

## Pacts / Partnerships and Governing the Parent and Child

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We can think of school reforms whether they be local projects, national projects, or international development projects as embodying salvation themes that join the individual's destiny to collective ideals of commitment and sacrifice of the nation. The idea of partnership is one example of a contemporary salvation theme. Salvation themes also embody a field of cultural practices that relate to social exclusion as well as inclusion. Reforms that include seemingly opposite ideological agendas--neo-liberalism introducing markets and decentralization introducing community participation--redesign the relation of the social Pact of the State in its obligations to its citizens and the Partnership through which individuals and groups in civil society participate. In the cultural practices of the school there are normalized qualities of the child and teacher that also inscribe practices of exclusion by constituting children and teachers who do not 'fit' the distinctions and dispositions of reasonable people. My purpose in this work, however, is not to demonize salvation narratives but to probe the themes of progress and rescue as a set of mentalities, which render algorithms for the self, family and government.

### **Introduction**

Reforms of teacher education and curriculum embody salvation narratives about the moral sensibility, self-responsibility and self-motivation that enables the child to act as the democratic citizen-of-the-future. This paper offers a reading of Pacts and Partnerships in education reform primarily in the context of the U.S. and the European Union. My intent is not only related to national reforms but to contribute to discussions about partnerships, alliances and cooperation in international development discourses, namely the activities of the World Bank. The issue of the globalization of salvation themes is raised in the work of John Meyer and associates (1997). My use of it, however, relates to the inscription of salvation themes as of a particular, specific kind of cosmopolitanism that inserts Enlightenment hopes in the historically particular systems of governing of the present. In the language of current U.S. reforms, the cosmopolitanism of the teacher is expressed through "professionalism" in which the teacher replaces provincial values and local affinities with norms of action that accept diversity and promote the values of a universal humanity. The individual participates in partnership through collaborative, lifelong learning. The salvation theme of the cosmopolitan teacher and child is not only a theme of future hope and future redemption. The cosmopolitanism embodies rules of ordering and classifying how the world and self are to perform as agents and with agency, which is related to Foucault's (1979) notion of governmentality. In this sense, then, I wish to consider the systems of reason that circulate in schooling as a material practice generating the principles that order, classify and divide action and participation<sup>1</sup>.

Why talk of the governing of the subject through the curriculum, the teacher, and teacher education through this notion of cosmopolitanism? There is a current trend in some literature that makes cosmopolitanism part of the issue of globalization and in this

the new citizen is contrasted to localism and nationalism, as though this were only a recent phenomenon. Yet, the modern school since the 19th century has embodied the governing of the child and family through notions of cosmopolitanism that were to use of rules of reason about "the learner," child development, and other universalizing discourses to order one's life's trajectory. Modern curriculum, from this perspective, functions to replace tradition or local norms in the production of the cosmopolitan "self." Further, when the cosmopolitan self is examined, it appears not as a fabricated global persona, but as a subjectivity that embodies and normalizes particular characteristics and dispositions. The principles generated to order the 'reasonable person' of schooling are also dividing practices that qualify and disqualify individuals for action and participation (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). The discursive mapping of the individual who works in partnerships, then is not only an act about salvation, but embodies a continuum of values whose sets of distinctions and values also fabricate their opposite--the characteristics and dispositions of the individual who is not active or learning. It is in this making of the normal and reasonable that the concept of inclusion joins with that of exclusion.

In this short paper, I will focus on the problem of partnership in schooling as it relates to the alchemy of school knowledge. The alchemy is the traveling of disciplines of knowledge production--physics, history, literary criticism--into the space of schooling. As the sorcerer of the Middle Ages sought to turn lead into gold, modern curriculum theory produces a magical change as knowledge is transported from the social spaces of historians or physicists, for example, into social spaces of the school. My reference to the alchemy is to suggest that the very knowledge systems of schooling--its alchemies--are systems of inclusion/exclusion that need to be scrutinized.

My strategy is a synthetic presentation of the knowledge of schooling that forms a contour of U.S. and in some instances, European teacher and teacher education reforms. The argument is drawn from a broader historical study of U.S. reforms and an eight country European study of educational governance and social inclusion and exclusion<sup>2</sup>. My purpose in this analysis is diagnostic. It is to historicize school knowledge as a cultural practice that encloses and interns the possibilities of action. However, the irony of a diagnosis that shows the contingency of these arrangements, in effect, makes it possible to judge the present inscriptions and arrangements. It also makes for the possibility of alternatives.

### **The Pact and Partnership: Governing of the Self**

Changes in the organizational patterns of schooling are occurring across Europe and North America. We can think of these changes as different trajectories connected either to conservative strategies of neo-liberalism and marketization, or to liberal and left efforts to decentralize bureaucracies and move towards local and community involvement. However, when these different ideological positions are examined in the concrete discourses of professionalization and pedagogical reform, the different teacher reforms and governmental policy changes overlap in their systems of reason (Popkewitz, 1996). The changes in school organizational patterns embody a new sense of displacement and the new calculus of intervention.

One way to think about the organizational changes is to first consider the relation by which the obligations of the State and the obligations of citizenship are established through seemingly opposite categories: the social Pact that binds a government to its citizens, and the Partnership contract between communities and governments. By Pact I am referring to the historically defined position of the State as the guardian of the Good and the progress of the nation. The modern ideas of the welfare state and the socialist state are enactments of the Pact wherein the State provides provisions of social security, employment, medical care, and schooling. The Pact is expressed in the case of many European Union members as the arrangement where the State represents a collective obligation by ensuring that all in society have adequate conditions for participation, social justice and equity. The idea of state standards for teaching and curriculum in the U.S. and the British TQA (Teaching Quality Assurance) are examples that inscribe the idea of the school as properly part of the State's social Pact.

Historically, the Pact has been mutually constructed in relation to the social networks of civil society, what we might call, the Partnership. In the U.S., charter schools, voucher systems and "choice" programs deploy the logic of a partnership--the new collaboration of businesses, local governments, local parent groups who work together through a rhetoric of "choice." The policy is to improve the quality of schooling by producing greater parental involvement and working relations with teachers. These partnerships work in one of the senses of the important American phrase, "We, the People." The partnerships are the constitution of a 'We' through which collective actions of the citizenry form the governing agendas through the participatory mechanisms of a democracy.

The "We" in "We, the people" has a double sense, however, which illustrates how the Pact and the Partnership are not contradictory or opposites but stand in a double relationship through which new patterns of governing are being constructed. The first sense is what I have just described, the sense of the partnership in which people participate and govern. The 'We' also is the government that represents the people, it is the Pact which constitutes a State that acts in the name of the people. The school is historically, one site of these double relations: the state organizes the school (the Pact) to administer the social and moral goals of the 'society,' and, at the same time, produce the child whose liberty enables participation in the formulation of social and cultural agendas (the Partnership).

The significance of the different practices that join the Pact and Partnership lies in a revisioning of the principles that govern the relation between the state, society, community and individuality. The rules that relate the Partnership and the Pact are not formal institutional procedures but are 'made' through the distinctions, differentiations, and categories that are inscribed to order how children are thought of, 'seen,' and acted on. Examples of this are the theories of childhood that divide children into age groups, and the theories of personality and growth, all of which order individuality into different capacities, capabilities, and notions of character (see, e.g., Baker, 2001; Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001; Bloch, & Popkewitz, 2000, & Walkerdine, 1988). As one examines the documents of reform both in the U.S. and Europe, one is struck that State authority is to regenerate and repair the family through democratization that involves mutual respect, decision-making, protection of and care for the child and the family. The

Partnership expresses new governing principles that define the duties and obligations parents are to have for their children's learning, discipline, and attendance at school. In the sense, then, of governing principles, the distinctions among Conservative, neo-liberal minimalist state governing, Social Democratic social welfare reforms, and the transatlantic discussions of the Third Way merge in the pedagogical distinctions and differentiations around the parent and the child.

### **Community as a Governing Practice**

A central metaphor in the salvation narratives of local control and teacher professionalism is that of "community." In the political alignments of the Third Way (Giddens, 1998), for example, government is to foster partnership by fostering community renewal and development. Today's political landscape calls for reforms that emphasize the community -- community health programs, community schools, community-based welfare systems, etc. (Rose, 1994). The community project, from one ideological viewpoint, is to empower through finding an authentic group voice in public arenas. With a different ideological agenda, community is evoked to talk about parental choice and school improvement through market pressures.

Community is a metaphor of the Pact and Partnership. The metaphor is evoked to signal the ways in which the collective obligation of society is organized in specific locales and through specific groups of people who can decide what is reasonable for the processes of change. It captures the salvation theme of the state that is to administer in order to produce individual participation that will save the democracy and economy. It is seductive in that it appeals to a renewal of the general social good through civic action that is local and in which those directly affected can take effective actions. But community participation should not be thought of as some abstract, pure principle that stands out from social practices. It is a word ordered by the amalgamation of discursive practices in which it is deployed.

The notion of community overlaps with discourses of pedagogy and reform to fabricate particular kinds of people who are vested with the particular capacities and capabilities of the school. The salvation themes embody a particular "reasonable person" who operates with a particular type of pragmatism. The organizational changes that call forth a new democratization of the school through metaphors of community embody particular ways of classifying and dividing the parent or child. Progress is constructed through the collaborative work of people in a continuous process of problem solving, modifying and creating new ends as the problems of daily life are confronted.

The formation of the citizen is not related to externally validated morals and obligations but in a set of practices through which the self works on itself. The individual is pragmatic, acting flexibly, ready to respond to new eventualities and 'empowered' through self-reflection, self-analysis, and life-long learning. The "new" child and parent are continually pragmatic and active in reworking their self capacity and potentialities through perpetual intervention. This universe is contingent and in the making rather than having a closed or settled condition.

The resulting discourses of change embody new patterns of calculative routines that "make" the citizen who manages his own personal ethics and collective allegiances (also

see Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 1992). The site of administration is the production of individuals who work on themselves through self-improvement, autonomous and "responsible" life conduct, and 'lifelong' learning. The salvation theme is to empower and to emancipate the child/family through their moral aspirations and desires.

### **The New Expertise of the Teacher**

The call for democracy in contemporary teacher and teacher education reforms embodies new types of expertise. The expert is one who engages individuals and communities so that they can be better managed, healthier and happier. The teacher is one who is personally responsible for "problem solving" in a world that is personally unstable. The professional teacher is "self-governing," and has greater local responsibility in implementing curriculum decisions--a normativity also found in the structuring of the new "constructivist" child (Popkewitz, 1991; 1993). The teacher administers the child who is flexible, ready to respond to new eventualities and empowered through the voices of local "communities" to construct and reconstruct his or her own "practice," participation, self management of choice, and autonomous ethical conduct of life. Teachers are to "coach" the child, and "collaborate" with the parent to empower them and to give "voice" to community. This teaching role, this "expertise" of the teacher, contrasts with the early part of the century where teachers were to "educate" the parent and the child to universal rules of national sagas.

The collaborative, participatory teacher or child is not an autonomous actor who exists without governing patterns. The expertise of the professional is ordered through sciences of education that increasingly provide a calculated, systematic rationality in which to improve schools, order community participation, and guide family development. The notions of collaboration, the rules that constitute "problem-solving" child and teacher, and the notions of community and parent participation are not born of "experience" but of experiences that are ordered and classified in relation to overlapping policy agendas and research programs.

Professional knowledge is not of a self-wisdom acquired through practice but rather the inscriptions of particular systems of rationality related to the new Pact and Partnership, systems which intern and enclose the boundaries of what constitutes experience and its administration. The practices of the new expertism fabricate a teacher who is self-actualized and who remakes her biography through continually calculating and rationally researching the self. New assessment methods are performed for teacher supervision and for the calculation of the child. One can think of the teacher education reforms designed to produce the 'reflective teacher' as simultaneously creating the possibility of increasing teachers involvement while also isolating and creating illusions of democratization (Zeichner, 1996). The teacher assesses the child in similar fashion; through life histories and portfolios the (constructivist) child makes and remakes his or her own biography.

### **The Alchemy of the Curriculum**

School subjects are performed as an alchemy. The expectations of curriculum related to the school timetable, conceptions of childhood, and conventions of teaching transform disciplinary knowledge into strategies for governing the child. Learning physics is about 'concept mastery,' the psychology of 'cooperative small group learning' and the 'motivation' and the 'self-esteem' of children. The only thing left of disciplinary practice when it arrives in the school is the namesake -- physics or history.

The alchemy of school subjects needs to be placed in the field of cultural practices that gives intelligibility to particular kinds of people who are vested in schooling with historically constructed capacities and capabilities of individuality. The revisioning of the Pact and Partnership, the notions of community, the new expertise of the teacher, and new assessment techniques are governing practices that are to remake the biographies of the child, which produce new systems of enclosures and internments. Were we to examine mathematics, for example, we would see that what is portrayed as the reason of mathematics is not mathematical reason but the transportation of a psychology directed to the inner capabilities of the child. The "innate reasoning" of the child in the teaching of mathematics is a logic of the psychology of children's development of justifications and conjectures. Teaching is the administration of the child who practices an inductive and deductive reasoning. The "reason" of mathematics teaching can be understood as the cultural production of individuals who work on themselves through self-improvement, autonomous and "responsible" life conduct, and "lifelong" learning (see, e.g., Rose, 1999).

The alchemy embodies a grid of logic that gives it intelligibility and through which individuals are observed and within which they understand themselves as reasonable people. The alchemy translates the disciplinary knowledge into particular distinctions about a psychology of the collaborative child and teacher, concepts that have little to do with the social spaces of physics or history. The instructional problem is for the child to act and participate according to a universal set of rules about learning, or what is called in today's reform, the pedagogical content of teaching. But the rules of reason for this learning are not a universal set of principles applied to children's development but particular historically mobilized divisions and displacements (see, e.g., Lesko, 2001).

It is at this point that the problem of social inclusion/exclusion can be considered. If we compare the dispositions and sensitivities of the cosmopolite to that of urban education (Popkewitz, 1998b; also see Mirón, 1996), it becomes clear that urban education provides a series of salvation stories of the U.S. efforts toward an inclusive society. However, the distinctions and categories of the urbanness of the child are categories of difference from the cosmopolite. The differences of teaching and of capabilities are constructed through the normalizing practices that "make" the urban child different from what continually goes unnamed--the normality of distinctions inscribed as the child who problem solves. The child who is administrated in urban and rural education is the child who lacks self-esteem and who needs remediation.

The politics of school knowledge involve overlapping discourses that relate the Partnership, the Pact, and pedagogy, and through this construct distinctions that qualify and disqualify individuals for participation. The discourses of reform that move from

partnerships, community participation, home-school collaboration, parent "choice" vouchers, and the new pedagogies of teaching and teacher education install the characteristics of the educated person and its opposite, the individuality that lies outside of the reason, the individuality that is not the reasonable person who collaborates and solves problems.

### **Towards a Study of Schooling**

My concern has been with how can we diagnose current reforms as a mutual set of relations that construct the Pact and the Partnership. The salvation themes in current reforms are not merely paths to redemption but effects of power that cannot be taken-for-granted. This notion of diagnosis is expressed by Rose (1999) who argues that the task of inquiry is to disturb "that which forms the very groundwork of our present, to make the given once more strange and to cause us to wonder at how it came to appear so natural" (p. 58). To show the contingency of the arrangement that we live by is to show how thought has played a part in holding those arrangements together and to contest the strategies governing human possibilities.

It is this politics of knowledge in education that I have engaged in. My discussion about "reason" as a field of cultural practices enabled a consideration of how multiple different layers of school reforms overlap to inscribe divisions in an unequal playing field. What pass as universal principles of learning or teaching are not universal, but are in fact specific and historically constructed in power relations. The distinctions serve as seemingly natural signposts to signal "the capable" child in school; the rules of psychology and teaching generate the principles of a child's progress, "development," and collaboration; these rules also generate the dispositions through which the teacher "knows" the problem-solving child (and the child who is not problem solving). But I argued that the fabrications are not natural to thought or planning but are historically fabricated as effects of power. The fabrications are divisions that exclude as they include, disqualify as they qualify individuals for action and participation. The distinctions and divisions of a child who will be flexible and problem-solving are inscriptions of a normality at the level of being--the capabilities, dispositions, and capacities of the child and teacher--and it is on this level that the politics of education works to qualify and disqualify individuals for participation.

In some ways, this analysis goes against the grain. Often contemporary critiques of such reforms think of them of as tied to conservative agendas associated with neo-liberalism and the metaphors of markets and privatization. If my argument is appropriate, what is associated with neo-liberalism is a calculus of intervention and salvation that involves multiple historical trajectories that overlap with but are not determined by the State policies associated either with Reagan and Thatcher or with Hayekian and Freedman economics<sup>3</sup>. The realignment of the idea of the welfare state, the policies that mutually construct centralizing and decentralizing policies overlap with other discourses of pedagogy, school administration and notions of participation and are not reducible to Neo-liberalism. What is significant in understanding neo-liberal ideas, then, is not their economic reductionism nor the establishment of another State theory of government, but considering how such practices relate to other practices to form a field of cultural practices that form the principles which order and govern the production of individuality. As Wagner (1994) suggests, it would be historically incorrect to

understand the economic language without considering how that language is worked within cultural practices.

### **Notes**

1. I discuss this more fully in Popkewitz, 1991; 1998; and in press.
2. The European study is directed by Sverker Lindblad of Uppsala University, Sweden.
3. Without moving into an economic analysis, the very restructuring of Keynesian economics that is assumed in neo-liberalism begins to appear after World War Two when Fordist production systems no longer are viewed as increasing productivity. Further, what is called 'markets' and privatization exist within complex systems of regulated spaces that have little to do with 19th century notions of markets.

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