Focus on Educational Planning

A Retrospective on Educational Planning in Comparative Education

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A Personal and Biographical Note

Educational planning as a field of practice with a body of literature has been a central component of comparative and international education for over 3 decades. A large portion of educational planning literature is comparative education literature. Conversely, a major share of comparative education literature is either directly about or closely related to educational planning. In the 1960s, many of the strongest North American academic centers for the study of comparative education during this formative period of the field had an explicit focus on educational planning in and for "developing nations" (e.g., the Center for the Study of Education and Development at Harvard, the Center for Development Education at Syracuse, the Comparative Education Center at Chicago, and the Stanford International and Development Education Center). Many of the forms and conceptions of educational planning may be understood as "applied comparative education," as part of what D. N. Wilson has recently referred to as the "melioristic" aspect of the field. Moreover, the *experience* of educational planning (its "successes"—limited, as will be argued below—and particularly its failures) has contributed importantly to the ongoing theoretical debate in comparative education.

As Wilson rightly notes, there has always been a fundamental tension between those who view comparative education primarily as a "scholarly discipline" or a "field of study" and those who regard it mainly as an "applied" or "practical" enterprise.[1] This tension was manifest in the fierce debates in the early to mid-1960s over whether to include the word "international" in the title of what had until then been called the Comparative Education Society. At issue was the *legitimacy* of applied or melioristic work as an aspect of the field of comparative education. Although the word "international" has been part of the society's title for some 3 decades now (but, interestingly, not in the title of this journal), the tension remains.

[1] D. N. Wilson, "Comparative and International Education: Fraternal or Siamese Twins? A Preliminary Geneology of Our Twin Fields," *Comparative Education Review* 38 (November 1994): 449–86.

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Individuals on the "practical" side still frequently complain of the seemingly futile "paradigm wars" on the "scholarly" side. Those on the "scholarly" side often assess planning as atheoretical, saying that planners have insufficient understanding of theory and/or that they follow the "wrong" theory. While this article focuses on the "practical" or "melioristic" aspect, the two "sides" have been in constant interaction, each feeding into the other in complex and often unnoted ways. As R. Paulston notes, "Disciplinary theory and practice continually interact in a process of mutual referral."[2]

I have been a student of and contributor to the literature of educational planning (and the broader literature of comparative education) for most of those 3+ decades. Educational planning for "developing nations" was the central focus of the program at the Center for Development Education at Syracuse University where I did my graduate work between 1963 and 1968. When I came to work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1968, I was hired by the Department of Educational Planning and served as its chairperson from 1973 to 1981. Those were the "glory days" of educational planning. When that department was disbanded in 1981 (as part of an internal "reorganization"), it seemed to symbolize the end of an era. In the previous year, Harvard University's Center for the Study of Education and Development had also been closed (to reappear later as the Harvard Institute for International Development). Many scholars and practitioners believed that educational planning as a field of study and practice was moribund; at the very least, the happy optimism of the 1960s had become much more guarded and cautious. Perhaps we were all learning a sense of intellectual humility that we should have learned much earlier. Don Adams once characterized this mood shift as the move from the "romantic sixties" to the "cynical seventies."[3] During this period I came to understand my own work less as "educational planning" and more as (an equally broad and amorphous field) "educational policy analysis." Then, in the late 1980s I was invited to be section editor for the "educational planning and policy" section of the second edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Education,* published in 1994.[4] This task provided the opportunity, indeed the necessity, to stand back from the particularities of the work and debates I and many others had been engaged in for some 30 years and see the field whole—where it had come from, where it had gotten to, and where it

[2] R. Paulston, ed., *Mapping Ways of Seeing Social and Educational Change* (New York: Garland, 1996), p. xix.

[3] Don Adams, "Development Education," *Comparative Education Review* 21 (June–October 1977): 298–301.

[4] T. Husén and N. Postlethwaite, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Education,* 2d ed. (Oxford: Pergamon, 1994).

seemed to be going. And because I have been a very active player in the field, it was also inevitably an exercise in putting my own professional life and work into context.

This article is a synopsis of the broad view of educational planning that I had to develop. I combine aspects of several pieces I wrote while in the multiyear process of encyclopedia production, each reflecting some aspect(s) of my growing understanding of the "whole."[5] It is an attempt at a *comparative* analysis of one important portion of the field of comparative and international education. There is in the history of our field a recurrent theme of lamenting the scarcity of really *comparative* work in comparative education. A significant part of the explanation for that scarcity is that undertaking such comparative work, particularly on a broad scale, is difficult and risky. This article illustrates some of that difficulty and risk and suffers from the necessary deficiency of any such broad synthesis: many sentences and paragraphs beg to be unpacked, qualified, and nuanced (to be, in currently fashionable parlance, "deconstructed"). But creating these broad syntheses allows us to see things whole—in this case, to trace out the main features of the intellectual history of one of the major strands of comparative and international education scholarship and practice. I offer it not as *the* "truth" about educational planning (in such matters I do not believe there is *one* truth) but rather as *an* interpretation; one person's understanding of that history and that field. Combining "lessons learned" with a view of the fundamental changes we are living through in the nature of the "nation-state" and the international order, I suggest, finally, a new conception of educational planning that focuses less on planning change and more on developing a capacity to innovate and that conceives of planning not as controlling learning but as enabling it. Overall, I argue that what has been learned from the experience of educational planning, together with changes in the nation-state, produces a fundamental theoretical challenge not only to how we understand and practice educational planning but to how we perceive and undertake "scholarly inquiry" in the field of comparative and international

[5] This article combines ideas developed in, and in some cases exact text from, several pieces I have written over the past few years, and it adds new material to develop a broader argument than I have heretofore constructed. See, e.g., "International Lessons for School Effectiveness: The View from the Developing World," in *Educational Policy for Effective Schools,* ed. M. Holmes et al. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1989), 8:53–70, "Planning Education: An Overview," in Husén and Postlethwaite, eds., 8:4499–4510, "Educational Cooperation in the Americas: A Review," in *Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas,* ed. J. Puryear and J. J. Brunner (Washington, D.C.: Organization of American States, 1994), pp. 67–101, "Changing Conceptions of Educational Quality and Educational Planning under Conditions of Globalization" (paper presented at the Second Congress of Mexican Educational Researchers, Mexico City, October 1995), and a series of editorial essays I have written for the journal *Curriculum Inquiry* over the past 7 years. It is, if not a culmination, at least a plateau on a long intellectual journey. It should be read as the current stage of a "work in progress" within a "life in progress."

education—requiring a shift from a traditionally modernist perspective to a generally postmodern, feminist, and narrative understanding of inquiry.

Definitions of Educational Planning

What exactly is educational planning? Part of the difficulty in demarcating the "boundaries" of the field is that there is a notable lack of agreement among scholars and practitioners regarding its definition. There is considerable confusion over who should be called, or call themselves, "educational planners," what such individuals do (or should do) when engaged in educational planning, and what bodies of literature apply to its study. What some authors refer to as "educational planning," others identify as "policy analysis," "policy making," "management," "administration," "research," "decision making," or, more broadly, "politics." One way to sort out some of the definitional confusion is to think in terms of a common view of policy development which identifies in simplified terms the following steps: (1) identification of a social phenomenon as a policy problem; (2) placement of the problem high on political agendas; (3) identification and evaluation of a range of possible "solutions"; (4) selection of one solution (the policy); (5) implementation; and (6) evaluation, feeding back into the cycle wherever appropriate.[6] While oversimplified as a description of how policy development actually occurs in human organizations, this scheme does help highlight the primary definitions of educational planning. Some definitions focus only on step 3; politicians or the "political system" deal with steps 1 and 2; "planners" identify and evaluate alternate "solutions" and present this information to "decision makers" (normally senior bureaucrats and/or politicians) who select one of the alternatives; and people having job titles such as "administrator," "evaluator," or "researcher" engage in steps 5 and 6.[7] Other definitions deal solely with step 5. For example, a policy decision is taken to move to universal primary enrollment in a developing nation over the next decade. The planner's role is then to forecast the number and location of nonenrolled children, estimate numbers of new teachers required and how they should be prepared and paid, identify how many new schools will be needed and where they should be located, develop cost estimates and implementation schedules, and so forth. Still other definitions include

[6] This is the now classic "policy cycle" or "policy wheel" as presented in J. Anderson, D. Brady, and C. Bullock, *Public Policy and Politics in America* (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks Cole, 1978). While a bit outdated, it is still a useful device for identifying and separating, at least conceptually, various broad classes of activity related to policy development.

[7] This view of planning is seen very clearly in the work of George Psacharopolous. See, e.g., G. Psacharopolous, "Comparative Education: From Theory to Practice, or Are You A:\neo.* or B:*.ist?" *Comparative Education Review* 34 (August 1990): 369–80, and "The Planning of Education: Where Do We Stand?" *Comparative Education Review* 30 (November 1986): 560–73.

some or all the other steps within educational planning. If most or all the steps are included in the definition, educational planning overlaps massively with or becomes coterminus with "educational policy analysis" or "educational administration."[8] Moreover, some definitions distinguish between and/or concentrate on levels (e.g., classroom, school, or institution; local, provincial, state, or national system) or foci (e.g., curriculum, enrollment, facilities, teacher force, or finances). Cutting across these distinctions, some observers see planning as wholly or mainly a *technical* exercise, utilizing "hard" quantitative data, complex statistical analyses, research results, and "rational" or "scientific" analysis. Others see it as primarily a *political* exercise, while still others see it as a combination of the two. Beyond such distinctions, some think of planning in terms of what people do who are called "educational planners" or who work in offices or units with "planning" in their title, while others define it with reference to a set of activities that must be carried out by any number of people with varied titles and job descriptions in order for any significant change in education to take place.

Typically couched in technicist or applied language, these disagreements over definitions often reflect fundamental (but frequently implicit) theoretical disagreements regarding the nature of social systems (including education), how and why they change, and the purposes and interests they do and should serve. For example, those who see planning as a technical exercise tend to operate (although the relationships here are rather loose) from a general "consensus" or "equilibrium" model of society, while those who take a political view tend to work from one variety or another of "conflict" theory. While it is not my purpose in this article to provide a grand theoretical synthesis regarding educational planning, or to use the experience of educational planning to argue for some particular traditional theoretical view, or to "build" some new theory (indeed, I elaborate below why I hold that such "purposes" are unattainable), I do give attention wherever salient to the broad theoretical disagreements that run through the history of educational planning. They are an important part of the story, but they are not *all* of the story. From the literature and lore of educational planning over the past several years, it has become clear that the connections between individuals' espoused theoretical stances and their understandings of planning or their judgments about appropriate "solutions" to particular educational "problems" are very often extremely loose—frequently undetectable. Thus, I use this

[8] W. L. Boyd, "Policy Analysis, Education Policy, and Management: Through a Glass Darkly," in *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, ed. N. Boyer (New York: Longman, 1988); and D. S. Anderson and B. J. Biddle, *Knowledge for Policy: Improving Education through Research* (London: Falmer, 1991).

article simply to get the historical narrative straight. In this regard I am influenced by Arthur Stinchcombe's observation that "the poverty of theory [especially with reference to what Jean Anyon calls "usefulness" of theory in meliorating inequalities—as opposed to simple intellectual elegance][9] comes . . . from not paying attention to the narrative detail. . . . People do much better theory when interpreting the historical sequences than they do when they set out to do theory. . . . Social theory without attention to detail is wind."[10] This article should thus be read as falling within the rapidly emerging field of narrative inquiry and theory[11] and as being much influenced by several major strands of postmodern thought, particularly postmodern feminist thought.

History of Educational Planning

In at least some senses, educational systems and institutions have always been planned. Someone determined what was to be taught (and often what could not be taught) to whom, how, where, when, by whom, to what purpose, and at whose cost. (That set of questions fairly well encompasses my own personal—and broad—"definition" of educational planning.) Governments, of whatever sort, have almost always attempted to exert control over such issues, through some combination of prescription, proscription, and enablement. For example, in China, for millennia the examination system for civil service positions was a powerful instrument of educational planning.[12] In Europe, throughout the Middle Ages the Church took a considerable interest in such educational planning questions. With the rise of the modern nation-state in post-Renaissance Europe, educational planning slowly became more systematic and encompassing as consciousness of the political value of developing a "national" system of education to serve the interests of the state began to emerge. In Napoleonic France the university became, in essence, a national educational planning institution. In Prussia, following the Napoleonic invasion,

[9] J. Anyon, "The Retreat of Marxism and Socialist Feminism: Postmodern and Poststructural Theories in Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 24 (Summer 1994): 115–33.

[10] A. Stinchcombe, *Theoretical Methods in Social History* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), p. 184.

[11] See, e.g., F. M. Connelly and D. J. Clandenin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," *Educational Researcher* 19 (May 1990): 2–14; P. Spence, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth* (New York: Norton, 1984); S. Gudmundsdottir, "The Teller, the Tale, and the One Being Told: The Narrative Nature of the Research Interview," *Curriculum Inquiry* 26 (Fall 1996): 293–306; and M. Van Manen, "Pedagogy, Virtue and Narrative Identity in Teaching," *Curriculum Inquiry* 24 (Summer 1994): 135–70.

[12] National examination systems, if their results have any "bite" at all in the lives of students and teachers, have always had this planning effect, whether explicitly intended or not. See L. D. McLean, "Examinations and Cultural Diversity," in *Education for Cultural Diversity: Convergence and Divergence,* ed. J. Lynch et al. (London: Falmer, 1992), pp. 427–42; and M. A. Eckstein and H. J. Noah, *Secondary School Examinations: International Perspectives on Policies and Practices* (New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1993).

the idea of a universal and compulsory schooling system as an instrument of state development was conceived, and bureaucratic apparatuses for its planning and implementation were established.[13] In the Province of Ontario in what was the mid-1800s the new nation of Canada, Egerton Ryerson developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for the development of a public education system.[14]

Only since World War II has it become common for nations to have educational "plans" and planning units in ministries of education staffed by people labeled "planners." The status and function of educational planning has developed somewhat differently across different sets of nations.

Socialist Nations

Formally identified educational planning in the modern sense first came to prominence in the state socialist societies. In the Soviet Union the drive after the October (1917) Revolution to eradicate illiteracy and achieve universal primary education led to the development of elaborate educational planning mechanisms. The desire for close ideological supervision meant complex curriculum planning and control measures. A planned economy both permitted and required an educational system adequate to fulfill the economy's projected needs for various kinds and levels of skilled labor. After World War II the principles and methods of educational planning developed in the Soviet Union were transferred to new socialist states in Central Europe and other parts of the world. These educational planning systems were highly centralized, command oriented, and with much attention devoted to close ideological control of the curriculum. They placed major emphasis on integrating educational development with planned economic development, integrating in-school and out-of-school education, and integrating childhood and adult education.

As seen in retrospect, these early educational planning systems were a somewhat curious blend of what came to be called "manpower planning"[15]—and an orthodox Marxist-Leninist understanding of the state and the individual's relation to it.[16] However, by the late 1980s, as the strains and contradictions within these state formations became apparent,

[13] I. N. Thut and D. K. Adams, *Educational Patterns in Contemporary Societies* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1964).

[14] J. D. Wilson, "The Ryerson Years in Canada West," in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. D. Wilson et al. (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1970), pp. 214–40.

[15] "*Man*power" planning is, for obvious reasons, no longer considered an appropriate term. I consistently use that antiquated label in this article because that is how the model and practice is generally referred to in the literature.

[16] Carnoy provides an instructive, if brief, analysis of the difficulties this seemingly odd combination produced for the former Soviet Union and Eastern European nations. M. Carnoy, "Education and the State: From Adam Smith to Perestroika," in *Emergent Issues in Education: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. R. Arnove et al. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), esp. pp. 156–57.

looser and more decentralized forms of educational planning began to emerge in many state socialist nations. Several Eastern European socialist states developed plans for devolving educational planning to local levels of authority. In the early 1990s, the People's Republic of China shifted a great deal of power and control over education from central planners to local authorities. Indeed, just before its dissolution the Soviet Union introduced an educational plan that would have created the most radically decentralized and locally differentiated educational system in the world.[17]

Capitalist Nations

In the industrialized market-economy capitalist nations there was (and is) considerable skepticism regarding educational planning, as the idea of planning is often seen to run counter to the basic precepts of the prevailing neoclassical economic theory and the structural-functional understanding of society of which it is a part. However, since *all* states, including capitalist ones, have a considerable interest in regulating and controlling education, there is empirically no such thing as a truly free market in education. Thus, even in those capitalist states where political actors rarely if ever publicly mention the words "plan" or "planning," there is still a great deal of educational planning that actually occurs.

Generally speaking, educational planning in industrialized capitalist states, as compared to socialist states, tends to be indicative rather than directive, to be more decentralized with much looser curriculum control, and to rely more on incentives than on command structures. Nonetheless, in many rich capitalist nations, formally identified educational "plans" or planning agencies emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. These were a response (in Europe) to the need for postwar economic reconstruction and, more generally, to the postwar demographic "boom," rapidly rising expectations regarding social and economic mobility, a sense of economic as well as military competition with the "socialist bloc," and the development of human capital theory, which saw education as an investment in national economic growth. For example, France established the Commission des Equipements Scolaires, Universitaires et Sportifs. The Federal Republic of Germany founded a comprehensive federal plan for education. The United States, in direct response to the "sputnik crisis," implemented the National Defense Education Act. The Province of Ontario, Canada, utilized the Robarts Plan for reorganization of its educational system. On a regional level the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched the Mediterranean Regional Project, a massive effort at manpower planning. By the latter part of the twentieth

[17] S. Heyneman, *Use of Educational Vouchers in the Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1991). See also W. Mitter, M. Weiss, and V. Schaefer, eds., *Recent Trends in Eastern European Education* (Frankfurt: German Institute for International Education Research, 1992).

century, many observers were claiming that even well-funded and carefully designed educational "plans" have produced no more than limited, and sometimes counterproductive, results. Parallel to this increasing skepticism about educational planning, and partly as a response to it, planning in developed capitalist states has been steadily shifting from emphasis on quantitative to qualitative factors and from technocratic to more participatory approaches in which the interests of a wide array of stakeholder groups are incorporated.[18]

Developing Nations

Among developing nations, especially those that achieved their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, formal centralized educational planning has played a visible role. In fact it is with reference to such nations that educational planning as a field of activity truly gained prominence. This pattern was stimulated and promoted by influential international organizations. For example, Unesco organized a series of meetings in 1960–62 where regional plans were developed for Asia, the Arab states, Africa, and Latin America—providing quantitative targets for educational expansion as a framework for the development of national educational plans. In 1964, the Unesco-associated International Institute for Educational Planning was established as a source of expertise and training, especially for developing nations. Major donor agencies, especially the World Bank starting in the 1970s, promoted educational planning as a condition for external assistance.[19]

However, many developing nations themselves enthusiastically embraced educational planning (and planning generally). Typically it was seen as one of the essential instruments of independent statecraft, and here the apparent success of planning in the nations of the "socialist bloc" had a powerful modeling effect with reference to both planning practice and its underlying social theory. Moreover, it was widely believed that educational planning was the only way to wisely allocate extremely scarce resources in the face of enormous needs. National educational planning agencies, commissions, departments, and educational "plans" proliferated. However, by the mid-1970s, and especially in the 1980s, it had become clear that in most cases the planning activity had not produced the anticipated results. While significant quantitative expansion had been achieved in many educational systems, large numbers of children were still without schooling, and many more received only minimal exposure

[18] I. Fagerlind and B. Sjosted, *Review and Prospects of Educational Planning and Management in Europe* (Paris: Unesco/International Congress on Planning and Management of Educational Development, 1990).

[19] K. King, *Aid and Education in the Developing World* (Harlow: Longman, 1991); and P. W. Jones, *World Bank Financing of Education: Lending, Learning, and Development* (London: Routledge, 1992).

to education. The absolute number of illiterate adults was increasing due to population growth in excess of educational expansion, education and its presumed benefits continued to be very unequally distributed, and the quality of the education provided was low and appeared to be declining. All of this was exacerbated by the severe financial crisis in most developing nations, beginning in many cases with the "oil shock" of the 1970s and becoming acute with the widespread "debt crisis" of the 1980s.

A variety of theoretical explanations, and attendant practical solutions, for this widespread failure of educational planning and policy were advanced, and fierce debates among both scholars and practitioners ensued. Conceptual confusion and uncertainty regarding appropriate planning and policy characterize this period.[20] The sudden and virtually total collapse of the Central and Eastern European socialist states added to the confusion, removing one of the main national and educational planning models for developing nations and empirically undermining the entire corpus of Marxist-inspired theory regarding educational planning and policy. While many uncertainties are still present, general patterns in educational planning in developing nations have begun to emerge. More emphasis is being placed on the quality of education rather than simply on quantitative expansion,[21] and on participatory and decentralized planning.[22] There is more focus on incentives, market forces, privatization of educational delivery, and out-of-school and nonformal education. More attention is being devoted to work-related training (in and out of school) and on the participation of nongovernmental organizations in both the planning and delivery of educational services. More emphasis is being placed on adult education as a central concern of the state. Theoretical positions regarding the state and its relation to individuals and civil society are becoming more subtle and complex with reference to educational policy and planning. These trends exist clearly in the documents and debates of the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand in 1990.[23] This conference, sponsored by Unesco, the World Bank, the

[20] J. P. Farrell, "Conceptualizing Education and the Drive for Social Equality," in Arnove et al., eds., pp. 107–22.

[21] See, e.g., B. Fuller, *Raising School Quality in Developing Countries: What Investments Boost Learning?* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1986); M. Lockheed and A. Verspoor, *Improving Primary Education in Developing Nations: A Review of Policy Options* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1990); and K. N. Ross and L. Mahlick, *Planning the Quality of Education* (Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning [IIEP], 1990).

[22] S. Shaeffer, *A Framework for Collaborating for Educational Change* (Paris: IIEP, 1991); F. Cepeda V., "Educación y participación," *Formas y reformas de la educación* 1 (Trimestre 3, 1996): 13–14; See also papers presented at the *Seminario internacional: Ventajas y riesgos de la decentralización en las reformas educativas* (International seminar: Advantages and risks of decentralization in educational reforms), Managua, July 1996.

[23] "What Really Happened at the World Conference in Jomtien?" *NORRAG News*, no. 8 (June 1990), pp. 3–53.

United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as well as many bilateral overseas assistance agencies, brought together hundreds of representatives of governments, agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to assess the state of education throughout the world and to suggest new directions and rough "targets" for further development. This conference may be seen as closing the cycle that began with the Unesco-sponsored regional meetings almost 3 decades earlier and, one hopes, as starting a new cycle of more effective planning of education as a fundamental aspect of national development.

Approaches to Educational Planning

As educational planning has developed in various parts of the world, a bewildering array of "approaches to," "understandings of," and "theories of" educational planning has also developed. Debates between proponents of differing views have been complex and often heated, addressing questions of practice and issues of underlying theory. Some observers claim that educational planning is a practice without a theory; others that it is a practice with an implicit and unexamined theory; others that it is a practice with *bad* theory; still others that it is a practice with (too) many theories. The debates have most often focused on attempts to explain why educational planning—and, indeed, *all* planning methods and practice—has failed to meet the high expectations set in the 1960s. As F. Caillods notes, "educational planning no longer occupies the central position it held in the sixties."[24]

But ultimately, debates regarding educational planning are disagreements about the nature of the "good society," how and why human social systems change, and how modifications of policy and practice in the present may influence the future—as reflected in specific questions about how states and civil society can best provide organized opportunities for their citizens to learn what is needed to move the social system from "here" to some desired future. The debates are both profound, involving some of the most fundamental theoretical questions humans have ever asked of themselves, and intensely practical because the basic questions addressed by educational planning (what will be taught to whom, how, where, when, by whom, to what purpose, and at whose cost) cannot be avoided by those responsible for organizing learning systems, large or small, private or public. Decisions, practical and profound, have to be made routinely (e.g., the ministry's budget must be presented to and approved by the legislature at a preset date each year), using whatever information and wisdom are available. The themes and issues of the debate

[24] F. Caillods, ed., *The Prospects for Educational Planning* (Paris: IIEP, 1989), p. 28 (emphasis mine).

interact and overlap such that no scheme (simple or complex) can include all the interactions and put each "position" in an identified "place" in relation to other positions on all issues.[25]

What I now present is not some grand categorical system but rather an outline of some of the main themes of debate and the positions involved in each. The categories of analysis I trace here are not those typically used in classifications of theoretical positions. The discourse of planning tends to fall into a set of analytical categories different from those of the disciplinary theoretical literature. This observation is not meant as a criticism of either intellectual approach; it does, however, denote a possible cause and/or consequence of the difficulty of communication between the two different "sides" of the field of comparative and international education. I choose here to use categories that are faithful to the way the basic arguments have actually worked out in the educational planning literature.

Technical versus Political Planning

As noted earlier, planning is often conceived to be mainly or exclusively a *technical* exercise, where general objectives for education are set through political processes outside the educational system. Planners then use a set of rigorous analytical and forecasting methods to determine the most efficient means of meeting those goals, or they present to decision makers a set of carefully evaluated alternatives. Although technically complex, this kind of planning is relatively straightforward and is routinely used within educational systems, as enrollments and teacher demand are projected, decisions are made about constructing or modifying facilities, and new curricular areas or "streams" are introduced. In other cases, such technical planning involves synthesizing and organizing existing research to estimate the probable effect of different policies or mixes of policies. Typically the objective is to "make a plan" and present a set of policies with specified objectives and means to reach them, often including detailed implementation measures. Technical planning assumes that the necessary information, both statistical data and research results, exists and can be acquired by the planner, with defined and fixed objectives, known alterna-

[25] This is not for want of trying. Rolland Paulston and colleagues, e.g., have been working for many years to develop a conceptual "map" of these debates. See Paulston, ed. (n. 2 above). I find this body of work helpful in clarifying my own understanding of the often subtle connections and distinctions between various schools (and subschools, and subsubschools) of thought, but (following the cartographic metaphor) the very details of such "maps" can lead us to lose sight of the major terrain features that structure and give meaning to the topographic details. My approach here is closer to Joseph Schwab's search for "commonplaces" in sorting out theoretical debates about curriculum and teaching. See F. M. Connelly and D. J. Clandenin, *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education [OISE] Press; New York: Teachers College Press, 1988); and J. S. Bell, "Finding the Commonplaces of Literacy," *Curriculum Inquiry* 23 (Spring 1993): 131–53.

tive policies, and an environment that is, and will remain, basically stable. Adherents argue that when these conditions are met this approach to planning can be quite successful.

However, it is increasingly put forth that such conditions are seldom met, with statistical data often missing or of doubtful accuracy, featuring vague, shifting, and frequently contradictory objectives, and in an environment that is rarely stable and seldom changes in predictable ways.[26] Moreover, a survey of educational planning in Europe through the late 1980s demonstrates that few policy decisions were based directly on research.[27] Many now suggest that, while planning necessarily involves a variety of technical analyses, it is inherently and intensely *political* because it attempts to shape the future. The setting of objectives and the identification and evaluation of alternatives are political contests among groups with conflicting interests and varying degrees of power, whether defined in terms of class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, geographical location, or whatever other important social group differences may exist in a given society.[28] Disputes about the future of education involve what large numbers of people care very deeply about: the future of their children, grandchildren, other young kin, or young people more generally, and the kind of society in which these children will live their lives. This view of planning thus reflects a basically "conflict" understanding of social systems.[29]

Successful educational planners, therefore, must be highly skilled political and technical operatives, and planning processes must bring in and take account of the varying stakeholder groups. This style of planning is often called "participatory," "transactive," or "interactive." A major variant in education has been labeled *strategic planning* and has been used in several states and large cities in the United States. Systematically involving all interested and potentially affected groups, it seeks collectively to construct policy options rather than to identify and evaluate them and strives for consensus rather than accurate prediction of outcomes. The model is not "rational" analysis, prediction, and control, but political decision making.[30] The debate is further complicated by disparate constructions of the words "politics" and "political." For example, some writers see

[26] N. McGinn and S. Street, "Educational Decentralization: Weak State or Strong State?" *Comparative Education Review* 30 (November 1986): 471–90; and N. McGinn, "Politics of Educational Planning," in Husén and Postlethwaite, eds. (n. 4 above), 8:4595–4602.

[27] Fagerlind and Sjosted.

[28] J. P. Farrell, *The National Unified School in Allende's Chile: The Role of Education in the Destruction of a Revolution* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); E. Schiefelbein, "The Politics of Educational Planning: The Chilean Case," *Educational Planning* 1 (August 1975): 212–30; and McGinn and Street.

[29] J. P. Farrell, "The Political Meaning of Educational Change in Allende's Chile," *Curriculum Inquiry* 20 (Fall 1990): 95–112.

[30] J. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Non-profit Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988).

"political" planning as involving the management of actual or potential conflict between groups (sometimes defined "essentialistically"—e.g., poor or rich, rural or urban, female or male, black or white, etc., all members of each category assumed to share some common "essential" identity—and other times as looser agglomerations of particularistic interests) with very different, if not irreconcilable, interests in education.[31] Others see it as a hermeneutical search for or construction of shared meanings and consensual views of educational issues.

"Top-Down" versus "Bottom-Up" Planning

The central issue regarding technical and political planning systems is the degree to which planning incorporates the interests of political groups and actors who have a stake in educational policy. The key concerns here are the degree to which lower-level actors within the educational system (e.g., school directors, teachers, students) are incorporated into the problem formulation and policy development process and the degree of flexibility they are authorized to exercise in implementing the decisions of planners/policy makers. That is, the issue here is power *within* the system rather than power *on* the system. The two issues often overlap empirically, but they are distinct. It is plausible to have a political planning system, at a nationally centralized location, that does not take into account the views of teachers.[32] It is also possible to have a decentralized system in which each local unit is politically sensitive to its environment but in which all local units operate in a very "top-down" fashion, ignoring teachers and students and working internally in a rigid "command" mode.[33]

Ultimately the question is whether educational planning is the business of a set of bureaucratic, political, and interest group elites—national or local—who fight, and hopefully work out accommodations, among themselves and then command the lower-level operatives or whether it is open to influence by those who are responsible for and affected by the results of the "plan": local teachers, parents, and students. Empirically, top-down, centrally driven, and command-oriented approaches rarely work well, and where they may be made to work well in the short-term it is usually by manipulating teachers and lower-level administrators into behaving in accord with the views of political or bureaucratic "experts" at more senior levels. When such approaches are forced to work, they tend to create resentments and resistances within the system that make future planned changes even more difficult.

[31] J. P. Farrell, "Narratives of Identity: The Voices of Youth," *Curriculum Inquiry* 26 (Fall 1996): 1–12.

[32] This was a criticism of the otherwise highly successful educational planning system in Chile in the late 1960s. See Farrell, *The National Unified School in Allende's Chile*.

[33] This was the case in Ontario, Canada, in the early 1970s. See J. P. Farrell and W. Alexander, *The Individualized System: Student Participation in Decision Making* (Toronto: OSIE Press, 1975).

Which Underlying Economic Model or Theory?

Educational planning "was early on 'captured' by economists and has been defined largely in, or in reaction to, their terms."[34] The most fundamental disagreements regarding how to understand and practice educational planning relate to differences in the basic economic model or theory. These economic theories (whether appealed to implicitly or explicitly) are reflections in the professional field of economics of more universal debates about how to understand why and how human collectivities maintain themselves or change. They are, that is, applications to the special field of economics of fundamental theoretical debates that range across all social and behavioral sciences. Much of this deep theoretical debate has been masked, particularly in the United States, by a typically technicist language that appears to talk only of planning techniques and planning models. I turn now to briefly describing the most widely used educational planning models and sketching the underlying theoretical debate.

The first model to come to prominence in the post–World War II era was the *manpower requirements* or *manpower planning* approach. This approach starts with estimates of projected "needs" in the economy for personnel with varying levels of formal education and specific sets of technical or professional skills and knowledge and then tries to use these to regulate and adjust the provision of appropriate levels and kinds of education to maximize the fit between the output of the educational system and the requirements of the economy. The techniques used are computationally complex but conceptually simple.[35] This model became popular very quickly, particularly because of the then apparent "success" of the Soviet Union's use of this approach. A study conducted by Unesco in 1968 reveals that of 91 nations surveyed, 73 had educational plans, and 60 based those plans on manpower forecasts.[36] However, the manpower model was strongly criticized almost from its inception. Critics claimed that the model was based on unrealistic assumptions about the real world, suggesting, for example, that it was inherently impossible to make predictions over the long time lines required by educational planning about the patterns of development of an economy and the particular labor needs that would be generated (at least in market economies). Detractors also argued that this model totally ignored the cost of educating that labor. As early as 1970, M. Blaug labeled the underlying theory "farfetched" and called the model a "modern form of crystal ball gazing."[37]

[34] J. P. Farrell, "A Reaction to the Macro Planning of Education: Why It Fails, Why It Survives, and the Alternatives," *Comparative Education Review* 19 (May 1975): 202–9, quote 202.

[35] K. Hinchcliffe, "Forecasting Manpower Requirements," in *Economics of Education: Research and Studies,* ed. G. Psacharopolous (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987).

[36] M. Blaug, *An Introduction to the Economics of Education* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970).

[37] Ibid., p. 46. See also D. Windham, "The Macro Planning of Education: Why It Fails, Why It Survives, and the Alternatives," *Comparative Education Review* 19 (May 1975): 185–201.

Some suggested that, given the quality of data available even in "advanced" societies and the complexity of all large economies, it was quite impossible (even in *planned* economies) to produce manpower requirement forecasts adequate for planning an educational system, and, consequently, such forecasts as had been widely produced were inaccurate and useless.[38] Others noted that, because of these problems, while many manpower-requirement-driven educational plans were designed, they were rarely implemented. Decision makers responded to the political demands of the citizens rather than to the usually unreliable calculations of the planners.[39]

As a consequence of these criticisms and arguments, the manpower requirements approach has steadily declined in popularity. However, it is still used, often successfully, for planning specific programs related to defined and carefully bounded subeconomies. For example, provision of places in specific professional educational programs (such as for doctors, teachers, or underwater welders) is often regulated in accord with projections of requirements for new entrants to the profession. In some cases institutions that provide short-term technical training have worked successfully with councils of local employers to adjust their training programs to probable real employment demands within their geographical catchment area. But as a model for planning large-scale educational systems, the manpower requirements approach has very nearly disappeared from the scene. However, arguments for using it judiciously, in combination with other approaches and subject to political judgment, appeared in the late 1980s.[40]

Planning and policy making based on responses to political demands are often called the *social demand* model. It is, of course, commonplace to note that political systems tend to respond to the expressed needs and desires of their citizens, through whatever formal or informal channels they are expressed. Some variants of a social demand approach focus on policy as a response to the political claims of already powerful classes or interest groups (e.g., expanding university places beyond what economic analysis would suggest because existing or aspiring elites demand such places for their children). Others see "demand" originating from broadly based nonelite groups (e.g., moving as rapidly as possible toward universal primary education as a response to a broad demand from the poor for at least minimal education for their children). In other versions, the "social

[38] A. Anderson and M. J. Bowman, eds., *Education and Economic Development* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

[39] P. Foster, "The Educational Policies of Post-colonial States," in *Education and Development: Issues in the Analysis and Planning of Post-colonial Societies*, ed. L. Anderson and D. Windham (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982).

[40] A. Mingat and J. Tan, *Analytical Tools for Sector Work in Education* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank/Johns Hopkins Press, 1988).

demand" refers to educational goals that are not narrowly economic (meeting the equality claims of specific marginalized groups, e.g., or providing citizenship education to promote loyalty to the nation). A view that gained prominence in the 1980s is that the "demand" comes from the government itself. In order to legitimate themselves, governments have to do, or at least be perceived as doing, something about educational policy demands of citizens. What is important is the *perception* that there is a policy response rather than the implementation or effectiveness of the policy.[41] Some economists consider the social demand model to be outside of economics altogether, in that it includes and responds to goals that are political rather than economic. The counter-argument is that it reflects a narrowly technocratic understanding of economics, that once political or social demands are discerned, cost-effectiveness analysis is often used (or should be used) to determine the most efficient way of meeting those demands.[42]

For many who have criticized the manpower approach and social demand model, the preferred alternative is *cost-benefit analysis*, in which the costs and benefits of alternate policies are evaluated to determine which public policy will be most efficient. This is a rather straightforward application to public policy planning of conventional neoclassical economic theory. Educational expenditures are treated as investments that yield both private and social rates of return. These are normally calculated by projecting and comparing the expected lifetime earnings of individuals with differing levels and types of education and relating these to the private and public costs of that education. In cases where earnings are not the most appropriate, or not the only, indicator of policy outcomes (e.g., if the policy goal is to increase educational achievement levels or to provide more equitable access for marginalized groups), *cost-effectiveness analysis* is recommended, to determine which policy or set of policies will most efficiently meet the nonearnings objectives.[43]

The kinds of analyses required by cost-benefit analysis are typically complex long-term research projects. A particular government does not often undertake such projects to undergird specific educational planning processes (especially in poor nations). But many such analyses have been carried out, especially by researchers in universities, private and government research agencies, and international organizations, and, over time,

[41] H. Weiler, "The Politics of Reform and Non-reform in French Education," *Comparative Education Review* 32 (August 1988): 251–65.

[42] Mingat and Tan.

[43] G. Psacharopolous and K. Hinchcliffe, "From Planning Techniques to Planning Process," in *Manpower Issues in Educational Investment: A Consideration of Planning Process and Techniques*, ed. G. Psacharopolous (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1983). See also H. Levin, *Cost Effectiveness: A Primer* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1983).

the *indirect effect* has been substantial. As the analytic results have cumulated, and particularly when summarized in "state-of-the-art" papers, they have changed the "conventional wisdom" or "climate of opinion" and thus influenced the views of planners in many nations and officials of influential international agencies regarding feasible and appropriate policies. State-of-the-art summaries that suggest that social rates of return are higher for primary than for university education have, for example, led the World Bank to suggest that developing nations should invest more heavily in primary education even if this requires reducing expenditures on university education.[44] Other state-of-the-art papers have led to widespread suggestions that increasing textbook provision and altering teacher training are highly efficient policies for improving school quality.[45] A variety of technical critiques of the several forms of cost-benefit analysis have been published, maintaining, for example, that calculating rates of return based on lifetime earnings involves many unrealistic assumptions or that regression analyses used in research studies that underlie cost-effectiveness analysis are highly unstable and misleading. Critics also claim that reliance on state-of-the-art summaries encourages national-level planners and, particularly, officials of powerful international agencies to overgeneralize, to produce and attempt to implement "one size fits all" policy prescriptions that do not take into account variations in local conditions.[46]

However, the strongest critiques have focused on the neoclassical economic theory on which all of the variants of cost-benefit analysis depend, representing ultimately a rejection of the equilibrium or consensus understanding of social cohesion and change, of which neoclassical economic theory is a particular application. With reference to planned change in education, M. Ginsburg outlines this paradigm as follows: "Within the equilibrium paradigm change in education tends to be portrayed as natural movements toward ever-higher stages of societal development or adaptations required by system imbalances or societal needs. In equilibrium approaches it is assumed that society is fundamentally consensual and operates based on homeostatic principles."[47] Advocates argue there

[44] World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1988), *Priorities and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Sector Review* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1995).

[45] Fuller, *Raising School Quality in Developing Countries* (n. 21 above); and J. P. Farrell and J. Oliveira, eds., *Teachers in Developing Countries: Improving Effectiveness and Managing Costs* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Economic Development Institute Seminar Series, 1993).

[46] S. Klees, "The Economics of Education: A More than Slightly Jaundiced View of Where We Are Now," in Caillods (n. 24 above); J. P. Farrell, "Educational Cooperation" (n. 5 above); J. Samoff, "Limiting Horizons: The World Bank's Priorities and Strategies for Education" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Williamsburg, Va., 1996).

[47] M. Ginsburg, ed., *Understanding Educational Reform in Global Context* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), p. 8.

is a general and knowable agreement within a society regarding the goals of educational policy, or (in the political model of planning) that whatever disagreements exist may be worked out through skilled use by planners of conflict-resolution techniques. The job of planning is to use economics-based analytical techniques to identify the most efficient means of reaching the consensually agreed or negotiated goals. Moreover, planning operates within a relatively restricted realm, focusing on those areas where the choices of individuals of relatively equal power operating in a free market do not produce optimal social results because of market imperfections.

An emerging *political economy* model of educational planning rejects all, or almost all, these assumptions.[48] Adherents of this view claim that societies are held together not by negotiation or consensus but by the explicit or implicit use of force by those groups that currently hold power and that conflict among socioeconomic classes, males and females, ethnic or racial groups, and other social divisions is endemic and built into social structures, including educational systems. Therefore, educational systems necessarily reproduce such structural inequalities or, in a newer version, *both* reproduce such inequalities and produce the seeds of change.[49] Educational planning is criticized as a set of technocratic exercises that mask the fact that planned (or unplanned) educational change is an exercise in the maintenance of power and control by the already privileged.[50] Although this model is based on a powerful theoretical critique of previous understandings of planning, and of social change generally (with which I basically agree), it remains unclear what it implies for the practice of educational planning. P. Easton and S. Klees, two leading proponents of the political economy model, have described the problem this way:

> In our view, there are no clear alternative perspectives that offer the same universal applicability as that (falsely) promised by neoclassical economists. Radical political economy, the most fully developed alternative, provides considerable insight in its analysis of the correspondences and contradictions in the relations of education to the broader economy and within the educational system itself, but even in the eyes of its proponents, it furnishes little basis for agreement about educational practice and policy reform, especially in capitalist societies. To a neoclassical economist these radical and institutional approaches are vague and subjective. However, the only reason for the endless profusion of precise neoclassical recommendations is the erroneous belief that neoclassical economists

[48] It would probably be better to label this model "radical" political economy, or "new," or "oppositional" political economy, but that sort of labeling would likely have little resonance within the intellectual tradition that has grown in the United States. There the field of economics has generally lost its *political economy* bite and has become very technicist. In Canada, the European political economy tradition (of either the conservative or radical sort) remains vital.

[49] M. Carnoy and H. Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985).

[50] P. Easton and S. Klees, "Conceptualizing the Role of Education in the Economy," in Arnove, et al., eds. (n. 16 above), pp. 123–42.

> have a technical, efficiency criterion enabling them to choose among alternatives. . . . If there is in fact no overriding technical criterion . . . as implied by a conflict view of the world, then a belief in democratic values necessarily leads one to envisage a messy, participative, negotiation-oriented and collective process.[51]

But this "messy, participative, negotiation-oriented and collective process" appears to fit better within a framework where social conflicts are negotiable rather than structural and fundamental. How does one negotiate educational policy among groups whose understandings and interests are irreconcilable? It seems most likely that the influence of this model and its underlying theoretical view will be strong but indirect and long-term, shifting the worldview and conventional wisdom of educational planners and those who train them. Yet even this possibility is currently clouded by the effect of the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and its associated states and the attendant widespread delegitimation of the essentially neo-Marxist theoretical framework underlying the political economy model (at least in the U.S. version, where the term "political economy" generally has a far different connotation than in much of the rest of the world) and the associated triumphalism of the more extreme forms of neoclassical economic theory.

Planning for Major Change versus Planning for System Maintenance

Educational planning as a field of practice and study grew to prominence when large-scale changes in education were widely seen as necessary. Planning has been associated with the creation of new educational systems and massive expansion of or major changes in existing systems. Because of this historical association, one finds in many discussions and debates an implicit assumption that planning is for or about large-scale educational change. This presumption masks the fact that in practice much educational planning is directed at the routine maintenance of relatively stable educational systems or the introduction of small changes designed (required) to adapt the system to minor fluctuations in the demands placed on it. As noted above, some critics of traditional planning models and approaches claim that this is all that planning really does even when it appears to be directed toward major change. Whatever one's view, it is still empirically the case that educational systems are not always faced with significant political demands for change, and they do remain relatively stable (often because of political demand that they do not change) for long periods of time. Historically, there is a tendency for periods of major change(s) in educational systems to be followed by relatively long periods of stability. But even in such stable eras, various forms of planning still need to be done. Population growth and other demo-

[51] Ibid., p. 138.

graphic shifts require routine enrollment and teacher demand forecasts and planning for new or modified facilities. Undramatic and routine changes in the economy produce new occupational skill demands that necessitate planning new educational programs. Routine evaluation systems produce evidence that programs and practices long thought to work well are becoming problematic, requiring the planning of new programs and policies. The general goals remain the same, but new and slightly modified means to reach them must be planned. These sorts of changes often seem dramatic and large to those working in the midst of them; nonetheless, they are in a broader view part of relatively routine system maintenance, difficult as that may be for the self-understandings of those who are heavily involved in these "local" fights. This is one of the hardest and least popular lessons from comparative studies of educational change.

However, planning approaches, and the technical, administrative, and political skills of planners, which work well in planning for routine maintenance of relatively stable systems, are often distinct from, if not counterproductive to, planning for major change. Put another way, those who have been most successful at planning for continuity and stability, and who have been "appropriately" rewarded and may therefore occupy senior bureaucratic/political positions, are often least likely to be successful planners of major change. This has implications for choosing a planning team when a major change effort is contemplated and for providing opportunities for planners to unlearn old habits and learn new skills. In some cases the only way to effectively plan major change after a period of relative stability is to establish a wholly new operational entity outside the normal educational bureaucracy or to redefine the role of an existing entity that functions outside normal bureaucratic channels and reward systems.[52]

What Has Been Learned from Several Decades of Planned Educational Reform?

Although much educational planning occurs in a context of relative stability and system maintenance, the widespread criticism and loss of confidence in planning has focused on perceived failures in planning for major educational reform. Indeed, the most powerful criticism of educational planning may be that it (in some versions of the critique, necessarily)[53] does a much better job of planning for stability than for change. Therefore it is appropriate to address what has been learned

[52] N. McGinn, E. Schiefelbein, and D. Warwick, "Educational Planning as Political Process: Two Case Studies from Latin America," *Comparative Education Review* 23 (August 1979): 218–39.

[53] Lynn Davies makes a particularly strong case for this view, quoting William Hazlett: "It is essential to the triumph of reform that it should never succeed." See L. Davies, "The Management and Mismanagement of School Effectiveness," in *The State and the School: An International Perspective*, ed. J. Turner (London: Falmer, 1996), p. 91.

about planning for major educational change. Much experience has accumulated with attempts in nation-states to design and implement large-scale, long-term programs of educational change. Several major works have summarized certain aspects of the knowledge acquired from that experience and, in some cases, provided theoretical interpretations of it. But much of the available information is still in the form of "lore"—the experienced-based wisdom of those who have attempted to plan major educational reforms. The following observations are based both on such published distillations and the "lore" of the field. Both are valid forms of knowledge. Moreover, we often need to remind ourselves that one can learn as much (perhaps more) from failure as from success.[54]

One general lesson is that planning educational change is a far more difficult and risk-prone venture than had been imagined in the 1950s and 1960s. There are many more examples of failure, or of minimal success, than of relatively complete success. Much more is known about what does not work, or does not usually work, than about what does work. A central lesson learned is that Nicolò Machiavelli was correct when he wrote more than 4 centuries ago: "And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." The change planner has staunch enemies among "all those who have done well under the old conditions" and who see clearly an immediate threat to their privileges, but only "lukewarm defenders" among the intended beneficiaries of the change since the potential benefits are uncertain in a dimly perceived future and people generally "do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them."[55] It is not accidental that these old words sound much like the positions of those who take a political and conflict theory view of educational planning and among them, those who argue for a political economy model. Machiavelli, after all, was advising his Prince how to use power to maintain it once it was acquired. Given the time and place in which he lived, it would have been remarkable if he had somehow acquired a consensus or equilibrium view of social cohesion and change.

Moreover, when planned educational reform attempts have been successful, the process has usually taken a long time, frequently far longer than originally anticipated. In recent decades there are a few examples where an unusual combination of favorable conditions and politically skilled planners has permitted a great deal of educational change in a

[54] The argument presented briefly in the following several paragraphs is developed more fully in Farrell, "Educational Cooperation."

[55] N. Machiavelli, "The Prince," in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. R. M. Hutchins (1513; reprint, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 23:9.

relatively brief period, but these have been rare and idiosyncratic. Beyond this, planning and managing significant change in educational systems is more difficult than in most other public or private enterprises (which means that change-planning models or theories based on private economic systems have little direct applicability to education). One is attempting in education to deliver (or change the delivery of) an intangible end product (learning) on a (typically) nonsale basis to a diverse, diffuse, and often reluctant clientele, using delivery agents (teachers) over whose daily behavior one has minimum or no effective control, and in environments where efforts to exert such control are frequently counterproductive to the general goals of the system. These conditions rarely pertain collectively in private economic organizations or in most other public social service delivery systems.

A further lesson is this. While it is usually difficult to accomplish large-scale, national-level, and top-down educational reform programs, we also have many examples of successful change attempts at the level of the local school, or a small system of schools, and occasionally in systems of thousands of schools (Colombia's Escuela Nueva program and a few other cases[56]). That is, while it is very difficult to change a national school system, it appears in many situations to be relatively easy to change a classroom or a school, in ways often unknown to national- or international-level planners. And thousands of such local changes can, over time, in an innovation diffusion process (conceptually and operationally very different from a planned change process as usually understood) build from the bottom up into a major change in the overall national educational effort. Under this conception, the task of the planner is not to invent and/or implement the innovation or the reform across the whole national territory but, rather, to develop and unleash a capacity to innovate throughout the system.[57]

This way of planning is often arduous to implement in national systems that focus heavily on control and regulation, or on working toward national educational standards or goals, because it is likely to result in a

[56] The Escuela Nueva program is now being adapted in large or small scale in at least 10 other Latin American nations. Other examples include the Mejoramiento de la Equalidad y Calidad de la Educación (MECE) Rural program in Chile, which is now present in over 3,000 schools (see J. San Miguel B., "Programa de mejoramiento de la calidad de la educación para las escuelas multigrados rurales," *Formas y reformas de la educación* 1 (Trimestre 3, 1996): 18–24; the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) program, which now operates in over 6,000 rural schools in Bangladesh and is currently spreading to urban schools and in adapted form into India and Pakistan (see S. C. Sarker, "The BRAC Non-formal Primary Education Centres in Bangladesh," in *Partnerships and Participation in Basic Education*, ed. S. Shaeffer [Paris: IIEP, 1994], vol. 2, case 7; plus not-yet-published research material from three graduate students whose theses I supervise); and the Community Schools project in rural Egypt, which is expected to spread to 8,000 schools within the next 5 years (personal participant observation).

[57] San Miguel, p. 19.

highly variegated and locally adapted set of learning systems throughout a national territory. This sort of variation and flexibility is frequently anathema to control-oriented regimes, which in matters of education includes almost all national regimes to one or another degree. Almost everywhere the desire to control learning is institutionally expressed in the need to plan education. What is not noticed in such situations represents a final lesson learned.

Much of educational planning represents an explicit or implicit attempt to regulate and control learning, by determining what is to be taught (prescribing the curriculum and sometimes testing for it) and what is not to be taught (leaving things out or formally proscribing them), regulating who may or may not teach (and in many cases how they should teach), and authorizing who, individually or as groups, shall have access to various types and levels of schooling. While highly control-oriented regimes go to great lengths to plan and regulate what is taught in the schools, and frequently extend these efforts beyond the schools to the mass media and other forms of individual and group communications, the attempt to control learning, in whatever form, by planning education is ubiquitous. Witness, for example, the fierce political debates in many nations regarding the inclusion in or exclusion from the curriculum of various bodies and forms of knowledge, including, in the United States and Canada, such matters as black history, working-class history, women's history, the "white male European" canon, evolutionism versus creationism, and so on.[58] None of these arguments would make any sense at all if the participants did not assume that there is a high probability that what is taught in the schools will be learned by the students.

Contrary to that assumption, we have come to realize (in a dramatic way in several nations over the past few years) that while it is possible to plan education, and even to control teaching, it is not possible to plan and control learning. Education, schooling, and individual classroom teaching are all observable and, therefore, at least theoretically and occasionally practically, subject to planning and control. Learning, however, is individual and "invisible" (it happens in that mysterious space behind

[58] This is hardly a new observation, although it is often forgotten. The historical record (see B. Fuller and R. Rubinson, "Does the State Expand Schooling? Review of the Evidence," in *The Political Construction of Education*, ed. B. Fuller and R. Rubinson [New York: Praeger, 1992], pp. 1–28) indicates clearly the alarm of many (most?) governments of the day soon after the "invention" (in Europe) of printing and the widespread dissemination of printed material and the ability to read it. Literacy unschooled, and therefore *uncontrolled*, was seen as dangerously subversive of the established order. In 1671 William Berkely, British governor of the Virginia Colony, was asked to report his views on education in the colony. He wrote: "I thank God there are no free schools or printing, and hope that we shall not have them for a hundred years, for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best governments. God keep us from both!" See Governor W. Berkely, "Report on Virginia Schools, 1671," in *Education in the United States: A Documentary History*, ed. S. Cohen (New York: Random House, 1974), 1:345.

the eyeballs); it is thus not subject to coercion (although it is possible to force people to behave as though they have learned something—for example, to provide the "correct" response to a political knowledge question), or to control, or to prediction of its consequences. It is of course the case that learning, as a process, frequently occurs interactively within human groups. But what is being learned, and how it is integrated with what has been learned before and might be learned after, is an individual matter. One may observe the results of learning, as in correct responses to a test, or appropriate behavior, or the ability to perform a task, but one rarely if ever knows whether the result is the product of any particular acts of teaching or educating. Indeed, a considerable amount of test performance reflects learning that takes place outside the context of education or schooling; that is what we mean when we speak of the effect of extra-school factors on educational achievement. Much of what is learned for the purpose of passing a test is just as promptly forgotten—indeed, mastering this kind of short-term-only memory seems to be one of the essential skills of successful test taking. And at a deeper level we can never know for sure what interpretations or significance learners attach to what has been learned, what meaning they make of it. As Alan Thomas notes:

> *Learning cannot be coerced.* Learning is the result of an act of will. Young people can be compelled by law to attend schools, and adults can be threatened with dire economic or other consequences if they do not acquire certain skills or attitudes, but any teacher knows that no outside force can actually compel someone to learn something . . . education cannot exist without learning. Learning, however, not only can exist outside the context of education but probably is most frequently found there. Learning has always outstripped education, and never more so than in the present period . . . learning is the act of an individual, whereas education is a relatively coherent group of social activities usually associated with a particular institution or institutions. Learning, in fact, is what makes human beings individual, whereas education is the institutionalized series of activities, roles, and organizations by means of which a group or society attempts to direct the learning capabilities of some or all of its members toward particular objectives. To learn is to do something by yourself. To educate is to do something to someone else.[59]

This necessary distinction between teaching (or schooling or education) and learning was forcefully brought home to me in conversation with a very senior educational researcher/planner in the Soviet Union, just a few months before his nation dissolved. We were discussing what was happening in his homeland and the neighboring states that it had until then controlled. He said to me, "Joe, what we are seeing here is the failure of several generations of conscious political socialization: from 40

[59] A. M. Thomas, *Beyond Education: A New Perspective on Society's Management of Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), pp. 14–17.

to 70 years, not only in the schools but in the youth groups, the adult education programs and meetings, the media, everywhere. We knew what we were *teaching* them. We didn't know *what they were learning*." And what they were learning was clearly very different from what they were being taught.[60]

This observation reminded me of what had happened in Iran. The government of the shah had used all the instruments of the state, from formal schools to a ruthless national security apparatus, to try to teach the citizens a set of "modernizing" messages. Meanwhile, an exiled cleric living in France had discovered the power of the cassette recorder. Cassettes are easily smuggled and duplicated, and cassette players are cheap and ubiquitous. The cleric's messages were widely available in the nation, principally through recorded sermons. The educational planners of the state knew what they were teaching. They did not know what the people were learning; we now know what set of messages was learned. The defeat of the military government in Chile in the plebescite of 1989 also comes to mind. The authorities actually thought they would win the plebescite, confirming General Pinochet in power for a further 8 years. They did not realize what the people had been learning, to a large degree, in my judgment, from a long-standing and widespread set of "popular education" programs that had reached large sectors of the population.

Obviously, the learners in these cases were not members of a universal or essentialist category. Many individuals in their societies certainly "learned" all, or most of, what the state taught through its educational planning agents. If this were not generally true, human societies and cultures could not sustain themselves. But in each case a large critical mass had learned something quite different from what they were taught, and when a crucial "conjuncture" (the Spanish word "*coyuntura*," with all its connotations, expresses the idea better) of events occurred, that "learning" was expressed in a way that either destroyed or fundamentally

[60] Personal conversation with V. Firsov, June 1990, in Budapest. I came to understand this distinction between teaching and learning on a personal level early on, though it was much later that I began to understand its broader implication. I spent 8 years of my childhood in a Roman Catholic primary school. That school (staffed entirely by nuns), the local church with which it was associated, my family, and the community in which I grew up, all worked very hard to teach a very conservative version of that religious faith. By about the age of 10 or 11 I began seriously to question what I was being taught. I learned at considerable pain (corporal punishment being permitted, indeed favored, in those days) that it was unwise to express those questions and opinions openly. I became very adept at producing the "required" responses in class "discussions" and tests—even won the school's "catechism medal" in grade 8, while keeping my personal questions and views to myself. What I was learning was very different from what the educational planners thought I was being taught. It is quite evident now that that experience was and is not at all uncommon. In some bodies of "critical" theory it is referred to as "resistance," and in others as "denial." Whether one views such resistance or denial among learners (and in the educational reform context, among teachers and parents as well) favorably or unfavorably depends largely on how one views the "canon" contained in the "taught" curriculum.

altered the very nation-state of which the educational planners were agents. The anthropologist E. T. Hall is likely right in observing that the learning drive is second only to the sex drive in its power on individual and collective human action.[61] Schooling (more broadly, education) may channel the power of human learning by making some things easier and others harder to learn, and schooling/education provides occasions or opportunities for learning that would not otherwise be available (or available with greater difficulty and randomness and less equity). But ultimately schooling/education cannot coerce, restrict, or ensure what is learned; it can only offer opportunities to learn. While it is possible to enable learning by planning education, it is not possible to control learning by planning education.

The Contingency View of Planning

In response to these complexities and in spite of these difficulties, a new view began to develop in the 1980s that asserts that some major educational change planning efforts have actually worked, in the sense of meeting their own goals or providing broader opportunities for or enablements of learning. In this view there is no single approach, model, or theory about planning that will be suitable in all circumstances. The choice is contingent on the situation: for example, the degree to which the political environment is conflict-ridden and turbulent, the desire and ability of the political regime to stress control and regulation or flexibility and variation, the scope and depth of change being contemplated, the technical and political competence of the central actors involved, or the resources actually available. The key to effective planning of major change is the ability to accurately read the context and select the appropriate approach. There is no single blueprint or strategy for designing and implementing educational change that will or can work in all circumstances. Some authors have begun to assess probable or plausible best matches between situation and planning approach.[62]

This contingency approach may appear on the surface to be theoretically simplistic, much too "commonsensical." Of course, different circumstances should evoke different responses. But this is not how standard discourse of educational planning (whether technicist or theoretical—and indeed "disciplinary" discourse of comparative education) has typically functioned over the past few decades. Standard discourse has tended strongly, in a very "modernist" fashion, to treat theory building as the

[61] E. T. Hall, "Unstated Features of the Cultural Context of Learning," in *Learning and Development in a Global Perspective*, ed. A. Thomas and E. T. Ploman (Toronto: OISE Press, 1985), pp. 157–76.

[62] D. Rondinelli, J. Middleton, and A. Verspoor, *Planning Educational Reforms in Developing Countries: The Contingency Approach* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990).

search for a universal "truth" and to assume (at least the plausibility of) a tightly coupled and highly deterministic relationship between theory (*the* truth) and policy/planning. Thus, for example, many Marxist or neo-Marxist scholars and planners have carefully worked out (deduced) the educational planning and policy consequences of *their* theoretical truth. Conversely, many structural/functional theoreticians have claimed with equal certainty (in their economics incarnation of the neoclassical folk) the universal applicability of their own deductions regarding educational policy/planning from *their* own theoretical truth. This desire and demand for a universally applicable truth has been widespread. The contingency view fundamentally challenges the assumptions of standard discourse. In this view, theory building may be seen not as a search for the truth but as an effort at creating extended metaphors. The basic intellectual approach is less "hard science" (although it would be foolish to abandon this model entirely, especially its demand for a rigorous relationship between evidence and claim) and more literature and aesthetics (where, if we are lucky, we may discover some of the most profound truths about human beings).[63] One does not ask of a metaphor, Is it true? Rather, one asks, Does it illuminate aspects of a phenomenon or situation we would not otherwise have seen or understood so clearly? And several different metaphors can simultaneously illuminate the same circumstance.[64] The contingency view is thus very postmodern and has a great deal in common with several strands of recent feminist analysis (and its emphasis on "multitruths")[65] and with the field of narrative inquiry and theory noted above. It is fundamentally subversive of much of what has long been considered "normal science" on the disciplinary "side" of comparative education.

If one accepts there is no universal model or theory (although the word "theory" seems much too elegant to describe what we actually, or can, know about educational change) for educational planning and that different circumstances may, or should, evoke different approaches, then examples of relatively successful planning responses to particular circumstances (successful in the sense of having accomplished many of the objectives the planners, and hopefully their societies, set) are likely the best way to show what planners may achieve if they are smart and lucky. (If

[63] As Hackett has noted: "Without metaphors, allegory and a thick description of the world around us there is no basis for comparative study or analysis." See P. Hackett, "Aesthetics as a Basis for Comparative Study," *Comparative Education Review* 32 (November 1988): 12.

[64] For a very useful extended discussion of the idea of illuminative research and evaluation, see H. Richards, *Evaluating Cultural Action* (Ottawa: IDRC, 1983).

[65] See, e.g., D. Wear, "Beyond Silences and Scripts: The Variety of Feminist Experience," *Curriculum Inquiry* 26 (Fall 1996): 307–20; E. Ellsworth, "Claiming the Tenured Body," in *The Centre of the Web: Women and Solitude*, ed. D. Wear (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), pp. 63–74; P. Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy within the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1994); and S. K. Walker, "Canonical Gestures," *Curriculum Inquiry* 24 (Summer 1994): 171–80.

one accepts the full implications of the contingency view of planning, then "smart" and "lucky," rather than, say, "theoretically sophisticated," are appropriate adjectives.) Since the contingency approach appears plausible, at least in some circumstances, to produce success in planning major educational change, it is expected to be increasingly disruptive to traditional, modernist ways of thinking about educational (and more broadly, social) theory.

I now turn to briefly outline several distinct approaches that have proven successful in particular situations. They are not meant to represent all the models and approaches that have been reasonably successful (no worldwide "catalog" exists); rather, they illustrate some of the different styles in which educational planning may succeed.

The Window of Opportunity Strategy: Chilean Reform, 1965–70

In the late 1960s, the Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei in Chile produced what is widely recognized as one of the most successful examples of large-scale educational change implemented rapidly. The government had come to power with a strong electoral mandate (but with influential opposition parties in the legislature) and a platform in which educational change figured prominently. It also inherited some important technical planning work, and further work quickly produced a long list of specific changes required, their likely costs and probable consequences, and the interconnections among them. This, however, never became a formal plan to be enacted all at once. Rather, the planners worked closely with educational politicians to create and watch for political windows of opportunity. When such an opening was detected they would enact and implement as many changes as seemed appropriate, then watch for and work to create another window of opportunity, and so on. Following this approach the reform planners had most elements in their original list in place by the end of a 6-year term of government.[66] Later evaluations indicate that the reform was remarkably successful in a comparative context in achieving its basic goal of increasing educational, and general socioeconomic, equality in the society, particularly among the urban working class.[67]

The Careful Experimentation/Steady Diffusion Model: Escuela Nueva in Colombia

The Escuela Nueva (New School) in Colombia has been evaluated as a highly successful program for increasing the educational achievement of poor rural children at low cost through fundamental alteration of the

[66] Schiefelbein, "The Politics of Educational Planning" (n. 28 above).

[67] J. P. Farrell and E. Schiefelbein, *Eight Years of Their Lives: Through Schooling to the Labour Market in Chile* (Ottawa: IDRC, 1981), and "Education and Status Attainment in Chile: A Comparative Challenge to the Wisconsin Model of Occupational Status Attainment," *Comparative Education Review* 29 (November 1985): 490–506.

schooling process. Change attempts started experimentally in the early 1980s, and by the end of the decade the program had spread to roughly 8,000 schools. Following further evaluation, it was expanded to cover all (approximately 27,000) rural primary schools in the nation, a goal that was close to realization by the mid-1990s. The initiative began with very small-scale pilot phase experimentation, carefully critiqued, leading to several modifications to the original design. It then spread from school to school through a carefully managed innovation diffusion process. The program was presented to teachers and parents, opportunities were available to visit schools where the program was already operating, regular in-service training and peer mentoring were provided to teachers along with thorough manuals and guides, special self-teaching books were designed for students, and teachers and parents were permitted and encouraged to adapt the general model to suit local conditions and needs. Regular evaluation has occurred, using a variety of "hard" and "soft" techniques, and the program has been regularly modified. The results in terms of attendance, retention, and achievement levels have been impressive. This is a single change, rather than a large menu of changes as in the Chilean case above, but it is a profound change in the nature of the schooling process, altering significantly the roles of teacher and student. Such changes are often thought to be the most difficult to introduce in a planned fashion. In a comparative context it is remarkable how quickly and smoothly this planned change has taken effect.[68]

The Top-Down Technical Planning Model: The Philippines Textbook Program

A severe shortage of textbooks had been a major problem in Philippine primary schools. A large-scale effort over 10 years produced an infusion of books, reducing the average student-to-book ratio from 10:1 to 2:1. Evaluation results indicated a significant increase in tested student achievement levels. Planners saw a large-scale, top-down, centrally driven planning model, relying heavily on technical analyses, as the best approach.

This may have been an appropriate prescription for the conditions, but the program was plagued by many adoption and implementation problems common to top-down models. Its relative success, in spite of these difficulties, seems due to the following features: (1) widespread agreement on the nature and seriousness of the problem and on its proposed solution—most major stakeholder groups were "onboard" from the outset; (2) the actual behavior changes required of teachers for the

[68] V. Colbert, C. Chiappe, and J. Arboleda, *The New School Program: More and Better Primary Education for Children in Rural Areas* (New York: Unicef; Bogota: Ministry of Education, Colombia, 1990); E. Schiefelbein, *In Search of the School of the 21st Century: Is Colombia's Escuela Nueva the Right Pathfinder?* (Santiago: Unesco Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1991); and J. Arboleda, "Participation and Partnership in the Colombian Escuela Nueva," in Shaeffer, ed. (n. 56 above), vol. 2, case 5.

program to work (learning how to use books where they had not previously had them) were relatively few, and a major in-service education program was incorporated into the program; and (3) planners built an ongoing learning capacity into the system so that early mistakes could be identified and corrected before they became major problems for the entire system.[69]

Slow Political Consensus Building: Chile, 1988–92

The success of the Chilean reform of 1965–70 has been noted, but during the subsequent regime of Salvador Allende (1970–73), public political debate regarding educational reform was widespread and extremely vituperative. The degree of bitterness generated is still well remembered, and major educational changes decreed by the 17-year military dictatorship that followed created deep resentment among wide sectors of the teaching force and the general public. In the late 1980s, it became increasingly evident that pressures were growing for a new democratic government to emerge, and demands for educational change would likely be very pressing. Given the history, those demands also had a high probability of creating destructive political disputes. A nongovernmental educational research institution that had been evaluating the effects of the military government's educational policies (operating as a sort of educational planning unit for a government-in-waiting) began in the late 1980s to convene regular meetings of representatives from most political parties and other key stakeholder groups. They aimed to develop a broad consensus around a set of educational changes that could be implemented in a redemocratized nation by whatever coalition of forces finally came to power, with little or no political dispute. This combination of technical and political work was successful. Once a democratically elected government came into power it was able to enact a series of educational policy changes relatively quickly and politically quietly.[70] What is striking, compared to the earlier Chilean case, is that two different sets of objective conditions, in the same nation but at two different moments in time, called forth two disparate approaches to educational planning, each of which combined technical and political work, and each of which was successful.

Looking to the Future: Educational Planning and the Changing Nature of the State

In this section I consider the implications of some recent developments in the nature of the state that even more profoundly challenge traditional

[69] A. de Guzman, "The Philippines: A Textbook Case," in *Textbooks in the Developing World: Educational and Economic Choices*, ed. J. P. Farrell and S. Heyneman (Washington, D.C.: World Bank/Economic Development Institute, 1989), pp. 141–72.

[70] This brief account is based on personal "participant observation" and conversations with many of the key actors.

conceptions of the theory and practice of educational planning—and more generally, of how we understand educational change and how we might influence it. The current situation is so recently on us that considerations of its implications are necessarily tentative. But these implications must be considered, even if we cannot yet be sure where they may lead us.

Educational planning is almost always a means by which states attempt to control and regulate the provision of opportunities to learn in organized and directed ways among (at least) the young; it is an instrument of national statecraft. M. Carnoy observes that "almost all analyses of educational problems have implicit in them a theory of the state, but few tell us what this theory is."[71] As with educational problems, so with educational planning. Debates among adherents of competing theories of the state reflect the general social theory debate noted above. But all the existing theories assume the modern concept of the nation-state that arose in Europe 2 or 3 centuries ago and that has become nearly universal. Educational planning is a national activity, except in some federal states where it is partly or wholly the responsibility of lower levels of government that for purposes of education behave like nation-states.[72] But by the mid-1990s, it is clear that many of the assumed characteristics and powers of the nation-state are eroding. I argue that we have not yet seriously begun to understand how profound a challenge this presents to the ways in which we have traditionally thought about education and educational change.

What is now commonly referred to as "globalization" is fundamentally altering the very nature of the state. More properly put, economic globalization, insertion in a competitive international market (the frame in which this argument is now most usually cast) is but one "symptom" of a much larger change. A series of technological advances are changing our predominant *forms or modes of communication*—dramatically altering their *speed* and *breadth*. Increasingly large numbers of people can now communicate instantaneously with people in all regions of the world. And the personal or institutional cost of linking oneself to these webs of communication is steadily decreasing. Even the most conservative estimates suggest that the worldwide communication capacity (i.e., distance covered and flow rate) of wireless and wired networks together will *at least* double every 2 years, producing a huge increase (at minimum hundredfold) in capacity and usage over the next 10 years, in both rich and poor nations, with a correspondingly dramatic decrease in cost.

The Canadian economic historian and social communication theorist Harold Innis argued many years ago that, from ancient Egypt onward,

[71] Carnoy (n. 16 above).

[72] Obviously these observations apply mainly to that form of educational planning that occurs at the level of the state, and not directly to local or institutional planning. However, almost everywhere local or institutional planning is regulated and constrained by state-level planning.

changes in predominant forms of political organization have been both driven and made possible by changes in predominant modes of communication, which were in turn made possible by new forms of technology.[73] We are now in the early stages of another such alteration in communication, which is eroding the foundations of our predominant political organization, the nation-state, and forcing us to search for new political forms. David Elkins, another Canadian political economist, picks up Innis's basic theme, arguing that the new modes of communication are driving us to shift from territorial- to nonterritorial-based forms of political organization.[74] Where this will lead us we cannot now say, but some of the patterns of nation-state erosion are already clear.

In an era where current communication technology permits the instantaneous transfer of capital and currency, nations do not have sovereign and autonomous control over their fiscal and monetary (i.e., most basic economic regulatory) policy—as several nations have recently discovered, to their peril, including not only some on the "periphery" (e.g., Mexico) but those purported to be in the "center" (Sweden and the United Kingdom come immediately to mind). Even so powerful a nation as the United States is severely constrained in what it can independently do to regulate its own economy, as witness both the behavior and rhetoric of its Federal Reserve Bank over the past few years. What does national economic sovereignty mean in such circumstances?

National boundaries have been for many years highly permeable to influences from other nations and cultures, even among tightly controlled societies. The primary forms of transnational communication of cultural messages—long- and short-wave radio, audio and video cassettes (often smuggled or pirated), and satellite television—while pervasive, have been until recently somewhat controllable by nation-states. In Canada we are very sensitive to this issue and have long had various "Canadian content" regulations on the mass media to "protect" domestic culture from the constant onslaught of messages from the United States. Many other nations have such regulations to protect against what in France is called "cultural assault." While not perfect, they have been reasonably effective.

[73] Innis's work was in this respect fundamental to Marshall McLuhan's later work. See H. Innis, *Empire and Communication* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950). In his earlier work on the political economy of Canada, as a natural-resource-dependent state in a quasicolonial relationship with Europe, Innis developed an analysis that was a precursor of what later came to be labeled "dependency theory." See his major books: *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930), *Settlement and the Mining Frontier* (1936), and *The Cod Fisheries* (1940), all published by the University of Toronto Press.

[74] D. Elkins, *Beyond Sovereignty: Territory and Political Economy in the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). For a fuller discussion of the erosion of the contemporary nation-state as a consequence of these new modes of communication and evidence of how difficult it is to predict what new forms of political/economic/social/cultural organization may emerge, see the papers presented at an international conference on "The Nation-State in a Global/Information Era," held at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, the John Deutsch Institute, November 1996.

But two new advances in communications technology are rapidly eroding what small measure of control has existed. The worldwide electronic mail communication network is only recently on us; it has many exciting possibilities, but it has already proven to be effectively uncontrollable with reference to message content (indeed it was designed to be uncontrollable). Beyond this, "technical wizards" are telling us that we are very near a time when almost anyone with the price of a cheap videocassette recorder (VCR) will be able to buy a small dish antenna that will give access in their home to television signals from the rest of the world, in a form that cannot be regulated or controlled except at a cost which all states, even the richest, will not be able to sustain over the medium- to long-term.[75] In both of these cases the ever increasing speed and volume of communication is overwhelming the capacity of the state to regulate. What does national cultural sovereignty mean in these circumstances?

The key word here is *national*. I am not arguing that cultures will necessarily erode under the increasing volume of messages from other cultures, although that may occur in some cases. I am in particular not arguing that these new modes of communication will increase the power of Western culture to erode non-Western cultures. (Indeed, if the idea of fundamentally uncontrollable modes of communication means anything at all, it means a weakening of the power of traditional controllers of communication—overwhelmingly—from the West.) Although it is far too early to predict the outcome of these massive increases in communication capacity, my own "best guess" is that they will strengthen the ability of non-Western cultures to resist penetration by "Western" cultures and themselves penetrate those previously powerful cultures.[76] At issue is not the resilience of cultures (most of which long preceded the modern nation-state) but the ability of nation-states to use their now standard instruments of regulation and control, including formal schooling, to promote, protect, and reinforce these cultures.

There is another phenomenon, indirectly related to changes in communications technology, that is eroding the traditional nation-state. International population flows are increasing rapidly and can be expected to increase in rate. If United Nations' figures are to be believed, there are

[75] Information Highway Advisory Council, *Connection Community Content: The Challenge of the Information Highway* (final report to the Government of Canada, September 1995).

[76] As Samuel P. Huntington has recently argued, already "much of the world is becoming *more modern* and *less Western*" (emphasis added). See S. P. Huntington, "Bye Bye Miss American Pie," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) (November 9, 1966), p. D5; this extract is from *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). It is already very evident even to this novice "web-surfer" that an extraordinary variety of voices are newly visible on the screen, from even very remote areas of the world. For a particularly interesting example, see the 30-day international "electronic seminar" or "think tank," held in October 1996 on education and technology, where new voices from Africa, Asia, and Latin America were very powerfully present, archived at ⟨www.worldbank.org/html.fpd.technet⟩.

now more people "on the move" than at any time in the world's history. Some of these movements are controlled and consensually supported, as in the worker mobility provisions of the European Union or the North American Free Trade Agreement. Others, the far larger share, are not controlled and are ultimately uncontrollable at a socially acceptable price, such as movements of political and economic refugees. These movements are challenging the ability of nations, including the richest, to effectively exercise a basic, indeed defining, duty and responsibility of the nation-state—to determine who shall be a member.

When such matters have been considered over the past few decades, it has been typically with reference to peripheral states, within some form of dependency or world system theory. In 1991, B. Fuller used the term "fragile state" to refer to the frequently precarious positions of the putative controllers of the instruments of national government in developing nations.[77] The world is moving quickly to a situation in which *all* nations, rich or poor, are to a high degree dependent nations and all states are "fragile"; where all nations have less and less control over their economies, polities, cultures, and societies; and where all nations are peripheral and nobody knows precisely where is the "center."[78]

This is a sad condition and a major conundrum for "new" states achieving their formal statehood precisely at the time when statehood means much less than it once did. But it is an equally, though differently, troubling condition for long-established states, and their peoples, who have assumed themselves to have a high degree of "sovereignty" and "independence of action" (and associated control over others), which is rapidly disappearing. When this steady erosion of the foundations of the nation-state is combined with (and may indeed be a cause of) the widespread growth of subnational loyalties (and in some cases irredentist movements, for example, in Greater Serbia, it is leading in many cases to the disintegration literally "dis-integration") of nation-states. I do not expect these patterns will automatically produce, in a form of blind technical determinism, sudden disappearances of existing nation-states—at least in the short-term.[79] I am arguing that these rapidly occurring developments are funda-

[77] B. Fuller, *Growing Up Modern: The Western State Builds Third World Schools* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1991).

[78] Under these conditions, formal national political contests can be seen increasingly as rather like a group of family members arguing over the terms of a will, only to discover that the decedent's estate is nearly bankrupt. An implicit recognition of this condition likely underlies much of the cynicism about, frustration with, and alienation from the formal institutions of politics one observes in most "Western democracies." Deep down we "know" that the governments we elect cannot actually *do* very much about the problems, that most trouble us. On this question, see also J. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[79] Although the fates of the former Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia—dissolved peacefully, turbulently, and very bloodily, respectively—should give pause to anyone who imagines that their own nation-state is forever peacefully integral. As a Canadian I cannot but be very sensitive to this issue.

mentally weakening even the apparently strongest existing (surviving?) nation-states in precisely those areas previously assumed to be most directly related to educational policy and planning and are en passant eroding the foundations of the major modernist bodies of theory we have relied on for thinking about education, its policy, and its planning.

Conclusion

All this profoundly challenges our understandings of what educational policy is and what it is about and, by implication, what comparative education as a field of study is and is about. But the plausible meanings and consequences are far from clear. What does it mean to plan education for national economic development (or global competitiveness) when nation-states are losing effective control of many of their previously most important levers of economic policy and when both capital and labor markets do not respect national boundaries? What does it mean to plan education in and for any individual European nation when citizens will have the possibility to live as members of a common European economy and perhaps a common European political system and culture? What does it mean to plan education as an instrument of national cultural transmission and reinforcement when national governments are increasingly unable to control cross-border flows of cultural messages and people? What does it mean to plan for decentralization when any central power that might be transferred downward is already seriously eroded? What does it mean to plan education for national integration or national development (however defined) when national boundaries, both physical and mental, are being eroded by supranational forces and subnational loyalties? Finding answers to such questions will likely be the major challenge facing educational planning (and comparative education, more generally) during the last years of this century and the early decades of the twenty-first century.

None of the answers are obvious now, although a literature is beginning to develop.[80] However, most of the work thus far available focuses on the economic aspects of globalization. While not wrong, this emphasis is far too narrow. The situation through which we are living is a progressive dissolution of the basic unit of analysis in which almost all discussions of educational planning and, indeed, of education and social change more

[80] See, e.g., Unesco/Commissión Económica Para América Latina (CEPAL) *Education and Knowledge: Basic Pillars of Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity* (Santiago: Unesco-CEPAL, 1993); T. Miklos et al., eds., *Mexico y Francia ante los retos educativos del nuevo milenio* (Mexico City: Secretaria de Educacíon Pública, 1994); and the following papers: A. R. Riddell, "Globalization, Decentralization, Privatization: Emasculation or Opportunity for Educational Planning?"; B. Avalos, "Education for Global/Regional Competitiveness: Chilean Policies and Reforms in Secondary Education"; L. Ratinoff, "Global Insecurity and Education in the Culture of Globalization" (papers presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Boston, March 1995).

generally, have been cast: the nation-state. Even world systems theory, which might be best equipped to deal with this new condition (whether operating within an equilibrium or conflict social theoretical model), still speaks mostly of inter*national* relationships and supra*national* institutions, as though nothing really fundamental (in the sense that I suggest) has been changing in the nature of the nation-state over the past 5–10 years.[81]

This situation requires not simply a Khunian paradigm shift but a metaparadigm shift. Some postmodern writers are beginning to grapple with this problem, but even they have not yet begun, in my judgment, to really grasp the depth of the intellectual disorder we are now in the midst of. They are, however, closer than most, especially those who work from a disciplined multitruth narrative position and who have not simply used this new label as an excuse for lack of intellectual rigor and a license for self-indulgence. A. R. Riddell, while speaking from a relatively narrow economics frame with respect to educational planning in the Third World, captures some of the difficulty we are facing: "Educational planners have danced to the tune of increased access and improved quality of education in the Third World to date. However, they have not sought to change the orchestra or the music; they have merely attempted to train better musicians in order better to play the same tunes."[82] While it is not at all clear to me that "educational" planners are either uniquely qualified or entitled to "change the orchestra or the music," someone has to do so. In some important ways, the tunes to which educational planners, and comparative educators more generally, have traditionally danced have already changed almost beyond recognition. Finding our feet in this new dance will require answers to the questions raised here, as well as, certainly, others we have not yet imagined.

I do not claim to know what these answers are, and I would not really trust anyone who did so claim at this early point. But I suspect they will ultimately flow from the lessons learned as discussed above and that planning change in this new epoch will require fundamental shifts in the way we think about change and the planning of it: at the very least from planning change to developing a capacity to innovate, and from planning as controlling learning to planning as enabling learning, within the postmodern and narrative contingency understanding I argued earlier. But, if I do not have the answers, I *have* learned that one cannot possibly (except by blind luck) get the answers right if one does not have the questions right. Helping to get the questions right is ultimately the purpose of this article.

[81] M. Ginsburg et al., "Educational Reform: Social Struggle, the State, and the World Economic System," in Ginsburg, ed. (n. 47 above), pp. 12–20.
[82] Riddell, pp. 25–26.