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## 1. A MODERN IDEA OF THE SCHOOL

The school is, without doubt, one of the most central institutions in modern Western society. The emergence of the school as a pedagogical institution is intertwined in a very fundamental way with the emergence of the modern society and modern cultural life forms. This means that the function of the school as a pedagogical institution is not solely understood in terms of functional necessities of society and economy but, additionally, in terms of its role as an institution whose task is to open up reflexive learning processes and, thus, participating also in the redefinition of social and cultural life forms. In this sense, the relation between school and society can be defined as reciprocal: although the function of the school is always determined by the factually- and historically-formed societal and economical necessities and cultural life forms, this determination is not absolute. As a pedagogical institution school is itself a crucial determinant of reformation and redefinition of the societal necessities and cultural life forms.

It naturally follows that the societal role and the functions of school has been under continuous critical debate and redefinition. In fact, this debate has been the essential part of the developmental history of the modern school system. Although the history of the critical debate about school includes also modes of radical school critics – the “de-schooling” arguments on behalf of a society without schools – the significance of the school as a social institution has been focal and increasing, at least since the 19th century in modern Western societies. However, the trends of change in the last few decades in particular have posed special challenges for the development of school systems, and a need to re-evaluate the pedagogical role of the school.

This volume discusses the pedagogical task of the school – i.e., the school as a pedagogical institution – from a number of different viewpoints. The essential questions motivating the articles in this volume are for example: How should the role and status of school be defined with respect to other social institutions? What is the educational task of school? How should the forms of pedagogical interaction and the structure of school be understood in modern society? How are the development needs of the national school systems related to global trends of change in educational policy? How are the functions of the school defined from the point of view of the economics of education?

This book does not aim to offer unambiguous answers to these questions but, instead, to stimulate – from different point of views – the discussion of the meaning of school in contemporary societies by emphasizing its peculiar pedagogical function.

An introduction to these issues is made below, first with (1) a short historical review of the pedagogical and social evolvement of the school, and then with (2) an introduction to the articles in this volume.

#### WHAT IS SCHOOL – A SHORT HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The institutional forms of school and their development are an essential part of the general development of modernization, the early stages of which have been traditionally described in terms of a transition from pre-modern society to modern society. In other words, the rise and development of the modern school system cannot be separated from the emergence and development of modern society. And the converse is also true: the emergence of modern society cannot be separated from “modernity of pedagogy” (Koch, Marotzki, & Peukert, 1993). Although the concrete form and institutional structures of the school – such as they are understood today – have evolved over a long period of time, there is an underlying change in the world view of ‘pre-modern man’, which has also involved a change in thought about upbringing and education. In other words, the transition from pre-modern or traditional society to modern bourgeois society also signified a critical change in conceptions about schooling, teaching and learning processes.

This does not mean, however, that organized education has not existed before the development of the modern society. Forms of organized schooling and education can be found in all the high cultures since archaic time – as the teaching practices of Sumerian reading and writing techniques about 2500–2000 BCE, Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum in ancient Greece, convent schools in the early Middle Ages, and so on and so forth – but school as a general pedagogical institution for every citizen is a product only of modernization especially promoted by the ideas of the European Enlightenment (see e.g. Gradstein, Justman, & Maier, 2005). The exact time of the development of ‘modern school’, however, is neither possible nor necessary to define (see e.g. Hoffmann et al., 1992). Rather, ‘a modern school’ is a typological phrase (Helmer, 1993) describing the change in educational thought and institutional schooling. Keeping in mind the difficulties in defining the precise turning point from ‘premodern’ to ‘modern’ and also in defining what the ‘modern’ actually is, we can conceptualize, on a general level, the difference between ‘premodern’ and ‘modern’ thinking about education and schooling.

In pre-modern societies, learning and teaching processes mostly took place in close correlation with the forms of action that were typical of the very social context to which the new generation was being inducted. Basic skills and knowledge were learnt in social interaction with the family and other members of the community. The natural medium of the processes of learning and growth was quotidian praxis, where personal experiences, and social skills were gained in dynamic interaction

with other people and things. Thus, there was little call for change or ‘innovations’ to the basic structures of pre-modern society from the new generation – none, at any rate, that would have necessitated learning processes beyond the level of knowledge and skills of the previous generations. Typically, people in the pre-modern community would transmit and transfer ‘historically constructed knowledge’ and skills – i.e. tradition – in mutual reciprocal interaction without any need for a form of pedagogical interaction or institution that was differentiated from the rest of life in the community. The pedagogical concern for the individual development of forms of knowledge and interaction was part of everyday caring in the immediate symbiosis between generations. In other words, knowledge of the world, people and intercourse between people was passed from one generation to the other, as if of itself, within the framework of people living together. This meant that pre-modern or traditional societies did not have a need for pedagogical institutions or special pedagogical professions, or, for that matter, a form of knowledge and praxis that was distinct from other forms of everyday praxis.

In the pre-modern way of life, pedagogical activity – concrete educational and teaching acts – have therefore always been directly integrated into human life and practical problems of a community. In other words, the learning processes have been inseparably attached to the contexts of the life-world, in which learning and the processes of growth are realized. The fact that the learning processes take place in everyday contexts and forms of living together does not, however, mean that the learning and growth processes are not directed in a more or less conscious manner. Education and teaching in their various forms are part of the everyday life of any human community. This is because the knowledge and skills required by social interaction are historical in nature. They have arisen as a result of man’s own activity, and they exist as a tradition. This means that their transmission from one generation to the next is not based solely on biological growth and maturation, as they are passed on in human action, in which the members of the next generation are required, in a more or less conscious fashion, to realize their own learning potential in ways that enable them to participate in human society. (Benner, 2012, p. 24). In this sense the transition from the pre-modern to the modern world and its conception of education and teaching is more like a gradational change rather than a steep turn.

It was essential for the development of the school institution that with modernization the unity between learning and direct social interaction characterized above began to weaken gradually (Benner, 2012, pp. 16–19). The transition from the pre-modern to the modern way of life created a need for more goal-oriented learning processes as the means of traditional pre-modern communities for ensuring the future of the next generation were felt to be insufficient. Entry into modern bourgeois society, required learning processes that could no longer be fulfilled in a typically pre-modern way. Learning processes that were meaningful and necessary in traditional communities did not any longer meet the qualification needs of modern society.

However, the emergence of modern society cannot be seen simply as a structural change in society calling for a change in ways of thinking of learning processes.

The emergence of the 'modern subject' was a necessary part of the process of modernization and reform in society. To the modern human, the future appeared open, thus offering in principle an opportunity for social change that could surpass the limits of prevailing society and traditional forms of community. The modern man also wanted to know more. This required the development of new forms of teaching and learning, which also meant new conceptions of knowledge. Knowledge is not immutable, but something created. What is more, modern society presumed skills that could not be learnt in the immediate, close community or in the contexts of everyday life. It was a functional necessity that the learning and teaching processes assumed a sphere of their own. When modern societies were evolving, this 'pedagogical sphere' gradually acquired established forms of institutional and organized action. While institutional education became an essential part of the structure of modern societies, the identity of modern man was more and more characterized by goal-oriented educational aspirations and aims for which traditional life forms could offer no sufficient guarantee.

In other words: In the modern sense, pedagogical praxis is no longer integrated into the other forms of human praxis, but is a relatively autonomous sphere among others in society. This separation of educational praxis is not possible without institutionalization. Although pedagogical praxis is vital and constitutive for every human community, it was only in the course of modernization that it began recognizably to take its form of institutionalized and organized action. The relationship between the younger generation and the social life-form is mediated by the specific forms of organized interactions, which differ from the other social activities. Actions in the educational sphere no longer belonged or, more precisely, do not belong yet to the spheres of work and economic production, political decision making and coordination of society, sacral rituals, moral publicity or esthetic experience. Educational institutions are specialized and bring their own function into the context of society. They do not take directly part in the planning of the future actions of society as do political institutions; they do not secure the material and economic basis of society and self-preservation of human species, as work and labor do; they are not directed towards the intersubjective giving of and asking for reasons for moral actions in the real medium of communicative public use of reason in order to form public opinion.

However, this does not imply that educational institutions do not link to the other institutionalized forms of human praxis. On the contrary, they are specialized to produce those processes of learning and individual abilities vital for our productive participation in other institutional realms. The institutionalized forms of pedagogical action create a sheltered area, where the members of the new generation may develop their abilities without yet being fully responsible for participating in the activities vital for the preservation and continuation of the socio-cultural life-forms shared by the adult generation.

Because of its existential role and specific social function, the pedagogical sphere has its own rationality, shaped in the specific forms of interaction and differing from

other forms of social action. Typically, the notion of teaching refers to such a form of interaction at the core of educational institutions. Teaching can, of course, take place in any situation where someone is in need of guidance or help; nevertheless, teaching in the pedagogical institutions differs from this occasional help. It is done continuously in organized settings. Teaching is the main activity of the pedagogical institutions, which are occupied by agents who have the professional knowledge, skills, qualification and status recognized by the institution to conduct the activity called “teaching”.

School is not just a context for “spontaneously running learning processes” (Fend, 2008, 180) or the immediate learning in the social intercourse and direct dealings with diverse aspects of everyday life. Learning is intentionally supported, guided, aimed and initiated by the diverse educational operations. Furthermore, what is at stake in schools is not merely to produce specific skills needed to solve problems that occur in the everyday lives of the pupils. Schools are able to produce educated individuals in the very broad meaning of the word, individuals who are able to continue their learning processes outside of school and participate in the various activities in society. The actual task of school is to expand the prevailing horizon and everyday experience of the pupils. This is possible only when institutionalized schooling is detached from the actually here and now lived context of the younger generation.

The emergence of the modern school system thus implied the basic insight that systematically organized teaching and learning processes enable the formation of skills and competences otherwise unobtainable within the framework of immediate everyday experience and intercourse between people. From the viewpoint of individual learning goals, in pre-modern society the routines of everyday life and prevailing social practices could be learnt without any special pedagogical intervention, but the modern world required something more. In other words, the task of the school as an institution was to create a ‘pedagogical space’ where human growth, development and learning processes could be subject to special pedagogical arrangements and attention. In a certain sense, the modern way of life called for teaching and learning processes that can be characterized as ‘artificial’ – or as Benner (2012, p. 19) pedagogically organized teaching is about “artificial interaction”, in which professionally acting pedagogues support and help the growing people in ways that would not be immediately possible in the rest of everyday life.

How, then, can the position and task of school be characterized, and what makes it a legitimate social institution? Briefly, two central aspects may be highlighted from the preceding discussion. First, with the development of modernization came the formulation and determination of the status and functions of school in relation to the needs of changing society. It became the task of the school to ensure that the representatives of the new generation adopt cognitive and practical skills to enable their operation as members of a bourgeois, industrializing society. Secondly, the pedagogical task of the school in modern society is to provide and optimize real opportunities for the fulfillment of individual educational processes, learning

potentials and ideals. The learning contexts of everyday life are insufficient and too sporadic in modern society, in terms not only of the cognitive needs or qualification requirements in a changing society, but also in terms of the individual needs and goals for education. From the latter perspective, the task and goals determined for the school as an institution emerge from the 'internal rationality' of pedagogical practice rather than from any obligation to enforce external societal needs. Citing Johan Friedrich Herbart, the school is the institutional form of 'educative teaching' (erziehender Unterricht), with the task of expanding and deepening the pupils' existing reserve of experiences by introducing into it, in a systematic and pedagogically meaningful way, cognitive and practical elements that are not possible in the changing contexts of everyday life. This means that the formulation of goals for the school – and its legitimate justification as an institution – cannot be directly derived from the immediate needs of society (such as qualification requirements in working life), but also not from individual learning objectives and educational needs. It is about reconciling and optimizing the mutual relationship between the two. Defined on a highly general level, the school's task as a pedagogical institution in the modern sense is built on this very basis.

With the move to late modern or post-modern society, the institutional structures and patterns of thought of modern society have been questioned in many ways. The critical voices of post-modernity have also targeted the foundations of the paradigm of institutional education. While the status and tasks of the school and other pedagogical institutions have become subject to increasingly varied and conflicting criticism, there is continuous lively discussion on the importance of education and development challenges of school systems. It proves how important an institution school is.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE BOOK

This volume investigates school from several points of view, divided into five parts: (1) Functions of the school: theoretical issues, (2) School, learning and teaching, (3) School, economics and labor markets, (4) School and school reform – national perspectives, (5) School, utopias and the future. In the beginning of every part there is a short introduction to the theme and the story of the section. Here we next give a condensed introduction to the chapters of the book.

##### *Functions of the School: Theoretical Issues*

In this section the philosophical and theoretical assumptions and foundations of a school as pedagogical and social institution are examined. The articles continue the discussion of the introductory chapter about a role, and function of modern school: what does the concept of school in a modern sense mean? What is the relation of a school to a state? How should one understand a school as a place of individual process of *Bildung*, growth and learning? Using a theoretical-philosophical approach, the

articles investigate educational ideas of a few well-known theorists of education and philosophy.

David Hansen's and Jessica Davis's *Socrates Goes to School* articulate a vision of the school as a center of 'a philosophical pedagogy', drawing on Plato's ideas from the Republic concerning self-cultivation and self-formation in conjunction with developing a civic or public consciousness. They incorporate ways in which John Dewey reconstructed Plato's ideas in service of what he called "the creative task" of justice and democracy. They discuss how a philosophical orientation can inform the entire formal and informal curriculum of the school, such that students learn the necessary skills for functioning in society even while developing a critical lens on the meaning of those skills, the nature of their society, and their personal destinies as human beings. The author's message challenges the values characteristic of present educational policy, i.e. the values calling for top-down accountability, the instrumental evaluation and external audition of schools. The authors remind us – as do Plato and Dewey – that we do not need to "audit" our merit as participants in humanity. Schools are not places where teachers and students have to earn a place in the social balance. Instead, school can be a place for philosophizing deeply and argumentatively about the important things in life.

Teemu Hanhela's article *Axel Honneth on Role, Form and Results of Public Education Revisited* is a theoretical analysis offering clarifications on Honneth's understanding of public education. Hanhela shows how Honneth's conception can be organised in concert with his recognition theory and a practical view of how a democratically-oriented education should be organised in schools.

The article introduces three pedagogical theorems: *the role of public education*, *the form of public education* and *the results of public education*. In the first category, the role of public education, the paper proposes that education is an inherent part of everyone's civil rights and the crucial instrument for maintaining a democratic society. The second theorem – the form of public education – is examined in order to improve our understanding of how democratic education should be organised, if Honneth's referred philosophical tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey is to be taken seriously. The third theorem – the results of public education – reveals Honneth's distinctive position. According to the author, for Honneth it is not enough that in democracy the discourse principles become an inherent part of our identity, but instead that the development of an intact identity equipped with *self-confidence*, *self-respect* and *self-esteem* should be secured and prioritized. Public education should secure and cultivate this identity development in an equal manner to all, as its main task.

In his article *What are Universities for? From the Community of the Selves to the Transformative Potential of Higher Education* Jani Kukkola attempts to show what the university essentially is, if any such character can be ascribed to it. Kukkola makes a case for the transformative potential of university education, considering it a phenomenon that can capture something of the uniqueness of the institution relative to other forms of education, without making claims to have captured its

soul. Alongside the development and expansion of universities from their medieval origins has been a quest for the ‘idea’ or the ‘meaning’ of the university itself. This idea may not necessarily require a fixed essence *per se*, as Kukkola will later claim, but rather a dynamic discursive transformation potential as a *community of selves*.

### *School, Learning and Teaching*

The pedagogic core task of the modern school has been traditionally described, among others, with concepts teaching, learning, education. With modernization came the demands of pedagogical professionalism and the related idea that carrying out the pedagogic tasks of the school requires specific vocational competence, i.e. teacher profession. In this section school education is examined from the point of view of the traditional pedagogical tasks of school on the one hand, and in light of the present educational research on the other. Especially two distinctive features of the present discussion make themselves felt: first, the pedagogical concepts such as ‘upbringing’, ‘education’ (*Erziehung*), ‘Bildung’, ‘teaching’, ‘growth’ have almost disappeared from discourse of school reformers and educational researchers; these concepts have been replaced by the concept of “learning”; secondly, the pedagogization or educationalization of culture and of society has called for a reassessment of the teaching profession and of the pedagogical tasks of school. The central questions are, therefore: ‘How should one understand the pedagogical nature of school and with what kinds of conceptual categories should one describe it?’; ‘Have concepts like *Bildung* and ‘human growth’ any place in present educational language?’; ‘How should one understand the professional role of teacher?’ The following articles focuses on these questions and some others.

In his article *Schools and the New Language of Learning: A Critical Perspective* Jouni Peltonen analyses the striking change in the manners of speaking that has occurred during the past 25 years within educational research, resulting in “the new language of learning”. This change follows the decline of traditional pedagogical concepts such as *education* and *teaching* or *Bildung* and *Erziehung* and goes hand in hand with the rise of the concept of *learning* as the most dominant conceptual category within educational discourse. Consequently, the claim is that the new, especially the constructivist- or sociocultural theories of learning, can alone orientate the process of education and the function of the educational institutions. While admitting that these new theories of learning have had a certain positive impact on some educational practices, their explanatory and normative potential is questioned in the article in two respects. As Peltonen demonstrates, the new theories of learning do not manage to constitute a sufficient basis for understanding, or for criticizing and improving either the processes of education taking place in the educational institutions or, analogously, for explaining, understanding and reforming educational institutions in modern or late-modern societies. In contrast to the “hegemony of the new theories of learning”, Peltonen argues that in order to capture the complexity of the educational processes and the complex nature of educational institutions a



synthesis of the theories and lines of thinking provided by different branches of educational research and educational theory is required.

In the article *The Paradox of Being a Teacher: Institutionalized Relevance and Organized Mistrust* Daniel Tröhler describes the paradoxical nature of the teaching profession which arises out of the mismatch between the excessive expectations imposed on teachers and, at the same time, the constant mistrust shown to them for fulfilling these expectations. The paradox is related to the cultural shift of the educationalization of the Western world – that not only are a wide variety of social, economic and moral problems defined as educational problems but, in addition, education itself is placed at the core of the historical process and expected to fulfil future ideals. According to Tröhler, educationalization was reinforced by the tradition of modern educational thinking and especially by certain inherent fundamental religious motives. The author defends this thesis with the help of two, at first sight very divergent, figures in the history of education: Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi and Burrhus F. Skinner. Common to these thinkers is, according to Tröhler, their argument which is constitutive of the cultural shift of educationalization but, also, their shared view that in order to save the younger generation from the corrupting forces of external society, certain ideal conditions for making the natural development of the children possible are needed. Tröhler underlines the religious motives behind this idea. The task of education is to take care of the salvation of the younger generation, to protect the “God’s creation” against the world of artificial moral corruption. The educator’s task is, then, to be God’s deputy, substitute and imitator, to secure the existence of this moral order. This religious background helps us, according to Tröhler, to understand those enormous expectations that schools and teachers meet even in secular contemporary societies. This raises the question: should one reject expectations, which no one can fulfil.

Eetu Pikkarainen analyses in his article *School Learning as Human Growth: Modal Dynamics of Learning* the function of school as a place for human growth. By human growth – or *Bildung* – he means the learning which is required by a member of a future society. According to Pikkarainen, school must be a bridge between current society and an unknown future society. Because we cannot be certain what competencies are required for the future, this approach suggests that we focus on the qualitative features of learning. Pikkarainen elaborates the nature of learning with the help of the semiotic conception of modal competence, which can be approached by the modal sub-verbs *want*, *can*, *know* and *must*. Learning is separated into three different levels: the lowest is pragmatic; the next is social; and the last and highest in terms of human growth is existential learning. The task of school, at all levels, is to foster or at least try to achieve the existential level of learning.

#### *School, Economics and Labor Markets*

In this section, education is analyzed from the point of view of the economics of education. Starting from the seminal works of Theodor Schultz and the “human

capital revolution in economics” in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the economics of education has gained an established and influential status among other sub-disciplines of educational research. As articles in this section prove, the economics of education has not only deepened our understanding of how education is related to the labor markets but has also gone far beyond Schultz’s original labor market focus by establishing a rich framework to study the production of education. Also, when analyzing the role of education in comparison to the human capital theory, as well as the microeconomics of education, the economics of education has, in many respects, overcome many of the reductionist, one-dimensional cause and effect views of the neo-classical human capital orthodoxy. The concepts in the economics of education currently focus on the complex, multi-causal relations between education and labor market. They recognize the challenges involved with modeling the production of education by considering the peculiar nature of emerging educational processes.

In their article *The State, Markets and Education* Kimmo Kontio and Maximilian Sailer argue that the development of public educational institutions as well as the economic rationale of the public funding of education can be explained in association with their functional necessity for securing and promoting economic welfare but also in their recognition of the potential alienating tendencies arising from the demands of the economy. Thus, traditionally the idea of modern public education is related to the kind of a “double function” where, in addition to the market mechanism, the function of educational institutions is also determined by political decision making regarding the amount of public spending on education and the goals public education is meant to achieve. Kontio and Sailer claim that, based on the findings of economics of education, several arguments can be found that together give a strong economic rationale for the public funding of education. On the other hand, the recent trends of the privatization of public education challenge the traditional role of the state when it comes to the funding of education and, more emphatically, for the provision of public education. This theme is selectively studied by introducing the market and public choice based argument on the provision of public education made influential by Milton Friedman. Whether the claims for the privatization of education marks a true change in traditionally-defined governmental responsibilities in education remains to be seen and naturally the economic justification of these claims is dependent on how adequately the overall benefits of education are estimated. The well-known methodological challenge is, of course, that many of the benefits are not easily expressed in pecuniary terms.

The rationale for the public funding of education is also addressed by Henry M. Levin in his article *The Economic Payoff to Investing in Educational Justice*. The vital preoccupation of Levin’s 40-year academic career has been to study whether seeking educational justice by greater educational investments in at-risk populations provides an economic payoff for the public that exceeds the costs. In contrast to the popular conclusions drawn already from the monumental *Coleman Report* (1966) and more recently quite often heard skepticism on whether improved public educational funding can promote educational equity, Levin argues that the

moral imperative for investment in educational equity can be supported by the strong economic evidence and, thus, an investment for educational equity is also a good public investment policy with high monetary returns. Although Levin's focus is on American society, his research can be considered as an example of the methodologically sophisticated attempts recently made to study the overall returns of educational investments. It thus has significant importance in general (see also Belfield & Levin, 2007.) Moreover, Levin's analysis of the costs and effects of the various educational interventions is noteworthy (see also Levin & McEwan, 2001). Namely, it is far from evident that educationalists and school reformers are always well aware of the importance of the cost analysis (when properly used and understood) when evaluating the desirability of the educational investments. For example, there might be a tendency, especially in dire economic times, to emphasize the cost side and ignore the effect side of the investments and this might have serious drawbacks. This is because, naturally, the desirability of the various educational interventions must be compared not only in relation to their costs but in relation to their cost-effectiveness ratios.

In his article "*Productivity, Effectiveness, Efficiency: Basic Concepts of the Economics of Education*" Dieter Timmermann gives a systematic analysis of the eminent economic concepts of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. When reflecting on the function of school and the educational system in terms of these concepts, many important issues come to the fore. For example, the concept of productivity can be constructed differently depending on how are the measures of schooling outputs and inputs identified. From this follows the idea that instead of a single productivity measure, a number of schooling productivities can be identified. Consequently, because there is no obvious reason to choose one productivity over other, educational productivity is a construction that is dependent on the observer's view about education and his or her interest in creating a certain kind of a agenda for education. When the focus is turned to the concept of efficiency, the normative orientation is added to the picture i.e. that the relation between output and its costs must be optimized so that the recourses are not wasted. The concept of effectiveness differs from the concepts of productivity and efficiency in the respect that it does not measure input-output-ratios but instead output relations. So, this concept expresses rather the pedagogical than an economic point of view of schooling. Also, when the nature of the production of education is reflected, the indetermination of the production must be taken seriously. This means, that instead of assuming a linear process of transformation of the contents taught into context of learned, the educational production involves significant contingencies and uncertainty resulting from endogenous factors. For example, the competencies a pupil will have at the end of a learning process is dependent on the fact that a pupil is an autonomous co-producer of these competencies. So, in the end, raising the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of the schooling might be crucially dependent on the fact how this indetermination of the educational production is taken into consideration.

*School and School Reform – National Perspectives*

In this section the contemporary discourses concerning school and school reforms are revealed with the help of a few national case studies. In these articles, the national and local interests and premises are related to the supranational and global educational policy trends. So, although the articles discuss educational policy and school reforms from national perspectives they describe also how supranational ideologies and global school reform waves, in many cases, challenge national and local educational interests and cause ideological tensions in national educational policy-making. In spite of the national and contextual differences, many authors of this section agree on the critical assessment of educational agendas of supranational organizations. From the national perspective, school doctrine of supranational organizations and global education policy trends appear as an ahistorical policy agenda and reform demands, in which cultural-historical connections of education have been ignored.

Pauli Siljander's article *School in Transition: The Case of Finland* examines, from a Finnish national perspective, the changes that have occurred in the Finnish educational system and educational mindset especially, over the past fifty years, taking into consideration the longer peculiar national history of Finland between two cultural, political and societal systems; on the border between the East and West. Siljander proves how the alterations in general educational policy views and pedagogical principles are interrelated and have defined Finnish school reforms from the 1960s to the present. According to Siljander, Finnish school reforms in their many focal transitions have been guided by the principle that Finnish national philosopher J.V. Snellman defined in the 19th century as a national lifeline: a small nation's strength is its *Bildung* and the *Bildung*'s strength is its generality instead of its particularity or elitism. The principle, thus, includes a strong demand for educational equality. It can be shown convincingly that changes in general educational policy and changes of pedagogical principles have gone 'hand in hand'. Although Finnish school reforms have been traditionally guided by the emphatic vision of *Bildung*, the recent debates on educational policy and pedagogical reform have made visible the tensions arising from the supranational organization's educational policy agendas and their implications to the national school system and its reforms.

In their articles, Wolfgang Schönig and Andreas Fuchs analyze the heated public debate concerning the meaningfulness of the recent school reforms in Germany. According to Schönig's *The Transformation of School in a Changing Society – A German Example* the German school system, when responding to the prevailing societal challenges has adopted the school reform's ideological guidelines from the neo-liberal political agenda; this in turn has led to the massive and resource-demanding restructuring of the German school system. The restructuring is fundamental in nature. When the chosen strategy is *management by objectives*, it has led to the establishment of the skill-based national education performance standards with the need for a rewriting of the curriculum, a redefining of teaching practices

and the creation of “the evaluation machinery” to satisfy the constant need for the measuring and top-down assessment of education. However, according to Schönig’s analysis, the evidence that these neo-liberally motivated reforms are bettering school practices and their outcomes is absent. When analyzing these reforms from the point of view of educational science and in the light of empirical studies, Schönig reveals the vacuity and shortcomings of these reforms. For example, the concept of skill is itself an unclear and vague term, lacking substance or content, tending to narrow the outcomes of education as a purely pragmatic adaptability and, moreover, from the skill-based curriculum, follows the de-politication of the curriculum and de-professionalization of teacher profession and teaching practice. The fundamental failure of these school reforms is that they are based on a logic that corresponds neither to the educational intuition nor to the expertise of teachers and professional pedagogues. What is needed, as Schönig emphasizes, is educational theoretical reflection about school and the educational processes taking place in schools on which the school reforms must be ultimately anchored.

John Andreas Fuchs’ *It Takes a Village* – (Catholic) Education in the 21st Century analyses the aftermath of the first PISA results (2000) on German educational policy. The results sent a shockwave throughout Germany and led immediately to the paradigm shift in educational policy where traditional educational values, objectives and ideals were replaced by educational standards, measurable test scores and competencies. Fuchs introduces a diagnosis, very much in the same spirit as Schönig, of the state of German public education which, as it defined education as a measurable, standardized and valuable resource, has lost education itself. One may ask, then, if German public education is facing a kind of “legitimation crisis”. In other words, when reflecting on the question of the provision of education in Germany, Fuchs points out interestingly that the recent trends in educational policy and school reforms do not necessarily correspond to parental preferences concerning education. It seems evident that what parents expect of public education is that it treats their children like human beings, respects their individual needs, hopes and dreams and does not regard them as sterile standardized human resources. According to Fuchs, the mismatch between parental wishes and the guidelines that public education has adopted in the aftermath of PISA explains the popularity of the private, especially Christian, schools in Germany. To show what is done differently in private schools, Fuchs analyses the pedagogical idea and practices of Catholic schools. Fuchs concludes that because Catholic schools have to a certain extent managed to elude state control, they have also been able to maintain very traditional and fundamental values in and motives for education (*Bildung*).

In the article *Schooling Vis-À-Vis Learning: The Case for Reducing Compulsion* Andrew Stables questions the dominant contemporary trend in educational policy where a long compulsory and formal schooling is individually and socially desirable. According to Stables, the mantra that the more one pursues formal education, the better one can do, has lost its power. Rather, this ideology leads to the problem of “over-compulsion” that endangers the actualization of the student’s own preferences

and ambitions and the critical evaluation of the personal educational paths. Although school is a functionally necessary social institution, an overly standardized formal school reduces the possibilities and potential effects of education and schooling. Stables introduces a scenario of a proposed school reform in England where the compulsory school age is reduced to 14 years and the current secondary school is abolished. However, the main point in the article is not to argue against school or schooling or defend de-schooling but, rather, to seek alternative ways of organizing formal schooling.

In the article *School Representation in Curriculum Policies* Alice Casimiro Lopes and Elizabeth Macedo analyse the political discourses surrounding school and the school curriculum in Brazil. In particular, they seek the meanings that are given to school as a social institution. Their methodological approach relies on post-structural discourse theory from Derrida to Laclau and Mouffe. According to this view, these discourses at different levels of society are seen as political hegemonization trials which have little by way of objective foundations. The important point is that if these discourses and texts have any effect they must be read and interpreted by people and this opens up the creation of new and different views. They find in their data four convergences which they name as (1) school as social redemption; (2) the school we have; (3) the [desired] school; and (4) the school as a place of authentic experience of teachers.

#### *School, Utopias and Future*

The articles on the last section open far reaching perspectives to the both past and future. While most of the earlier articles concentrate on many concurrent problems and reformation visions of schools, the main point of these two articles is to delve further into the future and history, if not to the timeless questions of schooling. While the first article sets forth a bewildering and intriguing Utopia of future school and society, the second argues that whatever changes may occur in society, school will perhaps remain surprisingly similar. In spite of their apparently opposing perspectives these articles, after all, point to the same core question of this whole book: school and school learning.

Alexander Sidorkin's article *The Emancipation of Children* constructs an argument that may to some degree seem quite similar to the radical school critics, like Ivan Illich's *deschooling*, especially because of its explicit Utopian finale. Yet there is a remarkable difference and originality in Sidorkin's thesis in relation to classical educational criticism. Namely, Sidorkin builds his arguments on economic analysis and conceptions. While economic theories have typically argued about whether education is either a form of consumption or investment, or both, Sidorkin's claim is that first and foremost education and school learning is neither: it is *work* and it is the work of children. Thus his criticism against schooling is not against any boring, difficult or artificial characteristic of school work but against the case that it is the last form of forced labour or even human servitude in civilized society. Thus schools

need not be “deschooled” but school work should be – just like any other work – paid justly and at least partly voluntary. Sidorkin’s utopian model may not perhaps change the school so much as cause a number of revolutionary transformations to the social structure and especially to the rights of the youth.

Norm Friesen’s article *The History of Education as the History of Writing: A Look from the Past to the Future* adopts an historical point of view with an exceptionally long time perspective. His point of departure is the Sumerian culture from about 2500–2000 BCE, whereas educational and school histories typically start from antiquity or from the eve of modern times. Friesen starts his consideration from the modern critique that instead of being boring, difficult, artificial and individual as in school, learning – especially the learning of children – should be fun, natural, authentic and social. According to Friesen’s view, this criticism is not a new phenomenon: famous critics like Rousseau, Dewey, Illich etc. have already broached the idea. Schooling seems to be very stable institution whose roots are as long as the history of writing. Happily, the Sumerians used clay as durable writing tablets and thus this period is exceptionally well documented. We can therefore reconstruct the educational characteristics of that culture and find astonishing similarities between it and later school practices. From that evidence, Friesen can construct an argument that – boring, repetitive and artificial – schooling will be also in the future an essential and necessary part of any human culture which relies on writing and textual knowledge.

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