

STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

THE NEW
EDUCATIONAL PACT
EDUCATION, COMPETITIVENESS
AND CITIZENSHIP IN MODERN SOCIETY

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INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

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To Nilda
For Sebastián and Pablo

Introduction

The school is a product of the modernization process and, as such, has always been subject to the tension between the needs of social integration and the requirements of personal development. Progressive movements in education have always been affected by this tension. The sectors which were looking for a more democratic coverage of the system underestimated the importance of the individualization of the learning process. Conversely, education policies based on personal development and respect for individual characteristics underestimated the institutional effects of these educational trends. Despite this division, the identity of progressive movements in education has been maintained in the face of conservative positions on both levels: elitist in terms of coverage and traditional in terms of socialization content.

The present situation, however, has completely changed this outlook. The fall of the Berlin Wall symbolizes the crisis affecting the traditional parameters which define political and ideological identities. Educational movements have not been unaffected by the crisis and the certainties of the past have disappeared. Some basic components of the progressive approach in education have today been taken up by those claiming to be representatives of the dominant order. Conversely, opposition to the dominant culture is being generated by ideological positions with a clearly traditional, anti-modern content. This phenomenon is not occurring only in the sphere of theory and ideologies. The current situation itself displays paradoxes which are not understandable in terms of traditional classifications. For instance, while Internet enables us to interact with people thousands of miles away, racial, ethnic and cultural prejudice prevents us from talking to our neighbour and raises the question of whether it is appropriate to educate boys and girls together.

As things are, individuals are just not sure where exactly they stand. The identity of the progressive educational movement and thought is in a state of crisis, and the simple answers of the past are no longer sufficient to define

an educational policy which responds to the objectives of democracy and equity in the distribution of knowledge. This book is therefore a response to a personal need, which may be shared by others, namely the need to reflect on the role of education in this new social scenario laden with uncertainty and to try and find an alternative, both to the social disintegration derived from neo-liberal tendencies and to the totalitarian unity advocated in fundamentalist, anti-modern theories.

The following script therefore moves between the past and the future. The look back at the past does not claim to be a historical analysis. It does try, on the other hand, to provide a useful instrument for a better understanding of what is changing. The glimpse into the future is not intended either to forecast what will happen, but to indicate which way we should be trying to guide our actions. As a result, the book is eclectic in more than one sense. From a theoretical point of view, it combines different disciplinary approaches: history, sociology, pedagogy, psychology and philosophy. From a political point of view, it adopts positions, but also allows for doubts and queries. Excluding doubt is a way of encouraging the predominance of dichotomous views, which promise us either a glorious destiny or total disaster. In this sense, the book tries not to fall into the trap of having to choose between pessimism and optimism and, perhaps excessively, assumes a conscious voluntarism based on a trust in the learning ability of human beings.

Many persons contributed either directly or indirectly to this work. My special thanks go to Ernesto Ottone and to Sylvain Lourié, who read the manuscript at an important stage of its preparation and gave me some very valuable comments and advice; to Raúl Gagliardi and to Fernando González Lucini, who read through it in its final stages and who, apart from suggesting a few changes, reassured me with their enthusiasm and their generosity, and to Nilda, who steadfastly read through the different versions, corrected all my mistakes and put up with my changing moods.

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Geneva, October 1995

CHAPTER I

We are living through a revolution

Crisis and education are two terms which have been associated so frequently and for so long that some justification may be found for the sceptical way many of those involved in education react to recurring reform plans that are supposed to improve the situation and to all critical analyses, however brilliant and relevant they may be. From this point of view, education has been one of the areas of public policy that has been most regularly and systematically 'reformed'. But despite this, results have been hard to come by, and paradoxically have led to an increase in the rigidity and conservatism of educational institutions.¹

1. THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

However, in the last few years, things have been changing. The educational crisis appears not so much as an expression of the failure to fulfil relatively well-accepted requirements, but rather as a particular reflection of the broader crisis occurring throughout social institutions, affecting the labour market and the administrative system just as much as the political system, the family and the system of values and beliefs. In other words, the crisis comes not from education's failure to fulfil its assigned social objectives, but, worse still, from the fact that we do not know what purpose it should accomplish and in what direction it should be going. This change in the nature of the crisis is also reflected in the areas where critics have made their comments. When the focus was placed on the deficiencies of the system, criticism tended to come from the educators themselves, and from researchers and academics in general. Now that it is clear from the crisis that it is not a question of just adding more of the same but more of changing objectives and behaviours, criticism is more concentrated among actors who are external to the educational process and system.

To explain this situation, we have to accept as a starting point that we are living through a real social upheaval. We are now confronted not with one

of the usual educational crises of the capitalist development model, but with the emergence of new forms of social, economic and political organization. 'Information society', 'post-capitalist society', 'post-industrial society', 'new Middle Ages' and 'third wave' are some of the expressions which a number of authors, such as Peter Drucker,² Alain Minc³ and Alvin Toffler,⁴ among others, have popularized in recent years. Beyond the differences of outlooks and approaches, all of these analyses concur in associating the entry into the new millennium with the emergence of a new social structure. Unlike traditional revolutionary ideologies, which resorted to semi-clandestine means to announce the transcendental change to come, these new theories, which herald profound social and economic upheavals, occupy a prominent place on the pages and screens of the mass communication media. The bearers of the new revolutionary messages are no longer just political leaders representing the poor, the excluded and the exploited. On the contrary, the revolutionary spokesmen are now the products of very different political backgrounds, familiar with state-of-the-art technologies and in close touch with the most modern sectors of the economy.

Just as an example, it is worth mentioning a relatively recent issue of Newsweek (February 1995) dedicated to new technologies. In its general presentation of the topic, the magazine states that: 'The revolution has only just begun, but already it's starting to overwhelm us. It's outstripping our capacity to cope, antiquating our laws, transforming our mores, reshuffling our economy, reordering our priorities, redefining our workplaces, invading our privacy, shifting our concept of reality.' In the same spirit, Newt Gingrich, the leader of the Republican Party in the United States, assumed a clearly revolutionary tone in presenting his party's proposals. He wrote the foreword to the last book written by Alvin and Heidi Toffler, for whom the present process of social change constitutes 'nothing less than a global revolution'.⁵ Other examples of how the spectrum of revolutionary speakers has widened may be found in the speeches of traditionally 'right-wing' political leaders, as well as in some scientific theories, which would have us believe that we may be facing not only the possibility of a real social upheaval, but also the appearance of 'a new form of life on Earth'.⁶

2. WHAT DOES THE NEW REVOLUTION CONSIST OF?

The sheer enormity of the changes ahead makes it impossible, within the confines of this book, to sum up all of their aspects. There are, nevertheless, a few central features that allude to the society of the future and provide a basis on which we may build up ideas and possible strategies for action.

Among the many possible criteria which may be used to describe the basic characteristics of the forthcoming changes, the author has selected three areas where significant transformations are taking place, namely production methods, communication technology and political democracy.

We may begin with changes in production methods. The rapid and far-reaching changes in technology, combined with globalization and ever-sharper competition to conquer markets, are changing the patterns of production and work organization. As has always been the case with the capitalist production system, there are two different versions of the changes occurring in the production process: one which emphasizes capitalism's capacity for change, and the other which highlights its destructive capacity. But what is new in the process of change which is occurring at present is the role played by knowledge and information both on the production side and in consumption. In this respect, the fundamental change would be the transition from a system of producing for mass consumption to one of producing for diversified consumption. The new, computer-based technologies offer the possibility of producing small quantities of articles which are increasingly suited to the tastes of a wide range of customers. Thus the idea is appearing of the flexible factory, adaptable to changing markets in terms of both volumes and specifications. As far as the workforce and work organization are concerned, this takes the form of multi-purpose production, with multi-functional equipment operating in multi-product plants, where the emphasis is placed on teamwork and the workers' ability to adapt to changing conditions and requirements.

But in addition to flexibility, modern production requires a different distribution of intelligence. The Taylorism and Fordism of mass production depended on a hierarchical, pyramid-shaped organizational structure, where creativity and intelligence were concentrated at the top, while the rest of the workforce mechanically executed the instructions that were handed down. The new production systems are based on a flatter and more open form of organization, with broad decision-making powers in the hands of local units and a more even spread of intelligence. The concept of 'total quality', popularized by modern corporate management theories, expresses this desirability of introducing intelligence at all stages of the production process.

Innovation and continuous improvement have become necessities for modern corporations. The life cycles of products are becoming shorter and shorter, giving rise to the constant need for new designs. No longer are there any fixed optimums, which means stimulating continuous training and the creativity of the workforce, as well as teamwork and links to other sectors,

companies or units holding information and knowledge required for innovation.

Studies concerning the operation of enterprises in practice show, however, that these tendencies towards constant innovation, internal flexibility and the relinquishment of fixed categories contain a significant destructive potential. Constant renovation generates high internal instability, which in turn erodes the possibilities of teamwork. Competitive demands are frequently short-term requirements, which lessen the chances of adopting strategic decisions and—most important from the social point of view—the new conditions of production carry a very significant potential for exclusion. To put it briefly, within the framework of current standards of social organization, a production system based on the intensive use of know-how can provide conditions of personal self-fulfilment only for a minority of workers. This minority can be offered guarantees of job security in exchange for complete readiness to reconvert and to become identified with the requirements of the corporation. In order to establish these conditions for a minority, however, the rest of the workforce has to make do with conditions of high insecurity.⁷

Second, the changes taking place in present-day society are very closely linked to new information technologies. These technologies have a significant impact not only on the production of goods and services, but also on all social relations. The accumulation of information, the speed of transmission, the overcoming of spatial limitations and the simultaneous use of different media (image, sound and text) are among the factors which explain the enormous potential for change inherent in these new technologies. Their use implies a reconsideration of basic concepts such as time and space. The very notion of reality is starting to be reconsidered, in view of the possibilities of building up 'virtual' realities, giving rise to unprecedented problems and epistemological questions. While only a technocratic conception would rest the basis of the new society on communication technologies as technologies, there is no doubt that the changes in those technologies are having powerful effects on our patterns of behaviour. In his book on the disappearance of childhood,⁸ Neil Postman mentions a hypothesis put forward by Harold Innis which appropriately summarizes the dimension of these changes. According to Innis, changes in communication technologies invariably produce three kinds of effects: they alter the structure of interests (the things we think about); they alter the nature of symbols (the things we think with); and they alter the nature of the community (the area in which we think).

The invention of the press and its consequences are, for example, very similar to those which are now being mentioned with regard to the invention

of audio-visual media. More copies of Rabelais' *Gargantua* were sold in two months than of the Bible in ten years. But the press changed not only the attitude of authors, but also that of readers. Before it was invented, reading books was a communal act. With the appearance of the printed book, however, a new tradition was created, that of the reader alone with his private reading. While the printed book significantly expanded access to knowledge, it also created an important barrier, in so far as access to the most useful information came to depend on mastery of the reading code. In this sense, the new communication media are changing the foundations of our reading-based culture. One of the most important factors of change is precisely the weakening of that barrier, and while the effects of the change, as we shall see further on, are still not entirely clear, its magnitude should not be underestimated.

Lastly, changes in production methods and in social relations brought about by the use of information technologies are having a direct impact on political life. The end of democracy, virtual democracy or, more cautiously, the question as to what democracy really is or which political formula will best express this new social and economic reality, are topics which are high up on the agenda of discussions concerning the future forms of citizen participation. Traditional political identities, essentially based on the position of each actor within the productive process, are losing their solidity. National frontiers are dissolving and the areas where citizenship is exercised are tending either to expand towards a citizenship without frontiers, or to become limited to a local sphere of action.

3. EDUCATION'S RESPONSE TO THE NEW SOCIAL REALITY

If we look at the situation from the point of view of education and educators, we will appreciate that what is most important is the common recognition that knowledge⁹ constitutes the most significant variable for explaining the new forms of social and economic organization. The idea that the basic resources for society and for individuals will be information, knowledge and the ability to produce and handle it has by now become commonplace. Education, understood as the activity by which knowledge is produced and distributed, therefore takes on a historically unprecedented significance, in at least two respects.

From the political-social point of view, it seems obvious that the battles to appropriate the places where the most socially significant knowledge is produced and distributed will be at the centre of future social conflicts. This means that educators, scientists, intellectuals and all of those involved in the

production and distribution of knowledge will play a very important role both in generating conflicts and in solving them.

Recent history provides us with some examples of conflicts that provide a clue to the central role that information and knowledge will play in the future. The question of respecting and protecting intellectual property rights, for instance, has become a vital aspect of the economy based on the use of knowledge and information. The negotiation between the United States and China about international trade standards, at the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995, did not revolve around the quantities of products or the value of rates or duties, but focused on the problem of intellectual property. The 'battle of the copyrights'—as that episode of economic history came to be known—ended with agreement on ways of monitoring the production of articles based on products of American intellectual property. Another example was the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations about 'cultural specificity', that is to say, the need to monitor the circulation of cultural products such as films and videos, with the aim of protecting cultures from the invasion of products originating, in particular, in the United States—the country which has taken the lead in the production of cultural goods and in the area of the 'information superhighway'. In the social-political arena, conflicts are also beginning to reflect a greater density of information, knowledge and usage of available technological tools. On 29 March 1995, for example, the *New York Times* reported on a student protest movement organized through the Internet opposed to the Republican-sponsored 'Contract with America'. The title of the report was 'Students turn to Internet for nation-wide protest planning'. That demonstration illustrated both the possibilities of the system and the risks it entailed. Communicating on the Internet allowed everyone to participate, regardless of the physical place and the position occupied by each individual in the organizational hierarchy. The risk, on the other hand, was that people not connected to the Internet were excluded from participation.

From the point of view of educational content, the impressive development of information technologies is giving rise to the need to avoid the occurrence of what was so feared by Hanna Arendt, namely the definitive split between knowledge and thought. Present-day technologies have an enormous capacity for accumulating and processing information. This process, taken to its extreme, would suppose that we are incapable of understanding, thinking and talking about something which we are nevertheless capable of doing. Man, said Hanna Arendt, appears possessed by a rebellion against human existence as it was given to us and would like to change it for something he has himself created. We are no longer satisfied

with our own intelligence and we would like to create an 'artificial' intelligence, just as we want to create life and to prolong it beyond the limits until now considered natural.

Science is advancing along these lines, and there is an obvious risk that decisions concerning how to use our scientific knowledge are escaping our control. If it ever happens that knowledge (in the modern sense of know-how) and thought are finally separated, we would become the helpless slaves not so much of our machines as of our know-how, unthinking creatures at the mercy of any technically feasible artefact, however deadly it may be.¹⁰ In this context, any consideration of the role of education in society and its development would therefore imply tackling the twin problems of defining the knowledge and the skills required for the education of citizens as well as the institutional form in which this educational process should take place. It is worth remembering that schools do not create the content of socialization. On the contrary, it is the content of socialization that determines the design of academic institutions. The school was created in order to transmit particular messages, which required the type of institutional organization with which we are familiar at present. But now we should be asking ourselves whether the school will be the socializing institution of the future and whether the training of future generations will require the same institutional design. Nobody can answer these questions categorically. It therefore appears essential that we should accept to base our approach on doubt and queries, and not, as we are accustomed, on the hope of supplying a single, categorical answer. We used to be accustomed to accepting doubt in the realm of ideas and thought, leaving claims of certainty to the political leaders, who have to take decisions and cannot allow themselves either doubt or experimentation. But the present circumstances, instead of extending the area where uncertainty is considered acceptable, are actually reducing it. The society of the future, subject to a constant, accelerating pace of change, should establish institutions which are able to handle uncertainty without having to abolish debate. Experimentation, which has so far been admitted only as a tool of scientific research, should become more accepted in theoretical thinking and in political practice.

The social changes which are occurring at present are so profound that we have to reformulate basic questions regarding the purposes of education, regarding who should assume the responsibility for training new generations and regarding what cultural legacy, what values and what conception of man and society we wish to pass on. The lack of direction perceptible in vast sectors of society and the short-term outlook that is typical of many decisions taken by political and economic leaders have re-emphasized the

need to discuss some basic questions. Philosophical thought is therefore back in favour. Obviously this does not mean a return to purely metaphysical reflection, detached from all operational aspects. On the contrary, it is a matter of situating technical and operational analyses within the overall framework of a conception which can give sense to our actions. Any technical analysis which does not take account of this overall framework will merely amount to a new version of technocratic thought. Discussing the purposes of education regardless of operational considerations would be not only sterile from the point of view of action, but also abstract and infertile from a theoretical point of view.

NOTES

1. On this point, see Juan Carlos Tedesco, *Current trends in educational reform*, Paris, UNESCO, International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1993.
2. Peter F. Drucker, *Post-capitalist society*, New York, Harper Business, 1993.
3. Alain Minc, *Le nouveau moyen âge* [The new Middle Ages], Paris, Gallimard, 1993.
4. Alvin Toffler, *Powershift*, New York, Bantam Books, 1989.
5. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *Creating a new civilization: the politics of the third wave*, Atlanta, Turner Publishing, 1995, p. 21.
6. See, for example, Jol De Rosnay, *L'homme symbiotique; regards sur le troisième millénaire* [Symbiotic man: looking towards the third millenium], Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1995.
7. André Gorz, *Métamorphose du travail* [The metamorphosis of work], Paris, Ed. Galilée, 1988.
8. Neil Postman, *The disappearance of childhood*, New York, Vintage Books, 1982.
9. The concept of knowledge is used in a very broad and necessarily ambiguous meaning, which covers other concepts such as 'information' and 'science'. Distinctions will be drawn between these three categories as the text progresses.
10. Hanna Arendt, *The human condition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969.

CHAPTER II

The crisis in the traditional system

In order properly to understand the present situation, we should start by analyzing the origin of education systems. While it is neither possible nor really relevant to launch into an extensive survey of the history of education at this juncture, it is worth recalling that—at least in Western societies—the education system that we now consider traditional originated in fact in the latter part of the last century, in response both to the political requirements of the effort to build democracy and nation-States and to the economic requirements of establishing the market. Subject to certain differences from one country or political culture to another, towards the end of the last century the strategy gained ground by creating an education system organized on different levels—primary, secondary and advanced—corresponding to the ages of individuals and to the place that each social sector was to occupy in the social hierarchy. Sequence and hierarchy were the two concepts around which educational activity was organized. In the traditional model, these categories are intimately associated. Sequence is linked to the development capacity of individuals, but also to the hierarchy of social positions. The education system was organized in a succession of grades related to particular ages. The ascent up the various grades and levels implied access to increasingly complex stages of understanding reality and to increasingly prestigious and powerful social positions. These characteristics may appear obvious, but they are not when compared to those which existed prior to the universal expansion of education systems, and more important still, if they are compared with the future. The hypothesis put forward in this chapter consists precisely in maintaining that the crisis in the traditional education system is expressing itself in the impossibility of maintaining these two categories. The traditional sequence in terms of access to knowledge is threatened both by the need for continuous learning and training and by the dissemination of general information (regardless of the age of the recipient) by the mass media. Hierarchy, on the other hand, is being shaken by universal access to education, the break in the chain of

authority and the dissociation between educational promotion and social advancement.

1. EDUCATING THE CITIZEN: NATION AND DEMOCRACY

The history of Western education is very closely linked with the history of the establishment of the nation, democracy and the market. Studies concerning the origin of the nation have shown that modern democracy was national from the very beginning.¹ After the appearance of the nation-State, political legitimacy ceased to be founded on dynasty or religion and instead became based on popular sovereignty. Apart from exclusions on grounds of age and sex—which arose for different reasons—the limit of citizen participation was brought back in this way to the condition of being an alien. The history of nation-States and the history of universal suffrage show the extremely important part played by education, understood as a process of socialization, in the consolidation of democratic nations. The incorporation of all citizens in education was the means of achieving political integration and, as shown by historic analyses of the establishment of nations, a citizen's education implied an attachment to the nation in preference to any other tie, whether religious, cultural or ethnic.² The nation and democracy are social constructs and as such have to be taught and learned. But unlike in the case of subjects and disciplines where learning is basically cognitive, the internalization of social norms and accession to specific, socially constructed entities implies explicitly incorporating an affective dimension into the process of learning. In this respect, the main characteristic of civic education during the period of construction and consolidation of nation-States and democracy was the emphasis placed on symbolic aspects, on rituals and on the authority vested in the actors and institutions responsible for inculcating the standards of social cohesion, that is to say, of acceptance of the rules of social discipline.

Social cohesion is expressed in terms of two different dimensions: in terms of contents, through acceptance of a common conception of the world and society, and in institutional terms, through incorporation within a system which is theoretically capable of including everyone, but which in practice leads to a hierarchy based on a dominant classification criterion (namely the ability to accede to growing levels of complexity). From this point of view, the levels of the education system represented a sequence, according to which the individual progressed from the simple to the complex and in which the understanding of complexity was reserved for those reaching the upper levels. Emile Durkheim provided the most

comprehensive explanation and theoretical justification for this system in his essays on education, particularly on moral education. His whole analysis is based on a concern for providing every individual with the type of education which corresponds to his or her place on the social scale and for achieving acceptance of a new ethic—the secular, republican ethic—which was to replace traditional religious morality. The teaching of rational morality and attachment to the nation was intended in this respect to rest on the same elements as traditional morality, such as symbols, rites and above all the sense of authority on the part of those who appeared as the bearers of the new values on which socialization was based. The type of social cohesion promoted by educational socialization acquired a strongly hierarchical character in terms of organization based on a triple scale of rising levels of complexity, rising levels of authority and rising social positions. Ascending the scale of educational hierarchy implied ascending the social hierarchy, and in this way the education system came to legitimize the existing social mobility. As a result of these characteristics, educational activity was perceived and conceptualized as a way of reproducing the dominant social order. The contents of school textbooks and of teaching practices, as well as the general architecture of the education system, were thus responding to the need to guarantee the social order through the acceptance of dominant standards.

Historically speaking, it is also worth remembering that the school, and in particular compulsory public schooling, was designed and expanded as an institution which competed with and occupied areas that traditionally belonged to well-established socialization agents, namely the family and the church. The relationship among school, family and church took on a conflictual character in places where middle-class demands on political authority could not be negotiated on a suitably agreed basis. The conflict arose in aspects for which society required standards of socialization, different from those inculcated by the family and the church, such as loyalty to the nation, to democratic principles of government and to the laws of the capitalist market economy. In aspects related to private life, on the other hand, school socialization extended the rigidity, respect for authority and discipline, and the acceptance of predetermined roles and world outlooks that dominated education within the family.

The new feature in that process was the expansion of primary school. Durkheim is very explicit on that point. His arguments are based on two postulates. The first, mainly psychological, consists in undervaluing the importance of the early years of life for the development of personality and particularly moral conscience. His second postulate, more directly sociological, consists in denying the possibility that the family might be responsible

for the moral training of individuals, transmitting a rational ethic which lay above the family's cultural particularities.³ Public education represented universal values and knowledge, aspects that were placed above the individual cultural standards of the groups making up society. Separating the school system from external cultural standards and patterns was for this reason essential to allow it to function.

The socializing message of the school derived significant support from the existence of 'counter ideologies', which helped to define the identity of the dominant approach. In different countries and at different times, the national-democratic education of the citizen strengthened his or her identity by opposition to religious persuasions, to anti-democratic or anti-capitalistic political leanings, or to the threat of a foreign power that challenged some aspect of national identity.

As soon as the school was identified as a specialized institution that was not the responsibility of all of the social players, but the basic responsibility of the State as an institution representing the general will and public interest, the socializing message of the school took on a very important innovative character. This message represented what was understood as modernization as opposed to the traditionalism of other socializing agencies. The history of education shows that—in its origins—democratic educational policy was characterized by a strong connection between the quantitative component (universal and compulsory access to school) and its qualitative components (secularity, loyalty to the nation, official language, etc.). This combination gave the policy a great power of transformation, which was assumed by the actors in the educational process, namely the administrators, schoolmasters, principals and teachers.

Public education, as it was conceived and applied especially in some European countries in the construction of democratic nation-States, owed much of its socializing effectiveness precisely to the innovative character of its messages and to its integrating potential. Trust in education and in the 'educatability' of individuals was a fundamental factor of success in the construction of the nation-State. Put briefly, public education based on the concepts of democracy and nation was endowed with a specific content, key actors and a coherent institutional and curricular design. The socializing fertility of the policy resided in the fact that it carried a meaning in the three senses of the term—as foundation, unity and finality. The foundation of the policy was given by the principle that the nation, democracy and the market were the key supports on which the collective policy rested; its unity was based on the significantly high level of coherence of the 'images of the world' offered by this ideology where every individual had his or her place in the social structure; and its finality was based on projecting the

possibility of an ever-improving future, and of the gradual expansion of areas of participation, freedom and justice.⁴

2. THE 'SOCIALIZATION DEFICIT' OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Although the overuse of the notion of 'crisis' to refer to all of the dimensions of social life has produced a kind of negative saturation, there is no doubt that two of the basic ideas that have governed public education throughout the twentieth century, namely the concepts of democracy and nation, are currently under review. The market, without the weight and control of democracy and nation, takes on a very different meaning from the one it had to start with and is incapable of generating an educational policy. Many analyses of the modern political situation have identified the main aspects of this crisis, which worsened following the burst of universal optimism brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall. Briefly, these analyses suggest that with the disappearance of the antagonism between two incompatible political systems, the political options facing the citizen are now circumstantial and not general in scope.

This change has made the traditional political party system obsolete, thereby causing a serious representational crisis. Traditional bonds are being eroded, while shifts are occurring in national and cultural ties and identities. At the top, we are witnessing the establishment of supranational political groupings, and below we are seeing the re-emergence of territorial localism and cultural particularities. The idea of nation-related citizenship is beginning to lose its meaning. Instead, what we have is not only an attachment to supranational entities, but also a retreat towards local 'groupings', where integration appears essentially as a cultural, and not political, drive. As a consequence, the aim of cultural homogeneity of the nation—as the traditional function of the State and the education system—is at present undergoing reconsideration.⁵ This crisis in the cultural homogeneity function is reflected in erosion of the socializing capacity not only of scholastic institutions, but also of all of the institutions traditionally responsible for fulfilling this function. In this respect, one of the most serious problems currently facing public education is what might be called the 'socialization deficit' that characterizes present-day society. We are living at a time when traditional educational institutions—particularly the family and the school—are losing their ability to effectively transmit cultural values and standards of social cohesion. The new socialization agents, such as the mass media and in particular television, have not covered this socialization deficit and were not designed to take charge of the moral and cultural education of

individuals. On the contrary, they were designed and developed on the assumption that such education is already complete. As a result of which, the current trend in the media consists in leaving it up to individuals to select whatever messages they wish to receive. The relative feebleness of the socializing capacity of the family and the school, alongside the absence of any rules governing the socializing action of the mass media, are worth looking at in more detail before we go on to analyze what basis is desirable for educational action in the future.

3. FAMILY AND SOCIALIZATION

The socialization process has traditionally been divided into two stages: primary socialization and secondary socialization. Berger and Luckman, in their book on the social construction of reality,⁶ defined primary socialization as the stage that the individual goes through in childhood and by which one becomes a member of society. Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that incorporates the already socialized individual in new sectors of the objective world of one's society. Primary socialization—which normally takes place within the family—is usually the most important for the individual. Through it, one acquires language, basic schemas for interpreting reality and the rudiments of the legitimating system.

According to analyses of the socialization process, the two most important characteristics of primary socialization are the affective charge with which their contents are transmitted and the absolute identification with the world as presented by adults. In this respect, it is important to bear in mind that primary socialization implies more than purely cognitive learning. It occurs in circumstances that are highly charged emotionally and, as Berger and Luckman maintain, there are good reasons to believe that without this emotional attachment to significant adults, the learning process would be difficult or practically impossible. Berger and Luckman state that the child identifies with the other signifiers in a variety of emotional ways; but whatever these are, internalization occurs only at the time of identification. The child accepts the 'roles' and attitudes of the other signifiers, which means that he internalizes and appropriates them and, through this identification with those other signifiers, the child becomes able to identify himself, and to acquire a subjectively coherent and plausible identity. In primary socialization, there is no problem of identification, no choice of other signifiers. Society introduces the socialization candidate to a predefined group of other signifiers which he has to accept as such,

without the possibility of opting for any other arrangement . . . The child does not internalize the world of his other signifiers as one of so many possible worlds: he internalizes it as the world, the only one which exists and which is conceivable, the world full stop. For this reason, the world internalized in primary socialization is much more firmly embedded in the consciousness than the worlds internalized in secondary socializations.⁷

These characteristics of socialization, however, are historically determined. They are not universal and they do not remain static. On the contrary, the hypothesis that the author would like to develop on this point is that the weakening of the socializing capacity of the family arises precisely from the changes in the emotional charge with which the contents of primary socialization are transmitted and the growing precocity with which the possibilities of choice appear. In present-day society, the contents of primary socialization are transmitted with a different affective charge than in the past, and both the groups and the predefined options to which a child is exposed tend to become differentiated, to multiply and to change with unprecedented speed.

In discussing these points, we need to analyze at least two main aspects: changes in the conception of individualism in contemporary society, and the role of the new agents of socialization, in particular the communication media.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALISM

There is a basic difference between the individualism of present-day society and that of the nineteenth century, which resides in the expansion of the possibilities of choice into areas pertaining to lifestyles and morals. In the nineteenth century, freedom was concentrated in the political and economic spheres. But in order to be successful in those spheres, it was necessary to adopt strict codes of personal conduct. Lawrence Friedman, in his book on authority and culture in contemporary society,⁸ pointed out this difference very clearly. He shows that ethical and economic work and social success in the western world depended on internal standards which governed behaviour, that is, self control, and on external standards of law and authority, which allowed freedom of movement and work, but which did not lessen restrictions on lifestyles or personal habits . . . To sum up, people did not choose a particular form of living, but rather they were trained to accept a preformed and pre-existing model. They were induced to adopt a fixed behaviour model, which governed crucial aspects of their daily lives.⁹

Unlike in the nineteenth century, the present type of individualism covers very broad areas, related in particular to lifestyle. The new form of individualism places the emphasis above all on self-expression, on respect for internal freedom, on the expansion of the personality, its special qualities and its exceptional aspect. The creed of our time is that every person is unique, that every person is or should be free, that each one of us has or should have the right to create or construct a form of life for himself or herself and to do so through free, open and unrestricted choice.

This extension of the possibilities of choice into areas related to lifestyle undoubtedly implies significant effects on the socialization process. If every individual has a legitimate right to define his or her own life, this means that adults adopt less authoritarian, less commanding conduct towards their children. The transmitted objective world is less unidimensional, less secure and less stable. The transmission of this instability is not only a subjective question. It is not just a matter of fathers and mothers nowadays having more respect for their children, that they are less sure of their ideas or their identities, or that they think that they no longer have the right to impose particular ideas on their children. There is in addition a socially objective expression of these changes, which is reflected in some significant changes occurring in family life.

While the changes in the composition and functioning of the family are not the same in all cultures, it is possible to observe some very significant common traits. Amongst other phenomena, social modernization has encouraged the incorporation of women in the labour market, a tendency to cut back on the number of children, an increase in separations and in the number of children living alone or with one parent. Although these phenomena are not generally applicable to all cultures, it might be worth considering the extreme case of the United States, where, if current trends are maintained, less than half of the children born today will live with their own mothers or fathers during their childhood, and where a growing number of boys and girls will experience family break-up two or three times before adulthood. In less developed societies, poor families tend to be nuclei where the father figure is absent and where children, from a very early age, spend a great deal of time without either parent. This means that significant adults are spending less real time with their children. The time is then taken up by other institutions (schools, nurseries, special child-care centres, clubs, etc.), or by exposure to the media, especially television. In this respect, it is worth remembering that one of the main features of socialization through television consists precisely in the fact that the child is left relatively alone in the face of incoming messages, without adults to help interpret them.

All these phenomena bring about a significant change in the socializing role of the family. In other words, we are witnessing a process whereby the contents of basic cultural education—primary socialization—are beginning to be transmitted with an affective charge different than before, because the educationally significant adults of the new generation are tending to be differentiated, because entry into the institutions is increasingly early, or because, in a more general and deeper sense, adults are no longer sure and capable of defining just what they want to offer as a model to the new generations.

5. TELEVISION: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CHILDHOOD

From the point of view of the contents of socialization, the most significant change is the fact that the possibility of choice has been brought forward chronologically and has been extended into various areas of lifestyle. What do these changes mean from the point of view of the socialization process? Extending the possibility of choice in the end implies unveiling the secret which prevailed in those areas. The absence of choice implies a lack of information regarding possible options. Access to information, on the other hand, entails a loss of secrecy, a loss of taboos and the admission of uncertainty. Neil Postman, in his provocative book on the disappearance of childhood in contemporary society,¹⁰ maintains that television is unveiling these secrets, particularly those related to three areas: sexuality, violence and the ability of adults to direct the world.

In all three of these aspects, the family fulfils an important function not only because of the messages it transmits, but also because of the barriers it establishes. On this basis, the role of television may be interpreted either as a cause or as an effect. The most commonly accepted opinion maintains that as a result of the presence of television, the range of choice with regard to traditionally rigid aspects has increased. The opposite view, however, is also tenable, namely that television distributes these messages because society admits a greater diversity of choice. Many critics of television, for instance, analyze the effects on children of watching so much violence in television programmes. Nevertheless—without denying that the problem is a real one—the impact on the child of seeing the real world is more serious still. Television violence is not only the violence conveyed through fiction, but also the violence portrayed in the news concerning what is happening in the world. In the traditional form of socialization, this reality was denied. In order to obtain such information, it was necessary to dominate the access codes (reading and writing) or to be present on the scene where events were

occurring. Television has removed these barriers, and to the extent that adult information is reaching children, the latter's curiosity is weakening in the same way as the adults' authority.

Postman's argument is very suggestive. According to his view, traditional family socialization was based on the consideration of childhood as a special category, a different category. The distinction between childhood and adulthood rested on the existence of unknown spheres, of secrets and more simply on the idea of 'shame'. Secrets were kept about sex, money, violence, death and illness, and were gradually revealed as the child became able to attain such knowledge. Thus just as the child's identity was defined as ignorance of these secrets, knowledge of and the ability to control the secrets defined the adults' identity. Postman's hypothesis is that television has altered this situation radically by doing away with the barrier imposed by reading for access to information. At present, anyone, whether or not he or she can read, can have access to information. In addition, television does not differentiate between moments or sequences in its distribution of information. By its very nature, television programming is general and therefore tends to display all of the secrets of adult life without any regard for ages or sensitivities. The appearance of television therefore brings with it the emergence of a communication structure which leads to the disappearance of 'childhood'. Watching television does not require any special ability, nor does it develop any particular skill. Television does not require any distinction to be drawn between children and adults and television programming tends to be directed at an undifferentiated public. Paradoxically, television thus re-establishes the conditions of communication that existed prior to the appearance of the press, eroding the division between children and adults. It places children before adult information and infantilizes adults by eliminating the traditional requirements for access to information.

These changes obviously affect relations between the family and the school. Many testimonies and much empirical evidence indicate that educators feel that children arrive in school and develop their schooling without the traditional family support. This erosion of family support is not expressed only in terms of a lack of time for helping children with their schoolwork or for looking after their school careers. In a more general and deeper sense, a new dissociation has occurred between family and school, whereby children come to school with a basic core of personality development characterized either by weak reference standards, or by reference standards which differ from those pursued by the school and for which the school is prepared.

In the typical sort of situation of the nineteenth century, the school was a continuation of the family in everything referring to moral socialization and lifestyles. The school further adapted the child in aspects that strengthened social cohesion, such as attachment to the nation, acceptance of discipline and codes of conduct, etc. In that process, the child passed from one institution of cohesion to another governed by the same categories, namely sequence and hierarchy. These two established a single, dominant model on which grades and stages rested.

In the twentieth century, on the other hand, the family has changed much more than the school. Between today's family and that of the end of the last century, there is an enormous gap, whereas between today's school and the school of the end of our century, the changes will be much less significant. The family environment has introduced differentiation and respect for diversity—an extension of the areas of choice and personalization. In the school system, in contrast, differentiation has been avoided—choice is limited and personal diversity is resisted.

The rigidity of the school system does not mean that it is still guided by traditional values with the same mystique and enthusiasm that educators possessed at the turn of the century. To a great extent, maintaining traditional features has turned into a purely formalistic exercise, based on bureaucratic routines, which have the effect of further weakening the authority and legitimacy of the school's socializing message. Students reject this option through their learning failure (with increasingly different students who do not succeed in learning the contents of a single model), through violence or other socially marginal forms of behaviour (such as drug consumption), or even by their indifference and the reduced effort that they are willing to make in their actual schoolwork.

6. SCHOOL AND SOCIALIZATION: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TEACHER

The school system's loss of socializing capacity has been pointed out repeatedly for many years. The causes are varied, ranging from internal factors such as the new mass dimension of education, the loss of prestige of teachers and the rigidity of education systems, to external factors, such as the dynamism and speed with which knowledge is created and mass communication media emerge. All these factors, however, converge on one crucial aspect, namely the significant decline of the teacher as a socializing agent. Following up the metaphor of the disappearance of the difference between childhood and adulthood used in the analysis of the family, one might even suggest that in the school as well there has been a blurring of the

distinction between teacher and pupil. This blurring process has occurred at the same time as the physical presence of both took on a mass dimension. Mass school education has been accompanied by the loss of social significance of the learning experience acquired in the school. This was due to several factors, the main ones are noted here.

In the first place, the disappearance of the distinction between teacher and pupil is part of the more general crisis of authority in contemporary society. Hanna Arendt analyzed this process very lucidly. The crisis of authority in modern society reaches its highest expression precisely when it touches on the pre-political areas where authority is exercised, such as in relations between teachers and pupils and between parents and children. Much of the educational literature in recent decades endeavoured, on the other hand, to politicize the analysis of relations between teachers and pupils, thus eroding the link of educational authority on the same basis as political authority was challenged. The hierarchical nature of traditional socialization encouraged this type of criticism, in which the teacher was associated with the figure of the master and the pupil with that of the slave, and where the learning link was subsumed under the more general category of a relation of ideological imposition.¹¹ As a result, 'active pedagogy', like many of the educational innovations aimed at personalizing education, remained restricted to the sphere of isolated experiments which did not succeed in contaminating the system as a whole. There was—and still is—a kind of insoluble contradiction inherent in educational innovations. Their success depends on the presence of a whole series of factors, which are precisely those that the system does not admit, such as teams of motivated teachers who share a common teaching project, and are devoted to their work for the sake of the objectives of the project and not a bureaucratic career. In this way, teaching theory remained disconnected from the reality of school activity and, because of this dissociation, incurred the impoverishment of any theory which did not resolve real problems. Teaching practice in turn was also increasingly impoverished because, since it lacked the theoretical basis that would have allowed it to evolve effectively, it remained restricted to the limits of empiricism. Educational theorists were dismissed as utopian and unrealistic, while educational empiricists were disqualified by their inability to justify, systematize and spread their actions.

The growing inability of pedagogy to explain and guide the school system allowed the development of a corpus of know-how that accentuated the de-professionalization of teachers. It is no coincidence, for instance, that the dominant educational theories in the last thirty or forty years have been those in which the educational fact in itself (the master-pupil relation) has been either underestimated or criticized and discredited. Such theories may

be divided into two major groups: those stemming from the economics of education and planners, and the critical theories originating in sociology, social psychology or social anthropology. The theory of human resources and human capital are the main expressions of the first of these groups, whereby everything that happened in the classroom was conceptualized in terms of a 'black box' that did not affect the development of the theory. In the second group, we can place the different versions of the theory of reproduction, where, as we have seen, master-pupil relations were conceptualized as relations of domination.¹² Subject to some differences between countries, teacher training in recent decades took place in the framework of these ideas, which leads one to think in terms of a kind of 'self-destructive component' of the professional teaching identity. In their search for greater social and professional prestige, teachers tended to move away from their own specific domain. The expansion of knowledge that occurred in teacher training in recent decades was related to what Basil Bernstein calls 'rules of hierarchy, criterion and selection'¹³ (evaluation, curriculum, guidance, sociology and politics of education, research, etc.). The increase in this knowledge is real, but all of these spheres of learning are outside the control of the professionals who acquire them. From this point of view, the extension of knowledge had a strongly destabilizing effect, since in many cases the acquisition of the knowledge generated an even greater distancing from classroom practice, or merely offered elements of criticism with respect to that practice. It would be interesting, from this angle, to analyze the reasons why this expansion of knowledge was not reflected in greater recognition for educational demand originating with teachers. Instead of this greater recognition of demand, there was a regressive effect, whereby knowledge acquired academically during initial training lost its legitimacy on account of its distance from real problems, while empirical knowledge learned in the workplace lacked academic legitimacy.

The way these ideas appeared, were accepted and were applied in various social and cultural contexts shows that we are not dealing with a purely arbitrary fact. There are factors that explain the situation and allow some appreciation of the complexity of the problem. Some of these factors were mentioned in the course of the analysis on the family. But others are more directly related with the school.

As we saw earlier, the two central concepts of the traditional school system were sequence in access to information and the hierarchy of positions that could be claimed by climbing the steps of education. Sequence was associated with the clear distinction between stages in the development of the personality, and hierarchy was associated with different

positions in the social structure. One of the features of present society is precisely the erosion of these two concepts.

The principle of sequential access to knowledge is being brought into question for two main reasons. First, television is offering the same information to everyone, regardless of age. Second, the need for continuous education through a constant updating of knowledge has brought about a crisis both in the idea of sequence and in the very concepts of teacher and pupil. If we have to learn throughout our lives, then we are all pupils. In periods of radical change occurring in the production system and in social relations, old knowledge, far from being a help, is a hindrance. In the popular imagination of contemporary society, there is a widespread notion that one does not need to be an adult to access the new forms of knowledge nor to operate the new media. The past is looked upon as an obstacle, which places us before a scenario in which the handling of devices by children and not by adults is creating a division between thought and know-how. Children know and can operate, but are unable to think about the meaning of what they are doing. Adults, on the other hand, can think of the meaning, but are unable to operate the new instruments.

The hierarchic principle, on the other hand, is being eroded by the growing difficulty of maintaining consistency between an education system that is increasingly expanding and a labour market that is shrinking and tending to eliminate intermediate positions. The distinction between teacher and student is more blurred than in the past, and, furthermore, rising up the steps of the educational hierarchy is less and less a guarantee of rising up the social scale.

7. THE LACK OF MEANING

The 'socialization deficit', however, refers not only to the absence of affective charge in transmission or in the instruments and institutions responsible for the process, but also to the actual content of the socializing message. In this respect, current socialization is faced on the one hand with the problem of the collapse of the basis on which social and personal identities were defined, and on the other hand with the loss of ideals, the absence of utopia and the lack of sense.

Social transformations have ruptured the foundations of traditional identities, whether professional (disappearance of occupations, profound and permanent changes in labour categories, need for constant professional recycling), spatial (migration, frequent spatial mobility) or political (erosion of the traditional distinction between 'right' and 'left'). The process of

change is so swift and profound that it is giving rise to what some analysts of present-day society are describing as a loss of historic continuity.

The identity crisis and the absence of the sense of historic continuity explain the appearance of the phenomenon of 'lack of sense', which many studies attribute to the present time.¹⁴ This lack of sense (direction or meaning), at least at the level of nation-States, is not a local but a universal problem. The Cold War system established a kind of order and provided answers to problems. In that situation, fragile States and dominated sectors had a point of reference to identify their place in the world and, through this access to a universal dimension, to facilitate their own internal integration. Referring to Ladi's analysis in this respect, present-day society has lost its sense in the three dimensions mentioned earlier. In terms of the foundation of society, the end of the Cold War signalled not only the end of communism but also the end of two centuries of enlightenment, that is to say, of the dominance of a conceptual, ideological and political scheme, that gave a meaning to the action of all actors. The breakdown of this conceptual scheme is reflected in the difficulty in finding an objective reference or in representing the future in any way at all, and arises from globalization. It would permit an effectively motivated commitment to principles that go beyond mere economic necessity. The loss of finality does away with the social or political promise of a 'better future'. As shown by many analyses of the present economic situation, the State's inability to protect citizens and to offer prospects for the future is not leading to a transfer of this function to the citizens themselves. On the contrary, this absence is stimulating short-term behaviours, which find their most striking expression in the behaviour of the financial markets and in shareholder pressures on corporate behaviour.

Corporations are presently guided by the need to conquer markets and to reduce the time between the creation and the marketing of a product. But this double dynamic is more related to the 'paths' of competitiveness and not to its objectives. Faster technological change appears as something which is not only brought about by economic activity, but also imposed on the latter. As Ladi suggests with lucidity:

all the actors in the global social game project themselves into the future not in order to defend a project, but in order to avoid being left out of a game which has no face . . . The end of utopia has brought about the consecration of urgency, now erected into a central theme of policy. Thus our societies pretend that the urgent nature of problems prevents them from thinking about a project, whereas in fact it is the total lack of prospects which makes them the slaves of urgency.¹⁵

The loss of sense has very significant consequences for education understood as a process of socialization, since it leaves educators without any points of reference. In present conditions, this loss of sense has at least three major consequences.

- It reduces the future and the prospects for both individual and social progress to a single dominant criterion, the economic criterion. The present economic criterion, however, does not even have the all-embracing capacity of industrial capitalism. Nowadays we talk of those who are 'in' and those who are 'out' or excluded. The effect of this is to shatter any possibility of social cohesion, or of transmitting a socializing message where each one can find his or her place. This impoverishment of the future outlook leads to a low capacity for attachment, erodes all social ties and in the last resort turns into an asocial project, one that does away with the centralism of political ties and citizen loyalties.
- It conveys the transmission of identities, whether cultural, professional or political, in regressive terms. The difficulties encountered in transmitting the cultural heritage of the past in relation to a line of historic continuity projected into the future arouse the temptation to return to the fixed, rigid images of past identities.
- As a result of the above, conservatism is aggravated and strong distrust is generated against any idea of change. The requirement of change is experienced as the opposite of the requirement to transmit identity. Transmission is judged to be conservative and change is deemed to be destructive.

Education is experiencing this situation in a particularly dramatic way. Clearly, this is not the first major upheaval of society, nor therefore the first time that the socialization of new generations entails a deep-seated social reconversion. What is special about this particular historic time, however, is the fact that the traditional sources of identity have disappeared and that the new sources are precisely characterized by the absence of fixed points of reference. Identity therefore has to be constructed. This is probably the most important concept we can refer to with regard to the educational process required by the present social changes.

NOTES

1. Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation* [The community of citizens: the modern idea of the nation], Paris, Gallimard, 1994.
2. Pierre Rossanvallon, *Le sacre du citoyen. Histoire du suffrage universel en France* [The rite of the citizen: the history of universal suffrage in France], Paris, Gallimard, 1994.

3. Emile Durkheim, *L'éducation morale* [Moral education], Paris, PUF, 1963.
4. Zak Ladi, *Un monde privé de sens* [World without meaning], Paris, Fayard, 1994.
5. Walo Hutmacher, *L'école dans tous ses états; des politiques de systèmes aux stratégies d'établissement* [The state of the school: from the politics of systems to institutional strategies], Geneva, Département de l'instruction publique, 1990.
6. P. Berger and T. Luckman, *The social construction of reality*, New York, Doubleday, 1966.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 170-171.
8. Lawrence M. Friedman, *The republic of choice: law authority and culture*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1990.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 43-44.
10. Neil Postman, *The disappearance of childhood*, New York, Vintage Books, 1982.
11. Much of the very widely read work of Paulo Freire, as well as the contributions of the critical sociology of education, were based on this phenomenon. See, for example, Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, New York, Herder & Herder, 1970; and Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in education, society and culture*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage, 1990.
12. For a commentary on reproduction theories referring in particular to the case of Latin America, see Juan Carlos Tedesco, *El reproductivismo educativo y los sectores populares en América Latina* [Reproduction: elements for a theory of the education system], *Revista Colombiana de educación* (Bogotá), no. 11, 1983.
13. Basil Bernstein, *Poder, educación y conciencia; sociología de la transmisión cultural* [Power, education and awareness: sociology of cultural transmission], Santiago de Chile, CIDE, 1988.
14. Z. Ladi, *op. cit.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

CHAPTER III

Quality for all

The crisis in the traditional national education model based on the categories of sequence and hierarchy, as referred to in the previous chapter, resulted in the spread of the idea that the problem in education is fundamentally a qualitative one. According to that interpretation, the crisis would be a crisis of quality since, even in developing countries, the quantitative expansion of education has been much more rapid than that of any other social variable.

Such a perception of the problem is not enough, however, to explain the new realities and challenges of education. In this chapter, the hypothesis that will be presented argues that the crisis resides in the link between quality and quantity, rather than in the quality of education itself. In the traditional model, that link was very direct and linear: higher levels of qualitative complexity were associated with a smaller number of individuals capable of accessing them. It is precisely that direct, linear link which cannot survive in the new reality. The expansion of school enrolment at all levels, especially since the 1960s, has upset the traditional balance and given rise to educational over-qualification in relation to the social hierarchy. This explains the general loss of value of diplomas and the growing disparity between levels of education and jobs.

In this respect, it is the link between the quality and the quantity of educational services that needs revising. What is taught and who should learn are therefore two issues that have to be considered as a single set of problems. The history of education in this sense provides a rich source of information regarding the patterns that have governed the relation between quantity and quality. Reducing the situation to its simplest expression, the choices hinge on either anti-democratic views that tend to rehabilitate mechanisms adjusting quantity and quality through selection criteria based solely on the market and/or on 'natural' considerations (biological, genetic and other conditioning), or a democratic approach based on universalizing

access to knowledge and diversifying criteria for the hierarchy of social positions.

The new element in this debate is that the definition of what is taught and who has access to that learning has turned into a central factor in deciding the distribution of power and wealth. The struggle to define those mechanisms of access to knowledge is already, and will be even more so in the future, at the heart of social controversy.

1. COMPETITIVENESS AND CITIZENSHIP

One of the most striking aspects of the current debate regarding the future of society is the considerable importance that is being attached by non-educators to education. As mentioned in Chapter I, sectors that traditionally took no interest in education now appear seriously concerned about the direction it is taking and its methods. The weightiest contribution undoubtedly comes from businessmen in the leading technological sector of the economy and from professionals in the communications sector. The aspect on which this change in attitude is based is the role played by the knowledge, information and intelligence of people involved in the productive process. Their forecasts in general are particularly optimistic, both from a strictly economic point of view and from a social, political and cultural point of view.

The authors who have popularized this optimistic vision of the future of society¹ start from the assumption that knowledge possesses intrinsically democratic virtues as its source of power. Unlike traditional sources of power (force, money or land), knowledge is infinitely extendible. Using it does not wear it and, quite the contrary, may produce even more knowledge. Different people may use the same knowledge and producing it requires creativity, freedom of movement, exchanges and dialogue, all of which are characteristics inherent in the democratic functioning of society. In institutional terms, intensive use of knowledge leads to the break-up of bureaucratic forms of management and gives rise to flexible forms of organization, where hierarchies are determined according to accumulated competence and information and not as a function of the formal position occupied within an administrative structure. As a result, power in this view would no longer depend on formal authority or rank but on the capacity to produce added value. Leadership is where added value is generated, increased and developed.² On that basis, these authors predict that both the companies and the jobs of the future will be classified in categories related to the intensity of the knowledge they use. The less knowledge-intensive companies will be

those that perpetuate the Fordist model of production, where intelligence is concentrated at the top and the rest of the workforce remains subjected to tasks that require the use of physical strength or the performance of repetitive gestures, manual or otherwise. Knowledge-intensive companies, on the other hand, want all of their staff to furnish an intense intellectual effort. In these cases, the objective is a workforce which is better paid, but smaller and more intelligent.³ But the concept of 'intelligent' as applied to the performance of workers is a very broad concept, which in effect covers both cognitive and non-cognitive capacities (such as affects, emotions, imagination and creativity). Toffler himself has clearly pointed out that such companies will normally expect more from their employees than uncultured companies. Staff are encouraged not only to use their rational minds, but to invest their emotions, intuition and imagination in their work. According to that theory, an occupational structure would be configured on the basis of three categories of employees: personnel for routine services, personnel for personal services and personnel for symbolic services.⁴ Routine services imply performing repetitive tasks either as part of a mass production process or in repetitive operations of modern companies (such as inputting data into computers). There are standard procedures for executing the tasks and pay is determined according to the time it takes to do them. Workers need to be able to read, write and do simple calculations. But their main virtues are loyalty, reliability and the ability to be directed.

Personal services also involve routine and repetitive tasks that do not require much education. But the main difference with routine services is that personal services are performed face to face and cannot be supplied collectively. The workers operate either alone or in small groups (waiters, nannies, hotel staff, cashiers, taxi drivers, mechanics, plumbers, carpenters, etc.) and not within companies engaged in large-scale production.

Symbolic services represent the three main types of activities carried out in high technology companies: identifying problems, solving problems and defining strategies. Included in this group are designers, engineers, scientists and researchers, public relations experts, lawyers, etc. Their income depends on the quality, originality and intelligence of their contributions. The performance of their work implies the development of four basic abilities—abstraction, systemic thinking, experimentation and teamwork.

A capacity for abstraction is essential for this kind of work and worker. Reality needs to be simplified to be understood and handled. The worker has to be able to discover patterns that govern different aspects of reality. In order to arrange and interpret the chaos of data and information around us, we need to create equations, analogies, models and metaphors. From this point of view, the symbolic worker has to be trained to be creative and

curious. Schools do exactly the opposite: they impose models, offer prefabricated solution packages, and stimulate obedience and memory.

Developing systemic thinking is a further step in abstraction. We naturally tend to think about reality in separate compartments. Formal education perpetuates that tendency by proposing a subject-related approach that divides reality. But discovering new opportunities or new solutions to problems means understanding the processes by which the different parts of reality are interconnected. In addition to being taught how to solve a problem, students should be trained to analyze why the problem occurred in the first place and how it is related to other existing or potential problems.

In order to learn the most complex forms of abstraction and systemic thought, we need to learn to experiment. It is essential to be able to understand causes and effects and to explore different possible solutions to the same problem. But experimenting has a further important aspect: students learn to accept responsibility for their own learning, a quality they will need for performances that require life-long retraining.

Lastly, symbolic workers operate in teams, take a great deal of time to communicate concepts and seek consensus before proceeding with the implementation of their plans. Instead of educating for individual ability, this type of approach means placing the emphasis on group learning. Learning to seek and to accept peer criticism, to ask for help, to give credit to others, etc. is fundamental for this type of worker.

In this respect, modern companies appear as an operational paradigm based on developing the best human potential to its fullest. We may be experiencing a unique historical circumstance, where the abilities demanded for productive work are the same as those required for the role of citizen and for personal fulfilment. The traditional capitalist system of mass production generated a parallel process, at times contradictory, with the requirements of a citizen's education and personal development on one side (calling for the qualities of solidarity, participation, creativity and critical thought) and training requirements for the market on the other side (discipline, obedience, passivity and individualism). The new production models, on the contrary, offer the opportunity and the need to use the same qualities as those required at a personal and social level.

A relatively recent paper, written by an institution representing the most advanced industrial groups in Europe, clearly reflects this change.⁵ The document claims to sound a warning with regard to the way education in Europe is responding to the requirements of society and, more particularly, those of the economy. Thus, it upholds the need for producing complete individuals, endowed with broader rather than deeper knowledge and skills,

capable of learning to learn and convinced of the need to increase the level of their knowledge constantly. Early specialization in lower-secondary education, as applied in many European countries, no longer appears to be in tune with reality. On leaving school, young people should possess a range of general scientific and literary aptitudes, the ability to make critical judgements and a sound basic command of the three pillars of knowledge: mathematics, science and technology, the humanities and socio-economic subjects. They should also be able to communicate, to take on responsibilities and to engage in teamwork.

The paper recognizes that the competitiveness of the European economy depends on the quality of its workforce. However, it explicitly maintains that the purpose of education does not consist only in training workers, but also in training citizens with abilities such as a command of language, an understanding of the foundations of science and technology, critical reasoning, the ability to analyze a problem, to distinguish events and their consequences, to adapt to new circumstances, to communicate and understand at least one foreign language, to work in teams, to have a taste for risk, a sense of responsibility and personal discipline, a sense of decision and commitment, initiative, curiosity, creativity, a professional approach, the pursuit of excellence, a sense of competition, a sense of service to the community and civic qualities.

What is new about these proposals is not so much their content as those who put them forward. Having taken over the most traditionally humanistic educational approach, modern industrialists maintain that they need:

... independent individuals, able to adapt to continuous change and constantly to rise to new challenges ... A basic balanced education should produce 'complete men' rather than specialists. It is in this spirit that we advocate versatile education. The essential purpose of education is to help all individuals to develop their full potential and to become complete human beings and not economic instruments. The acquisition of knowledge and skills must be accompanied by character training, cultural open-mindedness and an awakening of social responsibility.⁶

Somewhat similar attitudes may be found in other areas, expressed in other forms. The economy and economic theory have upgraded the role played by education in growth, replacing the older concepts of 'human resources' typical of the 1960s, and placing a very strong emphasis on skills and know-how rather than just on the number of years of study. The 'black box' of human resource theory becomes the main object of interest in this new version.

2. REDEFINING THE RELATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

The connection between the abilities required for civic performance and those needed for productive performance opens up new perspectives for the role of education in social development. We may be presented with a chance to overcome the traditional dichotomy between educational ideals and real production requirements. This means that educational ideals would become less abstract, while productive work would assume fully human characteristics.

Nevertheless, social reality is more complex than that. Corporate activities are based not only on technical production methods, but also on social and economic means of gaining market share and for making and maximizing profits. In this sense, the new production methods need to be analyzed not only from the technical point of view but also within the more general context of the labour market and social relations.

In that more general context, overcoming the dichotomy between abilities and areas of performance will affect the traditional balance between learning content and coverage. Although productive performance and civic performance tend to call for the same abilities and skills, the problem is that productive performance requires them only for the core of key workers (the symbolic analysts) whilst civic performance—so long as its democratic nature is maintained—requires them for everyone.

In traditional capitalism, civic training and work training were quite highly dissociated from the point of view of content. Social cohesion was achieved by attachment to political structures (the nation) and by the incorporation of all in the labour market. Cohesion manifested itself in the social system, which explains why solidarity was conceived not as a moral duty but as an organic product of the balanced functioning of the system. The process of socialization provided for a relatively high degree of consistency between economic position, political behaviour and cultural values. In that relationship, workers could consider their activity as a negative factor in terms of personal development, but that negative side was 'legitimated' by a political and cultural attitude of conflict, which found expression in membership in trade unions, left-wing political parties and a commitment to work involving only very limited aspects of their personality and intelligence.

In the new scenarios of knowledge-intensive capitalist production, the dissociation from the point of view of the content of abilities tends to diminish, while a more complete commitment is required for productive performance. As a counterpart to that greater individual involvement in

terms of skills and abilities, however, there has been a much greater distance between those who work in knowledge-intensive jobs and those who work in traditional sectors or, worse still, those who are excluded from work.

Segmentation and exclusion are the two most important social phenomena that accompanied the growth of the knowledge-intensive economy. It is no coincidence, therefore, that alongside all of the fascination produced by new technologies and the expansion of areas of freedom and personal creativity, there has been growing public and private concern with regard to all of the issues which have come to be called the new 'social question', including unemployment, poverty and various forms of exclusion related to violence and intolerance.

The inability of the new production systems to incorporate the whole population on a relatively stable basis substantially alters not only the situation of those who are 'out' but also that of those who are 'in'. In this sense, many studies have shown that the new production technologies and accompanying management models imply at least two phenomena which directly affect the situation of workers engaged in the key sectors of production: the significant reduction in the number of stable jobs available and the total use of the people who occupy those jobs.

With respect to the reduction in jobs, all of the evidence indicates that high technology companies can guarantee stable jobs only to a limited proportion of their workforce, thus creating—in addition to a significant increase in unemployment—more precarious conditions for the remainder of the workers.⁷ Companies are moving towards flexible recruitment methods both externally and internally. External flexibility takes the form of outsourcing parts of production to other companies, whilst internal flexibility refers to the multiple skills of its own workforce, who are required to adapt to changing working conditions. That demand for versatility and constant adaptability, added to the requirements of teamwork and creativity in solving changing problems, could potentially generate a highly destabilizing climate, both for the individual and for the institutions. One way of overcoming this instability would be to provide people in these jobs with a high degree of security, as compensation for their full commitment to corporate demands.

The most important aspects of the debate concerning the performance of key workers are those that refer to the way in which experience and knowledge are accumulated on the one hand, and the possibility and means of mobility and substitution on the other. It is interesting to note to what extent studies on high-technology companies tend to agree on the growing importance of on-the-job training. Robert Reich, for instance, does not hesitate to assert that the skills of workers operating in key tasks are

acquired at the workplace and through experience. He compares that situation with the one prevailing in the traditional mass-production economy and with the formal methods of accumulating knowledge. Intellectual property accumulated in copyrights and patents, for instance, only protects discoveries, that is, the end products of a process that has to be constantly renewed. Preserving those aspects is crucial in the traditional mass-production economy, where growth depends essentially on economies of scale and volume production of each article. But in an economy where products have a short life, growth will depend much more on the accumulated experience of the workforce, which bears the responsibility for renewing products and production processes.⁸ In this sort of situation, the studies of the new economic trends agree that these workers are decreasingly interchangeable and less replaceable. If this trend is correct, we would be faced with a phenomenon that substantially alters the way the labour market operates as well as relations between the labour market and education. The full utilization of personal creativity, imagination and intelligence in the productive process would imply the loss of much of the 'existential' autonomy of workers. Taken to its extreme, the trend could drift towards a scenario rather like the mediaeval corporate situation, where the individual, already possessing a set of initial aptitudes to perform a task, had to undergo a process of apprenticeship at the place of work, which acquired an almost familiar character, and total personal commitment.

The possibility of replacing key workers or, in other terms, of maintaining the most open labour market possible, constitutes a central aspect of the social options available for the future. Even at the risk of oversimplifying the complexity of future prospects, it is worth looking at two extreme scenarios that could enable us to appreciate some of the basic features of the social options to which we will need to respond. The only point in guessing future developments on the basis of existing elements is precisely to anticipate and possibly avoid some of these phenomena which, obviously, may or may not occur in different social situations.

The first scenario refers either to the metaphor of the 'new Middle Ages', which various authors, and especially Alain Minc, have sustained in recent years, or else to metaphors such as enlightened neo-despotism. The second scenario refers to the possibility of a solid society, based on sharing scarce goods such as work and the benefits of a highly productive economy.

The central feature of the different possibilities inherent in the first scenarios is the break-up of social cohesion. This break-up can take the form of a 'split' within society, with the existence of 'networks' which integrate individuals and groups transnationally but totally exclude those who are not part of the network, the spread of solidarity and forms of

reproduction based on individual aspects and interests, and consequently a significant weakening of all forms of expression of general interests. The 'dominant' sector would for the first time in history be the group of workers possessing the socially most significant knowledge and completely devoted to their work. Social relations would no longer be, as in the case of traditional capitalism, relations of exploitation. Exclusion or, as suggested by Robert Castel,⁹ the 'disaffiliation' from society of vast sectors of the population, would be the main consequence of this type of social structure. Those excluded would be virtually 'useless' socially and economically speaking and as such would not be counted as social players. Permanently faced with need and instability, they would generate attitudes and cultural patterns based on the difficulty of controlling the future. Their day-to-day survival strategies would give rise to what Castel calls 'random culture'. Unlike traditional workers, the problem of such sectors is their mere presence, but not their projects. Disaffiliation could be conceived not so much in terms of a complete absence of ties or relations, as in terms of the absence of participation in the structures that hold a meaning for society. From a political point of view, such high levels of exclusion could be maintained only with equally high levels of authoritarianism. Maintaining the democratic system in a situation where a significant proportion of citizens are economically passive and where the forms of integration and cohesion are so weak seems hardly feasible.

The alternatives to that regressive scenario are based precisely on devising strategies for maintaining social cohesion. The central premise of such proposals consists in avoiding work becoming monopolized by an elite in society. Sharing work therefore constitutes the key aspect of these alternatives, where, from an educational point of view, it is crucial to establish whether access to skills that are necessary for performance in the key sectors of the economy can or cannot be universal.

The analysis by Andre Gorz has probably contributed the most to the development of these alternatives to the split of society. His arguments are based on the assumption that the widespread availability of the skills required by the modern sector of the economy, along with a policy of shorter working time, constitutes the most effective means of preventing the collapse of social cohesion and the split of society. But the widespread availability of skills does not mean reducing work to an inferior routine, but rather significantly expanding access to qualifications and skills which are needed for holding down key jobs.

The banalization of skills simply means that what I can do others, many others, can also do or learn to do. A tremendous number of skills reserved until now for the elite have been banalized in the last twenty years or so, such as the knowledge of foreign languages, the use of

computers, knowledge of dietetics . . . As a result, the banalization of skills and of higher qualifications is the indispensable and most effective means of combating the dualization of society . . . It is the necessary complement to a policy of shorter working days so that jobs, even the most qualified, may be distributed over a much greater number of working people.¹⁰

These two scenarios prefigure the main lines of debate on the direction of education in the future and, as may clearly be appreciated, force us to reconsider not only the problem of the quality of education but also the link between quality and the coverage of the system.

From the qualitative point of view, there can be no doubt that the skills to be encouraged by education are those needed for the most advanced sectors of productive activity. However, unlike what occurred under the traditional model of mass production, the exercise of such skills does not take place exclusively in productive activity. The capacity for abstraction, creativity, the ability to think systemically and to understand complex problems, the ability to associate, to negotiate, to consult and to undertake collective projects are abilities that can and should be deployed in political life, in cultural life and in social activity in general. The paradox in this change in the relation between education and work resides in the fact that it is precisely when the relation becomes closer, when the requirements of economic competitiveness call for intensive use of knowledge and education, that the specificity of the link disappears. Educating for work and educating for citizenship demand the same activities. Therefore conflict and tension shift back to the quantitative aspect, i.e. deciding how many and who shall have access to such education.

If the logic of private and short-term interests prevails, we shall return to elitist forms of distribution of education services. The privatization of production and distribution of knowledge would be a natural consequence of such an approach. It is doubtful whether it would be feasible or possible to maintain and sustain such a system, as it implies exclusion and an authoritarian attitude towards the excluded. No system based on exclusion and authoritarianism can be sustainable in the long term. That is why the socially most legitimate alternative is a demand for quality for all, based on the assumption that all human beings are able to learn. This demand for more democratic access to mastery of the socially most significant skills has not only an ethical foundation but also an obvious socio-political foundation.

NOTES

1. Alvin Toffler, *Powershift*, New York, Bantam Books, 1989.

The new educational pact

2. Robert Reich, *The work of nations. Preparing ourselves for 21st century capitalism*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.
3. Alvin Toffler, op. cit.
4. Robert Reich, op. cit.
5. [European Round Table of Industrialists], *Une éducation européenne. Vers une société qui apprend* [European education: towards a learning society], Brussels, February 1995. The members of ERT include Fiat, Pirelli, Shell, Siemens, Bayer, Nestlé, Petrofina, Olivetti and Telefónica.
6. Ibid., p. 16.
7. Andre Gorz, *Métamorphoses du travail. Quête du sens. Critique de la raison économique* [The metamorphosis of work. The search for meaning. An appraisal of economic logic], Paris, Galilée, 1988.
8. R. Reich, op. cit., p. 108.
9. Robert Castel, *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale. Une chronique du salariat* [The metamorphoses of social affairs: the story of the wage-earning classes], Paris, Fayard, 1995.
10. Andre Gorz, op. cit., p. 102.

CHAPTER IV

The new technologies

The changes in production methods analyzed in the previous chapter are inextricably linked to the use of communication and information technologies. The way this topic has been analyzed has changed substantially in recent years, precisely as a result of rapid technological upheaval, which has led to a generalization that the society of the future will be an 'information society'. The extreme views of the computing technocracy tend to maintain that it is the technologies which are bringing about changes in social relations, whereas technological developments are in fact a response to the requirements of social relations. For instance, it was not the printing press that led to the democratization of reading, but the need to democratize culture that accounted for the invention of the printing press. Roughly the same may be said of the communication media. They did not invent the culture of idols and celebrities that now predominates in our society, but conversely it is the culture of celebrities and show business that explains the emergence and expansion of mass communication media. From this point of view, it may be said that the recent development of information technologies responds both to the requirements of the growing individualism of our society and to the requirements of social integration. This tension between individualism and integration directs many of the technological changes, which at the same time allow for an increasingly personalized use of communication media and greater interactivity.

The analysis and discussion concerning the relations between education and information technologies have taken place on two different but closely related levels: the role of information technologies in the socialization process and in the learning process. Paradoxically, the judgements expressed regarding these two dimensions of the relation between technologies and education tend to be opposed. While from the point of view of socialization, technologies are perceived as evil and as a threat to democracy and to the training of new generations, from the point of view of the learning process, they are perceived as the ideal solution to all of

education's problems of quality and coverage. In these apparently opposing views, there is an obvious complementarity based on the assumption that the active role in the process of learning and socialization rests with the external agents, in this case information technologies and their messages, and not with the frames of reference of the subjects, through which the messages transmitted by means of the technologies are processed.

1. TELEVISION AND LEARNING

Both the more common literature on this topic and the common sense of educators tend to hold the view with remarkable persistence that the school system is waging an unfair war with the communication media, which are accused of being one of the elements responsible for the moral turpitude of children and young people. The same view is generally shared by the cultured, intellectual elites, probably providing one of the few points on which these elites agree. Many examples of this may be cited. One opinion worth mentioning is that of Karl Popper and John Condry, who have published essays which representatively summarized the opinions on television most commonly held in intellectual and educational circles.¹ Condry's article is based on data concerning television and its effects in the United States. The conclusions he reaches, however, are very similar to those accepted in other social and cultural circles. From a quantitative point of view, the most important phenomenon that television has given rise to refers to the use of time. In modern society, children spend most of their time in front of the television set and not with their friends, their teachers or other adults. More time spent in front of the television set means less interest in reading, more chances of obesity and psychic passivity, and higher incidences of violence, aggressiveness and fear of real violence.

Based on Condry's data, Karl Popper maintains that television is a negative factor for the socialization of new generations, and attributes the problem to the purely commercial motivations that dominate television programming. According to Popper, television has become a threat to democracy, which therefore must be controlled. 'There can be no democracy unless television is controlled, or to put it more precisely, democracy cannot subsist in a sustainable form until the power of television is completely brought up to date.'² These hypotheses regarding the role of television in the socialization of new generations are appealing due to their simplicity. The problem, however, is not so simple. Without wishing to deny the importance of the influence exerted by the content of television messages on the conduct of individuals, particularly children and young

people, it has to be recognized that the problems of violence, citizen passivity and personal passivity are much more complex than that. The most serious phenomena of violence, xenophobia and cultural intolerance which are happening at present—for instance, in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia or Algeria—do not appear to be related to any significant exposure of the population to television. Similarly, the fragility of democracy and the existence of authoritarian regimes hardly appear to be at all inherent in societies that make greater use of television as a means of communication.

These ideas regarding the negative influence of television are based chiefly on programme content. Placing the question of content at the heart of the problem, however, reduces the debate to a question of control and regulation of broadcasts. This aspect should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, we have to recognize that it does not constitute the only or even the main focus of the problem. Control has never been a long-term solution for any socialization strategy, and moreover it produces at least two perverse effects: it avoids the real effort of wondering why this type of programme attracts such a large audience, and it opens the door to repressive tendencies which are difficult to control once they have taken over.

The complexity of television's role in the process of socialization and cultural development has been highlighted by Dominique Wolton in his studies on European television.³ Against the assumption whereby there is a simple, direct correlation between message content and the response of the recipient, Wolton draws attention to the impact of images on the public's frames of reception and interpretation. His approach, in brief, consists in demonstrating that it is not because we all see the same that the same is seen by all. There is instead a constant interaction between spectators and the world portrayed by television.

This more complex approach to the role of television in socialization draws our attention to the link that is established between the subject and the socializing message and to the form used for transmitting the message. As far as the form is concerned, all analyses agree in pointing out the significant differences there are between pictures and reading. Pictures appeal particularly to emotions, feelings and affectivity, while reading stimulates rationality and reflection. The changes in political information, for instance, are one of the aspects where the impact of television can best be appreciated. For many analysts, television has changed the nature of political opinion. It is no longer an opinion based on an intellectual evaluation of propositions, but instead an intuitive, emotional response to the presentation of images. On an economic and commercial level, there have also been significant changes. Advertising requires introducing non-

rational behaviour in the economy,⁴ so that the consumer no longer decides according to his or her judgement of the comparative advantages of each product, but according to the emotions that the image-based advertisements arouse in him. In fact, television—an expression of technological progress—is reintroducing more religious standards of political and economic behaviour. It is in this sense that Popper's own suggestion that television 'has replaced the voice of God' is to be understood.⁵ The conclusions of several studies on television follow the same line of analysis. Leo Scheer, for example, maintains that television has taken over the function of priests in traditional society, by constantly creating idols and divinities through its soap operas and shows. According to this view, communicators are in charge of feeding the machine, which acts like Mount Olympus in polytheistic times.⁶ For Régis Debray, from a different point of view, television is a technology of 'make-believe' which follows a 'seductive State' logic—unlike reading and writing, which follow the logic of reason.⁷ If tackled from this angle, the problem of television as a socializing agent cannot be resolved merely by increasing the diversity of programmes and channels offered or by introducing educational and cultural channels. The problem does not reside only in the content of the programmes, but also in the link established between the broadcaster, the content and the recipient. In the case of television, this link presupposes that intelligence is concentrated in the broadcaster and that operations between the broadcaster and the recipient should be easy and neutral, so that at the end of the circuit, there should only be order and passivity. The intellectual operation on which the link between broadcaster and recipient rests is redundancy. To put it in Scheer's own words:

The false paradox is now emerging whereby as the number of channels on offer increases, fewer different programmes are available; the greater the number of film distribution circuits, the greater the concentration of returns on a few, increasingly scarce films . . . So, if we refer to 'television form', the fact of multiplying channels will not change its type of impact on society. This multiplication will merely increase the number of opportunities for producing the same impact.⁸

The proliferation of television channels and the extension of distribution circuits of knowledge, values and cultural standards through images are profoundly affecting the contents of the socialization process. In the next chapter, we shall be referring to changes in the secondary socialization process, which are based on a central phenomenon. In contemporary society, in which primary ties are weakening and the family is no longer transmitting its contents with the same affective power as it used to, secondary socialization is beginning to charge itself with affectivity.

Socialization through images and no longer through the written language is taking on this function and doing it not so much through the contents, but through the form it uses. From this point of view, television tends to reproduce the primary socialization mechanisms employed by the family and by the church: it socializes through gestures, through affective climates, through tones of voice, and it promotes beliefs, emotions and total commitments.

There is no doubt that we lack a theory concerning television images.⁹ In the Western intellectual tradition, images have always been undervalued in relation to the written word. The problem, however, resides in the fact that civic training and socialization for public life (which precisely begins in school) are directly linked to the learning of reading and writing. Mastery of the written code, however, presumes that one is able to handle possible manipulations in the use of the code, that is, that one is able to spot contradictions, subtle shades and double meanings. A type of socialization based massively on images implies that we must learn (and hence teach) to protect ourselves from image-induced manipulation. The mastery of the written code, paradoxically, gave images considerable importance. Seeing was an important criterion of truth. Now, instead, the manipulation of images and the possibilities that are opening up for constructing 'virtual realities' are forcing us to establish a different relationship with images. Seeing is no longer enough. Now we have to teach people to use the media in order to avoid being manipulated by images, which opens the door to a whole line of future educational action based on the need to train for a critical use of the media.

But what does training for a critical use of the media mean exactly? Many educators maintain the theory that communication has to be introduced as a content of teaching and they therefore emphasize the need to teach how newspapers or radio and television programmes are produced. In other words, knowing the mechanisms by which these media are produced would signify—according to this theory—acquiring the possibility of protecting oneself from manipulation. Such efforts are, without any doubt, very important. Nevertheless, they should not lead us away from the focus of the problem, which is related to the frames of reference that every individual uses to process incoming messages.

These frames of reference are both cultural and cognitive. From the cultural point of view, the message viewer or recipient carries out a series of operations of identification, recognition and differentiation, which presuppose the existence of a set of inherent resources, a cultural core on the basis of which the message contents are selected and processed. When this inner core is not constituted or only partially constituted, the risks of alienation

and dependence increase considerably. The media, especially television, have not been designed to build up this core. On the contrary, they take it for granted that individuals have already developed it for themselves and, on that assumption, the tendency is to increase the diversity of supply in order to enable each person to choose the type of programme s/he prefers.

The situation is somewhat similar from the cognitive point of view. The media assume that viewers already have the necessary categories and abilities for observation, classification, comparison, etc. to process and interpret the enormous wealth of data that they offer us.

Are we reaching a situation where the communication media will explicitly have to assume—that is to say, subject to a socially controlled policy—the function of forming the basic core of socialization? Is there a need for a pact between the school and the image, as there was and is between the school and the book? This is very probably the case, and it is therefore important to draw attention to some parameters of the discussion concerning this pact.

The discussion concerning socialization based on communication technologies involves two different but intimately linked dimensions. The first is rather political and refers to the democratizing capacity of a strategy of this type from the point of view of coverage. The second is related to the place that the communication media can occupy from the point of view of socialization content.

With respect to coverage, the development of the communication media has tended to follow the development of other forms of cultural democratization. Just as the universalization of schooling gave rise to the appearance of mechanisms of internal differentiation (segmentation between public and private sectors, between elite and mass schooling, specialization of contents and institutional profiles), the universalization of television is now bringing about similar effects. The increase in viewing supply is tending to occur through the appearance of channels that specialize topically, ethnically, linguistically or culturally. Unlike in the case of the school, however, where attendance is compulsory, the admission to or exclusion from access to these channels is for the time being more a matter of personal choice, so that every individual is free to decide whether to view a particular programme or not.

It is most interesting to note that the debate taking place at present among social communicators about the question of which is preferable, general or specialized television, is based on arguments that are very similar to those which were and are used in the debate concerning public versus private schooling. The European example is very illustrative in this respect. In Europe, television was public practically until the 1980s. At that time there

was a complete reversal in the perception and evaluation of the problem. Private television, which had been rejected until then, began to be wanted and demanded by the public. Dominique Wolton supports the theory that it was the success of public television which gave rise to enormously increased demand for more viewing, and it was the resistance on the part of public television to open up and to renovate that brought about the change of opinion. Private television prevailed less thanks to its own virtues than on account of the shortcomings of public television.

From this point of view, the value of running a general, public, good quality television service is one of the crucial themes of any future educational policy. But merely having good standard, general television viewing or an excellent cultural channel does nothing to change one basic aspect, namely the type of intellectual operation generated by the link through the image. For this reason, beyond the more specific question of which type of television is preferable, one should insist on the need for a policy where the link produced by television occupies a limited place in socialization and communication policies.

The right strategy for limiting the place of television is not to establish controls or other types of repressive measures. Instead of a reactive strategy, we need a proactive strategy aimed at strengthening communicative actions through reading and writing, and through face-to-face contacts, both of which should provide a basis for socialization through the image that can be combined harmoniously with other forms of socialization. To achieve this proactive strategy, it will be necessary to make use of the communication technologies themselves, which, as we know, are not limited to television. The other technological instruments available—such as the computer and the telephone—mobilize aspects that are very different from those inherent in television and are based on reading and on dialogue. We should avoid, therefore, falling into the false dilemma whereby all that is modern is unidimensionally associated with the image and all that is traditional with reading and dialogue.

2. COMPUTING AND EDUCATION

Television is not the only information technology. There are, at least for the time being, another two technologies which hold considerable social and educational potential, namely the computer and the telephone. These two technologies, unlike television, are not based on the image or on control of affectivity. Although there are differences between them, they are both technologies intended to accumulate, process and disseminate information.

Although images, text and sound tend to be increasingly combined and multimedia devices are already a reality, what we are concerned with here is the identification of the type of operations that these technologies offer and their impact on the design of social institutions.

As far as the computer is concerned, its main characteristic is that its intelligence is distributed in an opposite way to that of the television set. With television, intelligence is located in the centre and the terminal is passive; with computing, intelligence is in the terminal and the centre is passive.¹⁰ The diversity of operations which can be carried out with terminals is governed, however, by the availability of programmes (software). This fact that activities are significantly determined by the programmes available raises one of the most important questions related to the design of future educational activities, namely the control of the design and distribution of programmes.

The telephone, on the other hand, differs from the other two technologies in the sense that its use is intended to ensure the circulation of information without implying any concentration of intelligence either in the centre or at the terminals. Its condition of use, however, is avoiding any type of interference or restriction on the transmission of messages.

The educational consequences of the development of computing and its use are at present the subject of an intense debate, which has several aspects. In the first place, we need to analyze the effects on the actual learning process. In this respect, despite all of the passionate arguments put forward both by militant supporters of the new technologies and by their opponents, it is impossible to reach any categorical conclusion at the current stage of the debate. Theories of catastrophes, just like technocratic illusions, have been belied by events.¹¹ The history of education shows in any case that the necessary abilities can be developed with less costly and less sophisticated technologies. Essentially, there is no doubt that using these technologies can be extremely useful for learning. Their presence is already a fact in many spheres of social life, so that there is no reason why the same should not be true for education. The real problem, however, is that education is supposed to train abilities that build up intelligent behaviour, such as observation, comparison and classification. From this point of view, the use of technologies is not an end in itself, but a function of cognitive development. The problem that arises with the appearance of new technologies is that their development will lead to the accumulation of knowledge in circuits that they themselves dominate. Whatever is not admitted to these circuits will have difficulty surviving at all, like the information and knowledge that was not incorporated in either books or written documents after the appearance of the printing press.

It is this factor, rather than the potential offered by the new technologies from a purely cognitive point of view, that means that the technological dimension has to be properly incorporated in democratic educational policies. Any failure to do so can merely lead to the exclusion of all those who have remained unable to master the codes with which these instruments have to be handled.

Second, in direct relation to the problem of access to technologies, the problem arises of operational costs. This problem is not a simple one, since it concerns not only the initial outlay, but also the costs incurred after the incorporation of technologies (such as maintenance, constant updating of equipment and software, etc.). The massive introduction of new technologies into education converts what has been so far a problem related almost exclusively to technical and professional teaching into a general problem. High quality, general education can no longer be low cost in the sense that it only requires a classroom, some tables and a teacher giving classes. The battle for resources and for who should assume the costs of general education is bound to become more and more heated, and we have no reason to suppose that without constant pressure from the popular sectors, the distribution of new technologies will be democratic.

Third, the new technologies raise the problem of ease of use in a different way. A characteristic that is common to all of these technologies is that they require individual work and that they mediate relations between individuals by means of screens, cards and other devices. Regarding this aspect, the most extreme views have been put forward regarding the social consequences of the new technologies, ranging from a kind of utopia where all are related to all, with the abolishment of geographical frontiers, physical distances, timetable limits and bureaucratic and political mediations, to the Orwellian picture of a society of atomized individuals, subjected to total control by devices able to keep track of every detail of our daily lives.

Against the theory that these instruments are 'relational machines' which bring increasing numbers of individuals into contact with each other, there is also the alternative theory whereby we can only understand the use of these devices properly if we invert their apparent functions and perceive them, not so much as instruments facilitating relations, but rather as filters which serve to protect us from others and from external reality.

Both of these possibilities do exist, and the greatest danger probably lies in attributing either effect to technology itself. A non-technocratic attitude to the problem implies identifying social demands that can stimulate the development of technologies as a means of strengthening, and not breaking, social ties. In this sense, introducing new technologies means freeing the time now taken up by routine tasks and overcoming the spatial and technical

barriers to communication which hamper personal development. From this point of view, technologies significantly improve our access to information. But as all the analyses tend to show, just as information in itself does not imply knowledge, the mere existence of communication does not imply the existence of a community. Technologies supply us with information and allow communication, which are necessary conditions for both knowledge and community. But constructing knowledge and the community are tasks for people, not machines. This is precisely where we can find the place of the new technologies in education. They should be utilized to free time that is now being used to transmit or communicate information, and allow us to use this time to build up knowledge and closer social and personal ties.

NOTES

1. Karl Popper and John Condry, *La télévision: un danger pour la démocratie* [Television: a danger for democracy], Paris, Anatolia Editions, 1994.
2. K. Popper, op. cit., p. 36.
3. Dominique Wolton, *Éloge du grand public. Une théorie critique de la télévision* [The praise of the general public: a critical theory of television], Paris, Flammarion, 1990.
4. N. Postman, *The disappearance of childhood*, New York, Vintage Books, 1982, p. 108.
5. K. Popper, op. cit., p. 36.
6. Leo Scheer, *La démocratie virtuelle* [Virtual democracy], Paris, Flammarion, 1994.
7. Régis Debray, *L'État séducteur. Les révolutions médiologiques du pouvoir* [The seductive State: a media revolution amongst those who hold power], Paris, Gallimard, 1993.
8. L. Scheer, op. cit., p. 54.
9. D. Wolton, op. cit.
10. L. Scheer, op. cit., p. 55.
11. An overall view of the situation as it has existed for over a decade may be obtained from the *World yearbook of education 1982/83: computers and education* (J. Megarry, et al., eds., London, Kogan Page, 1983). A more recent analysis, related mainly to the problem of cognitive development, may be found in S. Maclure and P. Davis, eds., *Learning to think, thinking to learn*, Paris, OECD, 1991.

CHAPTER V

The construction of identity

What singles out the situation as regards education at present is that the traditional connection has been lost between primary socialization and the different forms of secondary socialization. It is not a question, therefore, of trying to define learning techniques, institutional models or curricular designs, which in itself is already a very important and complex task. The technical and institutional definitions of educational action cannot be arrived at outside the overall context of the socialization process. The complexity of the current crisis originates precisely in the difficulty of directing formal educational actions without having a clear idea of their connection with other socializing actions and institutions.

Analyzing the socialization process is, in fact, a way of looking at the construction of individual identities. In traditional society, identities were based above all on inherent factors such as gender, race, ethnic origin and religion. Capitalism and democracy significantly eroded the importance of these factors, which were replaced by the nation, social class and political ideology. As we saw in earlier chapters, these factors are currently losing their socializing capacity and their significance is undergoing some notable changes. In this situation of instability and uncertainty, we are witnessing either a regression to traditional points of reference, or else an attachment to new values, perceived as capable of building new identities. Beyond the need to identify factors of greater or lesser importance in the construction of new identities, however, the most important change has been in the actual process by which these identities are constructed. In this regard, an outstanding feature of the present historic period is precisely the importance assumed by the individual's own activity in constructing his or her identity. Unlike in earlier historic periods, identities are no longer entirely imposed from outside; they have to be built up individually.

The most recent studies concerning the way identities are constructed tend to link the construction process with the elaboration of individual strategies that are deployed in response to particular challenges. This

approach explains the apparent volatility of identities, their multifaceted character, their sensitivity to events, and especially the endless forms of manipulation and linkage that may affect them. It also places the issue at the heart of the present problem: the existence of systems of meaning (cultures) is less and less separable from the many individual actions which relate to them, remodel them and denature them, but at the same time allow them to develop.¹ Unlike in traditional situations where the individual incorporated systems that existed independently, nowadays the individual takes in dispersed fragments of reality and it is up to that individual to reconstruct the system.

The fading of traditional frames of reference and the greater part played by individuals in constructing their own identities are part of the process of personal liberation. As we saw in Chapter II, personal autonomy developed in different stages. In the first stage, typical of traditional society, freedom of choice was extremely restricted for the individual. In the second stage, which in historic terms is situated in the nineteenth century, ideas of freedom and individual choice gained ground primarily in political and economic spheres. The right to vote and freedom in the marketplace were the expression of this concept of the individual. The expansion of political and economic freedom, however, was hedged in by strong restrictions on personal life-styles. Individuals did not choose a particular life-style, but rather they were trained to accept a pre-existing, fixed model of behaviour, which determined the most important aspects of their daily lives.² Unlike in the nineteenth century, present-day individualism spreads to broader spheres and in particular affects everything connected with life-style. This expansion of individualism, however, has been a source of new tensions. While on the one hand it brings with it a release from limitations imposed by beliefs, prejudices and pre-established views of life, on the other hand it deprives individuals of the protection which was traditionally afforded by belonging to a fixed identity, where responsibility for the development of conduct was externally determined. This ambiguity in our modern condition provides one of the richest sources of current philosophical and educational thinking.

Pascal Bruckner, for instance, has expressed this ambiguity in terms that reflect the general understanding concerning the individualism of contemporary society: 'From now onwards, my fate depends only on myself: I can no longer blame my failings or my mistakes on any outside entity. The reverse side of my sovereignty is that if I am my own master, then I am also my own obstacle, alone responsible for whatever failures or successes befall me.'³

These changes in the way identity is constructed considerably affect the role and methods of educational action, particularly in the area of formal education. Formal education—that is, from primary school to university—was organized on the basis of two major assumptions. The first consists in maintaining that the basic core of socialization is provided by the family. The second assumption is that there is a dominant, hegemonic cultural model, which the school system must transmit. The growth of individualism has caused a crisis in both of these assumptions, and hence an unprecedented crisis in the ways of organizing educational action.

As we saw earlier, the family is experiencing significant transformations that are weakening its socializing capacity, compared with its role in traditional society. Teachers are aware of this trend every day, and one of the most frequent complaints is that children are admitted to school with a basic core of socialization that is insufficient for them to undertake their learning task successfully. To put it in simple terms, when the family socialized, the school could go ahead and teach. Now that the family is failing to fulfil its socializing role, the school is not only unable to carry out its appointed task as efficiently as in the past, but it is also beginning to be subjected to new demands for which it is not prepared.

The absence of a dominant cultural model lies at the heart of the whole current debate about multiculturalism and its effects on education. It is not only a matter of different cultures being present in the same society, but more the fact that the Western cultural model has actually incorporated diversity as one of its central features, thereby weakening any hegemonic pretensions. The loss of such hegemonic pretensions in turn generates powerful insecurity and underlies many of the conservative reactions that are currently appearing in developed countries, where the challenge by the traditional cultural pattern has swollen to a strong current of opinion.

These two trends—the weakening of the family's socializing role and the loss of hegemonic pretensions in the cultural model—particularly affect the process of primary socialization. But with these changes occurring at the start of the socialization process, other socializing actions (such as secondary socialization) have not remained unaffected. The analysis of this stage in the socialization of contemporary society shows that the loss of rigidity in primary socialization is accompanied by significant changes in secondary socialization. Using a somewhat schematic and extreme argument, it might be suggested that there is a trend towards primary socialization becoming secondary and secondary socialization becoming primary. The secondary influence on primary socialization basically takes the form of increasingly early admission to school institutions, and shorter time spent with the more significant adults (fathers and mothers), who are replaced by other, more

distant and affectively neutral adults or by contact with the communication media. The primary tendency in secondary socialization, on the other hand, takes the form of the incorporation of a greater affective content in the activities of secondary institutions. A first pointer to this phenomenon is the emotional and religious mood arising from contact with television. As an agent of socialization, television basically mobilizes not rationality, but affectivity, which is precisely the key feature of primary socialization. Besides television, however, primary ties are increasingly being demanded both in social institutions in general and in the workplace.

Current trends in work organization, for instance, show a series of features that are directly linked to this 'primary' tendency in the work place. The difficulties experienced by large-scale undertakings and the tendency to operate on the basis of small, autonomous and flexible units presupposes the disappearance of the impersonal machinery of major bureaucracies, which is being replaced by face-to-face contacts, where the key elements are integration, teamwork and solidarity. This means that, unlike in the traditional Fordist model, where what counted was technical and professional skill and where private life, personality traits, etc. were secondary factors, professional activity is now tending increasingly to include all of the dimensions of personality and not only technical skill.⁴ In addition, companies are paying more and more attention to the personality traits of employees, which has given rise to a phenomenon that until now was considered restricted to political patronage or the inefficient operation of underdeveloped economies, namely the introduction of personal preferences in the area of economic production and work performance. As A. Labaube maintains, 'from the moment appearance or passion take the place of the tranquilizing know-how, risks and abuses are not far away.' Recruiters in modern companies now take account not only of essential technical diplomas but also of personality traits. As an analysis of recruitment policies in France has shown, what recruiters are looking for are strong personalities, sociable, able to organize teamwork and to adapt to changing situations.⁵ Another example of this tendency is the growing need, using a secondary mechanism such as legislation, to regulate aspects that were traditionally self-regulated by cultural mechanisms. Lawrence Friedman⁶ points out that the intense individualism that is so typical of contemporary society goes hand-in-hand with an equally intense expansion of the law as a form of authority. At first sight, these two tendencies appear contradictory. The problems of the crisis of authority and the expansion of legislation are inversely related, however. While the problem with authority is the crisis it is undergoing and its decline, the problem with legislation is that it is continually expanding. The paradox, however, is only apparent. As Fried-

man shows, the areas where the role of authority is being reduced are precisely the same as those where legislation is expanding. The law, as an instrument of social control, constitutes a kind of replacement, a substitute for traditional authority.

Incorporating a greater degree of affectivity and total commitment in secondary socialization is not a minor phenomenon. Until now, modernization was directly associated with secularization, that is to say, with the depreciation of sacred values in public life. While sacred values are part of the heritage of private and family life, public institutions can integrate individuals through some partial, specific aspect of their personality. In this respect, the school system—and particularly public schooling—can and must recruit and treat its pupils regardless of race, religion, gender or political ideology. Secondary socialization, in other words, has always been the domain of institutions that do not require total commitment. These changes in the process of socialization are affecting the very basis of social modernization. The introduction of primary elements in secondary institutions can lead to a weakening of social cohesion based on universal elements and can thereby open the door to authoritarian temptations to control institutions, and to turn subjectivity and individualism to political advantage.

Against these authoritarian tendencies, one should point out the liberating potential due to a more flexible and open form of socialization. While the responsibility for ethical training, for values and for basic behaviour is now coming to depend much more than before on secondary institutions and agents, there are also greater possibilities appearing for promoting more tolerant and varied conceptions.

In this context, education and all socializing actions are—and will be much more in the future—subject to new tensions and challenges. Educating to make use of greater liberty and to construct one's own identity while recognizing the identities of others entails different links among the school, the family, communication media, corporations and political institutions, as well as different links between what is basic and what is changing in the development of personality. Some of these links shall be analyzed in the following sections.

1. THE LINK BETWEEN STABLE AND DYNAMIC

The construction of identity implies establishing a specific link between the stable and the dynamic, on both a social and an individual level. From the ethical point of view, for example, the construction of identity requires a

link between the 'hard' core and a 'soft' set of values and rules of conduct; from the social point of view, identity is also defined by the link between the development of individuality and the development of sociability, between what is prescribed and what is chosen, between what is personal and what is alien, between the local and universal, between historic continuity and transformation.

The crisis of modernity appears to have reduced the area of what is stable, prescriptive, 'hard' and basic to a minimum. This reduction, however, has not led automatically and linearly to an increase in areas of freedom. The weakness of the frames of reference is socially related to economic insecurity, loss of confidence and legitimacy with regard to what is personal, and can have the effect, as shown by many contemporary events, of irrationally strengthening the demand for limits and fixed standards. Present-day society reflects the coexistence of an unprecedented expansion in the areas of liberty and choice, and a return to values and behaviours typical of traditional societies. This duality is observed not only among societies and cultures, which are themselves internally homogeneous. On the contrary, the duality cuts across societies. In a recent article giving his impressions of American society, T. Todorov offered an interesting explanation of what he considered to be a specifically American phenomenon of regression in relation to the process of constructing a democratic identity.⁷ The first manifestation of this regression is related to the individuals themselves, who systematically think of themselves as victims and not as responsible for their own fate. In the United States, the cultural habit of always looking for someone to blame for whatever is wrong in one's life has spread significantly. This attitude, which until now was restricted to the area of personal conduct, has changed, and what is new is that the victimization felt by individuals is now being transferred to the public domain. The second manifestation consists in thinking and acting not as an individual but as a member of a group. These groups take on a political existence and many decisions are beginning to be taken as a function of group participation, independent of individual conditions. Underlying the tendency towards political representation by groups—which is aimed at securing the representation of minorities—there is the assumption whereby, for instance, a black person thinks as a black person and can only be represented by another black person, or a woman thinks as a woman and can only be represented by another woman, and so on. The corollary of this line of thought is a phobia of mixture, an attitude that is already clearly visible in several spheres of American life.

The link between stable and dynamic, from an educational point of view, raises a number of crucial questions. How much stability, for instance, is

required for change? How much security in personal values is required for tolerance? How much individualism is required to show solidarity? How much repetition is required to be creative? We educators tend to extrapolate directly between the objective to be achieved and the means of achieving it. Thus we naturally tend to think that if the objective is to achieve the development of tolerance, then it will be necessary to be tolerant at all stages of psychological development and in all learning situations. Developmental psychology teaches us, on the contrary, that achieving certain results means at some stages undergoing the opposite experience. The authoritarian practices applied throughout education systems have made us completely mistrustful towards the claims of fixed patterns of conduct. Nevertheless, it would be worth remembering some of the conclusions reached by psychologists who have studied the way moral categories are built up and their relation to violent and authoritarian phenomena. For instance, one of the most serious criticisms of traditional educational practices is that education has tried to overcome the problem of violence by eliminating it from the school scene. As a well-known contemporary psychologist put it, nothing in the education of our children and young people has prepared them to dominate their violence, because it has been denied in their schooling. One feature is certain about our culture, and that is that it stimulates an extremely competitive spirit, and favours aggressive feelings aroused by rivalry, but at the same time makes aggressiveness a taboo. We are used to condemning the all too frequent acts of violence which appear in the mass media, but what we need, in fact, both in our education systems and in those media, is the ability to promote satisfactory modes of behaviour in relation to violence.⁸ The clearest conclusion which we can derive from historic experience and from the development of individual personality is that just as much the lack of as the overwhelming presence of a solid core of values and cognitive abilities will have the effect of preventing the construction of values of tolerance, open-mindedness and flexibility, as well as the development of flexible and creative intellectual capacities. The history of civilizations offers us a number of examples of how powerful cultural cohesion is associated with intolerance, encapsulation and, in the end, the death of culture.⁹ Present-day society offers us many examples of the opposite occurrence, namely that the complete lack of frames of reference also generates attitudes of anomie, social dissociation and detachment, and the search for protection by recreating traditional links. These point to the first challenge for pedagogy—to determine what are the components of the basic core of personality and intelligence and how they can be trained. Equilibria are always very easy to formulate but very difficult to achieve in

institutional practice. But just because they are difficult, does not mean there is not a need to achieve them.

2. THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONAL AND ALIEN: IDENTIFYING THE BORDERLINE

In the second place, the construction of identity implies the identification of what is 'different', or the identification of a borderline. At a time when globalization is occurring in all spheres of social life, identifying a borderline may appear to be a contradiction or a regressive aspiration, running contrary to the educational ideal of international understanding and tolerance. Nevertheless, the ideal of tolerance and understanding requires not so much the disappearance of frontiers as the disappearance of the conception that those who are 'different' are the enemy. The danger inherent in an ingenuous or 'angelical' view of education without frontiers resides in letting values related to the defence of identity be expressed by regressive, defensive and traditional attitudes. These currently find expression in various forms of neo-fanatic groupings that are currently spreading in a number of regions and, in response to this, letting the values of globalization and internationalization be represented by a financial or technocratic elite, divorced from the remainder of the population.

Apart from overcoming geographical frontiers, globalization has eroded traditional ties of solidarity, without any other forms of cohesion coming to replace them with the same intensity. The rupture of traditional ties of solidarity is generating new forms of exclusion, loneliness and marginality. It also gives rise, however, to new forms of association, whose values are not necessarily positive from the point of view of personal and social development. At the base of society and in excluded sectors, we are currently witnessing some occurrences of neo-fanatic groups that found the integration and protection of their members on values of intolerance, discrimination and the exacerbation of differences. In the upper strata, similar tendencies are apparent. The detachment from the nation that is currently found among elites participating in the supranational economy raises the risk that their sense of responsibility will not extend further than their neighbourhood.¹⁰ The general optimism of a few years ago regarding the construction of supranational political entities, such as the European Union, has rapidly faded. The difficulties do not, however, imply a return to the previous situation. In other words, the nation-State cannot be maintained in its traditional form, nor can it be rapidly and easily forgotten. From an educational point of view, the problem consists in finding out how to

promote a national identity that is consistent with open-mindedness and respect for others and for differences. In this respect, the European debate regarding the construction of a concept of citizenship based on a community of nations has drawn attention to the importance of the cognitive rupture implied in overcoming the concept of citizenship based on the nation-State. The basic problem that has been raised in relation to this process is the lack of experience on the part of most citizens with regard to the concept of European citizenship. According to these diagnoses, political construction is much more advanced than collective experience, which might explain the significant gap there is at present between elites and public opinion in general in the way this process is perceived.¹¹ In this respect, it may be worth heeding the warning of some intellectuals regarding the danger of falling into a demonization of nationalism. According to these authors, integration into a greater unit has to be based on a solid, secure sense of one's own cultural identity. From this point of view, self-confidence must provide the starting point for any strategy of integration and understanding of the 'other person'. Fear, insecurity and self-depreciation can in no way constitute the source of a new civic culture.¹² Appropriate training for the responsible exercise of citizenship and a redefinition of the link between citizenship and nation are therefore basic aspects of the educational action needed to promote a form of identity positively linked to the values of peace and tolerance.

3. INDIVIDUALISM AND GENERAL INTERESTS

The crisis affecting political identities and political representation has brought with it as a consequence a sense of crisis affecting the State and all expressions of 'general interests'. Who nowadays guarantees general interests? Who can take long-term decisions? Who can assume a vision of society that goes beyond personal or sectoral interests? As we witness the disappearance of all regulation based in some way or other on the idea of ultimate objectives, of the significance towards which social action should be tending, the connection between individual interests and general interests is turning into a permanent challenge. In traditional capitalism, the particular interests of each social sector were portrayed as general interests, and the success of this operation precisely reflected the hegemonic character of a particular social class. This claim to hegemony, however, is no longer as strong as in the past. The absence of any claim to dominance in current cultural models carries with it a substantial potential for exclusion, which in

the end amounts to not bothering about the whole, but only about individual interests.

In this context, the tension between individual interests and general interests takes on new meanings and new expressions. The tendency to delegate more decision-making power to the citizens, for instance, is in line with the objective of democratizing society. This greater decision-making power, however, entails a higher level of personal responsibility. The question of responsibility is therefore central to any considerations concerning the future. As external regulations become weaker, and as decisions are not taken by others but by ourselves, the role of personal or group responsibility for decisions is assuming greater proportions. As a result, ethical training is becoming a key requirement of civic education. In this regard, there are many testimonies of a general awareness regarding the need to strengthen ethical education in schools and in other social institutions. The civic responsibility of corporations with regard to the problem of employment and the environment, the responsibility of communication media with regard to the education of individuals, the responsibility of educators with regard to their pupils' learning, and the responsibility of pupils with regard to their own learning process are just some examples among many which explain why there is a need to strengthen the part played by individuals and institutions in order to avoid deregulation degenerating into chaos and into the dissolution of minimum social cohesion. The challenge facing efforts to construct a new civic culture therefore consists in offering non-excluding alternatives or tolerant, peaceful alternatives to the demand for ethical training.

The ethical training of the citizen, synthesized in the notion of responsibility, was intimately related to the idea of the nation. Training for responsibility implies learning and accepting that we have a common history, common values and a common destiny. The crisis of the nation-State places the question of responsibility in a different and much broader context. The traditional tension between socialization (understood as a means of strengthening social cohesion) and individualization (understood as a means of developing the personal ability to express interests and objectives) is now taking on a different meaning. Socialization, traditionally perceived as the conservative aspect of education, can and must be recovered for the sake of its capacity for developing feelings of solidarity and cohesion in the face of the destructive tendencies of market logic. A form of socialization based on market logic would signify a concern for others based only on their quality as necessary—and purely transitory—complements to transactions (with customers, suppliers, etc.). Socialization based on the logic of cultural identities totally incorporates what is

similar and totally excludes what is different. The challenge of modern socialization consists precisely in developing the ability to recognize the other person as a subject. In the words of Touraine, the challenge consists in overcoming the instrumental character of the market on the one hand, and the authoritarianism of identity-based logic on the other.

4. IDENTITY AND THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE

As we know, one of the key characteristics of life in a democracy consists in demanding that citizens exercise their ability to choose between various possible options when resolving a problem. The conditions of modern life, however, have produced a considerable increase in the areas where a citizen is called upon to decide and in the range of options that s/he has to accept as legitimate. From this point of view, democracy as an exercise in the ability to choose has gone much further than the mere choice of political options. It is worth calling attention to a phenomenon that is directly affecting our understanding of juvenile attitudes. Choice, as a capacity that we must exercise individually, is a form of conduct that is occurring increasingly early in the training of personality. It is true that political decisions, and in some cases decisions concerning entry into the labour market, are relatively belated. Nevertheless, the time to make choices in aspects affecting private life, such as sexuality, clothing, activities (sports, leisure, etc.) has been significantly brought forward. The young people of today are called upon to choose, to take decisions that until only recently were made by authorities outside the individual, such as the State, the family, the church and even the corporation. Teaching how to choose therefore constitutes an important task of education for peace and democracy. This challenge, however, applies to society as a whole and not only to the school system. At present we are facing the paradox of living in a situation requiring greater levels of responsibility at an increasingly early age, while at the same time prolonging the period of dependence by extending the years of schooling, and by increasing the difficulty of entering the labour market, the housing market, etc. This contradictory timing is one of the sources of conflict which society has not yet been able to resolve.

Developing the capacity to choose requires a form of pedagogy that is very different from that prevailing in our school systems at present. Teamwork, active solidarity between members of a group and developing the ability to listen are just some of the key elements of this new form of pedagogy which we should be developing in both theory and practice.¹³

5. CONFLICT AND CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

All of the connections analyzed in the preceding sections refer back in the end to a basic problem, namely the role of conflict, of opposition and of difficulty in constructing identity. What is personal, in fact, is built up from the definition of and relation with what is different. In this respect, the socialization strategies of the school system face the need to determine which elements the school system will decide to oppose, which will be considered as positive and which the school system will treat as neutral. In the traditional model, the school system dealt with what was universal and common, and in this sense adopted a neutral attitude towards important factors of cultural differentiation. But this relative neutrality was possible in so far as the factors of cultural differentiation belonged either to the family or to the condition of foreignness. The idea of nation and social mobility allowed the school to be neutral with respect to class, ethnic or cultural origins. In this regard, school socialization operated within the framework of conflict between individual and universal attitudes. Patterns that were perceived as universal were defined precisely in terms of their neutrality with respect to individual characteristics, and even derived their strength and their educational importance from that opposition. The challenge of breaking particularities made the school system's relative neutrality appear active. The classic example of this phenomenon is the debate on school secularism, which to a greater or lesser extent has been a concern in most Western countries.

The present nation-State crisis and the increasing difficulty experienced with efforts to fulfil the expectations of social mobility and the cultural changes associated with modernization have spelt the demise of this attitude of compromise and neutrality. The school system is now facing a double tension: on the one hand, a tension between the authoritarianism of identity-related demands and the liberation of universal proposals; on the other hand, the tension between the uniformization of universal proposals and respect for differences. A democratic approach means assuming the need to remain open to the universal starting from a personal identity, simultaneously opposing the authoritarian option of identities closed in on themselves and the other option of a non-critical acceptance of uniform messages.

NOTES

1. Bertrand Badie, *Culture et politique* [Culture and politics], Paris, Economica, 1993.

2. Lawrence Friedman, *The republic of choice: law, authority and culture*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1990.
3. Pascal Bruckner, *La tentation de l'innocence* [The temptation of innocence], Paris, Grasset, 1995.
4. See, for instance, Alain Labaube, Les exigences de la professionnalisation [The requirements of professionalization], *Le monde* (Paris), 15 March 1995.
5. Marie-Béatrice Baudet, *Un couple indissociable; dans la relation qualification-professionnalisation, le comportement a désormais toute sa place* [An inseparable couple: in the relationship between qualification and professionalization, behaviour now has a role to play], *Le monde* (Paris), 17 May 1995.
6. L. Friedman, op. cit.
7. Tzvetan Todorov, *Du culte de la différence à la sacralisation de la victime* [From the religion of difference to the sacredness of the victim], *Esprit* (Paris), June 1995.
8. Bruno Bettelheim, *Surviving and other essays*. New York, Random House, 1980.
9. See in this respect the book by Lê Thành Khôi, *Education et Civilisations, Sociétés d'hier* [Education and civilization: ancient societies], Paris, Nathan-IBE: UNESCO, 1995.
10. Christopher Lasch, *The revolt of the elites and the betrayal of democracy*, New York, Norton, 1995.
11. Dominique Wolton, *La dernière utopie. Naissance de l'Europe démocratique* [The last Utopia: the birth of democratic Europe], Paris, Flammarion, 1993.
12. Interview with Julia Kristeva, *Le monde des débats* (Paris), no. 1, October 1992.
13. Michel Crozier recently emphasized the ability to listen as a central element of education for democracy, overcoming the traditional limitations of civic instruction. See M. Crozier, *La crise de l'intelligence. Essai sur l'impuissance des élites à se réformer* [The intelligence crisis: an essay on the inability of elites to reform themselves], Paris, InterEditions, 1995.

CHAPTER VI

The total school

Although the future is not written, there are a few parameters that can help us identify the main lines along which it will need to be discussed. In the last resort, social development alternatives invariably revolve around the traditional choices between democracy or authoritarianism, equity or inequality, and liberty or domination. The specificity of every stage in history resides in the definition of what and who represents each of these choices and how. One of the notable features of the present historic period is that everyone appears to be in favour of change and that everyone is heralding change in the name of the same values.

Four examples taken from the specific field of education can be used to illustrate how difficult it is to identify clearly what and who best represent the side of democracy, equity and liberty, and how. The first example refers to the strategy based on giving priority to expanding the coverage of primary education. In some people's opinion, this constitutes a democratic, equitable goal. For others, it represents a new version of social conservatism that wants to offer popular sectors only basic education, thereby monopolizing access to higher education for the upper layers of society and for the developed countries.

The second example of this same ambiguity is the priority given to State action. The advocacy of public action in education was traditionally a left-wing tenet, which saw the public sector as a guarantee of equity and democracy in the supply of education. Many analyses and historic experiences, however, have shown that the State—in itself and in the abstract—is by no means a guarantee of equity and democracy, and that, on the contrary, it can act as an authoritarian force opposed to liberty and to respect for differences.

The third example of the same ambiguity is the spread of new technologies; for some, this promises the fulfilment of all democratic utopias, while for others it represents a threat bound to exacerbate inequalities and increase controls over the citizens. In the end, the democratic objectives of educa-

tion, as an activity which should serve the full development of personality by fostering abilities such as creativity, solidarity and problem-solving, are now defended not only by progressive educators, but also by social actors who, like businessmen, were identified in the past as strong opponents of these aims.

One of the many upshots of this situation is that the ambiguity and obscurity of social debates have caused a loss of identity among progressive educational movements. Significant groups of educators who were traditionally committed to change now appear to be defending conservative positions against the consequences of that change. Sectors that, on the contrary, had maintained conservative positions now appear as militants of change and renovation. It is not at all easy for the progressive movement in education to recover its identity, since one of the conditions of success of such a movement is a commitment to the social forces that are driving education in a democratic direction.

1. THE EXHAUSTION OF THE MODERNIZATION PARADIGM

The first part of this book showed the different aspects of the crisis occurring in education. We saw that this crisis is related to the exhaustion of a model of social organization based on what has been referred to as 'modernization'.

Alain Touraine¹ has drawn attention to the unilateral way in which the process of modernization has been conceived and conceptualized. Essentially, this process is based on the assumption that there is (or should be) an increasingly close relation among production (gradually becoming more efficient thanks to science, technology and/or better management), the organization of society (governed by law) and personal life (governed by interest, but also by the wish to be free of all limitations). There are two basic components in the process: rationality and subjectivity. While the first of these serves to organize social life and productive activity by incorporating science and technology, the second supports the full development of personality, freed from limitations imposed by social or cultural determinants. Historically, however, modernity has been associated almost exclusively with the first of these aspects. As Touraine points out, the trouble with our modernity is that it has evolved in opposition to half of itself, against the individual and his or her freedom.

From this point of view, education provides one of the most important battlegrounds between rationality and subjectivity. The organization of educational activity as part of an institutional system whose main aim is to

prepare for integration into society has been one of the most representative expressions of the principle of rationality. As we saw in the first part of this book, this has required placing a fundamental emphasis on learning universal aspects, over and above particularities, feelings and passions. Feelings and passions were only furthered and permitted in areas that fulfilled a strongly integrating function (such as the nation, the mother country or the party). School socialization, as a result, was aimed at promoting behaviours that were adapted to the requirements of an institutional system based on impersonal rules common to all. While this model entailed a break with family socialization—conceived as the preserve of particularity and feelings—it was organically linked in the way it operated with family socialization. The family socialized with a view to achieving success in school, in the sense that it was responsible for training the basic core of personality, one of whose main components was precisely preparation for school activity.

It is worth recalling that one of the basic rules of this model is that the family should be responsible for enabling the pupil to arrive at school both materially and psychologically fit to be educated. Only on that basis can formal education assume its specialized and partial (rational) task. This is one of the reasons, amongst others, why this model of schooling was successful in developed countries. Proof of this is afforded by examples of the opposite, that is, unsuccessful schooling, especially in developing countries. In these countries, where schooling was introduced exogenously, the family could undertake only to a very limited extent the task of socializing children culturally for their school activity, while providing the necessary material conditions for their education. The school system is being constantly pressured to become a 'total' institution, where the learning function competes with moral training and with the satisfaction of basic needs, which in the traditional model are preconditions for learning. Faced with this multiplicity of demands, only those who are able to adapt to the conditions required by the school system can succeed.² The tension between rationality and subjectivity existed throughout the historic development of education and pedagogy, generating along the way some insoluble contradictions. For instance, from the point of view of instrumental rationality, the democratic view emphasized the need to extend coverage and access to an institutional education system that was the same for all, thereby denying the importance of personalized attention. Personal differences were associated with cultural characteristics and—from that angle—any consideration of those differences was perceived as anti-democratic or simply depreciated from the point of view of educational policy. The democratization of the 'system' thus became the undoing of all

active pedagogies, which considered the concepts of democratization and modernization as leading to full personality development and not to integration within the social system. Active pedagogies stressed education for freedom and for creativity, which condemned them to develop outside the institutional framework of State-controlled schooling. What was democratic from the point of view of the development of subjectivity turned out to be elitist from the point of view of the system's logic.

In this respect, it is worth asking oneself why this contradiction between full personality training and training for social integration was noticed only by progressive movements in education but was not assumed by progressive social movements in general. Neither left-wing politicians nor the trade unions used active education as a rallying call. Social concerns were almost entirely related to economic concerns, so that priority was given to democratizing access to the system as a way of providing opportunities for social mobility. The most extreme form of this link between economic and social concerns was arrived at in the socialist countries, where education was linearly and directly related to the requirements of the production system and where the principles and pedagogic practices applied in educational institutions followed traditional standards, based on a cognitive approach and clearly authoritarian relations between master and pupil.

The present crisis is precisely the crisis of unidimensional conceptions of modernity. The type of instrumental rationality, which denies subjectivity and the value of liberty, led in the extreme to authoritarianism and to the different versions of 'enlightened despotism'. Pure subjectivity, on the other hand, deprived of the rationality of science and freely contracted cohesion, leads to equally authoritarian forms of integrism and fundamentalism. The criticism of the unidimensional character of modernization should not cause one to lose sight of the effectiveness of instrumental reason or the liberating force of critical thought and individualism. Touraine's book precisely highlights the dual dimension of new modernization, namely rationality and subjectivity. From this point of view, modernization is understood as a tense, unstable relation between reason and subject, between rationalization and subjectivity, between science and liberty. The relation, however, is not purely conceptual, but also political. Society's challenge to education therefore consists in relating this rationality and subjectivity to social action, that is, to social actors and not merely to isolated individuals.

2. THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of the modernization process has been its 'anti-finalism', that is, its break with any idea of ultimate, definitive

purposes to which all human action should tend. Instead, modernization has emphasized functions. What was 'good' was thus conceived as any socially useful action and, in this sense, institutions had to fulfil functions which would tend to guarantee the operating rationality of the system. Education therefore organized to fulfil its function of social integration. As a result, it needed to teach the standards and knowledge required for the performance of the various social activities, whether productive, political or social. Preparing for the performance of roles was the basic function of education. The counterpart to this function was obviously the system's capacity to incorporate individuals in the roles for which they had been trained.

Changes occurring in the productive, political and family system, however, caused the failure of that policy, which is no longer able to mobilize society. Unemployment makes it increasingly difficult to incorporate individuals according to the vocational training they have received; depersonalized training neither attracts nor promotes the learning of new generations, who see no sense in educational action that is disconnected from lifestyles where they are being constantly stimulated to make choices; and the educators themselves do not master the more dynamic aspects of contemporary culture and therefore find themselves superseded in their socializing capacity.

The modernization crisis based on the unilateral mastery of rationality has brought about what is seen as a lack of objectives, or a lack of direction towards which social action may be oriented. The uncertainty surrounding the destination of both social and individual development is one of the most visible characteristics of present-day society. This handicap is all the more apparent in education, since it casts serious doubts on the belief whereby we have something to transmit to new generations and, furthermore, that we wish to do so.

In preparing a democratic educational plan for the future, the first aspect that should be discussed is precisely the sense (or direction) of educational action. What is more, the matter should be attended to without delay. The current void in this respect tends to be occupied by at least two other tendencies that are opposed to the objectives of modernization and democracy.

First, there are the fundamentalist and integrationist ideas that represent a return to the notion of ultimate, sacred purposes, which are not open to discussion and are imposed on individuals. Fundamentalism is particularly attractive in situations where modernization impresses more for its destructive and exclusionary effects than for its liberating potential. With the disappearance of traditional forms of integration, combined with a low capacity for incorporating new ones, we see the appearance of anti-modern,

identity-related constructions, which, as some studies point out, are opposed both to modernization and to traditional forms of integration.³ Second, there is neo-liberalism, which translates into the development of asocial individualism, a disregard for any form of integration and a search for the satisfaction of personal interests regardless of their consequences on either social or ecological equilibrium.

In the face of these two options, each of which denies some aspect of modernization, the only possible democratic choice is to look for the link between instrumental rationality and subjectivity, between the system's logic and the requirements of personality development.

3. THE 'TOTAL' SCHOOL

The traditional school could be identified chiefly as an institution of secondary socialization, that is, where it was assumed that the basic core of personality and incorporation in society had already been acquired. The school's function could then focus on preparing for social integration—supplying increasingly specialized information, knowledge, values and attitudes, amongst others, which corresponded to the performance of relatively stable and hierarchically ordered social roles.

This model has now reached a state of crisis because the family no longer fulfils its role as before, society and the economy require changing roles and a performance involving the whole of personality and not just technical know-how, and citizens' own aspirations need more personalized attention. The dissociation between full personality development and technical know-how in the workplace imposed by the Fordist production model is now disappearing, just like traditional criteria of representation and citizen participation.

As a result, the school's social integration function needs to be redefined. The democratic criticism of the school's traditional role focussed on its reproductive nature and highlighted the conservative character of social integration promoted by the school system. This criticism was directed both at the contents of school socialization and teaching practices as at the institutional design, based on a pyramid-shaped system reflecting the social structure. What is sure is that this model has exhausted its possibilities and both the renovating and conservative alternatives nowadays no longer revolve around the same principles as in the past. Instead, we are facing a range of possible social scenarios, where promoting social integration and cohesion on the basis of freely discussed undertakings and agreement assumes a clearly progressive character, and where, on the contrary, it is the

conservative options which foster either the disintegration of the social fabric through asocial individualism and exclusion, or else the total integration—‘integrationism’—of fundamentalist movements.

At that point two possible lines of analysis open up. The first points to the question of the contents of school socialization, while the second looks at institutional design. While both of these dimensions are very closely linked, we shall concentrate on the former in the remainder of this chapter, and leave the analysis of institutional questions for the following chapter.

The most significant change ushered in by the new demands on education is that it should systematically assume the task of personality training. Both productive activity and civic activity, as we saw, require developing a series of abilities (such as systemic thought, solidarity, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, etc.), which are not mastered spontaneously, nor through the mere acquisition of information and know-how. Schools—or, to be more cautious, institutionalized forms of education—now have to tackle the task of shaping not only the basic core of cognitive development, but also the basic core of personality. This means that the school must take on the characteristics of a total institution. While these characteristics were already there in the traditional model, particularly in the early stages of primary school, they now appear to be demanded for the whole of the system. Training the personality of young people and of future professionals has nowadays become a growing requirement.

For the school to assume the task of full personality training is not without its dangers and problems. When personality training was a ‘private’ task, the school could establish its area of activity in the public domain, within a global frame of reference. Establishing a clear definition of the areas towards which the school was ‘neutral’ therefore constituted one of the most important and most difficult tasks facing Western education systems in their beginning. The democratic character of education, in that respect, was defined by its neutrality towards differences, particularly religious, ethnic, racial, social and gender differences. Neutrality towards differences, in the democratic version of this approach, signified an effort to do away with the inequalities associated with the differences. In the conservative version, on the other hand, neutrality towards differences implied either homogenization and introducing the dominant cultural model to all, or legitimizing inequalities through differing degrees of success in educational performance.

Nowadays, on the other hand, we know that in order to do away with inequalities, we have to deal with differences, and we also know that personality development means teaching to assume the choice of identities related to gender, religion and culture. Assuming personality training as an

educational task therefore affects all of the dimensions of the school institution, right from the definition of the curriculum up to evaluation criteria and teaching staff. The school, now converted into a 'total institution', will be exposed to all of the dangers of particularities. On the other hand, particularities will also be much more exposed to the action of public institutions.

Are we not touching on one of the most significant core elements of this link between rationality and subjectivity, which Touraine claimed was the essence of the modernization process? A greater involvement of secondary institutions in personality training, understood as an exclusive aspect of rationalization, leads to all of the forms of modern authoritarianism. The subordination of secondary socialization institutions to the exclusive logic of particularism, however, leads to other forms of subjection, through the traditional subordination to biological, ethnic, racial or religious determination. The present debate about multicultural and intercultural education revolves around this problem, which in the end means deciding towards what the future school system will be neutral and towards what it will not be neutral.

In this debate, one aspect at least appears foreseeable, the fact that the school's areas of neutrality will be much more limited than in the past. There are some questions that the school will not be able to leave on one side, but will have to assume actively by making them better known and discussed. Put in a different way, the future school will have less of an area set aside for a 'hidden' curriculum. In the traditional model of school neutrality, it was possible to adopt a dual attitude, one for stated goals and one for effective practice. In the new type of school practice, while there will presumably be latent functions and undesired effects, goals will be and must be declared. There will be a clear statement of the objectives proposed and greater freedom of choice.

The present debate about religious teaching is one example of this change. In this respect, there is no doubt that the secular principle should be maintained whereby religious teaching is a subject which should be taught by the churches and not by schools, particularly State schools. Nevertheless, there are two aspects which the school system should deal with actively. First, understanding the religious phenomenon as such. Knowing the nature of the religious phenomenon and its different forms of expression is a fundamental part of a citizen's cultural education. The history of religions is therefore either becoming a subject in its own right or an important part of history teaching in many countries. Second, there is a real need to strengthen ethical training, where values such as responsibility, tolerance, justice and solidarity constitute the central elements of a citizen's education.

The inculcation of these values can no longer be left to the spontaneous effects of social life.

Undertaking to train the personality, from a democratic point of view, therefore entails rejecting both the negation of subjectivity derived from rationalism, and the idea of a single personality, a unique personal model to which we should all tend, as advocated by authoritarian integrationism. Promoting a link between different elements, and promoting discussion, dialogue and exchange should be the limit of any attempt to impose a single personality model. In this respect, in view of the great diversity of choices that the individual will come across in the course of developing his/her social ties, the function of schooling in relation to personality training will consist in establishing frames of reference, which allow individuals to choose and to construct their own single or multiple identities.

The fact of incorporating more activities related to personality training in no way implies abandoning the cognitive function of education. It will not be possible, however, for the latter function to continue developing according to traditional patterns of information transmission and accumulation. In this respect, the most important problem that the school system will need to resolve is deciding how to promote the wish to know in the midst of the flood of information circulating in society and how to establish frames of reference to process what information is available.

For the same reason, teaching methods will also be facing demands for greater adjustment to personal rhythms and differences in the development of cognitive capacities. In the traditional model, based on providing information and know-how, methodologies were frontal. There was no personalized teaching work nor any group or teamwork. Social cohesion was achieved rather as a product of the overall action of the 'system', and not through school teaching practices. There are presumably many teachers and institutions which are carrying on noteworthy group integration work, but this is not part of the aims of educational policies, to such an extent that such efforts are not reflected in any evaluation criterion and do not produce any administrative sort of reaction. The introduction of teamwork, interdisciplinary activities and various forms of collective work have always met with enormous difficulties. Education's social integration function, traditionally defined as preparation for the performance of hierarchically ordered roles, will have to be redefined on the basis of preparation for teamwork, for the exercise of solidarity, and for recognition of and respect for differences. This type of training also requires a clear link between the group and the individual. Being an active member of a team implies having something personal to contribute. Personal excellence is not incompatible with teamwork. In this sense, the new education technologies may prove to be a

considerable help, in so far as they can free time used on routine tasks to create a climate of greater 'interchange' in teaching work.

In this connection, it is worth looking at the way that new technologies are introduced into productive activities. This move is basically a response to the real need to eliminate routine tasks and to offer a more efficient and individualized service. The introduction of new technologies does not occur in isolation, but is generally accompanied by changes in management, in personal relations and in the legal environment.⁴ In the case of education, on the other hand, there is often a tendency to lose sight of the objective for which new technologies need to be introduced. In fact, what is important is not introducing new technologies as such, but new methodologies that can liberate the teacher from the task of supplying information or filling in administrative forms, in order to allow him or her to dispense more personalized attention and devote him/herself to teamwork. To achieve this, as shown in some experiments conducted in developing countries, it is not essential to have computers. It can be done with less expensive equipment, such as written self-learning guides, which are suitable for teamwork and which allow the teacher sufficient time to concentrate on adapting the pace of learning to the needs of individual students.⁵ Training the ability to analyze and synthesize, as well as teamwork and creativity skills is not a pedagogically easy task either for the teacher or for the student. Traditional teaching methods were based on the concept of effort, which was related to duty, discipline and respect for the teacher's authority. Active teaching methods therefore stressed the elimination of the teacher's authority and emphasized the notions of liberty and participation. In practice, however, the application of active methodologies has in quite a few cases generated an image of 'facility' as a proposed alternative to the effort required by traditional methods. Yet nothing is further from the reality of the new educational challenges than this notion of facility. The construction of identities and the construction of intelligence are very demanding processes in terms of subjective work. The success of this subjective work is based on motivation and on adapting the learning approach to the possibilities of cognitive development. This aspect is in fact one of the keys of the future development of teaching methods, which will need to find an educational solution to the problem of achieving sufficient motivation for the effort of conducting the learning process.

There are at least two very important obstacles to 'revaluing' this effort. The first is the accelerating expansion of the entertainment and leisure industry. The increase in free time available to people, particularly in the developed world, has led to an enormous expansion in all services related to easy entertainment, ranging from travel and tourism to electronic games and

all forms of video shows. But free time is also related to the absence of work. The facility of entertainment and the lack of perspectives of productive work are very powerful demotivating factors where the learning effort is concerned. Clearly, this is a problem that exceeds the scope of the school system. Nevertheless, the latter will have to deal with it and to follow the general strategies adopted to overcome it. Some of the avenues schools can explore are preparing for a critical use of communication media and entertainment and for the conduct of activities which are not considered as work nowadays but which in the future will need to be accepted as such. Along with other social institutions, the school will also need to assume the task of promoting strategies based on overcoming the two most negative factors of current entertainment strategies, namely passivity and individualism. Promoting strategies for leisure time based on group activity provides a starting point for converting amusement into an educational factor.

The second obstacle to 'revaluing' the learning effort is the reverse of the former and refers to intense competition as a basis for success. A motivation for effort based on a desire for personal success over the other person constitutes a standard of conduct which is culturally accepted in Western societies. The educational challenge consists in promoting forms of conduct where the team and not the isolated individual is the factor of success and where victory does not signify the elimination of others, without whom any further competition becomes impossible.

4. SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

For most people, the traditional capitalist type of development model implied a high degree of dissociation between the skills required for productive work and those required for personality development. In Tournaine's terms, the rationality of adjustment to the system's requirements was incompatible with the subjectivity of the free development of personal possibilities. This incompatibility was resolved through the selective function of the education system, which allowed individualism only for a few. Now that the arrays of skills are tending to be compatible, the problem of coverage—that is to say, the effective possibilities of universalizing access to education based on full personal development—needs to be reconsidered.

In this respect, future alternatives will be situated in a spectrum ranging from the extreme of a return to access selection based on a new division of labour, to the true universalization of access and therefore to the significant

weakening of education's function as a means of selection for the labour market.

The democratic approach obviously favours universal access. But in the new social scenario, the arguments in favour of the democratization of education cannot be the same as in the past. To put it succinctly, it is no longer possible to support the claim for universal education, while pretending at the same time that education is a vehicle of social mobility. The tension between these two claims is already apparent in developed countries. In developing countries, paradoxically, this situation has existed for some time owing to the independence between educational development and economic development. In recent decades, the expansion of education combined with the rigidity of the labour market have produced the well-known phenomenon of a depreciation of titles and diplomas. Higher-education graduates began to take up jobs traditionally occupied by people with a middle standard of education; in turn they occupied positions for which previously only basic education was required, while people who only had basic education tended to become the most likely candidates for unemployment. This trend, however, now appears to have gone as far as it could, and there are signs that unemployment is also affecting the better educated. While undoubtedly there are a number of factors which need to be considered to explain the relation between employment and education, there is also no doubt that the dissociation between the number of years of study and the job obtained is already a visible tendency in capitalist society.

The problem with a democratic approach based on disconnecting education from social mobility is that it discards one of the most dynamic aspects of educational expansion, from both a social and a personal point of view. Breaking the culture of mobility—that is, the aspiration towards a better future associated with access to a higher position in the occupational scale—is no easy task.

According to conservative views, this rupture can be brought about by a re-examination of prescriptive factors in the determination of educational and social success. It is no coincidence, therefore, that so much prominence is currently being given to views concerning biological and ethnic determination in the development of intelligence or to religious views regarding the role of women, for instance. The current spread of these conceptions implies that social mobility is not only weak from the point of view of the real behaviour of the social structure, but is beginning to weaken also from the cultural point of view and therefore in terms of the expectations of social behaviour.

In this respect, it is necessary now more than ever to emphasize the universal scope of education. While in the past the education system could

organize itself into rising levels of complexity, where each level corresponded to a particular social category, in the future the democratization of access to higher levels of analysis of complex realities and phenomena must be universal. This universal access to the understanding of complex phenomena is a necessary condition for avoiding a breakup of social cohesion and the catastrophic scenarios which are potentially present in current social attitudes.

There are two factors which contribute to this break between access to higher levels of understanding of complexity and elitism. The first factor is cognitive in nature. Access to complexity implies a strong development of basic skills, that is, skills and abilities which can be developed in the early stages of life, areas where universal access to education has very broadly already been achieved. This supports the most significant social justification for giving priority to basic education, provided that this basic education is understood as developing fundamental skills and abilities for civic behaviour and not merely access to more years of schooling that are empty from the point of view of content. The importance of basic education implies breaking with one of the most established rules in the way our education systems are run: the assumption that the more basic the content of education is, the less resources it requires. Teachers, for instance, tend to quit jobs in the early grades at each level to take up jobs in the higher grades, which are more prestigious. Economic resources also tend to be distributed in the same way. One of the most important democratic goals in the future will be to reverse this tendency and to promote the prestige and importance of basic education.

The second factor is social in character and refers to demographic trends, which will bring about a gradual decline in the demand for access to basic education, alongside heightened demand for continuing education. This means that basic education will not be reduced to a particular stage in life, but that there will be continuing opportunities for retraining and updating.

These changes also imply a thorough reconsideration of the concept of compulsory schooling. This concept originated with recognition of the social need for education, which is why the three characteristics of compulsory, universal and basic were combined into a single policy package. In the traditional model, these three concepts were directly associated with a particular level in the education system and a particular stage in life. But if the renewal of knowledge and the need to universalize certain basic know-how and skills becomes an ongoing task, then there will be a need to rethink the problem of compulsory schooling, which can no longer be related exclusively to a particular level or stage in life.

NOTES

1. A great deal has been written on the crisis of modernization. Among the most thorough, recent analyses, see Alain Touraine, *Critique de la modernité* [In appraisal of modernity], Paris, Fayard, 1992.
2. For the Latin American case, see Juan Carlos Tedesco, *Elementos para un diagnóstico del sistema educativo tradicional en América Latina* [Elements for a diagnosis of the traditional education system in Latin America], in: R. Nassif, G.W. Rama and J.C. Tedesco, *El sistema educativo en América Latina*, Buenos Aires, Ed. Kapelusz, 1984. For a more general view, see Sylvain Lourié, *École et tiers monde* [The school and the Third World], Paris, Flammarion-Dominos, 1993.
3. The concept of 'anti-modern identity-related constructions' is taken from the work of Ernesto Ottone, *La modernidad problemática* [Troubled modernity], Santiago de Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, May 1995 (working document no. 39).
4. Albert Bressand and Catherine Distler, *La planète relationnelle* [The relational planet], Paris, Flammarion, 1995.
5. See, for instance, the experiment by Escuela Nueva in Colombia. Ernesto Schifelbein, et al., *En búsqueda de la escuela del siglo XXI; dos experiencias de autoaprendizaje* [Seeking the school of the twenty-first century: two self-learning experiments], Santiago de Chile, CPU-UNESCO, 1992.

CHAPTER VII

System or institution ?

The trend towards the personalization of services and the emphasis on full personality development give rise to requirements that are incompatible with some of the key rules of traditional models used for the organization and management of educational activities. This conflict underlies the current tendency to allow school establishments a greater degree of autonomy. According to this line of thought, more independent schools will be able to better adapt the basic components of their educational work to the characteristics and needs of the population to which they supply their services.

The arguments in favour of greater school autonomy have two main origins: learning theories and organization theories. With regard to learning theories, constructivism provided the basis of the approach whereby establishments and the teachers themselves are left free to take many of the decisions affecting school activities, thereby running the learning process on the basis of experience accumulated both by students and by teaching staff. With regard to school management and administration, there has been a marked tendency in recent years to convert major bureaucratic organizations into flat networks of smaller institutions, individually responsible for decisions aimed at improving productive efficiency and the ability to adjust to customers' requirements. The arguments in favour of an institutional reorganization of educational activity have also been strengthened by the many diagnoses concerning the problems generated by the management of centralized systems, such as inefficiency, little sense of responsibility for results, isolation and corporatism, rigidity and conservatism in the face of external change.

In other words, an educational policy related to respect for diversity, both personal and collective, requires a type of institutional organization which will enable educational establishments to operate more independently. This essentially means moving from a type of logic based on the operating rules of a system to a logic based on the operating rules of an institution. At the

same time, it is important to stress that it is not a question of abandoning the whole idea of a system, but on the contrary to allow what initially justified its appearance—the aim of strengthening cohesion and integration—to be achieved more effectively. As shown by many examples of education systems, an administrative approach that denies the existence of institutions leads to bureaucratic uniformity, to conservatism and to an absence of responsibility for the results obtained. The sort of cohesion obtained by this type of system is purely formal, and its administrative and educational consequences are incompatible with the guidelines of a democratic policy.

A short while ago, Edgar Morin warned us that a lack of a sense of responsibility for the results of actions undertaken and the lack of solidarity generated by the operation of major bureaucratic systems lead to moral degradation, since there can be no moral meaning without a sense of responsibility and without a sense of solidarity.¹ The opposite model, however, based on a disconnected set of institutions left to their own and exclusive operating logic, also leads to disintegration, to more segmentation and to social fragmentation through educational fragmentation.

I. INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND JUSTICE

Underlying the idea of organizing education according to a system, there are two potentially opposed alternatives: from the conservative point of view, the notion of integration, homogeneity, the incorporation of all within a hierarchical system of social positions, subject to values related to acceptance of the system; from the democratic point of view, a system which guarantees equity and equality in terms of the use of the main machinery of social incorporation and ascent.

This way of approaching the educational question was a significant component in a more general strategy for approaching the social question, based on what John Rawls called ‘the veil of ignorance’.² According to this theory, education was organized by ignoring a series of characteristics which determine each individual’s condition and possibilities in relation to learning and to the development of intelligence and personal abilities. Ignoring these factors was understood as a condition of justice. Treating everyone the same, regardless of individual circumstances, was the basic theoretical principle of traditional education. Obviously, in the real way educational institutions operated, this equality was far from being effective, but any discrimination appearing in practice was considered to be illegitimate and the effect of a maladjustment in the system, rather than a natural effect of its internal dynamic.

This 'opaqueness of the social question', as an implicit condition of policies of social justice, is disappearing. This is because there is a demand for differences, opposed to the idea of homogeneous treatment, while at the same time there is a much greater awareness of differences than in the past, and even where there is no such awareness, the wish to know is gaining ground. The habit of evaluating learning results, for instance, has now become generally accepted among educational administrations. It is clearly no longer possible to pursue strategies which disregard the evaluation of results. But when results are known, it is no longer possible to act in the same way as in the past. Homogeneous procedures can no longer be maintained when the veil of ignorance has been lifted.

Pierre Rosanvallon³ has drawn attention to this phenomenon and to the risks it entails. Underlying this approach based on ignoring differences there was both a discriminatory attitude, aimed at meting out equal treatment regardless of differences, and a socializing, integrating attitude, based on the belief in a common system for all. Raising the veil of ignorance also entails both potential outcomes. While it makes it possible to deal with individuals according to their specific character and needs, it can also lead to a loss of solidarity based on a knowledge of each individual's possibilities and interests. As Rosanvallon warns, an awareness of specificity and the recognition thereof generates a new principle of social life where tolerance replaces solidarity and where impartiality replaces equality and equity.

In other words, transparency generates greater instability. The establishment or construction of a civic sense of responsibility and collective justice has to be worked on, discussed and negotiated as an ongoing process. The institutional design of education therefore has to take up this challenge. There is no way of avoiding greater independence for educational establishments and hence differentiation and regard for individuality. But letting this recognition of differences become a recognition of inequality is equally to be avoided, just like the loss of the minimum degree of social cohesion required for a communal existence. The idea of compensating for differences lies at the centre of an educational strategy based on the principle of justice. But any attempt to compensate for differences entails the active involvement of politics, the State and therefore of the whole consensus machinery.

Paradoxically, the break with the traditional mechanisms by which education was institutionally organized has been an initiative that we may identify as 'right wing'. Despite the very sharp criticism made by followers of the reproduction theory in the 1970s, which showed how the traditional education system reproduced differences and excluded those unable to adapt to the dominant model, it was from neo-liberalism—especially in England

under Margaret Thatcher—that proposals for change emerged. Our intention is not to analyze this problem in itself, but—to a more limited extent—to recognize as a fact that the origin of these proposals generated another no less important social phenomenon, in the form of a defensive reaction against the trend towards differentiation, based on a nostalgic fondness for traditional values, equally anti-democratic and unfair from the angle of educational policy.

There is therefore a need for a certain conceptual and political clarification, in order to overcome the confusion that is dominating much of current educational debate, and which may serve to guide the responses of actors to the political options opening up in the future.

2. THE DEBATE ABOUT PRIVATE EDUCATION

The first question to address is that of privatization. From a neo-liberal point of view, the autonomy of schools and the introduction of an operating logic based on institutions are associated with the idea of deregulating the operation of the education system, allowing more scope for private activity. As a result, the privatization of teaching has been reintroduced into the educational debate, although in substantially different terms.⁴ As we know, the traditional controversy between public education and private education revolved basically around an ideological principle: in the end, it was a battle to control the institutions responsible for socializing individuals. The ideological angle of the discussion was related to the belief that the content of the socialization supplied by the institutions was substantially different in each case. The State, with its secular policy, competed with other traditional institutions, especially the church, for control of the socialization of certain sectors of the population. While in some cases the battle focussed on basic education for the whole of the population, in other cases it also spread to education for the elites.

At present, the discussion has broadened to involve more actors and more variables. With regard to actors, demands for the right to educate within a framework of selected particularities have been extended both from the point of view of the contents of these particularities and from the point of view of the actors making the demands. It is no longer a question merely of religious particularities, but also of specific life-styles, which parents demand for their children's education. With regard to the variables included in the debate, there has also been a significant enlargement. The discussion is no longer restricted to ideological and cultural considerations, but now

also covers financial and administrative arguments, which occupy a prominent place in the debate on privatization.

To sum up, the main arguments put forward to justify the need to expand private education are the following:

- The pressure of particular groups to maintain their cultural patterns;
- The challenge to improve the quality of education under conditions of budgetary restriction;
- The need to make the operation of educational institutions more dynamic; and
- Greater private interest in education, resulting from a greater appreciation of knowledge as a factor of production.⁵

Such arguments nevertheless reflect a strong underlying ideological connotation. A relatively recent study on some developed countries⁶ (England, Scotland, the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan) confirmed that even now the debate on private education tends to avoid complexity and to be based on categorical opinions (either for or against). An analysis of what empirical information is available (not much, admittedly) shows that the real situation is much more complex than appears from these categorical stances.

There are three widespread ideas which at least shed some light on the available information. The first of these is that there is no unique relation among the privatization of education, modernization and social development. The second is that there is no unique relation between privatization and the deregulation of educational institutions. The third is that there is no unique relation between privatization and better learning results.

3. PUBLIC/PRIVATE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is worth looking at the general trends of public and private education according to social development levels. Available empirical data shows some interesting facts.

With regard to pre-primary education, a level where the private sector has always played a very substantial role, available data indicates that while in South-East Asian countries private coverage is significantly low, in the other regions the private sector accounts for half or over half of all enrolment. In recent years, however, there has been a significant expansion of public enrolment, particularly in the case of Latin America. This increase is related to a significant increase in pre-school coverage, which in some

countries is already beginning to be compulsory. As pre-school education expands into traditionally excluded sectors (the children of low-income families), the responsibility of the public sector increases. Put in another way, the State appears as the most dynamic sector when it comes to satisfying the educational demands of the population living in conditions of poverty.

The analysis of primary education, on the other hand, indicates that in recent decades the situation has been practically stable. From 1975 to the present-day, the private sector, in both developed and developing countries, has accounted for between 10 and 15% of enrolment, except in the case of Oceania, where the figure is almost 25%.

In the case of secondary education, there are two tendencies which are worth noting. First, the private sector plays a significantly different role in developed countries and in developing countries. While in the former the private sector caters for about 15% of enrolment (roughly the same as in primary education), the proportion of private enrolment in developing countries is almost 30%. Second, the data indicate that in recent years, while in developed countries the situation remained stable with a slight tendency for the private sector to gain ground, in developing countries there was a marked decline in the share taken up by private enrolment. This decline is obviously related to economic crisis—particularly affecting the middle sectors that had previously enjoyed access to private education.

These general data obviously conceal important differences between countries. Very broadly speaking, it is safe to say that there are two extreme patterns of development:

- One expressed through a concentration of the public effort in primary education, leaving a more active role for private activity in intermediate and higher education; and
- The reverse, where the private sector takes on a greater share of the responsibility for primary education and a less active role at post-primary levels.

These patterns of behaviour reflect different structures of educational demand and, what is more important, different models of social distribution of public resources. A good illustration of this is provided by two different national cases: Japan and Brazil. In Japanese educational policy, the State assumes the main responsibility for guaranteeing basic education for the whole population, while at the same time a supply of high-quality advanced education. The private sector is practically non-existent at the primary level, and although it is quantitatively quite significant at post-secondary levels,

the public institutions enjoy the greatest reputation and prestige. This particular characteristic of the public sector is derived from selection criteria for access, the institutional differentiation which is typical of the Japanese public post-secondary sector and its strong sense of hierarchy. Japan offers an example of the 'elitist-public' model, which caters to students from the highest income families, but which also admits the children of low-income families with a high academic performance. The egalitarian tendency of this kind of system is even more marked if, as in the case of Japan, equality of opportunity is guaranteed by a homogeneous public system of basic education. The Japanese experience shows that lowering academic requirements in order to allow massive entry to public universities does not generate greater equity, but on the contrary allows private education the possibility of attracting the talented children of high-income families and thus to become the high quality, prestige sector of the education system, from which the children of low-income families are excluded.⁷ The other interesting example is Brazil. Enrolment distribution data indicate that while public efforts are greater in basic education than in higher education, there is a fair proportion of private primary enrolment. Nonetheless, like in Japan, public universities enjoy the greatest prestige and best reputation for quality. This link between high percentages of private basic education and high-quality, public higher education has led to the Brazilian case being presented as a typical case of the regressive use of public funds in education: the children of upper-class families go to good quality, private primary and secondary schools, where they obtain the preparation they need to pass entrance examinations into free public universities. The children of low-income families, on the other hand, receive low quality, public primary and secondary education, which does not prepare them to obtain satisfactory marks in university entrance examinations, so that in the end they have to pay for low-quality higher education.

The major difference between these two cases—apart from their different levels of economic development, of course—resides in the standard of equity at the base of the education system. While in Japan the State guarantees equal primary school for all, in Brazil primary schooling is strongly segmented, and the State has managed to establish a basis for equal opportunity. In these cases, equivalent results at the higher education level have very different meanings if the education systems are considered as a whole.

4. PRIVATE SCHOOLING AND PUBLIC CONTROL

The analysis of national differences also indicates that there are a great many ways in which private education is publicly regulated. From this point

of view, it is worth looking at the case of developed countries with a high incidence of private participation in education, but with strong State controls regulating private activity. In this respect, the Dutch experience with the privatization of public services is very interesting for the different forms of combination developed there between the public and private sectors. Historically, the demand for private education was strongly linked to religious heterogeneity. Both the Catholic and the Protestant communities claimed State help to offer their children an education in line with their cultural codes. 'Separate but equal' was a key component not only of the Dutch education system, but also of all of its institutional system.

This separation, however, goes with strict regulations. From the point of view of financing, for instance, the State offers subsidies but severely restricts the possibility of undertaking additional payments; it pays all teachers' salaries, both in the public and in the private sector, but will not allow schools to offer income supplements; it provides buildings, for both public and private schools, through the municipalities, with refunds by the central government. The fees collected by private schools are very low, owing partly to the fear of losing the State subsidy and partly to the strong competition generated by the ease of entry into the market allowed by the law. Lastly, the government maintains strict controls through key aspects of the education system, such as a uniform curriculum, a national examination system at the end of elementary school and secondary school, and controls on student selection criteria.⁸ One result of this connection is that the social backgrounds of students recruited by private schools in Holland are no different from those attending public schools.

5. PRIVATIZATION AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

With respect to the argument whereby privatization leads to an improvement in the quality of education through higher levels of responsibility for results and greater educational dynamism, existing data are not categorical either. Available information concerning learning results according to the public or private nature of schools and the social origin of students indicates that, generally speaking, private education recruits its students in the middle and upper sectors, thus producing a circular effect, in the sense that students from better family backgrounds are offered schooling with a good supply of equipment and qualified staff, and obtain better results than those produced by public schooling.

Despite the strong concentration of private supply in the middle and upper social strata, however, there are cases where private supply has been

extended to the lower social classes with the help of State subsidies. As we know, the reason given for stimulating this type of alternative has usually been a financial argument. According to some studies, it is cheaper for the State to finance a private establishment which offers free education than to finance a public establishment. It is a question now of knowing whether in addition to this theoretical financial advantage, there are other advantages from the point of view of the results achieved with education.

The information available about this problem is also very limited. For the case of Latin America, for instance, there are data that can be used to answer the question for two countries, Chile and Uruguay.⁹ In Chile's case, the data lead to two general conclusions. The first is the strong segmentation that is apparent within the system, where students of middle and upper social origin entering private schools not subsidized by the State achieve performance levels three times better than the lower segment, which includes students from low-income families who enter State schools. The second conclusion, less obvious than the first, refers to the behaviour of students from the lower social sectors, according to whether they are educated in State schools or in subsidized private schools. With regard to the teaching of Spanish, private schools obtain better results than State schools with students of lower social classes, although this tendency is reversed for students from extremely low classes. In mathematics, on the other hand, behaviour tends to be more regular. In the case of Chile, this analysis has to take into account information concerning the performance of private schools according to how old they are. It is well known that the process of educational privatization in Chile was very intense in recent years, when the creation of schools was stimulated with financial incentives. The new private schools are different from the traditional ones, from this point of view, due to the fact that they were set up very much with profit in mind. Data available for the city of Santiago illustrate an interesting point, in that private schools set up in the last ten years obtain significantly poorer results than those set up more than ten years ago, probably because they lack a teaching tradition, but also because they recruit their students from lower income families.

These data show that the new subsidized private schools are substantially more similar to State schools than the older private schools, which traditionally took in the children of middle- and upper-class families. On that basis, it would be possible to suggest the theory that in cases where there is a private educational supply available to lower income social sectors, the offer is also poor from the point of view of its compensating possibilities.

In Uruguay's case, the results of performance tests in mathematics and in Spanish, applied to a sample of public and private schools with students of different social strata, are also striking in so far as they confirm—in a country with a long tradition of high quality education—the little effect in terms of compensation of differences achieved by schooling in relation to the socio-economic differences between families. However, a disaggregated analysis of the data shows that the schools that manage to produce better learning results in students of low-income origin are State schools in inland towns. For these schools, the better results may be explained by a series of institutional characteristics (such as the personality of the principal involved, the teaching traditions of teachers, and the impossibility of social impunity for bad results owing to direct contact between teachers and parents).

6. INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AS AN EXPLANATION FOR GOOD RESULTS

Briefly, the results shown by information concerning public and private education indicate that the explanation for the good results achieved with learning does not depend on whether schools are State or private, but on their institutional dynamic. The best performances are related to the possibility of drawing up an educational project for a school, based on an awareness of specific objectives, the existence of shared work traditions and methodologies, teamwork and a sense of responsibility for results, that is, for the institution's identity.

In some cases this concept of institutional identity is associated with what some authors refer to as an 'institutional climate', and by others, more in line with the French tradition, an 'establishment project'. The debate on these subjects is attracting increasing attention, both in developed countries and in developing countries. Three main aspects are involved: a) how to combine respect for differences and the right to individuality with basic social cohesion and integration; b) how to guarantee social equity in the distribution of educational services; and c) how to promote the dynamism and efficiency required by any public service within the framework of a society undergoing change at an accelerating pace and which demands efficient use of available resources.

Privatization is not the only solution at present to ensure respect for differences. Differences and particularities are no longer the exclusive domain of the private sector, and instead, in our increasingly multicultural societies, they have become a fundamental aspect of the public domain. In

this sense, as we saw in the previous chapter, State schooling is now obliged to incorporate aspects that traditionally belonged to the domain of private education.

On the other hand, public (State) education no longer provides the only guarantee of equity in the distribution of educational services. Policies aimed at compensating differences through a mixed approach that focuses educational expenditure on the most needy populations have proved to be much more equitable than a public service which metes out homogeneous treatment to different populations.

Lastly, the dichotomy between efficiency and dynamism as the attributes of the private sector and rigidity and inefficiency as the legacy of the public sector is no longer valid. There is no reason why the public sector cannot adopt action strategies that ensure for their services, specifically their educational services, the characteristics of dynamism and responsibility for results which are now made to appear incompatible with its institutional design.

The autonomy of establishments provides one promising avenue for coming closer to these objectives, so long as we are able to define linkage mechanisms that will avoid excessive fragmentation and guarantee effective internal cohesion.¹⁰ The challenge consists precisely in promoting cohesion between educational institutions on the basis of common elements drawn from the objectives of all of the institutions. Linking efforts on the basis of common objectives or requirements provides a policy that could constitute the real base of the system. In this respect, the concept that could ensure a new linkage between the autonomy of individual establishments and the cohesion required between them is that of a network.

7. EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS

The use of the term 'network' has been extended in recent years to a very broad range of structures and types of organization, so that the term, while taking on a great deal of meaning, has also become substantially ambiguous. Existing studies highlight the need to distinguish at least two basic dimensions.¹¹

- The technological dimension, which includes the physical infrastructures that support a network and ensure communication and information flows; and
- The social dimension, which includes both the system of relations between individuals tied or linked by some common interest, such as

culture, that non-explicitly regulates contacts between members of the network.

These two dimensions point to the different barriers that need to be overcome for any network to function. The technological dimension raises all of the problems related to the need to overcome physical barriers. Participating in a network implies entering into contact (by voice, gesture, written word, etc.), which is facilitated (or not) by the technological infrastructure required by the network. The social dimension refers to organizational and legal barriers (any network implies defining certain agreed rules of the game, which take the form of contracts) and to cultural barriers (in addition to entering into contact and accepting certain rules of the game, there has to be a degree of connivance among network members, that is, a certain ability to reach agreement around a common project).

This general, complex view of networks makes it possible to look beyond the simplistic versions that reduce the problem of networks exclusively and fundamentally to a technological question. As shown by examples of more successful networks in the area of production and services, technology is not a factor that in isolation can produce the basic phenomenon of a network—it depends on a multiplication of contacts, exchanges and an improvement in the quality of the service offered.

In fact, many of the practices associated with the phenomenon of networks already existed prior to the appearance of the computing technology that has enabled those networks to expand.¹² As Bressand and Distler maintain: 'The engine of the current revolution, therefore, is not the «high-tech» whose exceptional performances the newspapers so often refer to, but a much broader collection of techniques, modes of organization and relational tools.'¹³

But the basic characteristic of a network, compared with traditional hierarchic systems, consists in the fact that the network can be mobilized through the initiatives of each of the participants and users, and not only from the top, by its owner or its builder. From this point of view, the logic of the network is potentially much more democratic than that of a system. This democratization is related in particular to internal operation, to mechanisms of communication and interchange. In this sense, the desire to introduce educational networks was already part of the anti-school educational way of thinking, which culminated in the 1960s and 1970s, based on the work of Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer.¹⁴ The difference, however, resides in the fact that according to Illich the network was fundamentally defined in anti-institutional terms. Nowadays, on the contrary, the idea of a network appears not as an alternative to institutions, but as a new way of

institutionalizing particular practices, whereby the main active role rests in the hands of users.

But can this greater power now in the hands of users be interpreted as a new way of privatizing educational supply? In network logic, who guarantees general interests and the long-term view? Obviously, networks in themselves cannot solve either the problem of access or the problem of a meaning or direction for action. These extremes, as we saw with communication technologies, have to be resolved socially and politically, and not by means of technical instruments. Once the objective has been duly defined, however, network operation proves to be more democratic and more efficient than operation based on the logic of hierarchical systems.

For instance, it is the responsibility of the State—through the available political mechanisms, including parliament, national education councils, etc.—to establish the need to promote ecological awareness, tolerance, solidarity and international understanding in the education of citizens. But the experience of hierarchical systems has shown that these objectives cannot be incorporated into the operation of educational institutions merely by decree, by a change of study plans or by any other measure imposing the same line of action on all establishments, regardless of their practical operating conditions, such as staff, equipment, location, type of student, type of staff, etc. Unless these objectives are really incorporated within the project of the establishment, their fulfilment will be merely formal and cosmetic. It is essential that individual institutions should be left to define how, in the light of their practical operating conditions, they can implement those objectives. Starting from that assumption, stimulating contact and exchange between establishments sharing common strategies, which can benefit from economies of scale by linking certain stages of the implementation of their project and which can share information, analysis of difficulties, resources, etc., is the type of dynamic that a network approach can develop. To achieve this, it is not essential, however, to have the latest communication technologies. School groupings and informal networks between educators sharing the same principles have been and are a frequent occurrence. The challenge is converting this practice, which at present lies on the fringe of management methods, into one that is legitimate and deserving of stimulation.

In this context, the role of the State—looking after general interests and the long term—consists in defining objectives, evaluating results and intervening whenever results are found to be unsatisfactory.

The problem of the independence of establishments and linkage networks does not arise in the same way in developed and in developing countries.

In the case of developed countries, the greatest emphasis on this line of action obviously comes from nations with a strong centralized tradition, especially European countries. In countries with a Saxon tradition where the State administration is strongly decentralized, on the other hand, the main problems focus on how to guarantee minimum homogeneous standards of quality. However, the debate in developed countries starts from a common base (namely the stronghold of local agents) from the economic point of view as well as from the political and cultural points of view.

In developing countries, on the other hand, the possibilities of achieving greater dynamism by allowing greater autonomy to local agents or by democratizing the private sector by means of subsidies comes up against the strong internal heterogeneity of the social structure. In this sense, the point that is worth constantly drawing attention to is the combination of the unequal distribution of material resources and the ability to express demands that are guaranteed satisfaction, with the State's inability to ensure a link with the private sector that will guarantee firm social control over the use of public resources. Where developing countries are concerned, the theory that allowing greater autonomy to local actors is an effective way of guaranteeing more dynamic results is by no means entirely confirmed. Some experiments of allowing municipalities to look after education have shown that local influence can prove to be just as strong of a factor of rigidity as centralized supply. From this point of view, therefore, the dilemma arising from decentralization policies and efforts to allow institutions greater autonomy is the question of operationalization. When is the right time and/or what are the preconditions required to ensure that the decision to decentralize will not be a leap in the dark? In this respect, the key factor with any policy of educational independence relates back to staff, since institutional autonomy implies professional autonomy for the teaching staff.

NOTES

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3. Pierre Rosanvallon, *La nouvelle question sociale: Repenser l'État-providence* [The new social issue: reconsidering the providential State], Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1995.
4. This section of the book is based on the ideas put forward in the article 'Privatización educativa y calidad de la educación en América Latina' [Privatization of education and the quality of education in Latin America], *Propuesta educativa* (Buenos Aires), no. 4, 1992, p. 5-13.
5. UNESCO, Division of Statistics on Education, *Development of private enrolment: first and second level education, 1975-1985*, Paris, May 1989. A summary of arguments in

- favour of the privatization of education may be found in several publications of the World Bank, which has regularly supported this strategy, especially for developing countries. See World Bank, *Financing education in developing countries: an exploration of policy options*, Washington, DC, 1986.
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 8. Estelle James, Benefits and costs of privatized public services: lessons from the Dutch education system, *Comparative education review* (Chicago), vol. 28, no. 4, 1984.
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 10. An interesting overview of studies on the subject of the independence of schools for the European case in general, and Italy in particular, may be found in F.E. Crema and G. Pollini, eds., *Scuola, autonomia, mutamento sociale* [School, autonomy, social mutation], Rome, Armando, 1989. For the case of the United States, see John E. Chubb and Eric A. Hanushek, *Reforming educational reform*, in: Henry J. Aaron, ed., *Setting national priorities: policies for the nineties*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1991.
 11. An analysis of the problem of networks in the economy and in contemporary society, as well as a conceptual definition of the term, is given in Albert Bressand and Catherine Distler, *La planète relationnelle* [The connected planet], Paris, Flammarion, 1995.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 65. 'Le moteur de la révolution en cours n'est donc pas la high-tech dont les journaux recensent si souvent les performances, mais un ensemble plus large de techniques, de modes d'organisation et d'outils relationnels.'
 14. Everett Reimer, *La escuela ha muerto. Alternativas en materia de educación* [Educational alternatives], Barcelona, Barral Ed., 1973.

CHAPTER VIII

Are teachers professionals, technicians or militants ?

The substantial changes occurring in education, from the point of view both of school organization and of proposed curricula, directly affect all categories of teaching staff. In most cases, the changes are perceived as a threat rather than as a new opportunity, so that teachers' reactions tend to be basically defensive.

New technologies, for instance, tend to be seen as unfair competition with respect to the socializing and educational role of the teacher and school. The greater degree of independence of schools and the heightened responsibility required for the results achieved produce feelings of insecurity related to the loss of protection afforded by the traditional type of situation, where decisions were taken by others and where the teacher saw him/herself as just another victim of the system. Demands for more receptiveness towards the requirements of society and the establishment of new pacts with the family, the communication media and businesses are viewed with mistrust owing to the threat they represent to the teacher's monopoly over the teaching process.

This defensive type of behaviour is very deep rooted, both in the history of the teaching profession and in the history of the actual processes of educational change. While there may be significant differences among countries, it has to be recognized that in recent decades there has been a clear deterioration in teachers' working conditions and professional status, particularly marked in developing countries affected by structural adjustment policies.¹ Another factor is that the decentralization of educational management has been motivated in quite a few cases by a wish to break up teacher unions or to reduce educational costs, rather than to improve the quality of education, its efficiency or its degree of democratization.² In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that teachers tend to adopt a sceptical attitude towards new strategies for change, if they do not actively reject them.

An analysis of all of the situation's underlying factors that generally affect teachers obviously lies outside the scope of this book. Essentially, however, it has to be accepted that the educational changes currently under way require significant changes in the standards of professionalism of teachers, and that the starting point for tackling these new requirements is particularly critical. In the short term, purely defensive attitudes may lead to a feeling that the problem has been solved. In the long term, such attitudes can only make matters worse.

1. TO PROFESSIONALIZE OR DE-PROFESSIONALIZE?

It seems to be generally agreed that the greater independence allowed to educational establishments and the more complex demands made on teaching to equip individuals with the skills they require to perform in society mean that higher standards of professionalism will be needed on the part of educators. Low standards have often been mentioned as one of the reasons for the defensive attitudes adopted by teachers with regard to change. This means we are caught in a vicious circle, where low social consideration for the teaching profession generates low levels of professionalism, which in turn reinforce the low social consideration given to teachers. The crisis occurring in traditional educational models, however, is tending to break this vicious circle. The new role of education and knowledge in society also implies reconsidering the role of educators. This means that there will be new conditions and requirements for the performance expected of teachers, and it has to be realized that although in some aspects the new conditions will imply higher standards of professionalism, in others they may lead to a de-professionalization of educational activity.

This question is by no means new in educational sociology. A number of studies conducted in the last decade have referred to the problem in direct terms.³ They highlighted the need to distinguish between two different aspects of the professionalization of teaching: first, professionalization based on improving working conditions, and second, professionalization based on developing 'professional ability' (the set of skills required for teaching). These studies suggested that there was no systematic link between these two trends in professionalization. According to the studies, the improvement of working conditions does not necessarily lead to a development of professional skills, while conversely, improving professional skills does not automatically imply that working conditions will improve.

In support of this theory, the same studies emphasize the fact that all of the improvements introduced in teacher training with the aim of improving the professional status of teachers failed to have a significant impact on the recognition of their professional condition. From the point of view of improving professional ability, professionalization was insufficient to offset the effects of other variables, such as the social origins of teachers and the high proportion of women among them.

But in addition to this lack of direct relationship between professional ability and conditions, the studies added a further dimension to the problem of the lack of opportunities for professionalizing teaching activity. The authors make a distinction between activities requiring the systematic application of a theoretical model, where practice is based on an equilibrium between experience and the application of theory, and activities based on intuition, interpersonal relations and common sense rather than the application of theories. They feel that education is an activity where full professionalization is neither possible nor desirable. Attributing excessive value to the systematic use of a theoretical model in a profession whose objective is to bring about changes in individuals is of little benefit in the end to the individuals themselves. Unlike in the case of a doctor, for instance, whose decisions are based on a system of highly structured, established knowledge, a significant number of the decisions which a teacher has to take are based on ethical choices, cultural considerations, subjective appreciations and theories with little empirical confirmation. From this point of view, it would even be possible to make a case for an approach based on the 'de-professionalization' of teaching.⁴ All of these arguments tend to confirm that the starting point for tackling future requirements is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is a clear demand for greater professionalization. Factors such as the greater independence of establishments, responsibility for results, teamwork based on a better technical culture and more scientific knowledge in teaching practice are all aspects that imply the need for more professionalization of teaching work. But at the same time there are other factors pointing in the opposite direction, such as the lowering of entry requirements to the teaching profession, brought about by the need to recruit more teachers, the more common availability of skills, including those related to teaching, or the demand for personal commitment rather than technical mastery in teaching work. Although the same tendencies are apparent in all types of activity, there is no doubt that they take on a special significance in the case of teaching. For this reason, rather than discussing whether there is a need for greater professionalization in general, it seems preferable to try to identify

the main characteristics of teaching work in the context of the new educational challenges.

2. TEACHING TEAM VERSUS ISOLATED TEACHERS

In the way schools were traditionally organized, teaching work was conducted typically in isolation. All of the studies on this problem agree that one of the most significant features of the professional work of teachers is its individuality. That type of organizational approach to schoolwork encourages neither discussion nor joint responsibility for results and obliges teachers to try to resolve the problems they encounter 'privately'. According to many studies, this constitutes one of the main obstacles to the development of a common technical culture. From this point of view, management reforms aimed at laying more emphasis on institutional profiles and individual objectives may provide an administrative basis for promoting teamwork among teachers. What information is available tends to indicate that wherever establishments can use their independence to set out their own educational objectives, teamwork and the accumulation of experience become a necessary part of institutional design. A change of this kind, however, is bound to entail major consequences for teacher training and working conditions.⁵ Where training is concerned, teamwork would mean introducing a much greater degree of differentiation between professional profiles than at present. A team has to be made up of individuals possessing different skills and abilities. It is unrealistic to think that any individual can possess all of the skills required for educational work in an institution, from specialized knowledge on subjects or related to specific working requirements at various stages of personality development, right up to the sort of personal abilities needed to cope with the different aspects of institutional work, such as management, negotiation, teaching, evaluation, research, etc.

But introducing the idea of a teaching team also has significant implications for management and working conditions. How can teacher mobility be allowed while the emphasis is being placed on institutional autonomy and while teacher performance is associated with the profile of each institution? How can a pay policy be worked out for teams rather than for isolated individuals? These questions—and undoubtedly many more which are bound to appear in the course of the development of educational strategies based on adapting educational supply to the varied needs of the community—do not have any ready-made answers. Finding the right answers will mean accepting a certain degree of experimentation and evaluation of

results in this area as well, where the traditions of individual countries and their political configurations are bound to play a fundamental role.

3. PROMOTING INNOVATION

Apart from isolated individual working conditions, the culture of the teaching profession is marked by an extremely sceptical attitude towards innovations, particularly any which entail sharing authority and responsibility. Analyses of educational innovations have clearly shown, however, that one of the conditions for them to be successful is precisely the commitment and active participation of teachers. Putting an end to the conservatism of education systems, especially in the sector of public education, constitutes another major challenge of democratic policy. It is essential to generate the ability to innovate if one is to avoid innovation becoming concentrated in a few places and belonging exclusively to one sector.

Apart from requiring the right personal predisposition, innovation means introducing new methods and incentives into the model of educational management. It will also have to be accepted that there is no single approach to solving the problems involved. Seeking innovation precisely signifies accepting that there is more than one possible solution. Michel Crozier, for instance, suggests two ways of involving teachers in educational change. The first would be to set up 'co-operative animation centres', offering teachers and school principals places where they can meet and where they can undertake training and research. There they could freely discuss problems in a less corporate spirit. National pilot bodies could serve as 'clearing-houses' to spread innovations and to input information, methodologies and new ideas. The second suggestion is to strengthen the leadership of school principals. Identifying innovating principals in different types of schools—for example, schools in difficult areas—and setting up a piloting network among them, would enable them to interact, share experiences and facilitate a better understanding of problems. This network would be connected with a national or regional unit helping to organize and support their work and experiments, and would be one way, apart from developing innovations, of strengthening teamwork among the school principals themselves.⁶

4. GIVING PRIORITY TO BASIC EDUCATION FACILITIES

In earlier chapters, it has been pointed out that one of the clearest goals of future educational policies will be the need to improve basic education.

Whether it is a matter of preparing for the mastery of basic codes (reading, writing, arithmetic, other languages, computing, etc.) or of inculcating cultural frames of reference and basic cognitive structures, there is no doubt that a solid basic education will be indispensable for developing the skills and abilities required for a productive performance in society.

In this respect, and going against traditional tendencies, the greatest demands for professionalism will appear in areas where educational work has been the most de-professionalized, namely basic education (the early years of primary, secondary and higher education). As we saw in earlier chapters, the traditional education system operated on the basis of the assumption that the younger the student, the less demanding was the process of learning and the fewer qualifications were required of the teacher.

Implementing a democratic educational policy means reversing that sort of approach. It is in basic education that there is the greatest need for specifically educational professionalism. Teaching how to read and write, for instance, implies very specific technical and professional skills, which are even more essential when teachers have to work with low-income communities. Giving priority to the technical and professional training of educators engaged in areas of basic education is also necessary from the social, and not just the educational, point of view. Furthermore, basic education is compulsory and universal. Placing the best teachers in these areas should therefore be one of the first democratic aims. To achieve this, in addition to vocational training, incentives need to be introduced to convert this political priority into a social image.

5. NEW TEACHERS

The greater diversity of places where knowledge is being produced, combined with the need for continuing education, are bound to lead to a substantial expansion both in training areas and in the range of educators. Apart from the communication media, new teachers will emerge from productive and social activity. With the current accelerating growth of knowledge, only individuals connected to activities that are productive and where knowledge is actually being used will be in a position to master that knowledge and pass it on. It is possible, then, to foresee that there may be two major categories of teachers: the 'basic teachers', responsible for imparting the 'hard' core of cognitive and personal structure, and 'specialized teachers', responsible for more specific areas of training, subject to constant review and renewal. It will be absolutely essential to maintain a

link between the two, because training in basic skills cannot be separated from the application of those skills in specific fields of activity.

The most common reaction of teaching bodies is mistrust and rejection of any initiative attempting to take the monopoly of the teaching function from the hands of those who hold the necessary credentials and are recognized as such. This attitude may be counterproductive in the event that, as often happens especially in areas related to productive activities, the gap between those who hold knowledge and information and those responsible for teaching widens significantly, causing educational contents to become obsolete. On the contrary, a policy designed to incorporate the 'new teachers' may prove to be a factor of both political and professional enrichment.

6. TEACHERS AND MILITANTS

While some aspects of teaching activity will require higher levels of professionalism and others will be more related to routine work, there is no doubt that there will be a significant increase in demands for personal commitment on behalf of teachers with regard to educational objectives. Helping to prepare an establishment's project and respecting its principles already presupposes that the first stage has been reached in an approach to job performance, transcending mere technical know-how and bureaucratic commitment. In addition to this participation in a team project, however, the actual task of forming students' personalities within a democratic policy framework also implies an active commitment to democratic values.

In this sense, one notable difficulty when it comes to evaluating the performance of teachers and planning their training is the common assumption that teachers have to possess all of the qualities that they are expected to impart to students. This assumption is not valid for all aspects of teaching work. For instance, it is neither realistic nor legitimate to expect teachers to be highly creative themselves in order to be able to train creative individuals. It would be quite justified, on the other hand, to require teachers to express a favourable attitude towards and to stimulate creativity. Similarly, a teacher may not have a strong personal ability to resolve problems, but should be able to stimulate this ability in students. Once again, from this point of view, it is worth highlighting the importance of teamwork, where individual abilities are combined to achieve a higher quality collective product.

In this respect, a democratic educational policy is very demanding in terms of the personal abilities required of teachers. There is a basic core of

attitudes and values without which it will be very difficult to cope with the demands of future professional work. The application of these values and the development of these attitudes constitute one of the success factors of socializing activity. The introduction of 'primary' factors in secondary socialization, as we saw, is now a general tendency. In this context, the conflict will be between fundamental, intolerant options, in which secondary socialization will be based on transmitting a view of the world that is exclusive and excluding, and democratic options, where the 'hard' core of socialization will incorporate respect for diversity as a significant factor. Nevertheless, the democratic option should not underestimate the importance of enthusiasm and acceptance of its principles as a success factor in education.

The risk related to any democratic socialization policy is that its rejection of imposition should take the form of affective neutrality. Enthusiasm, passion and commitment would then be the preserve of authoritarian socialization policies. Recovering passion for democratic values should therefore be part of a teacher's professional tasks.

Democratic convictions cover very different aspects, and socialization in that respect obviously does not depend only on the school system and on educators. One aspect, however, is specific to educators and it has been taking on considerable importance: the conviction that everyone is able to learn. This belief is precisely what is now under attack by both fundamentalist and neo-conservative views. According to some opinions, cultural individuality would be an obstacle to learning certain values that we consider universal. Thus respect for human rights, tolerance, equality between the sexes from the educational point of view, etc., would become related to cultural identities. In the opinions of others, ethnic origins or genetic determinants would hamper certain types of learning, which would be reserved for particular sectors of the population.

Traditional research into the 'Pygmalion effect' in the learning process shows that a teacher's expectations play a crucial role in his/her students' success. Only teachers who are profoundly convinced of their students' learning ability will be able to resist pressures to adapt educational supply to social, cultural or biological characteristics that are already noticeable in our societies.

NOTES

1. On the effects of structural adjustment on teachers' salaries and working conditions, see, for instance, Teresa Mariano Longo, *Politiques d'ajustement structurel et professionnalité des enseignants* [Structural adjustment policies and teacher professionalism], Paris,

- UNESCO, 1993. On the general impact of structural adjustment policies, see Fernando Reimers and Luis Tiburcio, *Education, adjustment and reconstruction: options for change*, Paris, UNESCO, 1993 (a UNESCO policy discussion paper).
2. For the case of Latin America, see J. Prawda, *Educational decentralization in Latin America: lessons learnt* (paper presented to the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, Maryland, March 1992).
 3. Franco Ghilardi, *Crisis y perspectivas de la profesión docente* [Crisis and prospects for the teaching profession], Barcelona, Ed. Gedisa, 1993.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 5. On this subject, see the interesting book by David Perkins, *Smart schools: from training memories to educating minds*, New York, The Free Press, 1992.
 6. Michel Crozier, *La crise de l'intelligence. Essai sur l'impuissance des élites de se réformer* [The intelligence crisis: an essay on the inability of elites to reform themselves], Paris, InterEditions, 1995, p. 146.

CHAPTER IX

Educational reform

The crisis in the traditional education system has placed a new emphasis on the problem of change in education. So long as the crisis was seen as a failure to fulfil specific objectives, reforming the system or some of its components appeared to be the most reasonable alternative. The revolutionary view was put forward by those who challenged the actual objectives of the system, that is, social integration and socialization for working within hierarchic organizations, while conservative approaches were based on the idea of returning to the equilibrium lost as a result of mass education.

Recent experience and changes have upset all of these views. On the one hand, it is clear that the traditional reformist approach has run out of arguments. The recurring attempts at educational reform in recent decades produced results that were very far from expectations and from the efforts invested. For this reason, broad political and social sectors are now strongly sceptical regarding the possibilities of changing the way the education system operates, a scepticism which finds expression in the general view that despite everything that has been tried in education, the results are still very poor.

On the other hand, we are witnessing the emergence of a revolutionary attitude, which no longer calls for de-schooling because of the tendency of the school system to reproduce the dominant social order, but on the contrary on account of its inability to do so. Insofar as the abilities that are considered crucial for economic competitiveness are the same as were traditionally considered crucial for full personality development, the revolutionary view now paradoxically appears to be advocated by those who traditionally were looked upon as conservatives. An extreme version of this position, which by that very fact provides a useful example, may be found in a newspaper article written by Lewis J. Perelman, originally in the United States, and later reproduced for the whole of Europe in *Courrier international*.¹ Perelman directs his remarks not at the State or at educators, but at businessmen. He addresses his article to them in the form of a letter,

where he asks why education is not changing like other sectors of society. The answer is simple: 'Education is the last great bastion of the socialist economy'. Making a clean sweep of education and replacing it with something else constitutes the most promising outcome for business. Against the argument that competitiveness depends on the population being educated, Perelman, while agreeing, adds that schooling as it is at present constitutes a barrier to the learning required by a modern workforce. Schools are accused, now by the ultra-liberals, of working with authoritarian, memory-based, repetitive methods that can only lead to a learning failure in the majority of the population.

On one point the earlier and present revolutionaries are right: the crisis is no longer just a partial crisis, and changes cannot be reduced to mere adjustments in a machine which has lost sight of its own purpose. The solution, however, is much more complex. Revolutionaries tend to be more lucid when putting forward diagnoses that justify change, but much less effective when it comes to presenting viable alternatives.

In this respect, recent experience has shown that strategies for radical change originating outside educational institutions tend to fail because they meet with strong resistance on the part of internal actors. Yet strategies based exclusively on the internal ability to bring about self-motivated change are very slow and end up giving in to the pressures of corporate demands. That experience has shown that reform methodologies and the ability to implement them effectively are often just as important as the actual contents of the proposed solutions.

1. THE EDUCATIONAL PACT AS A BASIS FOR REFORM

In light of the future requirements of educational change, we may arrive at the conclusion that the alternative to traditional reforms and revolutionary suggestions should be a strategy for change by agreement, consensus and contract among the various social players.² In a differentiated society, which is respectful of differences but equally united in agreement regarding certain basic rules of the game, agreement on educational strategies based on consultation lays to rest the notion that education is the responsibility of a single sector, and provides a guarantee of reasonable continuity as required for the implementation of medium- and long-term strategies.

Placing the process of consultation at the centre of strategies for educational change not only implies a new departure from the methods employed to handle reform strategies. It implies, in addition, a significantly

different view of the place occupied by education in the process of social consensus. In the past the social debate was almost exclusively focused on the problem of participation in work and the distribution of income. The extent and quality of participation in other sectors was a by-product of the shares of employment and income obtained. But insofar as peoples' knowledge and skills are recognized as fundamental factors for economic growth and political democracy, the question of deciding what shares are attributable to each sector in the appropriation of knowledge becomes a key aspect of social organization and of constructing the identity of individual social sectors.

Any shift in the place occupied by education and knowledge with respect to social organization will entail reordering alliances and battle lines. In this respect, there are already signs that some sectors which in the past pursued different interests are now tending to converge on certain basic educational objectives, which may become nationally agreed objectives in the future. But the tendencies towards a break-up of social cohesion and exclusion jeopardize the very notion of a relatively stable social consensus, that might open the way to agreement regarding what should be transmitted to the next generations. It is precisely from this point of view that the search for agreed educational strategies constitutes a line of action with a strongly democratic content.

Thus the policy of arriving at educational strategies by agreement and consensus constitutes an alternative methodology both to the authoritarian concept of centralized planning and to letting the market decide for itself. Unlike the market and central planning approaches, opting for consultation implies maintaining a political dimension in decision-making. The market place excludes politics and leaves decision-making to the outcome of the rivalry between different groups representing individual, short-term interests. Authoritarianism has the same effect of eliminating politics because it leaves all of the power in the hands of a single social player.

As far as educational purposes are concerned, therefore, consultation implies recognition of other points of view and negotiating common methods of working. Consultation does not do away with conflict, tensions or differences. It does not signify uniformity. There will obviously still be different interests and tensions between, for instance, the demands of the labour market and comprehensive personality training, between the private values of families and the universalism of school culture, between local autonomy and the need to co-ordinate at the regional or national level. But consultation can create a mechanism through which these conflicts and tensions may be resolved by means of dialogue and agreed action.

Apart from preserving the political dimension, moreover, consultation also preserves the possibility of introducing long-term and general interests in the choice of educational strategies. Long-term and general interests are key aspects of any educational strategy, and even more so of any strategy for sustained development. The greatest risk inherent in market mechanisms arises precisely from their inability to assume the long-term consequences of certain decisions and from the need to anticipate certain phenomena. Ecological equilibrium and social equity, for instance, are necessary conditions for development, and achieving them requires decisions that imply sacrificing immediate benefits. High quality, basic general education is a form of investment, the benefits of which will be apparent in the medium and long term, but it requires the implementation here and now of resource transfer mechanisms and an institutional design simultaneously ensuring cohesion and diversity. Neither market forces nor traditional, authoritarian planning systems are able to guarantee that these dimensions will be taken into account in educational decisions. Some recent examples of consultation between education and business illustrate this quite clearly. In most cases, businessmen are much more inclined to discuss educational agreements within the framework of specific institutions and for short-term periods, rather than long-term accords covering the education system as a whole.³ The responsibility for ensuring that due account is taken of the general interest and the long term in educational consultation processes rests with the State. The latter cannot, however, fulfil this role by resorting to the same mechanisms as in the past, that is to say, by assuming the main responsibility for defining policies and implementing them. In this new context, the strategic role of the State should be to organize consultation, to place all of the necessary information on the discussion table, to evaluate results, to act wherever necessary and to guarantee respect for rules of the game that are accepted by all.⁴

The role of the State in this sense may be summarized under three main headings of responsibility:

- to determine objectives and priorities through mechanisms of democratic discussion;
- to devise and implement mechanisms for the evaluation of results obtained in the pursuit of those objectives, allowing a high degree of autonomy to institutions and local bodies in deciding by which methods these results are to be obtained; and
- to implement efficient mechanisms to compensate for differences, so as to neutralize the anti-democratic aspects of decentralizing strategies, particularly important in countries experiencing powerful social imbalances.

For the State to play this strategic role, agreement and political will are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions. Introducing long-term considerations into educational discussions requires a clear ability to anticipate future demands and problems. The ability to anticipate, moreover, will depend on having accurate diagnoses concerning the current situation, a considerable amount of information concerning global trends and mechanisms for evaluating the actions undertaken, which can be used to introduce changes before results harden and become too difficult and too costly to modify. For this reason, close attention should be paid to improving information systems (measurement of results, observation of international trends, etc.) in efforts to alter educational management systems.

2. REFORM OR INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION?

Seeking agreements for long-term strategies may appear contradictory in a situation that is dominated by the need to adapt to conditions that change constantly and rapidly. The way societies and institutional systems operate, however, shows that the highest rates of dynamism occur in systems that maintain a strong degree of stability in certain basic core areas of their structure. The problem with education systems, as is the case of large bureaucracies, has been the attempt to organize them centrally and homogeneously. In this respect, the current trend towards greater institutional autonomy represents a substantial new departure, leaving behind the traditional goal of 'reforming the system' for an approach based on institutional or inter-institutional innovations.

In centralized education systems, innovation was traditionally limited to the private sector or to 'pilot experiments' in the public sector. At best, successful experiments then served as a basis for introducing general changes, but not always with the desired results. At present, there is increasing recognition that the success of innovations depends on adapting them to local conditions. This is why it appears much more important to generalize the ability to innovate than to generalize actual innovations. Successful innovations may, of course, play an important role from the point of view of generalizing this ability to innovate, if they are used as demonstration centres (either for staff training or for information exchange) as well as, in more general terms, to improve the standards of professionalism of teaching staff.

Educational policies aimed at encouraging innovation tend to be accused of a bias towards rich institutions. If this were true and inevitable, innovation would remain the preserve of rich countries and middle- to

high-income social sectors in developing countries. The risk of accepting that innovation should inevitably be associated with a plentiful availability of resources is that it can produce a dual mechanism, whereby the needs of poor sectors are met through rigid, mass programmes, and the requirements of middle- and high-income sectors through dynamic, personalized actions. All the same, it cannot be maintained, on the pretext of having to cope with massive requirements, that personalized attention is any less necessary in services provided to low-resource sectors than in services for the high-resource population. In the case of education, for example, there are a great many different examples of the individual ways in which children from low-income families cope with the requirements of learning. Encouraging innovation in the supply of education to popular sectors should therefore constitute one of the pillars of democratic educational policies.

Moreover, educational change based on innovation implies shifting from an approach to change based on supply to one based on the active role of demand. Traditional reforms typically attempted to change some particular aspect of educational supply, such as contents, system structure, equipment, teaching staff, etc. The role of demand, on the other hand, was underestimated or given consideration only in the initial stages of the process of change. In the future, on the contrary, educational demand will play an active part in the process of change and innovation, so that it is essential to design strategies for improving its quality. From this point of view, the most promising approach undoubtedly consists in offering more and better information to the users of the system.

3. STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE ARE SYSTEMIC

A last point is that another of the important features of reform strategies applied in the past was the tendency to focus on changing a particular aspect considered as a key factor of educational change, such as higher salaries for teachers, different contents, institutional reform, equipment, infrastructure, etc. When these changes are retrospectively evaluated, it is clear that one of the main factors explaining the relatively modest results they achieved is the unidimensional approach with which they were applied. Educational changes depend on the interaction of many factors, which act systemically.

Recognizing the systemic character of change, however, does not mean to say that it is either necessary or possible to change everything at once. What it does mean is that at any given moment due attention has to be paid to the effects of changing one specific aspect on all of the other factors.

Introducing an institutional change, such as decentralization, without considering at what point and along what guidelines appropriate action needs to be undertaken (to train staff, to reform contents and pay structures, to increase the supply of teaching equipment and material) will surely have a limited impact on educational results.

The key problem in reforms is therefore establishing the sequence and extent of the changes that need to be introduced in each of the system's components. Experience shows that these aspects (sequence and extent) are easier to decide locally than at the central level. It is practically impossible to determine a sequence of educational change that will apply in very different social, geographic and cultural situations. This is another reason why there is a tendency at present to give priority to institutional changes allowing a greater degree of autonomy to institutions in defining their own improvement strategy.

NOTES

1. Lewis J. Perelman, L'école actuelle est aussi productive et novatrice qu'un kolkhose [The present-day school is as productive and innovatory as a kolkhoz], *Courrier international*, no. 255, September 1995.
2. Even though the terms 'agreement', 'consensus' and 'contract' have different meanings in a political context, they are used here indistinguishably to refer to all possible ways for different players to arrive at a common position in order to develop a particular line of action.
3. CERI, *Schools and business, a new partnership*, Paris, OECD, 1994.
4. See, for instance, the interesting discussion on educational agreements in Latin America; in particular, the texts by Juan Casassus and Cecilia Braslavsky, in: FLACSO/Fundación Concretar, *¿Es posible concertar las políticas educativas? La concertación de políticas educativas en Argentina y América Latina* [Is it possible to equate educational policies? The mix of educational policies in Argentina and Latin America], Buenos Aires, Mino y Dávila Ed., 1995.

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