PALGRAVE STUDIES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Post-Covid Schooling

Future Alternatives to the Global Normal

Clive Harber

palgrave
macmillan

Palgrave Studies in Alternative Education

Series Editors
Helen Lees
Independent Researcher
London, UK

Michael Reiss
UCL Institute of Education
London, UK

This series emerges out of a recent global rise of interest in and actual educational practices done with voice, choice, freedoms and interpersonal thoughtfulness. From subversion to introversion, including alternative settings of the state to alternative pathways of the private, the series embraces a diverse range of voices.

Common to books in the series is a vision of education already in existence and knowledge of education possible here and now. Theoretical ideas with potential to be enacted or influential in lived practice are also a part of what we offer with the books.

This series repositions what we deem as valuable educationally by accepting the power of many different forces such as silence, love, joy, despair, confusion, curiosity, failure, attachments as all potentially viable, interesting, useful elements in educational stories. Nothing is rejected if it has history or record as being of worth to people educationally, nor does this series doubt or distrust compelling ideas of difference as relevant.

We wish to allow mainstream and marginal practices to meet here without prejudice as Other but also with a view to ensuring platforms for the Other to find community and understanding with others.

The following are the primary aims of the series:

- To publish new work on education with a distinctive voice.
- To enable alternative education to find a mainstream profile.
- To publish research that draws with interdisciplinary expertise on pertinent materials for interpersonal change or adjustments of approach towards greater voice.
- To show education as without borders or boundaries placed on what is possible to think and do.

If you would like to submit a proposal or discuss a project in more detail please contact: Rebecca Wyde rebecca.wyde@palgrave.com. The series will include both monographs and edited collections and Palgrave Pivot formats.

More information about this series at
http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/15489

Clive Harber

Post-Covid Schooling

Future Alternatives to the Global Normal

palgrave
macmillan

Clive Harber
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Birmingham, UK

Palgrave Studies in Alternative Education
ISBN 978-3-030-87823-8 ISBN 978-3-030-87824-5 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-87824-5

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface: The 'New Normal'?

Work on this book began during the Covid global pandemic in 2020–2021. In the UK, where I am based, and elsewhere globally, pressure was on governments to get children and young people back into school as quickly as possible. Schooling was deemed to be such a good thing that this happened despite widespread evidence that both teachers and pupils (and thus parents) were being infected as a result. Indeed, in the UK, outbreaks of the virus in schools began shortly after pupils returned in September 2020. When school had to be closed because infection rates were too high, there was widespread consensus amongst politicians and in the media that this was a bad thing. One motive for this was, of course, the need for children and young people to continue their education and miss as little schooling as possible. On the other hand, with children not at school many parents cannot go back to work and thus their labour and their human capital are lost to the economy.

However, this desire to get back to 'normal' in relation to schooling isn't necessarily straightforward, as the nature of contemporary everyday

schooling can be anything but normal and is often deeply problematic. For example, Hyman had this to say about 'normal' or everyday schooling in the UK in relation to the Covid pandemic:

> It's tempting to crave a return to life before this horrible pandemic struck…But inside we know a simple truth: "normal" was not right. Normal for schools had become unbalanced, at times unhinged. Tunnel vision. A pressure that was unhealthy, often toxic; Ofsted inspections, high-stakes exams, the crowding out of creativity. Normal was vindictive: 30% labelled as failures each year, after 12 years of education, to satisfy the normal distribution of the GCSE exam bell curve. Normal meant too many committed and creative teachers battling against the odds: 40% leaving the profession within five years. Normal could be dispiriting, with growing mental health problems in young people. Normal was scarred by deep inequalities, now further exposed by Covid. And in the compelling words of Andreas Schleicher of the OECD, normal meant educating people to become "second-class robots", rather than developing the human skills that are increasingly what will matter most. (Hyman, 2020)

Just as the economic emphasis in a post-Covid world must alter towards greener forms of economic development to combat climate change, so schooling should not necessarily just be a return to the same way of doing things. The purpose of this book is therefore to describe and critically analyse the nature of contemporary schooling. In particular it is concerned with looking at evidence on the daily, 'normal' or prosaic features of schooling that are often taken for granted or not sufficiently questioned or seen as problematic. The aspects of schooling that pupils experience every day on a routine basis may well be more controversial—and indeed negative and at odds with democracy and human rights—than it at first appears.

Throughout this book, in addition to academic and research evidence, I will intersperse the text with occasional personal reflections on my own educational history to illustrate a wider point I am trying to make about what other evidence and research are suggesting in relation to the nature of contemporary schooling. So, let us start by going back over 50 years in time to an ordinary day of normal schooling. It was a weekday in 1965 and I was 14 years old. My day started by having breakfast, putting on a

school uniform, taking two buses across south London. It then involved going into the school buildings before a time set by the school (making sure I wasn't caught being late by prefects), going to religious-based assembly, attending a series of timed lessons in which different subjects were taught (often stifling boredom), having a school lunch, mixing with other boys in the school playground, attending more lessons, regularly being reminded that the content of the lessons was important for the exams the following year, avoiding punishment for breaking school rules, going home and doing homework. This was a normal day and I was doing things most parents and young people regarded as normal, inevitable and to a large extent uncontroversial. In essence little has changed since and these routines, structures and practices are still everyday reality for millions of young people, parents and teachers in most countries of the world.

Such 'normal' routines matter and are of significance. Shortly after my average day of 1965, in 1968, the first chapter of a classic study of everyday life in schools in America (Jackson, 1968) was entitled 'The Daily Grind' and began:

> On a typical weekday morning between September and June some 35 million Americans kiss their loved ones goodbye, pick up their lunch pails and books, and leave to spend their day in that collection of enclosures (totaling about one million) known as elementary school classrooms…The school attendance of children is such a common experience in our society that those of us who watch them go hardly pause to consider what happens to them when they get there. (Jackson, 1968, p. 3)

Jackson argues that parents tend to be more interested on highlights or unusual events at school rather than the ordinary and that teachers are more likely to focus on specific acts of misbehaviour or accomplishment, even though such acts occupied but a small fraction of the student's time:

> And the student is no less selective. Even if someone bothered to question him or her about the minutae of the school day, they would probably be unable to give a complete account of what had happened…yet from the standpoint of giving shape and meaning to our lives these events about

> which we rarely speak may be as important as those that hold our listener's attention…The daily routine, the "rat race", and the infamous "old grind" may be brightened from time to time…but the greyness of our daily lives has an abrasive potency of its own. Anthropologists understand this fact better than do most other social scientists and their field studies have taught us to appreciate the cultural significance of the humdrum elements of human existence. (1968, pp. 3–4)

Dutro (2009) has drawn attention to the importance of examining the everyday experiences of pupils in schools and in particular to what she terms 'critical witnessing', that is the testimonies of children about their experience of schooling. Even though they may seem an uncontested and 'natural' phenomenon because of ingrained assumptions, schooling and the routines that go with it are not inevitable or set in stone. They are socially constructed by the many actors involved globally, nationally and locally. This is important because many of the taken-for-granted daily behaviours and practices associated with schooling are much more controversial than they may first appear and may well have significant aspects that are negative for the pupils, teachers and societies involved.

For example, in March 2019 a picture of children in an Indian school appeared in *The Guardian* newspaper alongside an article about Pakistan returning an Indian pilot who had been shot down over Pakistan (Safi & Zahra-Malik, 2019). The picture showed Indian schoolchildren in school uniform praying for the return of the pilot. The picture immediately raises political issues of uniform, uniformity and colonial heritage as well as nationalist political socialisation and using an educational institution to reproduce a religion—indoctrination—rather than educate about religions. The article made no comment about any of these. As has been argued elsewhere (Harber & Mncube, 2012, Ch. 1) the essence of politics is disagreement and, although not necessarily or immediately appearing so, there is much that is controversial and to be disagreed about in the daily, routine practices of schooling.

However, the daily experience of schooling for pupils may be uncomfortable and difficult as well as controversial. Thus, one study of pupils' views of schooling in the UK commented that

> for many children, school represents a difficult territory that they have to negotiate from the bus journey at the beginning of the day to the completion of homework at the end…what is strongly conveyed is a sense of vulnerability. Children feel small; the school environment is hard, especially when you fail; space is limited; toilets are unwelcoming or inaccessible; sick bays are inadequate; buildings are noisy; corridors are hectic; the school bus is a daily ordeal; bullies threaten; teachers shout and seem not to listen; belongings can be lost or stolen; bags are heavy; lockers are damaged; minority students feel victimised and marginalised. There is enormous pressure to conform; to be different is dangerous. (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003, pp. 108–9)

More recently, a survey and report by the Children's Society found that children in the UK have the lowest levels of life satisfaction, well-being and happiness across Europe and one key factor in this was fear of failure, including fear of failure at school. A linked factor was the high levels of school work expected from pupils at UK schools. As the article comments: 'Data for the report was collected before the coronavirus pandemic struck, suggesting things may now be significantly worse for the UK's young people' (Topping, 2020).

The day before children and young people in the UK were due to go back to school in March 2021 an article in *The Observer* newspaper (Jayanetti, 2021) reported that, while many parents were desperate for their children to return to school after months of home-learning away from friends, some children with special needs were facing the end of the best educational experience they have had in years. Many had flourished, freed from school environments that did not suit them. One parent of a 12-year-old boy with autism said her son was depressed about going back to school:

> After teachers at his former primary school started to restrain him when he displayed signs of anxiety, his attendance fell sharply, and when he started secondary school last September, he found the experience overwhelming and began withdrawing after a couple of weeks. (Jayanetti, 2021)

The boy much preferred using online lessons at home and wouldn't be returning to school on the due date. The article notes that

> Fran Morgan, founder of Square Peg, which campaigns for more flexible schooling for children who struggle in classroom environments, pointed to government data showing that around 200,000 Send [Special Educational Needs] children were persistent absentees before the pandemic. "These families are often desperate for access to online educational provision, which was suddenly made available in a matter of weeks when the pandemic hit," she said. "For those children who thrived in lockdown, with the pressure of enforceable mandatory school attendance removed, next week will probably see their anxieties return with a vengeance." (Jayanetti, 2021)

These concerns were dismissed by the government spokesperson who simply said: 'The classroom is the very best place for education, including for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities' (Jayanetti, 2021).

One study of schooling in 110 autobiographies in America (Bjorklund, 2004, p. 290) noted that schooling's

> Proponents argue that it helps liberate individuals from blind enslavement to instinct, habit, custom, and superstition. Education for all promotes individual social mobility, develops human capital, and keeps the class structure open. Universal education nobly serves the democratic ideal by producing informed citizens. It offers the promise that our diverse population with a continual influx of new immigrants will be given a common foundation of knowledge and values. And, finally, universal education can help solve social problems.

However, despite an expectation that the American autobiographers would therefore have nothing but praise for their schooling. she found that instead, across all types of autobiographers, they rarely had anything good to say, many being contemptuous or dismissive. She quotes Henry Adams, for example, who in his famous account focusing on his own education scoffed that 'the chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught' (2004, p. 290). Two key criticisms were the role of school in enforcing conformity and the need to resist indoctrination (2004, p. 299).

Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that there has always been pupil resistance to formal schooling in the forms of disaffection, boredom, truancy, voluntary home-based education (not induced by Covid) and school

'phobia' (Harber, 2004, pp. 12–14). Though in a minority, there has also been academic criticism. For example, John Taylor Gatto, an American critic of modern formal schooling wrote this at the turn of the twenty-first century:

> Let no school exceed a few hundred in size. Even that's far too big. And make them local. End all unnecessary transportation of students at once; transportation is what the British used to do with hardened criminals. We don't need it, we need neighborhood schools. Time to shut the school factories, profitable to the building and maintenance industries and to bus companies, but disaster for children. Neighborhoods need their own children and vice versa; it's a reciprocating good, providing surprising service to both. The factory school doesn't work anywhere—not in Harlem and not in Hollywood Hills, either. Education is always individualized, and individualization requires absolute trust and split-second flexibility. This should save taxpayers a bundle, too. Measure performance with individualized instruments. Standardized tests, like schools themselves, have lost their moral legitimacy. They correlate with nothing of human value and their very existence perverts curriculum into a preparation for these extravagant rituals. Indeed, all paper and pencil tests are a waste of time, useless as predictors of anything important unless the competition is rigged. As a casual guide they are probably harmless, as a sorting tool they are corrupt and deceitful. A test of whether you can drive is driving. Performance testing is where genuine evaluation will always be found. There surely can't be a normal parent on Earth who doesn't judge his or her child's progress by performance. School can never deal with really important things. Only education can teach us that quests don't always work, that even worthy lives most often end in tragedy, that money can't prevent this; that failure is a regular part of the human condition; that you will never understand evil; that serious pursuits are almost always lonely; that you can't negotiate love; that money can't buy much that really matters; that happiness is free. (Taylor Gatto, 2000, p. 24)

In fact there are three ways of looking at how school might affect individuals and the wider society. One is that it is a force for good and that it contributes to the improvement of society. And it is true that for many children schooling, in whole or in part, can be a positive experience. It can offer young people a place of safety and new experiences, learning

and opportunities that may not be available at home or in the community. Indeed, the latter part of my own secondary education at school was a largely positive experience. However, this positive role of schooling, while only partially true, is also nevertheless the overwhelmingly dominant global narrative concerning formal education. The second way is that it simply reproduces society as it is, including existing inequalities. The third, much more inconvenient truth, is that it has a negative role and actually harms young people and the wider society. I would argue that the role of formal schooling is complex and often contradictory and that all three roles have some truth in them. It is just that the first, positive, role has tended to get much more public and academic attention then the second and, particularly, the third, which concerns the social, mental and physical harm regularly and consistently perpetrated by schooling.

Nevertheless, in many countries schooling has become compulsory, with many seeing schooling as being the same as education, though this isn't necessarily the case. Moreover, in many countries that have not achieved universal schooling there has been an enormous effort, coordinated internationally by bodies such as UNESCO, to increase access to schooling—often referred to as Education For All. Thus, every year UNESCO publishes an Education For All Global Education Monitoring Report, which summarises progress towards achieving universal primary education.

Within this drive to achieve at least primary schooling for all is an assumption that schooling is automatically a good thing for individuals and societies. However, the positive role of schooling, while partially true, is also nevertheless the overwhelmingly dominant global narrative concerning formal education. Most debates concern making schools more effective at what they already do in terms, for example, of improving literacy and numeracy and the exam results that go with them. Yet schooling today manifests many negative practices and problematic characteristics in its everyday life, even if these are not always immediately recognised as such because they are often seen as ordinary and normal and thus taken for granted. Indeed, in many ways the everyday routines of schooling fail to meet the physical and psychological needs of individual students as human beings. Yet despite these negative aspects and

shortcomings young people are encouraged and compelled to go to school and, indeed, are controlled when they get there. In China, for example, where a huge emphasis has been placed on the importance of formal education, Wu's (2012) ethnographic research in a rural area found considerable disillusionment with schooling. Part of this was its perceived irrelevance to the context, but other negative everyday factors were education as confinement, boredom and a recurring sense of failure, a difficult and uninteresting curriculum and repetitive drilling for tests.

Also, important is that the present book has also tried to examine more everyday, taken-for-granted aspects of schooling. In doing so it has tried to use evidence from studies on pupils' perspective on schooling wherever possible. However, it is important to note

> The paucity of research considering education and schooling from the perspectives of children, in either developed or developing countries, largely reflects the traditional and conservative structures which shape educational systems internationally. Until very recently, research has given little more than cursory attention to children's views regarding their experiences of education, and seldom does such feedback have a significant influence on educational change and policy. (Phelps et al., 2014, p. 34)

Covid spread so rapidly because the globe has become so interconnected and will only come under control if the social and medical success is truly global. Schooling too is a global phenomenon—schools as organisations are essentially the same or certainly more similar than different around the world and there are historical reasons for this that are explored in the book. The main argument of the book is that the schools that we send children and young people back to globally for five days a week in term time need to change in a more positive direction. This book uses three analytical frameworks to examine the nature of everyday schooling globally—schooling as social control, schooling as social and economic reproduction and schooling as violence, and these are discussed in more detail in Chap. 1.

Birmingham, UK Clive Harber

References

Bjorklund, D. (2004). School as a Waste of Time? Complaints About Schooling in American Autobiographies. *The Journal of American Culture, 27*(3), 290–302.

Burke, C., & Grosvenor, I. (2003). *The School That I'd Like*. RoutledgeFalmer.

Dutro, E. (2009). Children's Testimony and the Necessity of Critical Witness in Urban Classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 48*, 231–238.

Harber, C. (2004). *Schooling as Violence*. RoutledgeFalmer.

Harber, C., & Mncube, V. (2012). *Education, Democracy and Development: Does Education Contribute to Democratisation in Developing Countries?* Symposium.

Hyman, P. (2020, July 5). Our School System Are Broken. Let' Grab This Chance to Remake Them. *The Guardian*.

Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in Classrooms*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Jayanetti, C. (2021, March 7). Special Needs Pupils in England Living in Dread of Returning to the Classroom. *The Observer*.

Phelps, R., Graham, A., Nhung, H. T. T., & Geeves, R. (2014). Exploring Vietnamese Children's Experiences of, and Views on, Learning at Primary School in Rural and Remote Communities. *International Journal of Educational Development, 36*, 33–43.

Safi, M., & Zahra-Malik, M. (2019, March 1). Pakistan Set to Free Captured Indian Pilot to Defuse Crisis. *The Guardian*.

Taylor Gatto, J. (2000). Nuts and Bolts: Breaking out of the Modern Schooling Trap. *Food and Water Journal, 10/1*, 24.

Topping, A. (2020, August 28). Children in UK Are the Unhappiest in Europe. *The Guardian*.

Wu, J. (2012). Disenchantment and Participation Limits of Compulsory Education: Lessons from Southwest China. *Compare, 42*(4), 621–646.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my long suffering wife, Mary Harber, for proofreading the manuscript—as she has done for all the books I have written since retiring—with only a very small amount of complaining. I'd also like to thank Helen Lees and Michael Reiss for their feedback on the manuscript. Finally, I'd like to thank the unknown woman I heard making an off-hand comment about how nice school uniforms looked for planting the seed in my mind that grew into this book.

Contents

1

Everyday Schooling: Preserving the Status Quo or Worse?

In this chapter we examine ways in which schooling currently does two things in relation to the wider society. First, how it acts as an institution that conserves social arrangements through its role as (a) an agency of social and political control and (b) a facilitator of existing socio-economic reproduction and inequality. Second, how it often makes matters worse for individual pupils and societies through (c) its active perpetration of violence. Thus, there are three key analytical themes that permeate the book. The first is schooling as social and political control—how the historical purposes of schooling mean that one of its key modern functions is of encouraging conformity, obedience and docility through its primarily authoritarian organisational structures and top-down daily rules and routines. The unequal exercise of power is woven into the organisational fabric of schooling. Thus the daily reality of schooling for many, if not most, pupils globally is *not* one of participating in decision-making either about school organisation or their own learning. Ironically, and as we shall see below, this is often despite public policy claims in countries such as Sweden, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Iceland, America and the UK that schooling is about educating critical citizens for participation in a democracy.

C. Harber, *Post-Covid Schooling*, Palgrave Studies in Alternative Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-87824-5_1

The second analytical framework is how schooling is an institution that conserves social arrangements as they are through its role as an agency of socio-economic reproduction of inequalities based on, for example, class, race or gender. As the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa once put it,

> For many, education cannot compensate for much deeper economic and social inequalities—it is not ladder out of poverty, it simply confirms one's status in life. (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, p. 142)

The third analytical framework is how school often makes matters worse through either its active perpetration of violence (e.g. through corporal punishment or teacher-initiated sexual harassment) or, equally importantly, its reproduction of violence by omission where it doesn't do something it should do to protect young people and keep them safe. Examples of violence by omission include failing to keep pupils safe by ignoring pupil-to-pupil bullying, insufficient attention to the safety of school buildings or placing schools where traffic and pollution are a known hazard.

Evidence—including, wherever possible, research evidence based on pupils' views of schooling—is provided throughout the book to support the idea that schooling does all three of these things in its everyday, normal structures and practices.

A History of Schooling as Social and Political Control

Sometimes the role of schooling in social and political control is obvious and clear cut. The content of textbooks, curriculum and use of slogans and symbols in the Soviet Union and apartheid South Africa are historical examples of this. This quotation is from a novel called *The Bookseller of Kabul*, based on experience in Afghanistan just after the Taliban were removed from power in 2001:

> When the schools open this spring there will hardly be any textbooks. Books printed by the Mujahdeen government and the Taliban are useless. This is how first-year schoolchildren learn the alphabet: J is for Jihad, our aim in life, I is for Israel, or enemy, K is for Kalashnikov, we will overcome, M is for Mujahdeen, our heroes, T is for Taliban…War was the central theme in maths books too. Schoolboys—because the Taliban printed books solely for boys—did not calculate in apples and cakes but in bullets and Kalashnikovs. Something like this: Little Omar has a Kalashnikov with three magazines. There are twenty bullets in each magazine. He uses two thirds of the bullets and kills sixty infidels. How many infidels does he kill with each bullet? Books from the Communist period cannot be used either. Their arithmetic problems dealt with land redistribution and egalitarian ideals. Red banners and happy collective farmers would guide children towards Communism. (Seierstad, 2004, pp. 62–63)

Clear-cut forms of schooling as political control are not confined to history, however. For example, in 2021 it was announced that all pupils in Hong Kong, starting as young as six, would be taught the national security law. Notices sent out required schools to prevent participation in political activities, to increase monitoring of employees and teaching materials, to remove books and flyers deemed to endanger national security and to report to authorities if necessary. The changes to the school curriculum were part of moves by the government to crack down on dissent and increase control of the political leanings of residents of Hong Kong beyond activists and opposition figures. In 2020 the city's leader, Carrie Lam, blamed the liberal studies curriculum for fuelling the 2019 pro-democracy protests and vowed to overhaul the education system. The government warned teachers that there was 'no room for debate or compromise' when it came to national security and that they should 'cultivate students' sense of responsibility to safeguard' it. Work plans and self-compiled teaching materials must be retained for at least two years to allow for inspection by school management or the education department (Davidson, 2021).

Even less sinister daily rituals such as saluting the flag, singing the national anthem and saying a national pledge can also be seen a form of imposing a political agenda of national unity. However, here the concern is more with how schooling as social and political control became deeply

embedded in the organisational nature of schooling globally, even if the societies that originally produced the organisational model have subsequently undergone major changes. During the nineteenth century, modern schooling took on most of its key and recognisable characteristics—it spread widely and became increasingly perceived as compulsory. It took place in separate buildings called a 'school', uniforms were introduced and an examined curriculum developed. As Miller (1989, pp. 156–7) puts it:

> Sometimes earlier, sometimes later, but above all in the last third of the nineteenth century, systems of compulsory schooling were established in most countries of the Western world. Between 1869 and 1882 alone, schooling was made compulsory in Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada, in 14 of the American states, in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales in Australia, In New Zealand, Scotland, the 15 crow lands of the Austrian Empire, in the Netherlands and Switzerland, and in France and England…what was significant was an international acceptance of the rational, compulsory-schooling model, a commitment of substantial proportions of public funds to the schooling enterprise and, over three or four decades (a brief period in historical terms), irreversible breakthroughs in the actual enforcement of what came to be understood as the one model of efficient schooling. This process revolved around the attempted standardization of curricula, school architecture, teaching practices and school behavior; the regularization and enforcement of school attendance of all children of what came to be understood as school age.

Green (1994) attempted to explain why such a wide range of countries introduced systems of mass formal schooling during the nineteenth century. He argues that the key social factor was state formation:

> The major impetus for the creation of national education systems lay in the need to provide the state with trained administrators, engineers and military personnale to spread dominant national cultures and inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood; and so to forge the political and cultural unity of burgeoning nation-states and cement the ideological hegemony of their dominant classes. (1994, p. 312)

Thus,

> The nineteenth century education system came to assume a primary responsibility for the moral, cultural and political development of the nation. It became the secular church. It was variously called upon to assimilate immigrant cultures, to promote established religious doctrines, to spread the standard form of the appointed national language, to forge a national identity and a national culture, to generalise new habits of routine and rational calculation, to encourage patriotic values, to inculcate moral disciplines and, above all, to indoctrinate in the political and economic creeds of the dominant classes. It helped construct the very subjectivities of citizenship, justifying the ways of the state to the people and the duties of the people to the state. It sought to create each person as a universal subject but it did so differentially according to class and gender. It formed the responsible citizen, the diligent worker, the willing tax payer, the reliable juror, the conscientious parent, the dutiful wife, the patriotic soldier and the dependable or deferential voter. (1994, p. 313)

It is clear that social control has been a key function of formal education right from its origins. As Green put it in his study of the origins of formal schooling in England, France, the US and Prussia,

> The task of public schooling was not so much to develop new skills for the industrial sector as to inculcate habits of conformity, discipline and morality that would counter the widespread problems of social disorder. (1990, p. 59)

Taylor Gatto (2009), examining the historical roots of American schooling, also notes the influence of Prussian education in America and writes that modern schooling emerging in the early twentieth century was designed as a counter to the threat of rising democratic forces threatening to give peasants and workers a voice at the bargaining table:

> Modern industrialised, compulsory schooling was to make a kind of surgical intervention into the prospective unity of these underclasses. Divide children by subject, by age-grading, by constant rankings on tests, and by many other more subtle means, and it was unlikely that the ignorant mass

> of mankind, separated in childhood, would ever re-integrate into a dangerous whole. (2009, p. vviii)

Toffler further argued that

> Mass education was the ingenious machine constructed by industrialism to produce the kind of adults it needed…the solution was an educational system that, in its very structure, simulated this new world…the regimentation, lack of individualisation, the rigid systems of seating, grouping, grading and marking, the authoritarian style of the teacher—are precisely those that made mass public education so effective as an instrument of adaptation for its time and place. (1970, pp. 354–5)

Johnson (1970), for example, shows how in Britain from the early nineteenth century schooling was seen as a way of 'civilising' and controlling the potentially disruptive and rebellious lower orders who were increasingly living in towns and cities as a result of increased industrialisation. Thus, as one Victorian author of a report on the South Wales coalfield put it, 'A band of efficient schoolmasters is kept at much less expense than a body of police or soldiery' (H.L. Bellairs, cited in Williams, 2003). Religious and moral education would play a large part in this for, even as the state took on an increasing responsibility for formal education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religion continued to influence the nature of provision (Miller, 1989, p. 174).

Shipman (1971) writes on the role of schooling in social control in some detail in regard to Britain, arguing that by the mid-nineteenth century schools were staffed by teachers who saw their job as full-time and used monitors and prefects to maintain order and stability. He states that

> Children were being exposed not only to a curriculum governed by religion and the class interests of their benefactors, but increasingly to organisations that were large scale, disciplined and, as in the factories, geared to regular and punctual attendance. (1971, p. 132)

Shipman also notes that there was no dispute about the role of religion in school, only over which version, and states that the primacy of the

control function of schooling in this period has been documented by many writers so that

> The role of the school is best seen as part of the total machinery of coercion that was used to limit disturbance and inculcate a new social discipline. (1971, p. 134)

He asserts that the clearest official statement of the social control function of school came in the Elementary Code of 1904, which laid down the duty of schools to fit children into the discipline and life of work and to implant in the children habits of industry, self-control and courageous perseverance in the face of difficulties (1971, p. 160).

Spring (1973) adds in relation to America that by the beginning of the twentieth century industrialisation and urbanisation had eroded the influence of the family, church and community on individual behaviour so school was substituted as a primary instrument of social control in order to maintain social order. Indeed, He cites an American sociologist writing at the end of the nineteenth century, and echoing the Bellairs quotation above, referring to schooling as an inexpensive form of police. Spring argues that the school increasingly became responsible for the whole child, which meant expanding its custodial function to the child's entire social life, including play, dancing and hobbies.

Schooling was not only used for social control and socio-economic reproduction in the newly industrialised countries of Europe, North America, Japan and Australia. During the nineteenth century colonialism further spread schooling around the globe. By the 1930s colonial powers controlled over 84.6% of the land surface of the world (Loomba, 1998, p. 15). After early missionary educational activity, the colonial state increasingly attempted to use schooling as a form of social control to keep local populations in their place by teaching the superiority of the culture of the colonising power (often referred to as 'civilising' local populations), by emphasising loyalty to the colonial power and by supplying the subordinate personnel necessary for the effective functioning of the colonial administration (Whitehead, 1986; Altbach & Kelly, 1984). Lord Macaulay put it in regard to education in colonial India that

> We must at present do our best to form a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, in intellect. (cited in Black, 2010)

Kelly (1984, pp. 24–27), for example, shows how the colonial curriculum in French Indochina, and especially Vietnam, was considerably more negative about local institutions and culture than in Francophone West Africa because establishing colonial schools in Vietnam was related to establishing French control over a more oppositional culture than existed in West Africa. In Vietnam there already existed a pre-colonial school system and the French were well aware of the political potential of these schools in terms of resistance to colonialism. The curriculum sought to detach pupils from affective ties to their nation and service to it by belittling it. In Francophone Africa, unlike Vietnam where a large nation-state already existed, there were a multitude of relatively small-scale societies posing less direct threat to French colonialism. Schooling was no less about political control, but the aim was to use education to develop loyalty among the selected few that attended school and to woo an African elite and prepare them for local leadership under French overall rule.

The ultimate fear of the colonial state that Western education—through greater literacy in English and thus access to wider ideas—would open the doors to an incipient nationalism was eventually realised. The use of schooling as a mechanism for social control is limited when the very (imposed colonial) basis for its existence is seen as unjust and unnecessarily restricted. If the very existence of the colonial state was seen by local populations as illegitimate, then the schooling provided would find it difficult to control the lives of the people as regards independence in the long term. However, despite their role in helping to facilitate independence, ironically the very school structures and practices bequeathed by colonialism have often persisted in the post-colonial period as they have often proved useful to post-colonial governments in facilitating political control. Sometimes, as in Ghana under Nkrumah, for example, or Malawi under Banda, political control has been clear and explicit. However, its main strength and durability lies in its implicit,

taken-for-granted nature and the way that it is built into what is seen as the 'normal' power structure of the school:

> Also, while the more racist and culturally controlling elements of colonial education may have disappeared…colonial education nevertheless continues to influence post-colonial education. This is because the basic ways in which a school operates including, for example, school management and organisation, teacher-pupil relationships, discipline and assessment were bequeathed by the colonial model and have not changed significantly since. (Harber, 2017, p. x on sub-Saharan Africa)

Thus, in a study of the ex-British colony of Trinidad and Tobago, for example, London argues that

> Schooling was intended to inculcate into the colonised a worldview of voluntary subservience to the ruling groups, and a willingness to continue to occupy positions on the lowest rungs of the occupational and social ladder. A number of effective strategies were used in the process, but the most significant among these was the instructional programmes and teaching methodologies used in colonial schools…Values, attitudes and behaviour were highlighted such as the habits of obedience, order, punctuality and honesty. (2002, p. 57)

Some of the characteristics of colonial schooling in Trinidad and Tobago outlined by London include mindlessness, verbatim repetition, character development, mastery of rules as a pre-requisite for application, use of abstract illustrations, monotonous drill, inculcation of specified norms for cleanliness and neatness and harsh discipline. He concludes by arguing that schooling is one of the places where colonial forms and practices have persisted and remained essentially the same throughout the post-colonial period.

Commenting on primary schooling in both England and colonial India, Alexander writes,

> Both were rooted in a concept of order in which the counterpart of dominance was acquiescent subordination, or that very English condition of "knowing one's station". The good life enjoyed by the minority was