, I hope to demonstrate that forms of student violence or misconduct often develop *in response to* the conditions of schooling. These conditions range from arbitrary and authoritarian teaching styles to the reification of school knowledge, academic tracking and racist, classist or sexist discrimination. In effect, students constantly *produce* cultural forms of action and understanding in the structural context of school; their behaviour is no mere reflex of what they learn from outside the school, but a creative response to the conditions within it (Levinson & Holland, 1996).

When we hear and watch students closely across the range of environments they frequent, we can begin to see the logic of their response to school. Indeed, anthropologically or sociologically trained ethnographers often attribute rationality to a range of behaviours that, to another institutional actor, might seem irrational or anti-social. The shift to an insider's perspective allows this rationality to come into focus. For this reason I have chosen to present various 'rationales' for student non-compliance—the comprehensible, even justifiable responses students make to forms of 'discipline' they suffer at the bottom of the status hierarchy. For this reason, too, I try to avoid ideologically charged terms like misconduct or resistance, opting for the more neutral non-compliance.³

What the studies tell us

One class of ethnographic studies attempts to understand student non-compliance as the result of role conflicts unique to the school setting. Such research comes out of the sociological tradition of symbolic interactionism, which highlights student responses to the organizational and discursive features of modern schools. Symbolic interactionism often portrays the classroom encounter as an ongoing achievement of consensus and co-ordinated activity. A normative order of implicit and explicit rules governs conduct. In this perspective, the emphasis is not so much on why students misbehave or fail to stay on task, but rather how schools and classrooms, and the corresponding roles of teacher and student, are symbolically constructed such that compliance is generally constant. In other words, the emphasis is not so much why order sometimes falls into chaos, but how there can ever be order at all. Conversely, a number of interactionist studies highlight the development of conflict. They examine how meaning is negotiated between teachers and students, and the ways in which an 'agreement' about proper roles can break down when either party fails to live up to expectations. They also examine how the individual interests and strategies of students can enter into conflict with the organizational imperatives of the school, which are themselves informed by forces and structures outside the school.

Much of the work on secondary education from this perspective comes out of Britain (see Woods, 1990, for an overview). Forms of student non-compliance may develop when teachers use harsh or arbitrary punitive measures, maintain extreme social distance because of classroom size or teacher personality, use arbitrary criteria for judging student work and so on. Teachers must develop enough legitimate authority to keep students engaged and attentive; such authority is typically negotiated on a daily basis, but the beginning of a school year is especially crucial (Beynon & Atkinson, 1984; Cusick, 1973; D'Amato, 1993).

D'Amato, an American anthropologist working mostly with Hawaiian-American primary students, nevertheless draws on symbolic interactionist work to provide us with a powerful account of the roots of student 'resistance'. D'Amato believes that non-compliance is pervasive in modern schools because they are compulsory and instruction is thus inherently 'contentious'. Adults attempt to coax compli-

ance from young people who often have rather different, age-specific interests and goals (p. 188). In order for students to accept a teacher's authority and work diligently in school, they must have developed sufficiently strong 'structural' or 'situational' rationales for doing so. The structural rationale refers to students' perception that doing well in school will benefit them in terms of career opportunities, social status and economic mobility, e.g. have the extrinsic value of improving their position in the broader societal structure. A student's structural rationale is typically informed by the historical experience of his/her family, community or ethnic group, and thus not easily susceptible to the school's intervention. The situational rationale, however, refers to students' perceptions that doing well and participating diligently may be a 'means of maintaining valued relationships with teachers and peers and of gaining access to experiences of mastery and accomplishment' (p. 191). Of course, teachers have a great deal of impact on students' situational rationales, especially in establishing a setting that enables students' appropriation of school knowledge through prevailing peer norms and structures. D'Amato says that in the absence of compelling structural and situational rationales, student frustration often escalates into more volatile forms of non-compliance.⁴

An interesting, related perspective on student non-compliance emerges in the work of Robert Everhart (1983), who studied a mostly working-class junior high school in the United States in the late 1970s. Everhart marries a symbolic interactionist approach to a Marxist conceptual framework, interpreting pervasive student non-compliance in classrooms (what students call 'goofing off') as a response to the alienation of their own labour. According to Everhart (p. 234–5), the school is characterized by a hierarchical structure in which large classes are standardized and routinized. Students are viewed as 'separate entities ... empty vessels only partially imbued with the abilities and maturity to hold responsible position ... or make decisions about the nature of the instructional process.' As a result, a form of rote instruction, involving the transmission of what Everhart calls 'reified knowledge', predominates in most classrooms. Drawing on Habermas (1971), Everhart contrasts the school's 'technical' interest in presenting reified knowledge for 'instrumental activity' with students' 'practical' interest in creating 'regenerative knowledge' among themselves for 'communicative activity' (p. 237–42). In his view, what teachers catalogue as student misbehaviour is actually communicative action between students, the use of humour and banter to create regenerative knowledge and thus enliven a deadening experience. Everhart likens the classroom to a factory, where workers have little control over the assignment of tasks and the products of their labour. Students struggle, like workers, to humanize the situation and thereby recover some control over a process that is fundamentally alien and alienating. In this light, student misconduct is viewed as resistance to a stultifying regime of frozen communication and work.

In the 1980s, sociolinguist Penelope Eckert (1989) explored the social class basis of student compliance and non-compliance in her study of an all-White suburban high school outside the large midwestern metropolis of Detroit. Ostensibly, Eckert wished to understand why and how oppositional 'symbolic categories' of group identifica-

tion developed among the students. Almost immediately upon beginning her field-work, she noticed a pervasive opposition between students who belonged to the 'Jock' or 'Burnout' categories. Jocks were students who participated enthusiastically in classrooms and extracurricular activities. They endorsed adult authority, took academic courses and occupied central areas of the school. Burnouts, on the other hand, kept their involvement to a minimum, questioned the uses and forms of adult authority, took vocational courses and occupied marginal areas of the school.⁵ Not all students identified themselves with these categories, but each one had to take up a position in the student culture defined by this 'hegemonic' category opposition, which 'increasingly restrict[ed] individual perceptions and choice' (p. 69).

According to Eckert, Jocks and Burnouts are 'adolescent embodiments' of the middle and working classes, respectively. Students from these social classes have rather different lives outside of school: the middle-class Jocks have all of their material needs met, are assigned minimal household responsibilities and participate in a variety of highly structured extracurricular activities, such as music lessons. These students, moreover, can envision the economic rewards provided by advanced schooling. Their families constantly reinforce the value of playing by the rules and advancing as an individual through the competitive education system. Burnouts, by contrast, must often work and care for younger siblings to help the household economy. Since their families cannot afford most structured extracurricular activities, they learn to take pleasure in 'adult' activities such as smoking, drinking, playing pool in clubs, fixing up cars and the like. They have already had the taste of freedom that a modest personal income can bring, and they are not convinced that doing well in school will bring them greater benefits in the future. Finally, they eschew highly individualistic displays of knowledge and talent, preferring instead to share their knowledge and thus display their collective solidarity.

Eckert skilfully develops her account of how these different social-class preferences and lifestyles affect students' behaviour in school. The school is organized like a 'corporation', managed entirely by adults, in which individuals develop their identities and relate to one another through corporate-defined tasks and roles, and struggle to achieve upward mobility through a highly competitive internal hierarchy (p. 103–12). Those who identify with the goals of the corporation are the most likely to succeed. Success may bring no immediate economic rewards, but it does carry the promise of positive employment opportunities and entrance into a good university. Eckert suggests that Jocks and Burnouts respond differently to this school structure because they have developed different means of achieving adolescent autonomy. Jocks are more willing to submit to adult authority and follow corporate rules because they have been socialized to expect a distinct period of 'adolescence' under adult guidance, and because they believe in the school's eventual rewards. Burnouts, however, learn adult roles earlier in their lives. Their social networks outside school are supportive and self-sufficient, not competitive and dependent on adults, like those of the Jocks. They prize group solidarity and material reciprocity over individual advancement, and they typically anticipate a working-class job (p. 136). Because they are more able and eager to immediately join the adult economy, they resent their 'temporary segregation in the institutions designed for their

age-group' (p. 15). They are unwilling to sacrifice their adult pleasures and their group solidarity for the uncertain rewards and competitive demands of the school's corporate hierarchy.

While Eckert reports little on classroom relations between teachers and students, she does provide a compelling portrait of the process by which students come to accept or reject the overall mission of the school. Burnouts generally seek more freedom from adult control, and this attitude begets non-compliance in varying school contexts. To use D'Amato's terms, the school Eckert studies fails to provide the Burnouts a situational rationale sufficiently attractive to compensate for the apparent absence of a structural rationale.

Eckert's study falls in a long line of interpretive ethnographic research that has sought to understand how school organization and practice produces and reproduces social class divisions. Hollingshead (1949) was an important precursor of this research tradition, and more recent work that highlights social class divisions would include Foley (1990), Larkin (1979), Page (1991), Page and Valli (1990) and Wexler (1992).⁶ Yet as secondary schools in the United States have become increasingly complex ethnically, and as researchers have attempted to document and remedy the disadvantages faced by ethnic minorities, attention has turned more in this direction. The consequences of students' gender identities in school have also come into focus.

Nigerian-born anthropologist John Ogbu (1987, 1992) has developed one of the most cogent and widely recognized explanations of ethnic minority school achievement and behaviour. Ogbu first set out to understand why certain minority groups appeared to fail in school at much higher rates than others. The predominant anthropological model of the 1970s and 1980s sought to explain the reasons for minority school failure in terms of the cultural 'differences' or 'discontinuities' (speech styles, values, cognitive modalities, etc.) between minority students and the mainstream, middle-class culture of the school. Such differences were shown to obstruct effective communication and learning, leading to negative academic outcomes for minority students. Yet Ogbu wondered why, if cultural differences were the primary cause of minority school failure, more recently immigrated minorities performed so much better in school. Surely the Asian student arriving in the United States for the first time faces greater and deeper cultural discontinuities between his/her home and school environments than, say, an African-American child who speaks English and whose family has lived in the United States for many generations.

Ogbu thus developed an important distinction between 'voluntary' immigrant minorities and 'involuntary' castelike minorities. Voluntary minorities, most of whom immigrated in recent decades, have come to the United States of their own will, seeking economic opportunity or political refuge. Involuntary minorities—Blacks, Native Americans and some Mexicans and Puerto Ricans—were incorporated into life in the United States through slavery or colonial expansion. Ogbu observes that most minority groups have significant 'primary' cultural differences from the culture of the school. Yet voluntary minorities do not allow such differences to compromise their school success. Rather, they adopt strategies of 'accommodation without assimilation' (Gibson, 1988; see Suarez-Orozco, 1989), embracing the school's promise of social mobility while retaining their distinct cultural

identity. Involuntary minorities, on the other hand, elaborate their primary cultural differences into oppositional 'secondary' differences. Because of their long history of oppression and discrimination, involuntary minorities tend to distrust mainstream schools. They view the school as attempting to strip them of a long-standing cultural identity, forged historically through resistance. For good reason, they also perceive a job ceiling in the labour market, and doubt whether individual advancement through school will really enhance their socio-economic mobility. Thus, involuntary minority students often effect a kind of 'cultural inversion', developing 'secondary' cultural characteristics that preserve their dignity and challenge the premises of mainstream success through school.

Ogbu's conceptual scheme was originally developed to explain the variability in minority school achievement, but it also goes a long way toward helping to explain patterns of student non-compliance.⁷ Two very recent studies of minority high school students attempt to modify and extend Ogbu's theory, enabling us to better understand the roots of non-compliance. These studies also introduce the gendered dimension of students' experience, showing how young men and women from the same ethnic group may respond differently to the conditions of school.

Signithia Fordham (1996) spent several years studying students and their families at a nearly all-Black high school in the nation's capital, Washington, DC. Fordham's principal methods of study included intensive interviewing and observation of some thirty-three key informants, evenly distributed among 'over' and 'under' achievers—students who performed much better or worse in school than their past performance or observable intelligence would indicate. What she found was a pervasive ambivalence in these students' response to school, a result of their constant battle with the negative effects of racial stigmatizing. This ambivalence took many forms, including outright rejection of the school's educational mission.

Fordham provides poignant evidence that students must constantly resist the racial stigmatizing they face in and out of school. This resistance, ironically enough, takes two rather different forms: conformity to dominant school norms and racial solidarity. Fordham construes school conformity as a powerful means of resisting the general societal image of Blacks as failures and not fully 'human'. By doing well in school, Black students can contest negative racial stereotypes and prove themselves before the stigmatizing gaze of dominant society (p. 40). Yet students also resist the school's attempt to ignore and erase their racial identity and solidarity. They find comfort and support in the 'fictive kinship' system, a form of imagined brotherhood and sisterhood African-Americans developed historically to cope with oppression. Students stick together and share what they have, even when their 'sharing or collaborating is defined in the dominant community and the school context as cheating.' As Fordham notes (p. 93):

The reluctance of most Capital High students to follow the socially sanctioned pattern of individualistic competition mystifies their teachers and other school officials. Indeed, they watch in hapless consternation as new recruits to the school ... are incorporated into the general group-oriented ethos that dominates the organizational pattern of the student population.

For fear of being perceived as 'acting White' by their peers, most students eschew the path of individual academic success or learn to mask such success by clowning around, playing sports and assisting their classmates.

Students at Capital High thus occupy a fundamentally ambivalent position toward their own schooling. They may want to succeed academically, to 'conform' in order to resist negative stereotypes, but they don't want to fully embrace the official curriculum. 'Overachieving' students are often tugged down; they compensate for their school success by misbehaving or by taking refuge in the fictive kinship system. 'Underachievers' typically avoid engaging with the school curriculum in any significant way. (Many of them even turn from school because teachers are unwilling to engage in honest discussion about their damaging racial legacy.)

Fordham devotes separate chapters to male and female students and their respective childhood upbringings. For both the males and the females, parental messages have been shot through with ambivalence: Black males are often told to succeed in school in order to show their 'humanness' in a racist society, but school success may also appear emasculating or treasonous. Black females may be told they can succeed like any non-Black student, that they face no racial stigma, even as they are told not to 'act like those White girls' (p. 104). It is not difficult to see how such ambivalence could lead to pervasive non-compliance and student misconduct. If students have no compelling situational or structural rationale for academic engagement, they will tend to pursue their own agendas. Fordham wants us to see, finally, that patterns of African-American school behaviour stem not from a *lack* of motivation, drive or intelligence, but from an active agency in pursuing their own sense of motivated and intelligent action (p. 339).

In her study of how high school students 'make and mold' their identities, Anne Locke Davidson (1996, p. 3) acknowledges that Ogbu's work has helped conceptualize:

the role that broader historical and economic circumstances play in day-to-day classroom activity. Taken to an extreme, however, it implies that the meanings, behaviours, and perceptions associated with a specific background are relatively fixed, exerting a constant influence on students' academic work until they leave. I reframe the question by considering the role of school and classroom processes in nurturing, resisting, or shaping the meanings students bring with them to school.

In other words, students may have predispositions to resist or comply based on their minority status and their perceptions of labour market opportunities, but these predispositions interact with a number of complex factors at the institutional level to mould identity and behaviour. Davidson is especially avid to identify those school practices that contribute to student 'alienation' and the formation of resistant identities.

To this end, Davidson endeavours to show us schools through the eyes of the students. The book presents the extended narratives of six youths, including voluntary and involuntary minorities, who represent a range of academic achievement. These six are taken out of a total of fifty-five students originally included in the Students'

Multiple Worlds Study, a large ethnographic team project conducted across four diverse urban high schools in California. Davidson and her colleagues tracked the experiences of these students in and out of school, and documented their life stories through extensive interviewing. The scope and time frame of the project allowed Davidson to appreciate the students' struggles in school and understand the reasons for academic engagement or alienation. Early in the book (p. 35–49), Davidson introduces the factors she thinks contribute most to student alienation, hence non-compliance. First, the practice of *academic tracking*, which separates groups of students and defines them as 'academically or socially different', contributes to the social isolation of some students. Second, '*significant speech acts*' by teachers, including negative expectations, differential treatment and proscription of behaviour or symbols marking group identity, can elicit oppositional student response. Third, some schools are dominated by '*bureaucratized relationships and practices*', where the enforcement of hierarchy and status divisions between teachers and students, and the maintenance of silent communicative distance, can provoke student non-compliance. Finally, teachers may either withhold or make inaccessible crucial knowledge for student success; schools thus often tragically and unwittingly create '*barriers to valued information*'. Clearly, these practices fail to provide a compelling situational rationale for students to do well in school. Davidson says these school practices are 'particularly relevant to the construction of identities' (p. 214), and it is not difficult to see why. Providing case studies of male and female Black, White and Latino students, Davidson shows how students' experiences of ethnicity and gender inform their relation to school practices. For example, Carla Chavez, a Latina of Mexican descent located in the advanced academic classes, is driven to succeed in school in part to 'prove Latina capability' to those who doubt it. Yet Carla also remains isolated and 'invisible' in these classes because the school 'conveys the message that achievement and advanced scholarship are the domains of non-Latinos' (p. 105).

By framing the relation between student identity and academic achievement in terms of engagement, Davidson allows us to assess the complex relations between students and schools. For involuntary minorities, who already come to school with a predisposition to disengage (in the absence of a 'structural rationale'), the school practices identified above are especially damaging. They are likely to lead to a more complete disengagement and assume forms of progressively more volatile non-compliance. As Davidson says, the school practices 'generate manifestations of opposition, including reduced academic effort, truancy, and verbal/physical expressions of anger and frustration' (p. 34).

Finally, I would like to summarize a recent study that implicitly challenges some of the work I have reviewed here. Along with some graduate students, John Devine spent several years observing and tutoring students at a few of the most troubled and ethnically diverse high schools in New York City. In his book on the 'culture of violence' in these schools, Devine (1996) argues that much of the violence and misconduct that occurs there does indeed originate outside the school. Student subjectivity is in significant measure formed by an ever more powerful and violent 'street culture' that then manifests itself in the school. Yet Devine also holds the schools

responsible for the worsening of student conduct. Throughout New York City and similarly besieged school districts, authorities have installed electronic metal detectors and hired security guards to reduce student violence. Correspondingly, teachers have come to abandon their roles as disciplinarians and moral educators. Now they teach only to student minds, relegating the concerns of body and emotion to the halls outside the classroom, where the guards can take control. Devine documents numerous instances in which teachers call upon guards to remove a student from the classroom for a relatively minor behavioural infraction. According to Devine, the 'technological escalation' of the scanners and guards 'only elicits further responses of marginalization, nostalgia, and violence' (p. 132), and induces more student alienation. In effect, legitimate violence has become institutionalized. Missing is a 'humanistic interaction with the "whole" student' (p. 131) that might restore some moral status and credibility to teachers. Indeed, in the absence of strong teacher sanctions, the violent street culture proliferates, even coming to 'Americanize' recent immigrants, who also start to lose their respect for elders and become rowdy in the school.

Devine's account is premised on an understanding of student subjectivity as a complex, situational and 'decentred' phenomenon. Street culture, though powerful, is not all that informs student subjectivity, which may be 'part sensitive child ... part street-smart lawbreaker ... and part willing student. Students switch among all these personas ...' (p. 139). The school, too, has become a fragmented institution. Rather than encouraging the construction of positive, pro-school identities, teachers turn away from the engagement with identity altogether. This makes it more difficult for teachers to nurture the sensitive child or encourage the willing student, and students harden their identities against the teachers and the apparatus of school control. Teachers thus lose a valuable opportunity to provide a context that blunts the effects of street culture and brings positive elements of student subjectivity to the fore. They fail to model the non-violent resolution of conflict and thereby inadvertently perpetuate a dehumanizing cycle of violence.

Conclusions

Recent ethnographic studies of secondary schools in the United States have examined the development of student behaviours in varied contexts. Much of this work attempts to understand how student non-compliance emerges in dialectical relation to the organizational structures and discourses found in the school. While the predominant societal view locates the causes of student 'misconduct' outside the official domain of the school (poor family conditions, prior psychological problems, negative influence of the media and peers, etc.), ethnographic studies tend to shed a different light on the issue. In these studies, the behaviour that appears to teachers and administrators as misconduct or 'irrational' violence may in fact be a 'rational' student response to a variety of school conditions: teachers' 'reified' presentation of knowledge (Everhart), a competitive, corporate hierarchy (Eckert), racial stigmatizing and individualistic assignments (Fordham), tracking, discriminatory remarks, communicative distance (Davidson) and 'violent' school discipline (Devine).

Features of school organization and discourse may thus actually bring out forms of misconduct and violence among students. Students' experiences in the family and community, including those structured by social class, ethnicity and gender, provide them with varying kinds of structural rationales and thus varying predispositions to comply with teacher directives in school. If schools fail to provide appropriate situational rationales, and instead reinforce student cynicism or divisiveness, an epidemic of non-compliance can result.

The problem of student non-compliance in secondary schools is complex and multi-faceted. Unquestionably, the ravages of modern society—the poverty, the violence, the drugs and the breakdown of families and values of mutual respect—contribute to the problem. Schools face a growing burden of social and psychological problems, and I do not mean to suggest that school practices are wholly responsible for student non-compliance. Rather, I have endeavoured to show that certain aspects of school practice may generate or provoke non-compliance. I have also endeavoured to illuminate the rationality of the student perspective and demonstrate how non-compliance makes perfect sense given certain circumstances. Ultimately, as the anthropologist Frederick Erickson (1987, p. 343–5) argues, schools must establish 'institutional legitimacy' with their students by creating conditions of trust. Without this legitimacy, students act up or tune out. As Erickson puts it, 'Learning what is deliberately taught can be seen as a form of political assent. Not learning can be seen as a form of political resistance.' When students are not learning the deliberate lesson, they are already violating some school standards for proper behaviour, and may be more apt to violate others. A truly comprehensive and reflexive approach to student behaviour in secondary schools must consider this dimension of school life.

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Notes

1. See related arguments by Bakan (1976), James and Prout (1990) and Lesko (1996).
2. In the United States' system, secondary education refers to both junior high school/middle school, covering the first two or three years of post-primary education (age 12–14), and high school, covering the final three or four years of compulsory schooling (age 14–18).
3. For the remainder of this paper, I will mostly use the term 'non-compliance' instead of 'misconduct' or 'resistance'. As I have indicated, the term 'misconduct' already carries considerable ideological freight. It indicates the negative sanction of a behaviour outside the range of the normative, adult definition of proper discipline. The term 'resistance' has a rather different, but equally troubling history. In some studies of school-

ing, student misconduct has been interpreted as a form of creative resistance to the stultifying effects of modern State schools (Everhart, 1983; Willis, 1977). As early as 1983, Henry Giroux identified the confusion surrounding this term, and argued for a usage restricted to oppositional behaviours with explicitly progressive political potential or intent (see also Kellner, 1995, p. 37–9). Still, the ongoing muddle and romance associated with the term renders it less than useful for my purposes here. By non-compliance, I simply indicate behaviours that fail to comply with the expectations and activities structured by adult authorities in schools.

4. A similar analysis can be found in Stinchcombe's (1964) much earlier study of 'rebellion' in a high school, where students' 'expressive alienation' was related both to contentious features of classroom interaction and a 'poor articulation between present activity and future status' (p. 174). Note the similarity to D'Amato's situational and structural rationales.
5. The term 'jock' is common slang in the United States for an athlete, a person who constructs an identity around regular and enthusiastic participation in sporting events. Because the school usually sponsors such events, in many schools the term 'jock' may be applied to any student who participates in officially sponsored school activities, such as student government or musical ensembles. Such students are in the popular mainstream. The term 'burnout' commonly refers to a student who regularly smokes marijuana and/or cigarettes, and appears disinterested in most official school activities. Eckert points out that these two terms in use at the school she studied are only local variants of symbolic categories found in most American high schools, which may include terms like 'socies' (sociable), 'greasers', 'hoods' and the like, usually indexing social class affiliation.
6. Authors such as Foley also address the school's role in subordinating or empowering minority ethnic groups, but ethnicity is conceived as intimately bound up with, and subject to the perception of, social class position.
7. Of course, Ogbu's theory is much more complex than what I have sketched here. See Levinson (1992) for a fuller exposition and critique.

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TRENDS/CASES

PATTERNS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN AFRICA

Pai Obanya

This paper will attempt to present a view of the concept of educational reform. Instead of a catalogue of the educational reform efforts of African countries since the 1960s, the focus will be on a broad, general review of major approaches to the issue. The paper will also assess major achievements and/or non-achievements on educational reform. Since educational reform should be a continuous process (and since there is still a strong need for better and further reforms in African education) the presentation will end with suggestions for a way forward.

A concept of educational reform

Educational reform is always related to a rethinking of the role of education in nation-building. This often entails a rethinking of national goals (based on a nation's history and the major contemporary and future trends affecting society).

From a rethinking of the various building blocks of a nation (political, social and economic considerations) should emerge issues concerned with the place and role of education in a given society. This often leads to a nation seeking appropriate answers to a set of closely related questions, posed at different levels of decision-making, and answered with increasing degrees of specificity and details as one goes from general policy issues to practical issues concerned with implementation and working towards the attainment of the expected outcomes.

Original language: English

Pai Obanya (Nigeria)

Ph.D (Education). Former Professor of Education at the University of Ibadan. Director, Institute of Education of same university, 1980–83. Foundation Dean, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University (Nigeria), 1984–85. Programme Co-ordinator with the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession. Currently Director, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, Dakar, Senegal. Was also Executive Secretary of the African Curriculum Organization. He has published extensively on curriculum development and teacher education.

Thus, in increasing order of specificity and detail, educational reform should seek answers in the following areas:

- at the political policy (or ideological) level: 'What type of new society is envisaged?' and 'What are the necessary building blocks for such a society?';
- at the general educational policy level: 'What specific form(s) of education will be needed to serve the specific development needs of the envisaged new society?';
- at the planning and policy interpretation levels: 'What necessary inputs (finance, infrastructures, physical resources, human resources, curriculum and materials, etc.) should be projected for seeing the envisaged reforms through?';
- at the day-to-day field operation level: 'What specific educative acts or processes (e.g. supervisory and school-management roles, teaching/learning methods, other organizational issues) should be actively and systematically promoted to ensure that the goals of the educational reforms are achieved?'; and
- at the periodic review level: 'To what extent are the inputs and the processes helping to achieve the intended outcomes?'

In other words, genuine educational reform is almost always tied up with reforms in the political, sociological and economic re-orientation of the wider society. Such reforms can be total, near total or just in parts. They can range from being totally radical (or revolutionary), through being partly so, to being non-revolutionary or even evolutionary.

Africa's educational reform experience seems to fit neatly into these typologies, as will be seen in the discussion that follows.

Major approaches to educational reform in Africa

A very broad categorization of Africa's educational reform efforts shows the following patterns: radical-revolutionary approaches; realistic-revolutionary approaches; ad hoc approaches; and evolutionary approaches.

RADICAL-REVOLUTIONARY APPROACHES

In the early years of independence, a number of African countries opted for what became known as the socialist path to development. Prominent among these were Tanzania, Benin, Guinea, Congo and Ethiopia. Their attempt to break completely with the past was shown in the new official names adopted by these countries, such as People's Revolutionary Republics (Guinea and Ethiopia), and People's Republics (Congo and Benin).

In this same class can be included the revolutionary movements in pre-independence Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. All these sought a complete break with the past through the building of people's republics.

The attempt to promote radical-revolutionary ideals in all aspects of national life (and to break completely with the colonial past) was reflected in the new educational policies and practices of these countries.

The United Republic of Tanzania is reputed to have been the first African country to come out with a well-articulated national policy on education, with the publication of its *Education for self-reliance* (1967). This document marked a breakthrough in several respects. First, it was closely linked with the building of a new nation. Second, the process of its elaboration involved intensive consultation with a variety of stake-holders. Third, the document led to radical curriculum reforms, including the development and use of Kiswahili for basic education, a closer relationship between education and production, and a renewed emphasis on examination-propelled curricula. Fourth, every attempt was made to create a learning society, with a vigorous promotion of literacy and adult education. Fifth, Tanzania's approach of national consultations leading to the elaboration of a national education policy document spread to other African countries.

Benin, Guinea, Ethiopia and Congo (Brazzaville) undertook reforms similar to those of Tanzania in a number of respects. These included the development of indigenous languages as the vehicle for basic education (Guinea, Ethiopia), the integration of productive work into the school curriculum and transforming schools into production units (Benin, Congo), greater diversification and vocationalization of curricula (Congo), vigorous promotion of literacy and adult education (Ethiopia), close involvement of local communities in the development of education (all the countries) and the promotion of civic/political education (all the countries).

The pre-independence political movements in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique had radical ideas about post-independence self-reliant societies. To prepare for such societies 'people's schools' were established in what were known as 'captured areas'. This involved forging as close a relationship as possible between the school and its immediate community, through community involvement in the running of schools and the provision of facilities, as well as through instruction in indigenous languages. The teaching of 'revolutionary ideals' in all teaching/learning situations and concerted action in promoting the education of girls and women were some of the attempts to prepare the citizenry for post-independence socialist-type republics.

REALISTIC-REVOLUTIONARY APPROACHES

The greatest proportion of African countries seemed to have attempted this approach to educational reform. This involved moderating the revolutionary zeal to break with the past and evolving a genuinely national education systems without forgetting the need to be cautious and to show greater awareness of the realities and constraints of the societies concerned.

In all these cases, various forms of national consultations were held (e.g. Nigeria in 1969, Zambia in the early 1970s) or some form of a needs analysis survey was undertaken (e.g. Botswana in the mid-1970s) leading to the publication of national policies on education. Such policy documents usually began with an analysis of the 'inherited colonial system of education', emphasizing its inadequacies. These were mainly the lack of relevance to the needs of the new nations being built, and lim-

ited access and equity. Reforms were accordingly proposed in terms of new national philosophies of education, new curricula and some statement on teacher education, educational management/financing and non-formal education.

In some of these countries (Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia) reforms have also included a 'restructuring' of the education system: 8-4-4 in Kenya and 6-3-3-4 in the English-speaking countries of West Africa. The goals here were to define the duration of formal basic education (eight years in Kenya, 6 + 3 years in English-speaking West Africa) and to diversify curricula at the junior and senior secondary school levels to cater for 'non-intellectual' talents.

By the time Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the realistic-revolutionary approach seemed to have been in force. Thus, post-independent Zimbabwe made tremendous progress in improving access to education at all levels, developing non-formal forms of education, evolving innovative approaches to science education (ZIM-SCI) and training teachers in large numbers at relatively reasonable costs (ZIM-TEC).

However the country did not break completely with the past. In fact it retained as many aspects as possible, such as the retention of the Cambridge junior and senior certificates and the continued existence of private educational institutions.

The realistic-revolutionary approach seemed also to have guided educational reforms in Namibia since its independence in 1990. Pre-independence, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) developed a coherent educational philosophy for a new Namibia. When the party came to power, it had to reform education quite radically by: 'de-apartheidizing' education by creating a single national educational authority; developing an appropriate up-grading and re-orientation programme for teachers; creating appropriate structures for national curriculum development; introducing indigenous languages into education; developing a national, integrated basic education strategy (i.e. articulating formal and non-formal approaches to the promotion of basic education); and improving access to all levels and forms of education.

In doing all this, Namibia has 'hastened slowly'. Every specific aspect of educational reform was subjected to systematic study and analysis, choices were made from a variety of possible options.

Above all, Namibia was in a position to draw appropriate lessons from earlier educational reform efforts in Africa. In addition, the country benefited from immense international goodwill and has had considerable technical and financial support for its educational reform programmes.

AD HOC APPROACHES

This is the type of educational reform that tends to address just one issue at a time, without an organic link with related problems, and often without carrying all possible stake-holders along with the reform process.

A very good example of an ad hoc approach is one in which new education policies are announced or decreed to the population without due study, analysis or consultation. Nigeria, for example, changed the school year from January-December to September-June in 1973, returned swiftly to the old system in 1983, and changed back to the 1973 'innovation' in 1985.

Another good example is that of 'modern' mathematics, which became in vogue in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. Sub-regional mathematical programmes were started in Eastern and Western Africa. Workshops and new materials became available in several places until some mathematicians and parents began to question what was modern in modern mathematics. The 'great mathematics controversy' that ensued in the 1980s resulted in many countries abandoning mid-stream this particular reform.

The restructuring of education systems already discussed (i.e. those of Kenya and English-speaking West Africa) has also given rise to national controversies. In Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia, people are still asking what 6-3-3-4 and 8-4-4 are all about. This is because the structure has been given undue emphasis at the expense of the curriculum diversification, improved teaching and learning that the new structures should have entailed. What is more, the wider society still has great difficulties in seeing what exactly is being reformed.

The use of national (indigenous) languages in education has often fallen into the category of ad hoc reforms. When the great zeal for educational reforms began in Africa in the 1960s, the argument was that the use of African languages in education would help to further develop such languages (further adapting them to the needs of a heavily scientific and technological world). In a good number of cases (for example, Senegal) national languages have remained a subject but not a medium of instruction. Moreover, in official circles, these languages are hardly used. The situation has led to Africans querying the practical utility of using indigenous languages in education.

Ad hoc reforms have also been influenced by the culture of pilot projects. Four examples taken from the 1970s—the golden years of African reform—illustrate this point. The educational television project that blossomed in Cote d'Ivoire in the 1970s and 1980s was presented as something that could wholly revolutionize teaching and learning in Africa. The Bunumbu (Sierra Leone), Namutamba (Uganda) and IPAR (Cameroon) projects of the same period were also seen as models for the ruralization of education and the production of polyvalent teachers who were to become agents of change. In all these projects very little account was taken of people's expectations of an education system, the condition of technical infrastructures and the extremely poor state of Africa's rural areas.

EVOLUTIONARY APPROACHES

These are the approaches to educational reform that, while acknowledging the inappropriateness of the 'inherited colonial education system', have not sought to engineer change in any radical and systematic manner. Instead, reforms have been allowed to take a sort of natural course.

The reforms of higher education in many of the French-speaking countries of Africa serve to illustrate this point. In 1968, for example, universities in France were rocked by serious student revolts. This resulted in changes in higher education involving modification of the structure of university courses and few changes in courses requirements. These alterations were immediately adopted in African countries with little or no modification.

Secondly, curriculum enrichment programmes (mainly in the areas of population and environmental issues) have been introduced in the name of 'reforms' in Africa since the early 1980s. The urge to introduce such reforms has come mainly from the international community in an effort to ensure that these worldwide concerns are taken into consideration by all countries. In Africa, some intensive activities have been (and are being) carried out. However, the impact of such activities at the school level (and on teaching-learner outcomes) has not been apparent. This is mainly because the filtering down of the new ideas has been left to take its natural course.

Thirdly, the habit of waiting for educational changes in the 'former colonial power' to dictate reforms in Africa still has its strong adherents. Thus, the reform of the *baccalauréat* in France (replacing first and second *baccalauréats* by a single one) led to similar reforms in Africa. This has also applied to the revision of the syllabuses of specific subjects in the school curriculum, most of which was done in Africa following the lead of France.

Perceivable impact of educational reform efforts in Africa

Evidence seems to suggest that the above typology is, at best, a matter of convenience. It appears in reality that while former socialist-oriented countries attempted to be downright revolutionary, most of the countries of the region have shown varying combinations of all the other approaches to educational reform. Today, all of these co-exist, as questions related to the search for relevance in African education continue to be asked.

While the impact of educational reform efforts has been mixed, the following can be noted as the major achievements.

The continued questioning of the relevance of education in Africa has led to continuing debates in various circles on the need for education in Africa to be responsive to the needs of society. This is a healthy sign (and a desirable fallout from the debates engineered by post-independence opinion moulders), as it seems to have created a 'questioning society' in Africa, especially in matters related to the development of education.

African countries have formed the habit of organizing different forms of national consultations on education. The so-called *États généraux de l'éducation* of the French-speaking countries have, for example, become part of the ongoing democratization process. As a result, virtually every country in Africa now has a national policy on education.

Indigenous languages have benefited from the educational reform efforts of the past thirty years. The extent of their use in education has ranged from their being the sole instruments for the promotion of literacy, to their being taught simply as subjects, to their being used wholly as the medium of instruction in basic education.

Political will, societal acceptance, the provision of appropriate pedagogic support and the level of socio-linguistic complexity have often determined the extent to which each country has been able to promote the use of its national languages in education.

Educational planning and management (as an essential element in overall national planning) has become institutionalized in African countries. The extent to which these have been integrated varies from one country to another, but there is widespread awareness that the two should go together.

The development of national curricula and teaching-learning materials has also become institutionalized in many countries. Considerable national expertise has been built in this area, even though there has been mixed success in the extent to which individual countries have been able to indigenize curricula.

Considerable progress has been made in various areas of curriculum enrichment. Integration of educational experiences (through more integrated disciplines—social studies, science, etc.) has taken root in the English-speaking countries. Practical subjects have been promoted in almost all countries, even though social and economic factors have determined the extent to which each country has been able to go. In the area of higher education, increased opportunities have been offered everywhere in Africa. However, questions relating to the mission of higher education have remained a major issue.

Throughout Africa a larger proportion of the school-going population has had access to schooling, and considerable effort has been made to promote literacy and non-formal education. Yet many questions remain unanswered and a slowing down (both in quantitative and qualitative terms) in progress has been observed since the 1980s.

The above catalogue emphasizes one major point: a great deal was achieved, but even more was not achieved, while some of the most pressing questions relating to educational reform were not even addressed. The explanation for this state of affairs lies in the political, economic and social crises that have been the lot of Africa since the 1980s.

In countries with a socialist bent, the goal of evolving genuinely national systems of education was not achieved. The countries did not have the economic clout to push reforms through. In addition, the ideological indoctrination and hero-worship promoted through educational institutions and the mass media did not go down well with the people. Resistance to authoritarian rule by such regimes was passive but deep-rooted. Moreover, the ideologues could not move the people, as their revolutionary ideas did not lead to any noticeable improvement in general welfare. The result was a dramatic turn around (as was the case in post-Sékou Touré Guinea) as soon as the powerful leaders were off the scene.

Since the mid-1970s the Portuguese-speaking States (particularly Angola and Mozambique) have become the African theatres for the hot version of the Cold War. This was also the situation in Ethiopia and Somalia. These countries could therefore not afford the luxury of testing the educational ideas that formed part of their overall revolutionary political thinking.

The prevalence of one party regimes also explains, in part at least, the lack of a 'trickle down' effect of educational reform ideas. Opponents of the ideas had to keep quiet, while praise-singers paraded them as success stories. 'Trickling down' was itself the prevalent model of effecting reform everywhere else. This meant that popular participation was very rarely encouraged and explains in part the huge gap that existed between reform ideas and their implementation.

In a good number of cases, the reforms were not all embracing, as the ad hoc approach tended to predominate. This led to some reforms creating more problems rather than helping those they were intended to serve. Lack of reliable educational statistics, for example, led to the habit of planning without the facts. This affected all attempts to improve access to education, as the resources needed for such a leap forward were often under-estimated.

Lack of capacity for the overall management of educational reforms was a feature of many African countries. Even where educational managers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, inspectors and classroom teachers were trained in large numbers, they were not often given the opportunity to develop themselves by further learning on the job. They were either misdeployed (with constant changes in government and its policies) or they left the education sector for greener pastures.

There was almost everywhere a fear of the unknown. The results of numerous educational experiments in the early independent years (ruralization, vocationalization, polyvalent teachers, use of African languages, changes in examination practices, etc.) were not clearly demonstrable. Evidence of improved life for the beneficiaries of the inherited colonial system of education was very visible in the improved lifestyle of the post-independence leaders. Getting the people to accept that the system was unsuitable for their future needs was therefore difficult.

Teaching conditions and teacher status (which were relatively high in colonial Africa) worsened progressively as other white-collar professions flourished after independence. Teacher-training institutions ceased to attract bright and motivated Africans. These factors had ill effects on the implementation of reforms. Teacher involvement in the consultations leading to reforms was minimal, while the teacher creativity and total acceptance needed to implement reforms were almost totally lacking.

Political instability (which has been a feature of a large number of African States) led to frequent changes in policies, including educational reform policies. The persistent turnover of technocrats accompanied the frequent changes in political actors, resulting in institutional memory loss and discontinuity in educational reform actions.

Furthermore, the economic woes that have befallen the continent since the 1980s have not helped educational reforms. Profound changes have meant serious financial implications and African educational reform has been hampered in an era of acute underfunding of education.

Lastly, the attitude of Africa's élite class has not helped the cause of educational reform. This class is the loudest in denouncing the inherited colonial system. It is the class that preaches vocationalization of curricula, the promotion of education in national languages and all other seemingly revolutionary ideas. At the same time, this group sends its children to private (parallel) schools where English, French and Portuguese are the languages of instruction and in which the 'classical' or 'academic' curriculum is still in vogue. There are countries where French and national baccalaureate programmes co-exist, with the élite class opting for the former, since it is more likely to guarantee access to 'international education'—often outside Africa.

Conclusions: which way forward?

Our analysis shows that, in spite of some ambivalence in conceptualizing, planning and implementing educational reforms in post-independence Africa, a few worthwhile achievements were recorded. There have been problems related to linking ideals with practice. These difficulties have been further compounded by severe political, economic and social problems. This crisis has resulted in a situation in which one is led to wonder whether or not education still exists in Africa. There has been very little reinforcement of successful reforms, the infrastructure is in ruins in the war-torn countries, and new ideas cannot be implemented due to lack of resources.

The situation calls for a 'begin again' posture. For this to be done, African countries must solve their political problems by becoming more democratic and politically stable. Educational reforms have to fit into an overall nation-building strategy and should be organically linked with all other development goals and actions. The example of Mauritius is instructive here. With a stable political climate, it has become better able to initiate responsive development programmes (into which the reform of education has been integrated) and has been acclaimed by the international community.

Second, Africa must ensure that education plays its primary role of enculturation. Education should seek to produce a citizen of the nation. All other goals follow from there (the inculcation of knowledge and skills, the promotion of peace and international understanding, etc.). This is also a nation-building issue and it is closely related to the emergence of national values that a democratic, post-independence Africa must seek to promote.

Third, as a means of mobilizing all Africans for educational reforms, popular participation must become the norm. Ideas 'trickling down' from above have not been able to penetrate all levels of society. Worse still, those charged with sensitizing the population to such new ideas have not shown that they themselves have accepted, let alone internalized, them.

Fourth, Africa should avoid the proliferation of educational projects. Every reform activity should fit into a general policy framework. For example, Sierra Leone recently (1994) released its National Education Action Plan. All existing and potential innovative efforts should fit into this, to avoid a big error of the past that promoted too many isolated projects at the same time, leading to diffused energies and yielding very little in terms of concrete results.

Fifth, the spirit of experimentation has to be built into the educational reform process. In the past, there were cases of experiments that went on indefinitely, without any findings leading to a generalization phase (e.g. the national language education programmes of a number of countries). There were also numerous cases of research and evaluation being completely absent from the process of developing and implementing reforms. The result has been that success stories are often told, but no attention is drawn to empirically verifiable issues to allow for replication and for further diffusion of new ideas through an emphasis on lessons learned.

Sixthly, reforms should cease to be half-hearted and directed only at the less privileged sections of society. For example, education in the mother-tongue should bear in mind the implications for education beyond the basic level and for the learning of 'official' languages.

The same point can be made regarding vocational training. This should not be seen simply as an alternative track for the less gifted, but as a means of providing a well-rounded curriculum through 'developing the hands along with the heart and head'.

In summary, African educational reform for the twenty-first century has some lessons to learn from the experiences of the past. These lessons have their political, philosophical, sociological and purely pedagogical dimensions. But above all, the major problem has been that of the management of reforms. The suggestions in this paper can be seen mainly as focusing on this point. If Africa can place educational reform tightly within the context of its national management reforms, the problem of reforms meeting overall national aspirations will be more appropriately addressed.

LANGUAGES AND REGIONS

IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE:

A REVIVAL OF REGIONAL ISSUES?

Soledad Perez

Introduction

As the twentieth century draws to a close, the debate on the renewal of comparative education deserves to be taken up and carried forward by specialists in the field. In recent years, education systems have had to respond to pressing demands for efficiency and productivity, economic concepts adapted to educational situations, and this has complicated interdisciplinary studies. However, as Tedesco (1997, p. 159) stresses, 'the renewal of comparative education entails a considerable broadening of its themes, a diversification of its methods and the use of interdisciplinary approaches'. One long-standing theme, still on the agenda, that can be approached through interdisciplinary studies is the regional issue, especially language problems, since languages are emblematic of cultural identity in several regional contexts.

Researchers have always taken an interest in the theme of regional minorities. Several studies, such as those by Berger (1972), Touraine et al. (1981) and Furter (1983), were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s in fields such as political sociology, education and economics. In their studies, all the authors draw attention to the wide variety of minority situations, which differ from one region to another and one country to another. For our present purposes, we shall define the concept of region as a geographical, socio-historical, political and economic area subordi-

Original language: French

Soledad Perez (France)

Currently a teacher in comparative education at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Geneva, Switzerland. She has carried out research on women and education and studied various levels of instruction in the education systems of developed and developing countries. Consultant for international organizations such as the ILO and UNESCO. Research interests currently focused on regional issues, but she is also active in the field of work, employment and training. E-mail address: perezs@fapse.unige.ch

nate to a nation-state, dependent on the central authority but enjoying, in some cases, a certain degree of autonomy.

We shall look into the question of language, which plays an important part in various socio-economic and political situations. In the same way as cultural concerns play a symbolic role in regional movements and their claims, though without much real impact on regional development, language is often the decisive factor in a growing awareness that culminates in demands for autonomy or separatism. The linguistic factor, in conjunction with other economic, social and political factors, may kindle a sense of collective identity. Indeed, the history of nation-states shows how they have exploited linguistic issues in order to pre-empt the idea of nationality and have attempted to create cultural uniformity throughout the national territory by determining, for instance, the language to be used for administration and law. The cultural and linguistic strategies of nation-States sought to establish new forms of solidarity that obliged the ruling classes to integrate national minorities into society, in the knowledge that success would depend on how far the dominant values were accepted by those minorities and on their access to society's resources. It is important to note that a language, by its very nature, serves society as a whole; it is a means of communication among people no matter what social group an individual may belong to. But social groups are far from being insensitive to language. Their desire to use it and to impose their own vocabulary, terms and expressions on it accounts for the language policies of nation-states towards national minorities.

In order to understand minority issues at the regional level, we shall try to clarify the many different facets of regional minorities, using examples from Europe and elsewhere to support our argument. We make no claim to provide a complete picture of minority issues, nor shall we embark on theoretical debates concerning concepts such as nation or ethnic group, already widely discussed by authors such as Keating (1996), or spend time on the problems of landless linguistic minorities such as gypsies. In this study, we shall confine ourselves to regional linguistic minorities with a territory in which the language has played an important part in history and still does so today. As to methodology, we shall make use of information and approaches drawn from the socio-historical, educational, economic and political fields without, however, taking a strictly disciplinary approach. In concluding this article, we shall attempt to offer some points for consideration regarding the revival of interest in the study of regional issues in comparative education.

The many facets of regional minorities

THE DIVERSITY OF REGIONAL MINORITIES

The first thing to bear in mind is the existence of a wide range of minority situations governed by national socio-political, economic, cultural and educational factors. Furthermore, such situations may be perceived as exceptional or unique by the populations concerned. Our starting point is the distinction between historical and recent minorities. A good illustration is provided by the autonomous commu-

nities in Spain: Catalonia is a historical minority and Andalusia a recent minority first recognized in the Constitution of 1978. But let us look at the example of Catalonia as part of the Spanish State from a historical point of view.

Autonomy can be regarded as a general aspiration in Spain, taking different forms in different regions. With the bourgeois revolution of 1869, unification took place by force, but autonomy movements and anti-centralist pressure remained constant throughout the nineteenth century. For the general public in the early part of this century, the words 'regionalism', 'autonomism' and 'separatism' essentially conjured up the trends of opinion in three traditional outlying regions—Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia. Each of these regions could invoke powerful historical and cultural arguments to support its demands. Whenever a democratic regime came to power (the bourgeois revolution of 1869, the First Republic in 1873 or the Second Republic in 1931), anti-centralist feelings developed in various forms such as cantonalism or autonomism (Tamames, 1986). By repressing the regions in various ways over some forty years (prohibition of the public use of vernacular languages for example, or banning public displays of regional cultural activities such as the sardana in Catalonia), federal policy under Franco inflamed nationalities that had had their first taste of autonomy or had been on the point of gaining it on the eve of the civil war. The new State was founded on autocracy, centralization and uniformity. Hence the underground struggle of the Catalans: to win back official recognition of their cultural identity through a strong urge for self-government.

The Constitution of 1978 granted some legal rights to the autonomous communities. Article 2 recognized the existence of nationalities while at the same time stressed the principle of the unity and indivisibility of the Spanish nation: 'The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards, and recognizes and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions which make it up and the solidarity among all of them' (Couffignal, 1993). A ministry for the regions came into being in 1977. Decree laws granted pre-autonomous status to Catalonia on 29 September 1977, to the Basque country on 4 January 1978 and to Andalusia in March 1978. As we can see, the government granted pre-autonomous status quite swiftly. The decisions taken and the rapidity of events had social and political reasons: in the Basque country, autonomous status was seen at the time as a response and/or solution to the violence of ETA ('Basque Nation and Liberty'). History has belied expectations: the paramilitary movement has been active in Spain. For other minorities, such as those in the Canary Islands (granted pre-autonomous status in March 1978), the Prime Minister at the time (Adolfo Suárez) was anxious to accord the status before making an official visit because there had been talk of independence in the area.

The government gave precedence to historical communities, but newly formed communities, like Andalusia, soon demanded the same status. Social, cultural and political diversity required special forms of organization for each of the regions within the unity of the Spanish State. The spread of the regionalist movement was not due to economic causes alone. The awakening of a national and/or regional consciousness was an important political factor. For poor regions, such as Andalusia, the hope

of making quicker and more effective progress towards economic and therefore social development, while at the same time evading the centralism of Madrid, was a decisive reason for demanding autonomy. Accordingly, these new minorities worked out their own plans for endogenous development. The foregoing examples illustrate the diversity of regional minorities within a single country but we need to further refine the concept of regional minorities by bringing out the various facets of these regional language movements.

A SUGGESTED DEFINITION

In order to cover the many different facets of regional minorities, we now propose the following definition: a minority may be defined as a group of persons with their own characteristics, such as a language, culture, religion or territory, which it can modify and interpret in the course of inter-ethnic social relations in order to construct its own identity. The particular features will vary from one minority to another, according to the importance attached to each characteristic.

We have just seen the importance of history in Catalonia as a means of explaining its desire for autonomy. History has had a similar influence over many other regional minorities. However, a purely historical approach would be highly reductionist.

Our definition distinguishes a minority by the number of persons belonging to it. During apartheid in South Africa, the black community (in the Natal region as well as in other regions) was in a minority from the political and legal point of view, and from the economic standpoint, although it formed a numerical majority. It now constitutes the majority under socio-political and democratic criteria but remains a minority economically since financial and economic power is in the hands of the white minority. This example illustrates the dynamic nature of the process whereby a minority may achieve major changes in its status but still needs to gain control over the economic levers of power if it is to develop satisfactorily. The number of persons was the decisive factor in the case of South Africa but under no circumstances should it be studied in isolation. It was, however, instrumental in pressing majority demands, which were eventually accepted by the then political authority under great international pressure. The role of certain social forces such as the African National Congress (ANC) was decisive in every aspect of the struggle against apartheid, but especially in the fields of education and language, and in winning for the black community the same economic and social rights as those enjoyed by persons of European origin (ANC, 1995).

Regional economic development adds a further element to the definition of a minority. Many economic problems are essentially territorial in scope and may be handled differently in different geographical areas. These are problems, such as town-planning or environmental protection, that constitute the exclusive or almost exclusive subject matter of regional economic policies. Most economic policies are pitched at an intermediate level, with both general and regional aspects. Unemployment is undoubtedly a global phenomenon, but its intensity varies from region to region.

When we observe the interdependence of the regions in Spain, we see that there are considerable disparities among them. Some are rich (Catalonia, the Basque country, Madrid), some are close to the national average for per capita income (Valencia), while others are poor (Andalusia). Catalonia has long drawn a large proportion of its workforce from the south. The paradoxical Francoist policy proved economically beneficial for the Basques and the Catalans whom it was designed to punish politically. It was beneficial because it imposed industrial protectionism and channelled towards the three most industrialized zones in the country (Madrid, Barcelona, the Basque country) the resources of the most disadvantaged agricultural regions: cheap labour, raw materials, power, agricultural produce and local savings through the operations of regular banks and savings banks. It also transformed the poor regions into an internal market in which the three rich territories sold their manufactured goods at the high prices associated with a protectionist regime. It is because they were the richest regions that Catalonia and the Basque country demanded, alongside full recognition of their historical and cultural identity and wide-ranging internal autonomy, the right to take part in Madrid-based policy-making.

The poor regions denounced these measures. With the end of Francoism, they demanded and obtained the right to autonomous administration without intervention by the central authorities. The regional disparities in Spain were partly offset by contributions from European and international funds. So we have both developed regions and socially and economically backward ones. Let us now turn to an example of regional underdevelopment and its impact on the language issue. Several authors (Bassand, 1973; Rennwald, 1978; Jeanneret & Maillat, 1981) have studied the question of the Swiss Jura. Its underdevelopment has several causes including, in the first place, a characteristic concentration of the means of production and capital in zones where large companies are established (to the detriment of other areas) thereby creating socio-economic inequalities between centres of development.

This dependence on the establishment or departure of big companies has destabilized all economic activity. The Jura is still characterized in part by its membership in the industrial clock and watchmaking fraternity. Its heavy specialization in the box-making sector is a further indicator of the fact that the major decision-making centres lie outside the region. The emigration of people from the Jura towards the large Swiss urban centres is partly due to the shortage of attractive jobs in the regional labour market. The presence of urban centres on the edge of the Jura drains a large number of workers from the area, who become commuters. Another feature of the Jura is the lack of a town large enough to serve as a major centre of development. Bassand, Rennwald, Jeanneret and Maillat point out that the Jura has been handicapped by the lack of road and rail connections. These regional disparities have given rise to social disparities and it can be said that—though to a lesser degree than in the case of Andalusia—the Jura underwent a form of internal colonialism before obtaining its independence. But this regional underdevelopment alone does not explain the scale of the autonomy movement.

LANGUAGES AND REGIONS

It is tempting at this point to take up the language question. Can language be the most important characteristic of a minority? The first argument is based on legal grounds. It is highly important for a minority to be legally recognized in the national context, hence the debate on the status of languages. It may be a question of the administrative or official language (French) and a so-called national language (Breton) without official status. A language has official status when it can be used on all occasions, whether legal or non-legal, and this gives rise to bilingualism. Catalan and Euskera were recognized by the Spanish Constitution of 1978 as official languages with the same status as Spanish. Let us see if the case of Breton is similar to that of the two Spanish communities.

Throughout its history, France has tried to impose the supremacy of one language over the others. The French revolutionaries decreed French the official language, other languages being regarded as subversive (De Certeau, 1974). With time, dialects, *patois* and regional languages have disappeared from French territory in favour of a single language. For the rulers of France, compulsory schooling was explicitly intended to 'Frenchify' and nationalize the children of a country that was still largely multilingual and compartmentalized (Citron, 1994). So the central authorities worked out an offensive strategy: *patois*, dialects and regional languages were no longer accepted in the classroom or on the playground. They became shameful, rejected not only by decision-makers but also by families, who sided with the authorities. The Catholic Church, another important voice in education, abandoned sermons and religious education in regional languages in favour of the single official language. France is now the scene of cultural and linguistic demonstrations and protests by a few regional minorities who are attempting by all available means to reintroduce their languages (Breton, Basque, Corsican and so on) into their territory.

The legal provisions governing the teaching of regional languages and cultures in France are of recent date. A circular of 7 April 1995 restates the principles and methods for the teaching of regional languages and cultures from pre-school to upper secondary education. The demand for teaching in a regional language is rising in France and is based on the involvement of families and pupils. The courses are administered by the local authorities in co-operation with the regional education authority, in the person of the rector. The seven regional languages taught in France are Occitan, Corsican, Catalan, Breton, Creole, Basque and Gallo. As for the actual teaching, the circular stipulates that language lessons may start at the pre-school level and be treated either as an introductory course in a regional language (one to three hours per week) or as a bilingual French-regional language course (six to thirteen hours in the regional language) (France, 1994). The regional school inspectors, who are in charge of the national education services in their *département*, examine each case and decide whether the conditions are right to introduce a course of instruction in a regional language. This process takes into account the wishes of the families as well as the human and financial resources available to the inspectors. Although, generally speaking, the teaching of regional languages is expand-

ing, numbers in the Rennes education authority have stagnated over the last two years because of problems in recruiting primary teachers capable of teaching Breton, especially in a bilingual context.

The case of Brittany and Breton

How has the French State reacted to demands from Brittany? In Brittany three languages have existed side by side: French, Gallo (a Romance language) and Breton (a Celtic language). For our purposes, we shall confine ourselves to Breton, of which there are four dialectal variants (those of Cornouaille, Léon, Tréguier and Vannes). These dialects explain the difficulties of achieving linguistic unity: over the years several attempts have been made to codify the language, culminating in an interdialectal version. Today, the Cultural Institute of Brittany acts as the centre for the study and establishing the terminology of the Breton language.

Historically, Breton has steadily lost ground in relation to French for a variety of reasons. Until the seventeenth century, the educated ruling class gradually gave up Breton, which was divided into separate dialects in the various parts of the province. The revolutionaries saw the Breton language as a bastion of the *ancien régime* and a means of subjugating the people, as opposed to French, which was the language of the 'new man'. Here it should be emphasized that the State has practised a policy of linguistic integration backed up by various laws, such as the Guizot law of 1833 or the Ferry laws on formal education of 1881 to 1889. The First World War proved a decisive turning point: a knowledge of French was regarded as essential to social advancement and the key to assimilation into the dominant cultural model. In the 1950s even the Catholic Church abandoned sermons in Breton. Certain authors, such as Elegoet (1981), note a break in the natural transmission of the language, mainly due to the decisive impact of economic changes such as the revolution in agriculture and the entry of Brittany into the market economy.

The example of Breton shows how language—often in combination with other factors—acts as a catalyst. History reveals that the social classes in power abandoned Breton in favour of French whereas, in the case of Catalonia, the Catalan *bourgeoisie* was always very proud of its language; this is one of the differences between France and Spain. Moreover, France has remained a centralizing State despite its attempts at regionalization, whereas Spain is partly federal and partly decentralized, with the result that, unlike Brittany, the autonomous communities have some right to manage their own affairs, especially in the field of education. For the Catalans, there was linguistic continuity even under the dictatorship: Catalan was spoken in the home and in groups regarded as subversive by the totalitarian regime. At present, the Catalan education system has considerable economic and financial resources to run the various levels of education. Throughout Catalonia, instruction is in Catalan. As for the Bretons, they are gradually recovering their language and are beginning to enjoy some linguistic recognition, which has social, educational and financial implications. In contrast to the Catalans, there are relatively few Bretons who want education to be provided in the regional language.

It is instructive to consider the regionalist movements that have had such a widely reported impact in Brittany and have used language as the spearhead of their campaigns. Breton demands for the preservation of the language have always been backed by a wide range of twentieth-century social movements. The founding of the Diwan association—the word means ‘the sprouting of a seed’ in Breton—during the 1970s was the work of a group of parents and teachers who argued the need to use the Breton language in Breton society. Breton was accepted as an optional language for the baccalaureate. The Haby educational reform of 1975 allowed one hour of instruction per week at primary school provided this was requested by the families and teaching staff. The first Diwan primary school opened in the 1980s. A degree course in Breton followed by thirty-two students was included in the curriculum at the University of Rennes. In 1988, the first Diwan lower secondary school opened. In higher education, various types of diploma in the Breton language—such as the first degree (1981), CAPES (a postgraduate teaching qualification) and the DEUG (a university diploma of general studies)—were introduced, but few teaching posts were created. During the 1990s, the first bilingual classes were started in private Catholic schools. In September 1994, with the opening of the first Diwan *lycée*, continuity of instruction in Breton became available throughout the system, but there were few enrolments.

The case of the Jura

When we turn to the situation in the French-speaking Swiss Jura, we find that the autonomy movement was already active at the end of the Second World War as a response to both socio-economic inequalities and a cultural and political imbalance. ‘The alienation experienced by the people of the Jura has taken a variety of forms’ (Rennwald, 1978, p. 171). In its struggle for independence, the Jura movement gave precedence to the fight against cultural alienation—hence its defence of the French language. This points to the existence of another factor that can rally the people of a given region: the right to be different. Nation-states and their power elites have been forced to recognize the existence of regionalist movements. Although the French State has always followed the policy of assimilating its minorities, it has had to face the fact that certain regions proclaimed their right to be different where language was concerned. Partly in order to preserve its centralizing role, the State considerably reduced the opposition by downgrading linguistic difference through a policy of harassment at every level: French was portrayed as the language of social advancement, Breton as the language of backwardness (the image of Bécassine).¹ In France, the transition to pluralism has been blocked out of fear that it would damage the fabric of society. The State has resorted to subterfuge, conceding some degree of recognition to regional languages, although not sufficiently to call into question the supremacy of French. In the case of the Swiss Jura, the canton of Bern has, in the course of its history, repeatedly attempted to Germanize the region. These attempts led to cultural alienation: the deterioration and decline of the French language inevitably resulted from the teaching of German. The Germanization process and

the scale of German-Swiss immigration explain why the people of the Jura have become very sensitive to language issues. For them, the effort to arrest the decline of their language was a means of defending their culture and asserting their collective identity, and hence their right to be different.

The case of the Amerindian minorities

The study of Indian minorities in Latin America—peoples linked to a territory—brings out several aspects of the right to be different: the right to land, the right to education and the right to culture are among the constant demands of these minorities. This example demonstrates in concrete terms the wide variety of factors involved and their relative importance depending on the socio-economic, political and educational contexts of the societies concerned. The right to linguistic difference has been an important issue for the Amerindian minorities of Latin America. For decades, Latin American States have denigrated the native languages (for example, by refusing to recognize Indian first and family names for official purposes). The Amerindian populations have struggled for their right to cultural existence and development in keeping with their own identities within nation-states that are frequently hostile to their advancement. In regard to education, these minorities have resisted attempts by States to integrate them into society (Perez, 1996).

For a long time, native languages were given a negative image by the political authorities. It is a long and difficult task, still continuing today, to restore a positive image. As we have shown, Breton suffered from the same socio-educational constraints as the Amerindian languages. It is now being tested to see if it can win new prestige and recognition. In the Jura, the image of the French language and its worldwide social status have played a key role in the demands of the population. In Catalonia, the historical prestige of the Catalan language and the political and economic determination of the local authorities to promote things Catalan conferred a positive image on the language, even during the difficult years of its history.

THE DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS FOR REGIONAL MINORITIES

In considering these examples of regional minorities, it is interesting to note that while States have politically recognized the cultural differences of minorities, they have adopted different solutions to the problems raised. Switzerland recognized the Jura as a canton with autonomy over its territory without calling in to question national unity. Spain, in its 1978 Constitution, granted autonomous status to Catalonia. Both these minorities were given full powers to administer their own territory while respecting the constitutional rights of the nation. In the case of the Breton minority and the Amerindian minorities of Latin America, their linguistic demands have been recognized in certain well-defined areas, such as education based on bilingual curricula. To illustrate this, let us take bilingual instruction in Breton, which seems to us to share several features with other bilingual teaching systems.

The example of Breton

When we look at the statistics for the 1993/94 school year provided by the various associations concerned with the teaching of Breton (the Diwan Association, the Breton-Language Teachers' Association, the Breton-Language Parent-Teachers' Association for State schools and the Dihun-Breiz Association for private Catholic schools), we find 2,100 children enrolled in the bilingual classes of the various education systems, more than half of them in Diwan schools. Of the 625,000 schoolchildren in Brittany, these schools account for 0.3% of enrolments.

The situation with regard to Breton language teaching may be briefly described as follows: bilingual instruction is provided at the request of families and activists. The concept of bilingualism varies greatly from one school to another, being closely bound up with political considerations that determine whether or not bilingual classes can be introduced in a given area. In practice, several conditions, such as the appointment of a teacher and the agreement of the school inspector, have to be met before this type of instruction can be put in place.

Bilingual instruction in the Diwan schools offers a useful insight into the motives of the grass-roots social partners, in particular the parents' and teachers' associations. The principles set forth in the Diwan charter outline the major linguistic and cultural demands of the Bretons. Article 2 asserts that Diwan exists owing to 'the shortcomings of a national education system that fails to give its rightful place to the Breton language'. Article 6 expresses 'hostility to any attempt to enforce linguistic uniformity'. In Article 8, the association proclaims its 'solidarity with all peoples fighting for their cultural identity', including immigrant workers, and asserts that their diversity helps to enrich the human heritage.

In the view of this association (Diwan, 1992), Breton should be a language of instruction at all levels of education, with the following objectives:

- Breton children should receive an education in Breton;
- allegiance to Breton culture should be enhanced by a knowledge of its history, language and forms of cultural expression;
- Breton identity should be safeguarded; and
- Breton should permit linguistic immersion by its adaptability to all fields and should be the language used in schools.

Diwan bilingualism means equal competence in the two languages by the end of primary education. At the pre-school level, Breton is the only language used. In primary school, reading, writing and mathematics are taught in Breton.

French becomes part of the curriculum from the second year (CE1) of primary education, with two hours a week. It is gradually given more emphasis: four hours in the third year (CE2), six hours in the fourth year (CM1) and nine hours in the fifth year (CM2). At the secondary level, courses follow the official curricula laid down by the national education authorities, with the introduction of other modern languages. Mathematics is taught in Breton with practical exercises in French. The physical sciences, and other subjects such as history, geography, Latin and information technology, follow the same principles.

Other examples of minority strategies

As the Breton example shows, even if the nation-state recognizes that regional minorities have the right to education in their own language and allows them a measure of freedom, bilingual education curricula remain under the control of the Ministry of Education. In Ecuador, the State continued to take charge of the bilingual curricula for Indian minorities over a period of years. The Indians had to fight for a say in their design and content. Nowadays, the Amerindian populations have acquired a certain socio-political power that the State is obliged to take into account. Nevertheless, efforts are still being made in the name of national unity to eradicate these pluralistic forms of political and cultural organization by repeated use of the mass media to disseminate a homogeneous official culture. These regional minorities are strongly linked to a territory, and while some of them remain subcultures, they are still in a position to take action that might result in the break-up of the elitist homogeneous culture, thereby opening up new prospects in the States concerned. In many cases, the building of these nationalities resulted from the strategies that they adopted in response to political problems and the need to resolve territorial, cultural and linguistic issues. As Touraine et al. (1981) and Furter (1983) suggest, these movements could progress from resistance to positive action, in which case they would need to place the emphasis on novel approaches, making use of existing school and out-of-school systems to develop new policies.

Catalonia shows that it is possible for a minority language and culture to cohabit both at the world level and within the Spanish State. Regional minorities with political power, like Catalonia, are always in a position to reopen negotiations with the central authorities.

For the purposes of our definition we have highlighted certain facets of regional minorities. We have found that they favour some strategies rather than others when it comes to settling conflictual situations with the State. Regional minorities, because they form part of specific countries, adapt their strategies in accordance with their history and their own special features. We have tried to identify certain factors that, in our view, make it easier to grasp the complex nature of linguistic minorities. For many regional minorities, the language question remains the touchstone of cultural recognition in States where the elite gives precedence to the rapid growth of a modern economy, which in practice entails unification of the internal market and concentration of the means of production, thus reinforcing the power of the dominant groups. As we have seen, although economic factors are not the only decisive issue, a minority group with a strong industrial base and rich in human resources, backed up by a banking system and business network, will clearly stand a greater chance of making the political establishment take notice of its demands. Catalonia is stepping up its efforts to obtain guarantees of greater autonomy, in matters of taxation for example, and at the same time seeking to exercise a decisive role in central government.

Dependent and marginal minorities have to fall back on the socio-political force of numbers, which may induce the public authorities to devise socio-economic,

educational and political solutions that are acceptable to them. South Africa and the Indian minorities of Latin America constitute historical and enduring examples of this approach.

Conclusion: the revival of studies on regional minorities

In the late twentieth century many States tolerate the differences evinced by minorities and try to accommodate them to a modest and limited extent in their social systems, especially education. In practice, nation-states tailor their attitudes and actions to match the social and political strengths of their minorities, while at the same time seeking to preserve national unity. Thus, language policies change over time as an attempt is made to strike a balance between a territorial right, which underpins the right of a society to insist on the recognition and administrative protection of the official language on its territory, and the rights of citizens to be guaranteed certain services, including the right to bilingual education, regardless of where they live.

Researchers interested in regional issues are faced with methodological problems peculiar to minority situations. The criteria for a definition necessarily involve a number of disciplines, such as geography, sociology, linguistics, history and economics, which make it possible to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the question. For researchers, it is more convenient to study minorities from the standpoint of their particular discipline, which is why we find political, religious, ethnic and economic studies, or analyses like our own which attempt to produce a synthesis of several different approaches in order to account for the complex nature of the subject. However, a comprehensive study of minorities would call for the setting up of interdisciplinary research teams that could undertake much broader investigations. For this kind of work, it is essential to create structures within university institutions or research centres that will facilitate such an approach. Regional linguistic minorities are so complex that the whole field of study needs to be redefined. As Rege Colet (1993) observes, interdisciplinarity involves not only methodological and conceptual problems but also collaboration among individuals, who will have to develop theoretical concepts and methodologies that reflect the consensus on a given subject.

The new challenge facing specialists in comparative regional studies is how to adapt to the structural and social changes taking place in education that encourage the establishment of communication networks among all the social actors concerned. Already the development of new technologies is facilitating interaction among regional language movements. Regional minorities used to feel isolated when standing up to States with centralist tendencies. Today they represent new actors operating within societies determined to advance towards greater autonomy. Researchers will therefore have to adopt a new approach when studying regional minorities, which are constantly changing and developing. As pointed out by Tedesco (1997), 'the processes that form the actors of society are one of the tasks facing comparative education'.

To conclude this article, we would add that the recognition of regional minorities and their participation in the societies of tomorrow will be fundamental to promoting understanding and peace among all members of society.

Note

1. A little Breton girl, heroine of an early twentieth-century comic strip often criticized for its condescending portrayal of Breton life.

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EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY

IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Ingo Richter

The purpose of this article is to investigate if the European Union (EU) is able to pursue a youth policy for multicultural societies on the basis of existing agreements. After an initial examination of the European Community Treaty (EC-Treaty) in the version presented by the Treaty of Maastricht,¹ I shall attempt to clarify the terms 'multicultural society' and 'youth policy' in the context of the questions raised. The conclusion will return to the basic legal positions of the EU and try to assess if, or in what manner, they might be able to lead to the establishment of a youth policy for multicultural societies.

The legal basis for a European youth policy in multicultural societies

In the Treaty of Maastricht version of the EC-Treaty, there are two conceivable principles for a youth policy in multicultural societies.

First, 'General and Vocational Training and Youth' is the heading of Chapter 3 of the eighth section of the EC-Treaty devoted to social policy. Article 126 settles the co-operation among Member States and their activities in the field of general education. The diversity of cultures and languages is mentioned, but a close look reveals that at issue here are the cultures and languages *among* Member States and not those *within* Member States. A look at individual goals confirms this interpre-

Original language: English

Ingo Richter (Germany)

Graduated from universities in Hamburg and Paris. First employed at the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research, then as professor of political and administrative law at the Free University of Berlin, and as professor of public law at Hamburg University. Teaching assignments in France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Editor of the journal *Recht der Jugend und des Bildungswesens* [Rights of youth and education] since 1977. Became director of the German Youth Institute in Munich in 1993. Since 1966, honorary professor at University of Tübingen. His most recent publications co-authored with Gunnar Folke-Schuppert are: *Casebook Verwaltungsrecht* [Administrative law casebook] (1995); *Casebook Verfassungsrecht* [Constitutional law casebook] (1996).

tation, since the European dimension of education is to be developed in particular 'by learning and disseminating the languages of Member States.' Thus, the EC-Treaty fails to consider the plurality of cultures and languages within Member States. Nor do European vocational training policies, now based on Article 127 of the EC-Contract, show any awareness of the problems young people in multicultural societies have with vocational training.

Secondly, if the legal principles of youth policy within the EU do not take any account of multiculturalism, a legal basis might nevertheless be found in the area of cultural policy. Cultural policy has, after all, obtained its own legal basis in the EC-Treaty thanks to the Treaty of Maastricht. Article 128, para. 1, states: 'The Community contributes to the development of cultures in Member States and to preserving national and regional diversity, at the same time emphasizing the common cultural heritage.'

National and regional diversity is at least mentioned here, regional diversity in particular. This addresses the fact that within the EU there are not only national cultures, but also regional differences within States, and the EU is expected to safeguard these differences. The phrase 'preserving of their [...] regional diversity', however, says more about the fear of traditional regional cultures within Member States being diluted than about a policy focusing on the multicultural societies that have emerged in these States—especially since multicultural societies cannot be seen as regional cultures and, moreover, include non-European as well as European cultures. Article 128 takes no notice of this, since the first objective stated therein is 'to improve the knowledge of and to disseminate the culture and history of European nations.' Therefore, this article on culture in the EC-Treaty shows no awareness of the multicultural blend in societies of Member States.

These conclusions concerning the EC-Treaty are not surprising if we consider the nature of the EU. The EU is based on a contract among Member States who have agreed to create a 'union of European nations continuing to grow closer together' (Article A of the Maastricht Treaty). However, they commit themselves to protecting the national identity of Member States (Article F of the Maastricht Treaty). Even though the Maastricht Treaty has created a so-called union citizenship, only citizens of a Member State can acquire it (Article 8, EC-Treaty). Member States keep full control of citizenship rights. Nationals from non-Union countries cannot become Union citizens unless they become citizens of a Member State. Union citizens, to a large extent, have equal status with national citizens of Member States—any discrimination due to citizenship in another Member State is prohibited (Article 6, EC-Contract). The Treaty of Maastricht provides for a certain regionalization below the level of Member States—such as the European Fund for Regional Development according to Article 130b of the EC-Treaty, as well as Regional Committees according to Article 198a of the same document—but how to define regions is once again the affair of Member States. The EU is a multinational community with a programme for integration. To this extent, it is also a multicultural community. However, multicultural societies within Member States are not, at a first glance, a concern of EU policy.

Even so, there are EU programmes devoted to the problems of multicultural societies within Member States. In the Youth for Europe Programme, which covers a five year period (1995–99), some attention is being given to the problems of co-existence in multicultural contexts within the EU:

- Campaign A: youth exchanges and initiatives with the intent of giving priority to the battle against intolerance and segregation by promoting a better understanding of foreign cultures, by developing solidarity and through the promotion of social, cultural and personal skills.
- Campaign B: social workers (the need for social workers to obtain qualifications in intercultural learning).

Youth policy in multicultural societies

Leaving aside the theoretical and practical discussion of the term ‘multicultural societies’, for pragmatic reasons I prefer to give a simple definition and use it as a basis for my exposition from here on. This definition consists of two parts. I shall describe ‘cultures’ as communities of shared values, i.e. as a totality of individuals who share certain views and attitudes. The reasons for them to do so can be very different. I shall refer to the reasons named in the ban on discrimination (Article 3, para. 3) of German Basic Law: descent, race, language, homeland, origin and religion. I shall not refer to sex or politics in this context. It follows that multicultural societies are societies in which several categories of people of this kind live together—without distinction of their manner of living together.

To determine in which manner they live together, I shall distinguish four kinds of political systems. The first two assume the regional segregation of cultures. This can be clarified by a look at the history of European religious wars.

SYSTEMS OF PARITY

The religious peace treaty of Augsburg in 1555 was based, on the one hand, on the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, i.e. on the religious homogeneity of German states or what today is cynically called ‘religious purging’. On the other hand, it was based on the equal distribution of power within the whole German Empire that, in this sense, was an integrative multicultural State. If we apply this definition to other ‘communities of shared values’ characterized by origin and language, we could say, for instance, that contemporary Switzerland and Belgium are systems of parity in this sense.

MAJORITY/MINORITY SYSTEMS

Prussia, having emerged from the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a clearly Protestant State, acquired territories with Catholic majorities during the conquests of the Seven Years War in the eighteenth century and during the wars of liberation at the beginning of the nineteenth century—first Silesia and West Prussia, then the Rhineland. Prussia remained a Protestant State, but the Catholic

minorities were tolerated and enjoyed a certain cultural autonomy. In the case of Prussia, this definition applies simultaneously to origin and language when considering some religious minorities such as the Catholic West Prussians who were Polish at the same time.

However, both majority/minority systems and systems of parity assume that different communities of shared values can live together, that they do not kill each other, that majorities do not destroy or expel minorities, or insist on assimilation to the point where their identities become unrecognizable. This has happened frequently throughout history and continues to happen today.

The other two kinds of co-existence presuppose an integration of cultures as a consequence of migration. These two types have taken shape in the ethnic history of the United States of America, although the implications for Europe are probably more ideological than historical.

THE MELTING-POT THEORY

Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur emigrated from France to the American colonies in 1759, married an American woman, settled on a farm in Orange County, New York, and published his *Letters from an American farmer* during the American Revolution. This eighteenth-century French American marvelled at the astonishing diversity of the other settlers—‘a mixture of English, Scots, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes, a strange mixture of blood’ that you could find in no other country.

He recalled one family whose grandfather was English, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a Frenchwoman and whose present four sons had married women of different nationalities. ‘From this promiscuous breed’, he wrote, ‘that race now called Americans have arisen.’ What, Crèvecoeur mused, were the characteristics of this suddenly emergent American race? *Letters from an American farmer* propounded a famous question: ‘What then is the American, this new man?’ (Twentieth-century readers must overlook eighteenth-century male obliviousness to the existence of women.) Crèvecoeur gave his own question its classic answer:

He is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles [. . .]. *Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men.* (Schlesinger, 1992, p. 11–12)

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in his book *The disuniting of America*, writes that Crèvecoeur was the ‘inventor’ of the melting-pot theory. But he also investigates the origins of another theory: that of pluralistic integration.

CULTURAL PLURALISM

In 1915, Horace Kallen, a Jewish-American philosopher, wrote an essay for *The nation* entitled Democracy versus the melting pot. The melting pot, Kallen argued,

was valid neither as a fact nor as an ideal. What impressed him was, on the contrary, the persistence of ethnic groups and their distinctive traditions. Unlike freely chosen affiliations, Kallen said, the ethnic bond was both involuntary and immutable. 'Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers — Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons —, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, they would have to cease to be.'

Ethnic diversity, Kallen observed, enriches American civilization. He saw the nation not as one people, except in a political and administrative sense, but rather 'as a federation or commonwealth of national cultures [. . .]. a democracy of nationalities, co-operating voluntarily and autonomously through common institutions ... a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind.' He came to call this concept 'cultural pluralism' (Schlesinger, 1992, p. 36).

These two kinds of political system also presuppose that communities of shared values co-exist. They assume that immigrants are not suppressed, expelled or robbed of their identity through assimilation. The melting-pot theory aims at integration, but not at assimilation. Cultural pluralism, on the other hand, assumes segregation, but cannot completely deny political integration.

Naturally, regional forms of segregation and migration-dependent forms of integration often overlap and mix. If we look at Europe today, we can see various layers of multiculturalism.

- The EU sees itself (as mentioned above) as a political system of equal Member States with diverse cultures in the sense of the first type.
- In the EU Member States there are political systems of parity of the first type (e.g. Belgium) and majority/minority-systems of the second type (e.g. Spain with regard to the Basques, or Finland with regard to the Lapps).
- All EU Member States, however, have developed into migration-dependent, integrative societies because they have all absorbed, for quite different reasons, large numbers of people from other cultures, for example the Turkish job migrants in Germany or the Muslim North Africans in France. French politics, in view of the universal claims of French culture, might be said to represent more of the melting-pot theory, whereas German politics might represent more of cultural pluralism. But that is a debatable point.

The political debate of the term multicultural society seems to focus on the question of whether the principles of parity should be applied to cultural pluralism—if the policies of Member States combine the systems of parity model with that of cultural pluralism.

Eight maxims to define youth and its significance in multicultural societies

This is not the place to give a theoretical definition of youth and youth policy. It is meaningful, in a political as well as an academic sense, to consider youth as an independent phase of life. It is characterized by specific requirements and dynam-

ics (outlined below) referring to Klaus Hurrelmann's eight socio-theoretical maxims on the development of the individual and integration during adolescence (Hurrelmann, 1994).

1. Young people are to be seen as subjects who assimilate reality in a productive way and build their own world creatively.
2. The phase of adolescence is characterized by the first opportunity in one's life history to develop an ego identity.
3. In the phase of adolescence, formation of the individual and integration processes coincide, and therefore a very positive stimulation potential, but also a high stress potential, is involved.
4. The socialization process in adolescence may show strong symptoms of crisis if adolescents do not manage to relate and connect the requirements of individuality and integration with each other.
5. The individuality and integration processes follow their own divergent dynamics. In order to reduce the tension that builds up between individuality and integration requirements, appropriate and flexible individual coping strategies are necessary.
6. In order to reduce the tension that builds up between individuality and integration requirements, the effective and wide-ranging support of the most important social groups adolescents relate to is as necessary as individual coping skills.
7. Whether stimulation or stress potentials dominate personality development in adolescence depends largely on the structural social conditions in place during the formative years.
8. The phase of adolescence can be identified as an independent phase in one's life history even under the changed historical, social and economic conditions of today's industrial societies.

In multicultural societies—no matter what kind—the phase of adolescence acquires its own specific expression.

Multicultural societies have structural prerequisites for youth phase development in the sense of maxim 7, e.g. establishing an official language in the case of cultural pluralism (type 4).

Social support in the sense of maxim 6 is given by homogeneous cultural groups, e.g. the solidarity shown by members of cultural minorities (type 2).

Multicultural societies demand individual coping strategies in cultural conflict situations in the sense of maxim 5 when members of a specific culture decide in favour of another culture, for example when minority members join the civil service (type 2) or when they marry into another culture (type 4).

Crisis situations in the sense of maxim 4 threaten to appear in multicultural societies when tension develops between individual identity and the requirements of those societies, e.g. the assimilation pressure possibly arising from the melting-pot situation of type 3.

Cultural conflict can be stimulating in adolescence in the sense of maxim 3, when individuals are capable of coping with the inconsistencies of a multicultural society in a positive manner. But it can also be a burden if coping fails, such as in

the case of social pressure that cultural majorities exert on cultural minorities (type 2). The chance of developing an ego identity under the conditions of a multicultural society (as in maxim 2), requires that the assumption contained in maxim 1 is correct—that adolescents are subjects who assimilate reality in a productive way and build their own world—which is an anthropological assumption.

The task and the chance of developing an ego identity under the conditions of a multicultural society depend in part—as noted by Hurrelmann—on a given socio-structural environment. This environment includes the form of organization that has been worked out for the cultures co-existing in this society. On the basis of a re-formulated understanding of the term milieu and its adoption in socio-pedagogical circles (Böhnisch, 1994), I shall make use of this term to specify the importance of multiculturalism for youth policy and socio-pedagogical investigations. What matters for adolescents growing up under the conditions of multicultural societies in Europe is whether and how their milieu is determined by the organization of multicultural co-existence.

Multicultural milieux can have very different shapes and forms. Even now there are milieux that have no multicultural characteristics whatsoever, such as in remote rural areas, for instance Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Germany, traditionally Protestant and with hardly any foreigners living there. Some [milieux] are characterized by the form of organization in which social parity exists, successfully—as in the region of Brussels with its Flemish-Walloon mix—or unsuccessfully—as in Northern Ireland. There are milieux in which cultural majorities set the tune, nevertheless leaving some cultural autonomy to the cultural minorities involved—as in Lapland and Southern Tyrol or, less obviously, in Alsace and the Basque region. In some milieux, the identity of immigrant population groups dissolved almost entirely in the culture of the host country due to melting-pot policies, as in the case of the Poles who moved into the Ruhr area in the 1920s.

There are milieux characterized by cultural pluralism, as in some districts of German cities with a high Turkish population (Kreuzberg) or districts of French cities with a large North African population (St. Denis). There are also milieux, however, and probably they are the most frequent, in which multiculturalism has found no clear expression, but nonetheless it determines the socialization of adolescents. These are milieux with many minorities, milieux with characteristic minorities in certain professions, milieux with changing minorities, etc.

In summary, one can say that the phase of adolescence is characterized in large areas of Europe, with regard both to biography and milieu, by diverse forms of multicultural co-existence.

A European youth policy for multicultural societies?

As previously stated, the Treaty of Maastricht version of the EC-Treaty makes a provision for a youth policy in multicultural societies, but the EU completely ignores the existence of multicultural societies in Europe and considers Member States to be contracting and autonomous nation-states. Thus, all EU programmes in the fields

of education, youth and culture have only indirect consequences for the co-existence of young people in multicultural societies.

When we consider the significance of multiculturalism for adolescents in European societies, the question naturally arises whether, in the framework of EC-Treaty regulations, goal-oriented political thinking with regard to the phase of adolescence in multicultural [milieux] is not, after all, possible and necessary. This is true for two concrete reasons. First, I shall explain several principles of a multicultural youth policy in the EU and then I will give some examples of feasible programmes.

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR A EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

No multicultural EU policy

There can be no European policy for the different kinds of organized social life in multicultural societies as outlined above, because that would exceed the authority of the EU. For instance, the EU cannot call for equal contributions of cultural minorities to policy decisions; nor can it devote itself to the melting-pot theory.

Social change and multiculturalism

The organizational forms of multicultural co-existence change with time, particularly because of conflicts arising between cultures. Cultural minorities are integrated into the cultural majority by means of a melting-pot policy, or they maintain their autonomy, or they develop cultural pluralism to the point of cultural parity. It is not the job of the EU to control this process of change.

Living together in freedom

In the Treaty of Maastricht (Article F), the EU declares its support of democratic principles and of fundamental rights as developed in the shared constitutional traditions of Member States. This means the organizational forms of co-existence among cultures in multicultural societies must be shaped by the principle of freedom, i.e. multicultural societies decide themselves how they want to live together.

Individual self-realization

The political programmes of the EU must not contribute to suppressing individuals, adolescents in particular, in their cultural orientations, neither in the sense of making them identify with the majority, nor in the sense of encouraging them to identify with their origins and original [milieux]. Rather, EU programmes should give adolescents the opportunity to develop their personalities and social environment independently.

Considering non-Member States

The EU must not confine itself to a policy favouring Union citizens, since the multicultural societies in Member States contain non-Union citizens as well. Rather, the difficult forms of co-existence in multicultural societies are often based on European cultures merging with non-European ones.

Multicultural policy seen as a cross-sectional policy

A European youth policy in multicultural societies is not only a 'policy of cultures', but also a policy concerned with the economy, the job market, social issues and education.

SIX AREAS OF ACTIVITY FOR A EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Language

EU policy in support of languages, according to Article 126, para. 2/1, must follow a threefold objective: give adolescents the chance to learn the *lingua franca* of the EU, which is English; give them the chance to learn the native language of their respective Member States; and support them in their own linguistic culture if required.

Cultural activities

The term 'cultural diversity' in Article 128, para. 1 should be interpreted with a view to multicultural milieux. However, EU support measures should not be limited to 'cultivating tradition', but rather take into consideration the fact that multicultural milieux develop their own forms of co-existence in cultural settings. These are determined by multiculturalism itself, particularly by cultural pluralism and by living in the midst of a culturally divergent majority.

Exchange

Youth exchange programmes and the exchange of socio-pedagogical welfare workers, as defined in Article 126, para. 2/5, must not be organized exclusively at the national level, but should take into consideration the cultural milieux existing within these States. Establishing and maintaining special cultural ties (for instance to countries of origin) is of particular significance in this context.

Education

Since cultural minorities are often at a disadvantage socially, a youth policy for multicultural societies must give special support to the education of adolescents accord-

ing to Article 127, para. 2/2, because this is an important prerequisite for furthering the concept of individuality as well as integration in multicultural societies.

Mass communication

The promotion of 'artistic and literary works including the audio-visual domain', in the sense of Article 128, para. 2/4, must also be aimed at supporting the social life of multicultural societies. The phrase 'artistic and literary works' must be given a broad interpretation and should include political information and opinion forming as well as popular culture.

Mobility

The EU must systematically promote the mobility of trainees according to Article 127, para. 2/3, and of employees according to Article 48, within the framework of a general policy guaranteeing freedom of movement (Article 8a) and favouring specific forms of co-existence in multicultural societies. But, on the other hand, the process by which citizens, and adolescents in particular, detach themselves from their multicultural milieux should also be facilitated.

Summary

Even though the EC-Treaty gives the impression of being unaware of multicultural societies, its regulations can still be interpreted in such a way as to facilitate and even literally call for a European policy giving due consideration to the phase of adolescence in multicultural societies.

Note

1. The European Union was founded in Maastricht in February 1992 as an outcome of the European Community, and it has become common to talk of the 'Treaty of Maastricht' (Gazette of the European Community, no. C 191 of 29 July 1992).

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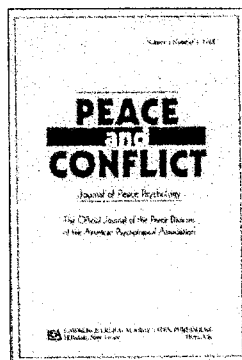
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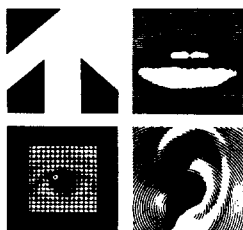
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