

STEVEN BRINT

THINKING ABOUT SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES AS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

An Intellectual Self-Portrait

EARLY LIFE

I was born in Albuquerque, NM in 1951. My father, one of the first computer systems analysts, worked in the defense industry at Sandia Laboratories. My mother raised three boys and acted in local theater. Both of my parents were Jewish but secular by orientation, particularly my father. They were politically liberal and intellectually oriented. When I told my parents at age 9 that I had no intention to continue with Sunday school, my mother agreed as long as I promised to read an illustrated treatise on the world's major religions. My paternal grandfather was a self-employed plumber who had migrated to the United States as a young man and had a fourth grade education. My maternal grandfather, also an immigrant, owned three western wear stores in New Mexico. My mother's sister, however, had married into a wealthy family in New York. I consequently developed a heightened sense of status and class differences from an early age, and an appreciation for the working class greatly influenced by my creative and free-thinking paternal grandfather.

I played football and wrestled as an adolescent. I also read obsessively. Vance Packard and J.D. Salinger were particular favorites. After my parents' divorce, my mother remarried and we moved to suburban Kansas City. I was one of the few who left Kansas for college. At Berkeley, I was an editor and columnist on the *Daily Cal* and captained a championship intramural softball team. I had the experience of studying with Troy Duster, Philippe Nonet, Philip Selznick, and Neil Smelser. At Troy's home, jazz was on and the easel was up, while, speaking hardly a word, he let the undergraduates in his senior seminar struggle with one another over the works of theorists like Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse. I wrote a senior essay entitled "A Critique of Critical Theory."

I attended graduate school at Harvard, where I studied with Ann Swidler, James A. Davis, and Daniel Bell. I became engaged with educational studies in the later 1970s as a research assistant for Jerome Karabel, who had, obtained a large grant from the National Institute of Education to study "power and ideology in higher education." Karabel ran an evening seminar in which we discussed books of theoretical significance that bore on educational studies. Here I encountered works by Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, Collins, Konrad and Szelenyi, Jencks, Meyer and Rowan, Sarfatti Larson, and many others. Those who attended the seminar included Paul DiMaggio, Kevin Dougherty, David Karen, Katherine McClelland, David Stark, David Swartz, and Michael Useem. My dissertation, "Stirrings of an

Oppositional Elite?” written under the supervision of Daniel Bell and James Davis, used survey data to analyze the plausibility of the various “new-class” theories that were circulating at the time.

INTELLECTUAL ORIENTATION

I have worked at the intersection of the sociology of education, the sociology of the professions, and the study of middle-class politics. In my work on schooling, I have taken the explicit purposes of schooling (cultural transmission, socialization, and talent identification) more seriously than most sociologists, but I have historicized them, subjected them to critical analysis, and rooted them in political contestation. I have identified the key features of schools and universities as social structures, while simultaneously examining them as objects of contestation influenced by powerful external actors who attempt to use them to advance new forms of organization that reflect their major constituencies’ interests and ideals. I have “frozen” schools and universities as crystallized social structures, and I have watched them “flow” over time under the influence of contending forces. My approach reflects the characteristic Weberian interests in the causes of transformations in social organization and the characterization of the crystallized structures that emerge from these transformations. Like Weber, I have emphasized the ideal and material interests of organizational managers as much as those of powerful external actors. Much of my work has been motivated by skepticism toward what I regarded as debatable views of intellectuals and policy makers. Some has been motivated by a search for better data with which to answer questions in which I became interested.

U.S. TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

In *The Diverted Dream* (1989), Karabel and I examined a new type of educational organization, the two-year junior (later community) college, founded for the first time in 1900. We emphasized that the origins of the junior college reflected the progressive American ideology of opportunity, but its founding was sponsored by leading university presidents and deans who saw the new colleges as a way to create a bulwark between their own institutions and the large numbers of under-prepared students they feared would seek admission. We also focused on the interests of the small band of junior college specialists who sought to escape the sense of subordinate status they experienced by adopting a new identity as the leading provider of occupationally-relevant post-secondary education. We emphasized the subsequent assembly of a powerful coalition of supporters for the new colleges’ mission, led by the Kellogg Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Nixon Administration. We developed a framework in which the interests of powerful social actors in the colleges’ environment is refracted through the lens of managerial interests in developing a distinctive status and identity. Community colleges are the greatest success story of U.S. higher education in the 20th century, judging by the share of post-secondary students they enrolled. We accounted for this success by emphasizing their organizational assets: geographical closeness to most students, low cost, dual tracks (transfer and occupational), and the development of community support through offering adult education and avocational courses. We also emphasized that the institutional success of the community colleges was built on a massive failure: most students failed to complete any degree. We attributed these

failures to the students' lack of preparation for college work, the colleges' low levels of student support services, and the proliferation of pathways through the colleges.

In subsequent work on the origins and transformation of community colleges (toward becoming more vocationally oriented institutions) (Brint and Karabel 1991), we criticized neo-institutional theories of schooling for failing to appreciate the role of powerful influences in the environment on the founding and transformations of educational institutions. We also criticized the neo-institutionalists' failure to take managerial interests into account. We used the community college case to offer generalizations about the environmental opportunities and organizational asset bases that allowed for the successful entry of new forms into established educational systems. In a later work of self-reflection (Brint 2003), I regretted the tendency in *The Diverted Dream* to equate transfer with better labor market opportunities, acknowledging that some occupational programs, such as nursing and electronics technology, showed strong labor market outcomes. I also emphasized more than we had originally the role of political progressivism as an element in the founding of the first junior colleges. At the same time, I observed that conditions for young people entering community colleges had deteriorated in several respects following the publication of *The Diverted Dream*, given the evidence that remedial courses were growing but with only limited success and the large number of students who were unable to find the classes they needed to make timely progress to their degrees.

U.S. FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

In *The Ends of Knowledge*, now nearing completion, I examine organizational and cultural change in U.S. four-year colleges and universities between 1980 and 2015. The book focuses on the consequences and potentialities of expansion. In human systems, I argue that growth is misconceived as simply a flow, a magnification, or a flowering. It typically brings benefits, to be sure, and these benefits are unequally distributed. To understand growth fully it is important to see that it occurs within systems of interaction. That means that it is *channelled*. Growth follows along previously structured paths and it occurs in contexts that give it shape. That means also that it creates *new openings*. It permits the possibility of new organizational forms built by educational entrepreneurs who find that they can compete successfully with existing organizations. It causes *pooling* of common sentiment. It creates new interest groups and it motivates other groups to oppose their assertions. Under conditions of scarcity and preference, it creates *fissuring* of structures. It expands fissures within systems and creates divergent trajectories. It encourages *concentrations* and *dilutions*. Growth stimulates many of those who are newly incorporated to great effort, while at the same time risking lower levels of performance on average. It causes the development of *outlets*. It creates and legitimates safe zones for those who cannot succeed on the educational terms of the system, bringing the margins closer to the center and even, at times, giving the "margins" precedence over the center. It encourages the construction of *barriers*. It promotes the development of new forms of academic differentiation and higher levels of credentialing as protection against the dilution of performance norms. And it creates competition among potential *regulators*. It commands the attention of the powerful, and it creates interests among some with vision and resources to direct its power toward ends they identify as in the public interest.

Under the urging of a growth coalition led by the major philanthropies and the White House, I argue that the higher education industry is moving toward complete market penetration. Unlike many consumer product industries in which adaptive upgrading of products is required for firms to stay in business over the long run, higher education can pursue market penetration without adaptive upgrading simply by setting up incomparable quality levels through selective admissions and granting baccalaureates to those whose performance would not pass muster in the better secondary schools. In the context of selective admissions and no industrywide standards for baccalaureate level performance, the paradox of market penetration is that it provides real opportunity for many who would otherwise be excluded, while at the same time ensuring that the average college degree counts for less and less with respect to the cognitive side of human capital development.

I emphasize the development of first-generation students as a key status group in the press for complete market penetration. Where financial aid is available, upwardly mobile first-generation college students, most of them from low-income backgrounds, are the human power source driving market penetration. They have the pride of coming from families that overcame obstacles to achieve the American dream and the motivation to prove their worth against those who doubt it. They are the natural audience for the rhetoric of opportunity and the natural repository for resentment against social exclusions. Social incorporation is essential to the teleology of market penetration. It therefore should come as no surprise that a harmony of interests exists between college and foundation presidents who take up the values of inclusion and diversity and the students whose persistence will be required to realize the college completion agenda. Although built on the rhetoric of opportunity, the higher education system continues to yield disproportionate benefits to those who are well prepared by family and prior school background to succeed at the levels that count. The paradox of the first-generation is that students misrecognize the endpoint of the system as opportunity and degree attainment, rather than market penetration, and consequently run the risk of a bitter awakening when the futures that seem to beckon materialize in a disproportionate way for the already advantaged.

I emphasize the development of a mass intellectual and professional stratum. A larger undergraduate population produces a larger graduate population, both because more graduate students are needed to staff undergraduate sections, and because undergraduates who want to stand out in labor markets in which the baccalaureate has become normative without standing for have little choice but to pursue higher level degrees. These higher level degrees, particularly the first professional degrees and the doctorate create something that is truly new human society, a mass of highly educated people. These people are trained to read the literatures in their fields, to consider empirical evidence, and to reason systematically through problems and are absorbed not just in universities, but also in a wide range of institutions in society. Some of these people become idea and knowledge generators in their own right. Universities consequently are no longer the "service stations" for society, as Kerr (1963) viewed them. Instead the conventions of research permeate and universities become one center of ideas and knowledge generation among others. This becomes increasingly true as tenure track positions in colleges and universities fail to keep pace with the growth of undergraduate enrollments, and more doctoral degree recipients seek employment outside the university. Universities continue to generate many ideas and inventions, but they also become more a partner than a source. Many

ideas and inventions are jointly produced by research workers inside and outside the university. Equally, ideas that are generated outside of the university enter universities for refining and testing. In this respect the university becomes more often a reviser and adjudicator of ideas and less often a source.

I emphasize the phenomenon of dynamism at the top and industrialization at the bottom of the system. The resources available to the top 30 U.S. research universities have allowed them to extend the distance between themselves and the remaining 7,000 colleges and universities in the country. Drawing on large endowments, extraordinary grant funding, and high tuition charges, the top of the system is remarkably productive, both in its research accomplishments and in the educational opportunities it provides. One measure of leadership dynamics can be found in the production of influential articles, which have become more concentrated over time. A new model of the “creative” type of man is developing at these institutions, in business and engineering as much as in design and the arts. Students have the opportunity at MIT to install workshops in their dormitory rooms, so that they can build and tinker all night, if they wish, and students at Stanford can work on projects with professors whose innovations launched the digital revolution. If they have good ideas to bring to market, they will have access to venture capital funds to pursue them. By contrast, with limited funds for the employment of instructors and graders, the middle and bottom of the system has become increasingly mechanized. In some public institutions, students choose from among dozens of fully online degree and certificate programs and hundreds of individual online classes. Even those that are taught face-to-face often feature assessments based on machine-graded examinations. I argue that changes in the stratification structure of U.S. higher education in these ways mirror changes in the opportunity structure of American society, where the top tenth of one percent of households, by recent estimates, own twenty-two percent of the country’s wealth (Saez and Zucman 2014).

I emphasize disciplinary divergence. When college going was rare, the prestige of the disciplines mattered little. Science and engineering were prestigious because of their association with industrial and technological progress, but the humanities were also prestigious because of their association with wealth and cultivation. The arrival of mass higher education challenged and finally eroded that rough equality. Academic status became associated with perceptions of rigor and capacities for abstraction. Mathematics and physics stood atop of this hierarchy, with only economics and philosophy from the social sciences and humanities ranking high. A parallel hierarchy of labor market opportunities undoubtedly impressed students and their parents more—with engineering and business students having the best chance at good salaries, followed by those in physical and life sciences, the social sciences, the humanities and the arts, and, finally, education and human services. These hierarchies are the result not only of the relative demand for educated labor, but also the elimination of many prospective majors from the more advantaged quantitative fields. While providing a relatively stable prestige order, useful to university administrators in the allocation of resources, the hierarchy and the elimination process also created awkward imbalances in university life, including the reliance of universities on non-quantitative fields to provide “soft landing” spots more than rigorous training requirements. Faculty members in non-quantitative fields taught on average more for lower pay, confronted less motivated students, and, perhaps for these reasons, also required less from their students. Given their distinctive role within the university, their still-healthy enrollments, and the continuing support they

receive from cultural institutions, it would be a mistake to see the humanities as an endangered species. However, humanities fields with few majors are endangered. The disciplinary hierarchy has been reinforced by professional accreditors and relative deprivation. Engineering and business accreditors are requiring that students develop social as well as technical skills, reducing long-standing advantages of the humanities and social sciences. By contrast, large numbers of students and faculty in the humanities and interpretive social sciences fields identify with the dispossessed whose condition mirrors their own.

I also emphasize the drift upward of policy making authority. The federal government has of course been an important actor in U.S. higher education since the time of the Morrill Act. Research universities could not perform their work without federal funding for research, and neither colleges nor universities would survive without the billions of dollars provided by the federal government in Pell grants, guaranteed student loans and indirectly through tax benefits for parents whose students attend college. Prior to the 1990s, the system was marked by decentralization, with peer review important in the distribution of grants and financial aid awarded to students to use as they saw fit. Since the 1990s, a new more activist regulatory and policy environment has begun to emerge. The major philanthropies have been the leaders of the movement toward prescriptive centralization guided by the college completion agenda. The Obama Administration has signaled its intention to play a more directive role as well. The Administration's plan centered on a ratings system that would compare colleges to one another on the measures the Administration identified as important to American families, including average tuition costs, graduation rates, and average amount of debt at graduation. Prescriptive centralization can create greater focus on meeting important national goals, but it risks the vitality that comes from a decentralized system upholding a wide variety of values. The State is understandably concerned with efficiency, but good education is often not particularly efficient. It requires trial and error, deeper digging, multiple drafts, and contestation.

THE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES 2000 PROJECT

The Ends of Knowledge was influenced by papers my research group and I produced in the years 2000-2014 with the support of foundation and NSF funding. During this time, the *Colleges & Universities 2000 Project*, as I called it, constructed two large databases: the Institutional Data Archive on American Higher Education (IDA) and the College Catalog Study Database (CCS). We also constructed a database on the consequences of the Great Recession for U.S. higher education based on coding of reports found in LexisNexis for a sample of more than 300 colleges and universities. These databases became important sources for our work on U.S. higher education.

We found a technique for identifying the latent structure of the higher education field through cluster analysis of institutional characteristics, with findings that departed from the accepted view promulgated by the Carnegie Classification. We found the key structural characteristics to be selectivity, control, and highest degree awarded. We identified seven primary organizational locations in the system and showed that college and university presidents chose as reference institutions those in the same structural location. We also showed that aspirations to move up the hierarchy were common among the higher enrollment and financially stronger institutions in each segment. Upwardly mobile public institutions wanted to offer

higher level degrees and upwardly mobile private institutions to become more selective (Brint, Riddle, and Hanneman 2006).

We studied curricula extensively. We found that the center of gravity in U.S. higher education since the 1930s has been occupational-professional education, with a brief reversion to emphasis on arts and sciences in the 1960s (Brint et al. 2005). Our studies led us to develop many reasons to criticize neo-institutional theories of the convergence of organizational structures to mimic dominant models. We found that multiple models of general education have been supported by legislative fiat, informal networks, or long-standing conventions (Brint et al. 2011). Similarly, we found that interdisciplinary programs have been much more popular at liberal arts oriented institutions, larger institutions, and high-status institutions than elsewhere in the system (Brint et al. 2009). At the same time, we found that interdisciplinary research and curricula were growing moderately in popularity, influenced by the interests of the federal government in solving major problems, the interests of activists scattered across humanities and social science fields in studying marginalized populations, and the interests of organizational managers who excelled in aggregating resources and valued leverage against the traditionalism of academic departments (Brint 2005). Large and high-status organizations have been much more likely than others to add newly emerging academic fields, such as neuroscience and international business (Brint et al. 2011), and they have been much more likely to protect declining liberal arts fields (Brint et al. 2012). The capacity for adaptation that comes from high enrollments and robust finances allow some institutions to innovate without withdrawing from traditional fields. The opposite is true for low-capacity institutions. Mission also matters: liberal arts oriented institutions tend to stay that way; they are reluctant to add occupational fields or to withdraw from traditional arts and sciences fields (Brint et al. 2005; Brint et al. 2012). Public institutions also show distinctive missions; unlike privates they are more interested in developing specialists in a broad range of fields than in cutting edge creative work in a smaller number of fields (Brint 2005). They have inherited a strong interest in applied fields that serve society, and they have much greater interest in making social contributions through providing opportunities to low-income populations (Brint 2007). Nor have we seen convergence in decision-making structures; instead, based on accounts of a sample of senior leaders surveyed in 2001 and 2012, we have seen some growth in the number of decisions in which managers only are involved, but also expansion of the number of actors involved in most forms of academic decision making (Apkarian et al. 2014).

We found fewer reasons to be skeptical about the role of market forces in U.S. higher education. We found that patterns of donor support and changing student interests do affect the growth and decline of academic fields. However, changes in labor market conditions and government funding priorities did not show effects on the rise and fall of academic fields. The pattern of progressive enclosure of labor market opportunities in professional and managerial occupations, particularly in those occupations in which fewer than 80 percent but more than half of workers had college degrees, were as important as any of the market forces we studied (Brint et al. 2013).

STUDENT CULTURE AND TEACHING REFORM

Another strand of work that contributed to *The Ends of Knowledge* grew out of survey analyses of the student experience through my involvement as a faculty associate at the Center for Studies in Higher Education at UC Berkeley. Here I served with my colleagues John Douglass and Gregg Thomson as a principal researcher on the UC Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES) and later as a principal researcher on the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey and Consortium. The latter grew out of UCUES and included some two dozen major public research universities and nearly a dozen international partners. My research using these data initially focused on disciplinary differences. Working with Allison M. Cantwell and Robert A. Hanneman, I found important differences in cultures of engagement between science and engineering fields and humanities and social science fields. Success for students in science and engineering was associated net of covariates with focus on improving quantitative skills, studying with and helping others, conscientious attendance, and it was rooted in a high value placed on prestigious and well-paying jobs. Success for students in humanities and social science fields was, by contrast, associated, net of covariates, with frequent participation in class, asking “insightful” questions, interaction with professors, and other measures of overt interest in class materials. The difference was between group oriented grinds and individualistic enthusiasts (Brint, Cantwell, and Hanneman 2008). A subsequent study explored differences between the disciplines in work effort, conscientiousness, and analytical and critical thinking. Science and engineering disciplines scored high on work effort (as measured by hours spent studying and attending class). They also scored higher on measures of conscientiousness. We expected the humanities and social sciences to shine on our measures of analytical and critical thinking, but that turned out not to be the case. Instead, we found few disciplinary differences on these measures (Brint, Cantwell, and Saxena 2012).

At the same time, from my experiences in the lecture hall, I had developed concerns about the average level of students’ academic engagement and competence. Cantwell and I studied time use in the University of California and found that students were spending more than 40 hours a week on average in social and recreational activities but only 26-27 hours a week on study and attending class. Women, students who had achieved high GPAs, and science and engineering students were more likely to spend longer hours in study (Brint and Cantwell 2010). In a subsequent study, we developed a theory of student disengagement and studied the composition of disengaged student populations. Using the UCUES instrument, we found that one-quarter of students said they rarely if ever participated in class or communicated with their professors and one-fifth of students said they worked on their studies 18 hours or less each week and completed 50 percent or less of assigned reading (Brint and Cantwell 2014). These findings led me to wonder whether students were learning as much or more in their co-curricular involvements in student clubs and organizations. I added several questions to the SERU survey as a way to explore this issue and am currently engaged in analyzing these data. I have come to suspect that for most residential college students, the physical campus experience may be more valuable for the co-curricular learning it fosters than for the stimulation it offers in the classroom. This of course has important implications for the future of physical campuses and the substitutability of online instruction for the physical campus experience. Sadly, the results of this work add to a growing list of

research, beginning with Derek Bok's *Our Underachieving Colleges* (2006), questioning the extent to which U.S. research universities are successful as teaching and learning institutions.

The obverse side of this interest in student culture has been an interest in the prospects for the reform of teaching. I described the rise of "the new progressivism" in college teaching based on project based learning and ample opportunities for interactive engagement. I questioned whether the new progressivism was typically accompanied by enough rigor to lead to improved subject matter mastery. (This skepticism seems to have been warranted, judging from the widely-read work of Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa on "limited learning" in college.) I discussed the sources of decline in requirements outside of quantitative fields, pointing to deteriorating labor market prospects in interpretive disciplines, the interests of higher education senior leaders in maintaining and expanding enrollments, and the concerns of many faculty members not to discourage under-prepared students from low-income backgrounds. In the same piece, I questioned whether the accountability movement would accomplish much to change these dynamics. I emphasized that most faculty members treated accountability requirements as compliance make-work and failed to see their relevance to student achievement. In addition, some faculty members resented the intrusion of external agencies into the classroom and feared that the higher education accountability movement would lead to the same types of one-size-fits-all thinking evident in K-12 accountability movements with similar levels of erosion of professional judgment (Brint 2011). (I had previously studied the consequences of K-12 accountability on teachers' sense of professionalism in a study of five Southern California school districts. See Brint and Teele 2008.)

REFORMING UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

I have used the results of my research and thinking on undergraduate teaching and learning in practical activities as an educational reformer. As vice provost for undergraduate education, I launched a number of initiatives to improve teaching and learning on my University of California campus at Riverside. I developed a philosophy that involved stretching high-achieving students, bringing in better teaching and new adaptive learning technologies, and carefully evaluating and redesigning, where necessary, academic support services for struggling students. For high-achieving students, I developed a leadership pathway program, a Rhodes-Marshall program to prepare students for prestigious scholarship and fellowship competitions, and fostered a redesign of the Honors program along the lines of a small liberal arts college with early research exposure. I began the Chancellor's Research Fellows competition and fostered the development of early research experiences across the colleges through a variety of incentive programs. I started a "new faculty" course for entering assistant professors to provide "basic training" for teaching in the research university. I doubled the size of the campus's Academy of Distinguished Teachers, and fostered their involvement in mentoring faculty members whose teaching is subpar as well as their redesign of teaching evaluations. I developed an incentive program for colleagues to redesign courses to bring in more interactive engagement and discovery-based learning opportunities. I also developed an incentive program for colleagues to pilot and increase their use of well-validated adaptive learning technologies. I encouraged redesign of our humanities, social

sciences, and business learning communities to focus on academic skill development. I used the results of program evaluations to foster the introduction of best practices in tutoring and summer “catch-up” programs.

As an educational reformer, I became involved in a number of national associations beginning in the mid-2000s, including the University Innovations Alliance (a consortium of eleven public research universities devoted to improving graduation rates among low-income and under-represented minority students), the previously-mentioned SERU Consortium, the Reinvention Center, and the Educational Advisory Board’s Academic Affairs Forum. This reform work led to a collaboration with the Russell Sage Foundation and Charles Clotfelter, my co-editor, on a volume entitled *Effectiveness in Higher Education* (Brint and Clotfelter forthcoming).

SCHOOLING IN COMPARATIVE-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A final major interest has been in the understanding of schooling in a comparative-historical perspective. The centerpiece of this work is *Schools and Societies* (2006 [1998]). The book combines an organizational theory approach to the structure of schooling; a consciousness of affinities between social and educational change; and a Weberian approach to the multi-sided struggles for control of curricula, educational opportunities, and educational policy. In a book with a wide sweep, it is possible only to note a few highlights.

The book emphasizes that social institutions are intended to raise standards and to reduce the variability among children that would otherwise exist. They owe their success to the implementation of authority structures, rules, comparatively small classes, grading as a means to create status hierarchies among children related to school goals, the alternation between work and recreational time, and the creation of classroom environments in which work tasks are of pre-eminent significance. Schools can organize in a variety of ways to increase learning, notably by spending more time on task, by providing adequate learning materials, and by grouping children effectively. However, learning is only one way to raise standards and to reduce variability. The book endorses the insights of John Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977) about the importance of “ritual categories,” such as “credentialed teacher” and “college graduate,” as legitimating forces and mechanisms for hiding variability. It also emphasizes socialization messages both within and outside the classroom.

My intuition was that socialization was more important than any of the other ostensible purposes of schooling. By socialization, I mean the effort to inculcate and reinforce authority-approved attitudes and behaviors. The book differentiates three dimensions of conformity: behavioral, moral, and cultural. It also distinguishes four socio-historical forms of school-based socialization: the village/communal pattern, the industrializing pattern, the bureau-corporate pattern and the elite pattern. The first transformation is from the relatively free-flowing village/communal pattern to an industrial pattern characterized by very stringent demands for behavioral control and moral conformity. The bureau-corporate/mass consumption pattern, which comes into play in middle-class neighborhoods in wealthy countries is based on impersonal control through rules and routines, relatively lower levels of moral discussion and training, and many more choices in classroom and extracurricular life. Students are acculturated to a world of bureaucratic organization and mass consumption.

I emphasized that schools are also a staging ground for developing skills in informal socialization. Just as the classroom is well designed to produce orderly and industrious employees, the playground is well designed to produce adults with at least minimal levels of interpersonal skills. This production is connected to structural features of the playground. The playground is supervised by adult monitors, but not directed by them. Many children mix freely on the playground and therefore relations with a wide variety of types of children are possible. Children are similar in age, bringing a rough equality, but are usually not close neighbors or family members, encouraging repeated encounters with “strangers.” On the playground, children must learn to build core groups of supporters and deal with bullies, ‘tagalongs,’ tattletales, false friends, snobs, and other familiar childhood types. Through confronting many types of children and diverse issues related to trust, confidence and conflict, children can become skillful navigators of relationships.

I was skeptical of the idea, most closely associated with the work of Melvin Kohn (1972) and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1979), that the schools propagate class-based patterns of socialization. In work with Michael T. Matthews and Mary C. Contreras (2001), studying working-class and middle-class primary schools in Southern California (and including one elite private school), we found that the main socialization messages were quite similar across schools. These messages focused on order and effort: sitting still, not bothering other children, and working hard. These are not properly construed as capitalist forms of socialization; one would not have found any different basic pattern in Bolshevik Russia or Maoist China. They express features of life in highly-organized, economically advancing societies. Anthropologists have shown that tolerance for disorder, wandering attention, and irregular effort are more common in remote regions of agrarian societies with low or moderate development trajectories. In this study, we were surprised by how few messages in any of the classrooms concerned intellectual virtues (curiosity, creativity, independent thinking). We also discovered that schools use concepts drawn from the broader culture, such as citizenship and self-esteem, and redefine them in ways that support the authority structure of the school. In the schools we studied, citizenship, for example, had nothing to do with exercise one’s rights, including the right to protest. Instead, a good citizen was one who consistently followed the rules of the school.

My interests in cultural transmission focused on historicizing the rise and fall of subject matter and linking these curricular changes to developments in the economy, the state, and society. I identified a number of patterns of correspondence, some related to economic relations, others to social incorporation, and still others to national political priorities. I have emphasized that agrarian subjects give way as the rural economy gives way to commercial and industrial life. I have emphasized that subject matter associated with highly cultivated elites tend to give way to subject matter that reflect aspirations for social incorporation. (Latin and art history fall, literature and history representative of minority group experiences gain). Both immigration patterns and national geopolitical interests affect language teaching. (European languages and Russian fall, Asian languages and Arabic gain). Coalitions are often important in transformations of curriculum. Mathematics and science entered the curriculum not only because of the advocacy of scientists, but because calculation became a more important social capacity with the rise of commercial civilization and business people favored more widespread facility with calculation. More generally, I emphasized the interplay of the state, the liberal professions, and

social movements in the formation of the curriculum (Brint 2006: chap. 4). One can say that the curriculum is the product of the overlapping interests of the state and the liberal professionals. National language and history teaching encourages identification with the nation-state. But the messages of literature and history are the province of textbook writers who are themselves professors or who have worked closely with professors. Progressive educators fought to bring the arts and physical education into the curriculum. The State has little interest in these fields, but it conceded space to the social movement of progressive educators. Educators have been persuasive that a focus solely on “serious” subjects is too taxing for children. However, “back to basics” movements are very popular with state officials, as well as conservatives, and cuts to the arts and physical education are tolerated if it appears that children are not succeeding in core fields. The state’s interest in social incorporation has been an important influence since the Civil Rights movement and, goaded by social movement activists, has led to many changes in the literature, history, and social science curricula.

The weight of sociological work at this time was on the reproduction of class, racial-ethnic and gender privileges through schooling. Although I acknowledged the many advantages that students from the dominant groups held in converting economic and social privileges into scholastic attainments, I also resisted what I regarded to be a one-sided emphasis on inequality. I emphasized that educational attainment itself, rather than class background or measured intelligence, is the most important influence on later life chances. Hundreds of thousands of students from the bottom half of the income distribution are identified as academically promising by school systems and thereby provided with the encouragement and tools to advance through the educational system. This capacity of the system is greatly enhanced by the existence of neighborhood schools whose students are drawn from relatively homogeneous and class differentiated populations. Because every school produces hierarchies, some students in poor neighborhoods will, by definition, achieve high rank within their schools. By contrast, if students from highly educated families were distributed more evenly across schools the opportunity to resort based on school achievement would be markedly lower.

Within this context, I emphasized that social class is a constant divider across the world. Students from well-educated families come to school with a wide set of advantages. Their parents tend to use larger vocabularies, read to them at night, encourage their literacy, set aside study spaces, insist on completion of homework, provide them tutoring, get involved in the schools, travel abroad, and expose them to cultural institutions. Not all of these practices exist in every society, but these are characteristic of the types of family practices that can lead to scholastic advantages. I characterized race and ethnicity as a variable divider, because some racial-ethnic minorities do very well in school systems, while others do not. I noted the importance of timing of arrival in the host country (better to arrive at a time of rapid industrialization), the distribution of rural versus urban backgrounds, and oral versus written traditions. I also emphasized the study cultures characteristic of members of different ethnic groups once they have arrived in a host country. I characterized gender as a declining divider and, somewhat against the grain at the time, speculated on the advantages that girls held over boys in academic achievement. I honestly thought I might become anathema among feminists, but that did not happen, presumably because I also emphasized the continuing disadvantages women faced

in the labor market and in the most highly marketable science and engineering majors.

I distinguished the main forms of variation in the structure of schooling systems in the advanced societies and to identify some likely consequences of these variations. I focused on distinct starting points: elite preparation and democratic uplift. These starting points influenced the trajectory of mass schooling, with the former typically leading to greater ability-based tracking and slower rates of expansion. These differences are also linked to the size of the population studying vocational subjects in secondary school. Following the work of James Rosenbaum, I emphasized differences between systems, such as the German and Japanese systems, that create close connections between occupationally oriented secondary school students and employers and those that do not create these connections (see, e.g., Rosenbaum and Binder 1997; Rosenbaum and Kariya 1989). Finally, I emphasized differences between systems that link admission to higher levels in the educational system to examination scores and those that use a wider range of criteria. The former tend to create a more highly concentrated focus on academics during secondary school years. These structural features were historically related to life chances, with highly tracked systems with large vocational systems and heavy emphasis on test-based mobility associated with weaker chances for success in the educational system for students from lower income backgrounds. Students sense of status boundaries, the importance of academic discipline, and their levels of opportunity consciousness as compared to class consciousness are also, I argued, related to these structural characteristics of school systems in the industrialized world. At the same time, educational expansion and the “watering down” of entrance tests are worldwide phenomena and have consequently led to much greater similarity across systems since the 1970s. Levels of inequality in society have become a much more important influence on life chances and structural differences between systems a less important influence.

I also analyzed the structures of schooling in the developing world. I emphasized the effects of colonial legacies on the structure of schooling, with most postcolonial societies erected systems modeled in large part on their colonial rulers. These countries have faced the problems of poverty, traditionalism, and physical insecurity as limits on educational achievement. Nevertheless, one can see differences in the first post-colonial generation between mass mobilizing and status quo oriented (often authoritarian) leaders in these countries, with the former being more interested in and more successful in developing mass literacy and educational opportunities for the poor. The World Bank and other major international players created a blueprint for educational development that was widely influential in the second post-colonial generation. The World Bank argued that most educational policymaking in the developing world had been a disaster with too much funding of higher education relative to primary schooling, too much funding of vocational education relative to general education, and too little private investment in schooling relative to public investment. The policies it advocated can be characterized as “back to basics” at the primary level and “let the market decide” at the post-primary level. As economic circumstances have diverged in the developing countries so too have schooling conditions. High-income countries such as Argentina, Taiwan, and Kuwait, show educational attainment profiles similar to those of industrialized societies, while educational attainments have stagnated or deteriorated in low-income countries and regions. I expressed skepticism both about the role of schooling in promoting

economic development and about its irrelevance to this objective. When a commitment to human capital development through schooling is combined with political stability, declining population growth, effective policies for the advancement of trade and industry, and macroeconomic stability to prevent over-borrowing low-income developing countries begin to experience strong rates of growth and development. But investing in schooling without these other “success ingredients” cannot lead to the achievement of development aims.

TOWARD A BROADER FRAME FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

In recent years I have been involved in efforts to expand the frame of the sociology of education. I remarked on the limited scope of the sociology of education in the first edition of *Schools and Societies* (1998 [2006]), noting that “in adult life, the knowledge taught in school does not necessarily count for more than other forms of knowledge, such as common sense, popular culture, merchandising, folklore, and religious belief” (p. 98), and implying that a broader sociology of education would be less school focused and would instead contrast schooling with competing culture-producing and knowledge-creating institutions. I broadened this nascent critique in an essay “The Collective Mind at Work” (2009 [2013]) in which I conducted a content analysis of a decade of articles in the journal *Sociology of Education*. I concluded that the “collective mind,” as represented in the journal, was heavily quantitative, focused on K-12 schooling in the United States, and had as its major theme the effects of inequalities on academic achievement and educational attainment. In the essay I called for a sociology of education that was more international in scope, more open to qualitative work, more connected to non-school based educational influences and institutions, and focused as much on “school-to-society” links (i.e. school inputs to the shaping of society and culture) as on “society-to-school” links (i.e. the influence of inequality on schooling). I did not reject the field’s achievements in the study of inequality, but I argued that a more rounded perspective would lead to a better appreciation of schooling’s role in the construction of society and culture.

This essay helped to launch an intellectual movement to broaden the scope of our sub-discipline, though it was certainly not the only source for that movement. The first culmination of the movement will come with the publication of Jal Mehta and Scott Davies’s edited volume, *Education in a New Society*. My contribution to the volume examines the institutional geography of “knowledge trade” between universities and other social institutions. Today it is evident that knowledge originates in many institutions—universities in the United States account for only about half of basic research and much less than that of applied research. I develop a view of the university in this complex institutional ecology that partially dethrones the university as knowledge generator while at the same time showing its essential role in the adjudication of knowledge claims. I argue that the metaphor of economic trade provides a potentially illuminating lens for understanding academic knowledge and its intercourse with knowledge originating in other institutional domains. I develop a vocabulary for understanding the primary forms of interaction between academic knowledge and knowledge originating in other spheres of society. A *knowledge-producing institution* is any institution that creates a body of knowledge that shapes practice and is based on more than assertion, convention, or opinion. Examples include: formulas for successful popular culture genres, influential

management tools such as “the balanced scorecard,” yogic philosophy and practice, charettes in architecture, and scenario planning in the military. I develop a vocabulary for discussing universities and the institutional geography of knowledge trade. *Knowledge exports and imports* are bodies of knowledge that pass into new institutional arenas and are either appropriated wholesale, or are subjected to processes of testing, refinement, and revision consistent with the practices and purposes of the adopting institutional arena. *Trade routes* describe the direction and heaviness of the traffic from one institutional domain to another. *Barriers to cross-institutional trade* in order of severity consist of corrupted knowledge goods, failed exchanges, and boycotts and blockades. *Meta-cognitive metropolises* are the centers of adjudication of truth claims. When one broadens the scope of knowledge creation beyond academe, it seems clear that the knowledge generation function is not a monopoly of academe, but that the adjudicatory function remains a near-monopoly (Brint forthcoming).

CONCLUSION

An intellectual self-portrait ought to be a recounting not only of how one thought about the subjects of one’s work, but the personal and intellectual influences on that thinking. My own experiences of ambivalence about schooling no doubt played an important role in the development of my thinking. I found reading to be a magic carpet that brought me wherever I wanted to travel and into deep encounters with people I wanted to know more about. At times when domestic relations in our household were rocky, I valued the predictable structures of school. Yet I was often terrifically bored by classroom life—to the extent that I refused to attend school for nearly an entire year at age eight. I experienced tensions throughout my early life reconciling my intellectual interests with the business orientation of my maternal family. (These tensions were ultimately resolved during my years as a university administrator.) I was emotionally moved by the attempts of the first professors I met to heal the wounds of the Kansas City riots of 1968 by bringing together adolescents from the suburbs and the inner-city for “rap sessions.” This experience led me to see the possibilities of teaching in a different light. I was greatly influenced by my teachers at Berkeley, particularly by the clarity and structure of Neil Smelser’s lectures (and his good humor in the face of radical critique) and the freedom of thought and creativity fostered by Troy Duster. Intellectual friendships with the sociologists Jerome Karabel, Eliot Freidson, and Robert A. Hanneman, have been pivotal influences on my thinking and my work. I was fortunate to find another intellectual friend (as well as a lover) in my wife, Michele Renee Salzman. Reading Max Weber was the decisive intellectual experience of my life. I have done my best to carry Weber’s sensibilities and lessons into the study of schooling.

AFFILIATION

Steven Brint
University of California, Riverside

MY FAVORITE PERSONAL TEXTS

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