A renewed sense for

The purposes of schooling:

The challenges of education

And social cohesion

In Asia, Africa, Latin America,

Europe and Central Asia

Stephen P. Heyneman and Sanja Todoric-Bebic

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Stephen P. Heyneman (United States of America)
Adjunct professor, Department of Sociology, American University, Washington, DC. President of ComparativeEducation.com, a private consulting company. For more than two decades he worked with the World Bank in educational research and policy reform, training of education ministers and other senior policy officials, and finally as Lead Education Advisor for the Europe and Central Asia Region. He has worked on educational problems in sixty countries. Author of about 100 articles or books describing those problems. B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, M.A. in African studies from the University of California at Los Angeles, M.A. and Ph.D. in comparative education from the University of Chicago. E-mail: sheyneman@aol.com

Sanja Todoric-Bebic (Croatia)
She has worked in the area of training, programme design and curriculum development since 1994, focusing on education for refugees, immigrants and minority populations. Most recently, she co-ordinated the Cultural Orientation Programme for Kosovar refugees resettled in the United States. Currently completing her M.A. studies in international training and education at the American University. Her research interests include the role of education in pre- and post-conflict societies, and minority-generated alternatives to state-mandated education. B.A. in English and American Studies from Smith College. E-mail: sdbebic@aol.com

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In the last half of this century, over 100 countries have emerged anew in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and Central Asia. Though far from uniform, many countries have written new constitutions guaranteeing individual freedoms and liberties, encouraged private economic and social organizations, declared private ownership of property to be legal, encouraged entrepreneurial private enterprise, and fostered new political and trade relationships with international organizations and foreign countries. Many have guaranteed freedom of worship, travel both in and outside the country of origin, the freedom to participate in debate on public policy, and the freedom to vote for public leaders.

However, the understanding of these freedoms has not been perfect, nor has their articulation been a guarantee of adherence to them. Untested by experience, democratic principles have proved to be an imperfect tool for effectively establishing domestic policy. Historical tensions have emerged among ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. New tensions have resulted from the inconsistency of legislative and legal institutions and the precipitous growth of inequality in income, property and economic power. Some countries have had to face the challenges arising from widespread illegal behaviour, public corruption and the breakdown of the legitimacy of public institutions. Adjudicating mechanisms, police and security officers, courts of law and the laws themselves have failed to keep pace with the evolving needs of the environment in which they operate. Additionally, the media and local elected officials have sometimes proved to be uncertain of their new functions, unfamiliar with democratic traditions and professional standards of listening to all sides, and open to corruption. The result has often been a growth in social tension.

The question is whether educational mechanisms can lower social tension and help achieve social cohesion. What is the experience to date with the social utility of education mechanisms? This paper will summarize the experience in meeting the challenges of social cohesion and hence economic development. It will review recent experience in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and Central Asia. At the end of the paper there is a brief summary, which reaches three conclusions.

The first is that the social cohesion function of education is at the heart of each nation's education system, and one of the main reasons why nations invest in public schooling. The second is that some school systems accomplish this better than others. In fact, it is possible to judge the performance of an education system as much on the basis of its contribution to social cohesion as on its attainment of learning objectives. The third is that the social cohesion objectives and concerns are not uniform around the world. There are countries in some regions that are concerned primarily with ethnic identity, while countries in other regions might be concerned with public corruption or illegal behaviour. But, regardless of the emphasis placed on social cohesion in different regions, one element appears to be true throughout: countries, faced with a tendency to splinter, use public education to reduce the risk of that happening.
Sub-Saharan Africa

Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced a multitude of dictatorial regimes since independence. The number of these regimes has declined in the last decade and progress in democracy has been coupled with the strengthening of civil society. Moreover, the last few decades have seen a steady economic decline that has frustrated the programmes of public institutions. Four different approaches to nation-building have emerged.

Developing common nationality while preserving minority languages and cultures. Nigeria has over 90 million inhabitants, 250 ethnic groups, 400 languages and a wide variety of religions. It has been independent since 1960; it had a civil war in 1967 and has had periodic civil unrest since then. The National Policy on Education lists unification as one of the basic objectives of the country’s education system. While over 10 million people speak Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, English was adopted as the official national language. The Universal Primary Education scheme was initiated in 1976. As a way of forging national unity, the curriculum focuses on global, not local, concerns. It cultivates both a sense of nationalism and a sense of the importance and value of diversity.

Quickly developing a unique new culture resulting from the synthesis of previously existing groups (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala, 1998, p. 17). In this approach, pursued in Chad, Ghana, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, the school system is assigned a central role in creating a unified sense of nationhood, using a central language of instruction and centrally prescribed textbooks and curricula. For example, the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) adopted a strategy of national amalgamation, concentrating educational policy on global and national concerns. Centrally prescribed curricula and textbooks were used, and Portuguese was adopted as the language of instruction. According to critics, this approach under-estimated the complexity of the Mozambican socio-cultural reality (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala, 1998, p. 230). The concept was static and did not take into consideration cultural diversity.

Gradually developing a national culture concentrating on the expansion of the educational infrastructure. The Government of Zimbabwe, for example, has chosen to address the qualitative aspects of the country’s education sector (aims of education and the core curriculum and methodologies) at a much slower pace with more flexibility, and without direct state intervention. While there has been an impressive expansion of the school system, the urban–rural differences still persist. New textbooks favour accounts ‘which assert African dignity and pride, the rich legacy of pre-colonial history, and the colonial oppression’ (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala, 1998, p. 25). However, the approach did not include ‘positive and proactive strategies to eliminate social and economic imbalances at national level’ (ibid. p. 26). Barriers to access still persist.

Developing unity within diversity. In South Africa the focus is on forging national unity while allowing for diversity. The approach to diversity is not simply
additive, i.e. adding units or lessons on different ethnic groups, but transformative, with the purpose of questioning and transforming the ‘canons, assumptions and purposes that underlie the curriculum’ (Nkomo, 1998, p. 139). The assumption underlying this approach is that ‘prejudicial attitudes and behaviors, if learned through the medium of socially constructed culture, must of necessity be deconstructed and reconstructed through the process of multicultural education’ (ibid., p. 141). The emphasis here is not so much on creating a nation as on a ‘civic consciousness, with overarching or generic common ideals that are unifying and to which all citizens can subscribe’ (ibid. p. 142). There is a debate in South Africa on whether the core curriculum, essential for this purpose, should be developed through democratic consultation with all relevant constituencies, or be prescribed by the government. The ultimate goal is the creation of a civic consciousness that ‘promotes a sense of common citizenship with generic values but is accommodating and tolerant of other identities’ (ibid., p. 144).

In the case of South Africa, the attempt at reconciling national unity with cultural diversity is made more challenging by the presence of ethnic and linguistic minorities, regional claims to autonomy or cultural identity, the influx of migrants and socio-economic conflict (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala, 1998, p. 30).

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COHESION ISSUES

Language of instruction. Ethnic rivalry has often prevented use of a single indigenous language, thus leading many countries to adopt English, French, Portuguese or Spanish as the language of instruction. Other countries have chosen a small number of local languages in the first years of school, hoping for a smooth transition to a national language later. Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania chose local languages to help stimulate national integration, in spite of the fact that neither language had previously been used in higher education. South Africa chose English over Afrikaans. In Namibia, at its independence in 1990, only 5% of the population spoke English; nevertheless, English was adopted as the official language with the purpose of ‘uniting all Namibians, irrespective of race, into one national entity’ (Lemmer, 1998, p. 310). However, the majority of Namibian teachers lack the English proficiency necessary for effective teaching in that medium. In addition, in many classrooms a ‘three language medium situation is found: English, Afrikaans and mother tongue. Some observers fear that this is creating a new elite’ (Lemmer, 1998; Datta, 1984). There are debates as to whether expectations about English as the gateway to social, political and economic mobility were realistic.

With Shona and Ndebele spoken by 80% and 15% of the population respectively in Zimbabwe, English was kept as the official language at independence in 1980, while Shona and Ndebele were elevated to national languages. In anglophone Africa, English is overwhelmingly regarded as the language of upward mobility, and this has frequently led to the replacement of a racial elite by a social status elite, since the use of English disproportionately benefits the affluent and the urban populations.
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Some of the benefits expected from the adoption of an international language, especially English, as the medium of instruction include more rapid familiarity with technical terminology and concepts, upward occupational mobility, enhanced nation-building, facilitation of international and pan-African co-operation, and an increase in democratic participation. In the case of countries that have adopted English, symbols are used in education to demonstrate Africanness and foster national unity, instead of indigenous languages.

STRUCTURAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL COHESION

Equality of opportunity. A number of African countries have experimented with educational institutions in which pupils are selected by quota from different regions (such as Nigeria's Federal Government Colleges) or residential/boarding secondary schools (common in West Africa and anglophone Africa). Such selection policies are based on the idea that exposure to people from other ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic groups will increase tolerance. Some observers point out that the possibility of interaction among diverse ethnic communities is necessary but not sufficient for nation-building. The content of the communication matters a great deal (Datta, 1984). In addition, if the larger society neither encourages nor accepts interaction across ethnic groups, the impact of educational policies will be limited. Finally, relative isolation from communities of origin can reinforce attitudes of elitism and exacerbate divisions by education levels. On the other hand, without inter-regional interaction, even in a limited circumstance such as in secondary schools, widely diffuse populations in a large and diverse nation may not have any opportunity to experience one another.

Universal primary education. Programmes to reduce regional, ethnic and religious imbalances are common in sub-Saharan Africa (Lemmer, 1998, p. 261). However, imbalances usually persist at post-primary levels. Political rivalries, hidden curriculum, school organization, and formal versus informal messages conveyed by schools may interfere with the cohesive role of formal education. While the official curriculum may emphasize a national orientation, this may not always be stressed in practice by the teacher or administrator. In many countries, the school system is the focus of regional and ethnic disputes. In the case of Kenya’s Harambee Institutes of Technology twelve such institutes were opened in the 1970s in response to the demand by politicians for establishments in their own areas. The distribution of educational institutions was not based on need or careful policy planning but rather on whims of local politicians. Trends in employment, as well as diverging levels of economic prosperity within and among targeted groups, can also reduce the impact of education as a force for change.

Administration, organization and school governance. Teaching practices and social relations in the classroom can reinforce or discredit the content of instruction. In many African countries, the classroom environment is hierarchically structured in terms of distribution of space and communication. Most schools in Africa retain a traditional hierarchical structure of authority rather than a participatory
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and democratic structure. The goals of democracy sometimes contrast sharply with
the style of the classroom. In fact, the governance of the ministry of education itself,
with so small a formal arena for professional responsibility, may reinforce attitudes
and behaviour that are antithetical to the content of the civics curriculum.

The role of the teacher in political socialization. In environments where class-
rooms are organized around the teacher's position, students are not given the neces-
sary experience in interaction and decision-making that can effectively introduce
them to their future democratic and participatory roles as citizens. The adoption and
modelling, on the part of the teacher, of participatory and democratic classroom
practices can contribute to the formation of democratic values among students.

Latin America

For the first time in their history, most Latin American countries now have demo-
cratically elected governments, a promising fact in a region that has experienced
considerable instability over a number of decades. On the other hand, there has
been an increasing social polarization along economic lines because of the changes
in the economies. Social stratification is one of the central regional challenges to
social cohesion. Social, political and economic violence is a major concern, and ille-
gal behaviour—particularly the drug traffic and institutional corruption—is often
viewed as threatening to national purposes and goals.

Attempts to counter these practices are made more challenging by lack of expe-
rience with democratic institutions in many of the Latin American countries, includ-
ing a widespread unfamiliarity with the privileges and rights, and the obligations
and responsibilities, of citizenship. In the education sector, issues of privatization
and a crisis in quality are the most prominent items on the regional agenda.

Most Latin American and Caribbean countries are not in the initial phases of
nation-formation. Debates on issues of social cohesion and nation-building were
prominent in the nineteenth century (and continued in the revolutionary societies
of Cuba in the 1960s and Nicaragua in the 1980s), while now the discourse of eco-
nomic development and social stability is paramount. However different, Latin
American education systems are characterized by deeply ingrained structural inequal-
ities between public and private municipal and state systems. This systematic inequality
reduces public confidence that there is equal opportunity, which is a necessary
underpinning for social cohesion. Where private systems of education designed for
children of the wealthy contrast with a state system of schools of generally lower
quality for children of the underprivileged, the school system can be said to be a
handicap to the social cohesion goals of the wider society.

SOCIAL COHESION PROBLEMS

In the education sector, inequalities are most prominently displayed in the distinc-
tions between urban and rural populations (which sometimes correspond to lin-
guistic and cultural differences) and among urban social and economic groups.

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A structure of inequality gives rise to differential identities, posing a challenge to a unified sense of national identity, namely that elites may differ from the masses in their political commitment to and psychological association with the nation. In this context, the system of elite recruitment for leadership positions has direct implications for national identity. On the one hand, as Albornoz suggests, it 'provides considerable continuity, efficiency and stability, but corruption and influence peddling which are pervasive throughout the system erode public confidence'. Also, the system locks out the poor and underprivileged middle classes, leading to constant tension (Albornoz, 1993, p. 4).

Some believe that in Latin America elite members of society share similar characteristics throughout the region, thus leading to social cohesion based on group rather than nation. For instance, Albornoz points out that the Latin American elite has:

developed a certain regional homogeneity. Upper-class children have a more homogeneous school curriculum than their counterparts in poor schools even within the same country. Venezuela, for example, has two highly different sub-systems, one for the wealthy and one for the poor, one which is managed by the private sector and the other managed by the state (Albornoz, 1993, p. 117).

Throughout the region, urban schools are better resourced than rural ones, high- and medium-income brackets are better equipped, and in ethnically mixed societies the 'white' schools do better than those for children of mixed or 'pure' ethnic origins. Some countries have fewer problems than others. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico and Venezuela the school inequalities are less pronounced than in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru and Suriname.

Spatial remoteness and particular religious or linguistic orientations can eclipse the sense of nationality. Some indigenous populations in very remote areas may not recognize that they are part of a larger nation.

Even when legislation exists at the national level to equalize access to education for the indigenous and immigrant populations, implementation can be sketchy. With its confluence of Spanish and indigenous traditions, Mexico has experienced a separation between written rights and daily practices in local languages. And even where Quechua has been elevated to a national language, as in Peru, it has not led to equalization in access and social mobility.

Some suggest that Latin American schools have spread the ideology and culture of the nation-state but have done so by dissociating themselves from civil society and by remaining closed to participatory decision-making (Puiggros, 1999). Although most agree that schools educate for democracy both explicitly and through a 'spontaneous pedagogy of democracy', citizenship education has placed emphasis on facts rather than on democratic skills and values (Tenti Fanfani, 1993, p. 58–60; Villegas-Reimers, 1994, p. 24). Ministries of education typically present civics-related courses either as a separate subject or as a theme integrated into other subjects (Tibbitts & Torney-Purta, 1999, p. 13). A 1993 Latin American survey on civic education found that the predominant teaching for civics was traditional lectures.
This manifest curriculum is rarely coupled with the promulgation of democratic ideals through the hidden curriculum (participatory methodology, an active role for pupils in decision-making at the classroom/school level, and the organization of the school environment, among others).

An alternative vision emerged in the late 1980s, calling for a new model, one which emphasized the building of democracy through the promotion of interactive and social competencies. History curricula began to incorporate indigenous populations, immigrants, women, different religions, as well as regional differences, with the ultimate goal of reconstructing a 'shared imagery' which is to form the foundation of a common national identity. For example, curricula in the Rio Negro Province in Argentina include a course in history, where high-school students jointly work on a project called 'Adolescents here and there, then and now'. The goal of the exercise is to discover the diversity of their origins and to explore cultural diversity in past and present generations of Argentinians. Ultimately, students not only acquire analytical competencies but also 'reconstruct and enrich a shared imagery, which is the basis of national identity' (Braslavsky, 1993, p. 48).

Multigrade Escuela Nueva in Colombia is another model of education for democracy. Initiated in 1975, it is being implemented in some 20,000 Colombian schools (Puiggros, 1999, p. 51). This approach focuses directly on methodological innovation and uses a student-centred approach to instruction to promote attitudes and values related to democratic decision-making and participation (Tibbitts & Torney-Purta, 1999, p. 25). Escuela Nueva is designed to maximize the involvement of students by giving them the opportunity to make decisions and bring their own knowledge into the environment. Students are supposed to learn democracy by directly experiencing it through participation in student government and action committees. Parents and communities are also actively involved in the educational process.

Asia

Asia includes a wide range of different societies, from Islamic and socialist countries to capitalist democracies, many of which are also characterized by complex multiculturalism. These circumstances make ethnicity, language and religion central concerns in the context of nation-building and social cohesion. Generally speaking, most of the countries in the region have placed either national unity or economic growth/manpower preparation at the centre of their educational agendas.

Approaches to Nation-Building

Diverse societies such as India, Indonesia and Malaysia put more emphasis on the role of education in forging and maintaining national unity. More homogeneous countries, for example Japan, have stressed the contribution of education to workforce formation in their educational planning. A third group of countries, including China and Singapore, have put both social cohesion and economic growth at the centre of educational policy.
Schooling for national unity. Malaysia has pursued an approach to education policy typical of a multiracial society: creating a unified identity by fostering the development of a national culture, ‘based on the cultures of the ethnic groups of the region, incorporating elements of other cultures which are suitable and appropriate, and with Islam as an important element in its formulation’ (Thomas, 1992, p. 22). Achieving a greater unity of all peoples, a democratic way of life, a just society in which wealth should be shared, a liberal approach to diversity, and a modern society oriented towards science and technology, as well as belief in God and loyalty to country, are central tasks of the country’s educational system.

Role of moral education in promoting social cohesion. A number of Asian countries have opted for the inclusion of moral education in both primary and secondary school curricula as a way of promoting cohesiveness and national unity. Planners in diverse societies such as India, Indonesia and Malaysia have based the content of moral education curricula on a societal consensus on ‘universal values’ which transcend particular religions or ethnicities. In environments plagued by inter-group conflict based on religion or ethnicity, it is hoped that such a subject will contribute to a sense of national identity by concentrating on shared values rather than on differences.

Malaysia’s Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Education identifies sixteen universal values that do not conflict with any of the religions, cultures and norms of Malaysian society. These are as follows: compassion/empathy, self-reliance, humility/modesty, respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, cleanliness of body and mind, honesty/integrity, diligence, co-operation, moderation, gratitude, rationality and public spiritedness (Hashim, 1996).

In practice, however, there is a gap between the values espoused by the planners and the reality of implementation. For example, Muslim students in Malaysia are more likely to attend classes in Islamic education, while moral education classes are designed almost exclusively for non-Muslims. The segregation of Muslims from non-Muslims in the area of moral education ‘does not help in improving understanding and appreciation of values among the various communities’ (ibid., p. 147). Also, languages other than Malay, English and Arabic are rarely taught, and non-Malays are sporadically and often inaccurately represented in textbooks. An analysis of textbooks widely used in Malaysia revealed, for example, that the majority of texts ‘seem to have interpreted “Malaysian” as “Malay” with little inclusion of other groups, such as Chinese, Indians, Sabahans and Sarawakians. Also, less than 15% of passages analyzed showed the various groups interacting with each other at work or play’ (Mukherjee & Khairiah, 1988, p. 153).

Multiple languages of instruction as a challenge to social cohesion. Many countries in the region are struggling to find a balance between validating the cultures and languages of their heterogeneous populations, and discouraging separatism based on these. A central concern in this regard is the language of instruction.

In Malaysia, for example, school children are segregated early in life through primary education because the majority of Chinese and Tamil children attend separate schools, with Mandarin and Tamil respectively as the medium of instruction (Hashim,
In reality, students of various ethnic groups only begin to meet and socialize in secondary schools, a fact which cannot be considered conducive to national unity. If opportunities for mutual discussion and deliberation, as well as opportunities to exercise democratic decision-making, are missing from the school experience, attempts at forging lasting national unity will remain limited and superficial.

India has opted for a three-language formula in both primary and secondary education, comprising Hindi, the local language and English. This policy, however, poses numerous challenges. First, communication between different groups across this vast nation can be complicated because, in reality, very few people can communicate in their native language, Hindi and English. Also, the three-language formula has not been universally accepted, and even where it has been, its implementation has been uneven. In addition, in Hindi-speaking areas languages other than Hindi and English are rarely taught (Singh, 1993).

The existence of multiple policies regulating the education of minorities in multicultural societies, while hopeful, does not guarantee their adequate implementation. Beyond that, other important curricular considerations need to be analysed. How are authority and superior/subordinate relations depicted in curricular materials? What is the profile of interaction between dominant and minority groups that emerges? To what extent do policies isolate and alienate ethnic minorities? Is there a balance between dominant and minority values projected in texts? (Mukherjee & Khairiah, 1988, p. 162). Regional biases in representation are also pervasive.

Textbooks and social cohesion. The ‘minority’ nationalities in China number about 80 million, or 8% of the whole population. As Bass points out,

For China’s stability and prosperity, it is vitally important that all its nationalities identify with China. This has always been stated as the major political reason for promoting ‘minority education’ [...] While Han Chinese were to be educated to provide technical personnel for economic development, the overriding goal of education for ‘minority’ nationalities was to encourage political allegiance towards China and enhance stability in border areas (Bass, 1998, p. 10).

In essence, the curriculum is directly linked to the question of the ‘stability’ of the whole country.

What the Chinese party-State wants and needs is a bilingual education system capable of producing people who are both ‘ethnic and expert’ (Postiglione, 1999, p. 124). While the multiplicity of languages and religions was perceived as a threat to national unity in the past, since the beginning of the Four Modernizations period, both national minority languages and the need to close the gap between minority and Han Chinese achievement in education have been emphasized. There are still many challenges: educational materials in national minority languages are not sufficiently available, especially in sciences; as a result of many languages in use, students from different ethnic minorities attend different schools, making ethnic segregation common; speakers of minority languages who are not fluent in the majority language have limited access to broader occupational opportunities, etc. (Postiglione, 1999).
A key issue concerns 'what the school does to minority culture, through representation, textbooks and notions of “backwardness” of certain minority groups, such as Tibetans' (Postiglione, 1999, p. 14). The impact of schooling on both ethnic and national identity depends on what is taught, how it is taught and how it is evaluated. Thus, the diversity among China's minority population does not appear to be fully reflected in the content of schooling, even though minority languages are emphasized in many regions. In the 1990s, following what the Chinese Government perceived as an upsurge in Tibetan nationalism, textbooks were rewritten to emphasize more strongly the indissoluble unity of Tibet and China.

In some cases, textbook content has been identified as contributing to civil conflict. One example is that of Sri Lanka.

The population of Sri Lanka is divided into many groups, but the two largest are the Sinhalese (74%) and the Tamils (18%). They speak different languages and practise different religions (Buddhist and Hindu). In the 1950s national identity in Sri Lanka was an important issue as it is today for the new countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. On the basis of an interpretation of 'minority rights' prevalent forty years ago, Sri Lankan school populations were segregated ethnically, as were all textbook materials and supplies. The content and tone for the country's history were decided by the central ministry of education.

In a review published years later, however, pedagogical materials were discovered to be far from equal, and not based upon an inter-ethnic consensus either on content or on tone. The dominant historical image presented in the early textbooks was that of a 'glorious but embattled Sinhalese nation repeatedly having to defend itself and its Buddhist traditions from the ravages of Tamil invaders' (Nissan, 1996, p. 34). Damaging messages conveying images of Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese were scattered throughout Sinhalese textbooks. National heroes were chosen whose reputations were based on, among other things, victories over Tamils in ethnic wars. On the other hand, Tamil text materials emphasized historical figures whose reputations were based on, among other things, accommodation with the Sinhalese. In neither of the texts were there positive illustrations drawn from the other ethnic group. There was no attempt to teach about the contribution of Tamil kings to Buddhist tradition or the links between Sinhalese kingdoms and Buddhist centres in India. Language texts were largely mono-cultural in content, with few references to other ethnic groups (ibid., p. 36).

Because the texts were culturally inflammatory, and because there was no effort to balance the prejudices stemming from outside the classroom with more positive experiences and illustrations within the classroom, Sri Lankan schools can be said to have achieved the opposite of the intention of all good public school systems. Instead of laying a foundation for national co-operation and harmony, which is the basic rationale for public schooling, they laid the intellectual foundations for social conflict and civil war.

Promoting social cohesion through homogeneity: Japan. The 'uniqueness' of Japanese culture, the 'homogeneity' of the Japanese, and 'Japaneseness' are emphasized in civics education, because they are said to transcend factionalism and pro-
provide a unifying function (McVeigh, 1998, p. 193). ‘Japaneseess’ is defined in eth-
nic terms, and identity is defined according to physical traits. The ‘sameness’ of the
Japanese as a value is reinforced in the choice of Japanese language usage as a part
of moral education. Many schools include ‘proper language use’ as a part of moral
education. Nationalizing rituals include the ‘unofficial’ national anthem and flag,
which the Ministry of Education has ‘advised’ schools to use in school functions in
recent years, over the objections of some who find it reminiscent of Japan’s imper-
ial history (ibid., p. 114).

The sense of belonging to a group and, by extension, to a nation is instilled in
Japanese students through school organization as well. Students are members not only
of grades, but also of ‘groups’ which ‘cut vertically through different grades, fur-
ther integrating a student into a school’s group life’ (ibid. p. 155).

A central component of becoming a good citizen is moral training. Since 1962
the Japanese Ministry of Education has mandated that all students in primary schools
(ages 1–6) and junior high schools (ages 7–9) receive thirty-five hours of moral edu-
cation every year. The emphasis of these classes is on how best to interact with oth-
ers in a group setting. The requirement is based on the underlying belief that proper
self-cultivation results in family harmony, which leads to effective governing of the
nation and ultimately the world. Although both Japanese and American schools are
said to be successful in instilling moral values, the values chosen to be emphasized
differ substantially. The American system emphasizes respect for students, whereas
the Japanese system emphasizes the responsibility of students (Ban & Cummings,
1999, p. 81).

The Ministry of Education also prescribes twenty-two values that primary and
middle school students should learn. These are divided into four categories, the
fourth being ‘relation to group and society’. The list of core values under this head-
ing includes ‘to love the nation through an awareness of being Japanese’, and ‘to
be aware of being Japanese in the world’ (McVeigh, 1998). Civil society is rooted
in nation-building and maintaining an orderly, predictable and controlled environ-
ment that is conducive to economic pursuits.

Europe and Central Asia

THE CHALLENGE OF OVERCOMING THE INHERITANCE

One common impression is that education under the Party/State was both effective
and excellent. However questionable the evidence of academic quality, it is never-
theless clear that the education system under the Party/State was effectively delivered.
Access to schooling was universal, even in rural areas. Literacy among adults was
nearly universal. Female representation in higher education was near parity. Since
the structures were already in place at the beginning of the transition, could these
achievements not continue?

The educational challenge of an open society. Creating an effective and excel-
 lent education system in an open society and multi-party democracy is significantly
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different and profoundly more complex than it was under the Party/State. There is little experience in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region in meeting the new demands.

Curriculum challenges in open societies in transition generally fall into three categories. First, there is the challenge of pedagogy. The emphasis must shift to the complexities of student learning as distinct from the content of teaching. Next, there is the challenge of introducing new subject-matter which often has no precedent in the region—Western economics, accounting methods, civil rights law, business administration and the like. Last, and by far the most complex, are the changes necessary in the teaching of civics education, social studies and history.

Student learning. Under the Party/State, students were treated as receptacles for information. Despite the existence of a long liberal local tradition in pedagogical philosophy (Ushinsky, Vygotsky and Tolstoy), the Soviets reduced the accepted expertise in education to a few simple principles, none of which included differences in student interest, motivation or orientation.

As a task it is simpler to articulate the changes in teaching philosophy than it is to demonstrate changes in the classroom. To be sure, there is a long way to go before the changes in philosophy represent a normal experience for students. Nevertheless, the problems of implementation in the transition may not be significantly more complicated than in other education systems around the world. Successes achieved so far should not be minimized. The wide acceptance of the need to move away from fixed-formula teaching towards treating students differently on the basis of their learning style and interest is one of the greater success stories of the transition. It is fair to speculate, however, that this success has been achieved because the demand for pedagogical change was local in origin and the mechanisms to effect it were domestic in design. The same cannot be said of the other two categories of curriculum challenge.

New subject-matter. Administering an economy by planning it, and managing a political system by enforcing debateless policy, imply a set of intellectual underpinnings very different from those required by a free-market, open democracy. Under the Party/State, studying 'economics' was analogous to how Westerners might classify a training course for public administration. Emphasis was placed on how to plan. On the other hand, under the Party/State there was a prolific range of engineering courses of study because technology was considered politically 'safe' and useful for state production.

Today there are examples in the ECA region of new curricular content in many of these areas of study. However, the new curricula sometimes result from direct, and often imperfect, translations of Western precedents and can be presented in the classroom with the stultifying didactic style that characterized the Party/State. Thus, a curriculum change is not necessarily the solution to the problem.

On the other hand, there are ample examples of good precedents where new curricula are designed specifically for the ECA region's students, and in a pedagogically modern manner that underpins new principles of student learning. One illustration is the economics curriculum designed in collaboration between the SLO (the

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Dutch national curriculum organization) and Moscow State Pedagogical University. This curriculum explains the nature of economics, and that various aspects of economics differ depending on one's own role and function. There are chapters which require the student to see economics from the viewpoint of different roles: that of a public citizen, a property owner, a producer, a consumer, a participant in a financial market, an insurer and, finally, a head of a family with a tight budget (Levitsky & van den Broek, 1995).

Civics, social studies and history. By far and away the greatest educational challenge in the ECA region, and the problem with the widest implications outside the region, is the problem of teaching civics, social studies and history. Three important reasons need to be mentioned by way of background. First, of the twenty-seven nations in the ECA region, none are monolingual, mono-ethnic or mono-religious.

Second, while organization of the school system is hardly uniform throughout the region, the authority to design the curriculum is now in many instances a local responsibility. No longer is there a single political party to enforce discipline and standardize content. Even where there is a national curriculum, such as in the Russian Federation, the application of the curriculum, by design, is not standard. Classroom teachers have more professional latitude to interpret, to target pedagogy and content differently, and to place emphasis based on local needs as seen by local authorities. How can a country raise national standards but at the same time encourage local curricular control? One successful method is that used in Hungary.

The Hungarian performance standards are inspired by democratic values. They are designed to give equal weight to the interests of the individual and to those of the wider community. They are designed to balance the national standards containing the fundamental 'domains' that all citizens need with a considerable latitude in curricular and pedagogical choice that supports professional and institutional autonomy. The national performance standards are designed to use less than two-thirds of school time, with one-third left for local preference with regard to objectives and content. Performance objectives are always organized not by subject-matter, but by comprehensive domains. This enables schools to choose, establish and group material in a manner they believe to be the most effective. National performance standards do not determine the objectives by grade level, but set out stages of objectives to be met in years 6 and 10. They require that schoolteachers understand and choose from a multitude of privately produced educational materials. This requires a significantly higher standard of educational professionalism on the part of teachers than when all materials were centrally designed and supplied (Hungary, Ministry of Culture and Education, 1996).

Third, ethnic, linguistic, racial, national and religious differences take on a different characteristic in the ECA region in comparison with other parts of the world. In the first place it is not clear, from a linguistic point of view, what is meant by 'nationality' and what is meant by 'ethnicity'. Until 1997, for example, Russian citizens carried an identity card (an internal passport) which listed their 'nationality'—Buriat, Jew, German, Kazak, Russian etc. All were 'Russian citizens', but with different 'nationalities'.
In addition, many ethnic and religious histories are inflammatory owing to the particularly harsh political tradition in the region. There are grievances in the former Party/States that are for the most part unparalleled in the West, resulting in unique educational complications (Broxup & Bennigsen, 1983; Broxup, 1992, 1994; Anweiler, 1992; Rywkin, 1990; Kirkwood, 1991; Karavetz, 1978; Shadrikov, 1993; Wheeler, 1962; Shorish, 1991, 1984).

In the former Party/States minorities were in many instances forcibly moved for political reasons. German-speakers were relocated to Siberia away from the war front. Korean-speakers were moved to Central Asia. Jews, Cossacks, Tatars, Buriats, Poles, Georgians and many others were relocated to distant and unfamiliar territory. Until now, these displaced peoples had no genuine political voice or authority regarding what they wished to teach the young. Now they often have both a voice and authority. More important, there are few institutional traditions of democratic procedures, such as local school boards, to act as constraints. Using the curriculum to remedy 'old wrongs' is one of the first demands of local ethnic authorities. Given this history of persecution on so many sides and from so many different sources, it is not surprising that the first temptation among ethnic authorities is to redress past wrongs through the curriculum in public schools. This gives rise to new problems.

Since there are no traditions of consultation on curricular issues and since there is a long-standing tradition of authoritarian curriculum enforcement, it is natural that new, locally designed curricula may exacerbate rather than reduce tension. One illustration is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the curriculum was designed (within the same country) by different ethnic authorities without any enforcement of a consensus.

Additionally, ethnic bias and hatred are apparent in the accounts of history recorded in textbooks. A section of a Bosniak text entitled 'Genocide and ethnic cleansing' reads:

Horrible crimes committed against the non-Serb population of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Serb-Montenegrin aggressors and domestic chetniki were aimed at creating an ethnically cleansed area where exclusively the Serb people would live. In order to carry out this monstrous idea of theirs, they planned to kill or expel hundreds of thousands of Bosniaks and Croats. They had at their disposal the entire technical equipment and weaponry of the former JNA [...] The criminals began to carry out their plans in the most ferocious way. Horror swept through villages and cities. Looting, raping and slaughters [...] screams and outcries of the people being exposed to such horrendous plights as the Bosniak people experienced [...] Europe and the rest of the world did nothing to prevent the criminals from ravaging and slaughtering innocent people (Heyneman, 2000, forthcoming).

To question whether this text is appropriate is not a matter of whether the events described occurred. The two issues must be separated. The public school experience is intended to mould the desired behaviour of future citizens. Therefore, citizens from all different ethnic groups must feel comfortable about the content of the public school curriculum. If one or more groups is uncomfortable, the school system
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has abrogated its public functions. This Bosnian illustration is an example of where abrogation of public function occurred. Bosnia needs a textbook policy that has criteria for approving the textbooks to be used in all schools and which would not exacerbate the problems in the relationships with its neighbours.

The central education dilemma. In the ECA region, there are two alternative principles, equally legitimate, which conflict with each other. One principle is the demand for national identity on the part of the twenty-seven nations. The problem is where to draw the line between the need for a national culture and the rights of local minorities. Will ethnic minority interests be better protected in an independent country such as Kazakhstan than they were when Kazakhstan was a part of the USSR? This question is not unique to Kazakhstan, but rather is a universal issue to varying degrees throughout the ECA region.

The other half of the problem pertains to the rights of the majority or the rights of the national community. Their educational interests are no less compelling: the Kazaks in Kazakhstan; the Latvians in Latvia; the Romanians in Romania, etc. What is to protect the national community from extremist versions of history as portrayed by curricula designed by minority populations? What are the rights of the national community as regards having a sense of compromise and historical dignity ascribed to their national culture by minority populations in their own country? What protection does the national community have against the possibility that a minority community within the same country may encourage loyalty to another nation where their ethnic group is more numerous? The problem of civics education has multiple sources, and therefore must involve multiple solutions. Not all solutions can be incorporated under the heading of 'rights of minorities'. None of these conventions address this other side of the equation.

On the other hand, there have recently been efforts by the professional education community to establish a set of international standards for civics education. These standards go to the heart of the necessity for compromise. Instead of attempting to establish the rights and privileges of minority populations, they attempt to delineate the obligations and responsibilities of all populations, majority as well as minority.

The proposed international professional guidelines include standards of many kinds. They include standards for curriculum content—for example, presenting different views of history and different opinions about its contemporary relevance. They include a set of terms to identify different levels of critical thinking: being able to identify a concept; describe it; explain it; evaluate a position on it; take and/or defend a position concerning it. They include a set of standards for 'participation' in civics: being able to manage a conflict, build a consensus, influence others by moderating someone else's view, etc. Lastly, there are standards proposed for terminology used in civics—civil society, constitutional rights, private opinion, citizenship obligations and the like. The net result of these components constitutes an international precedent because it establishes for the first time an international standard for curriculum excellence in civics.

The purpose of establishing an international professional standard is to actively draw up a set of principles against which each country and each local curriculum
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authority may measure its own civics curriculum (Center for Civics Education, 1994; CIVITAS, 1995; Heyneman, 1995b, 1995c, 2000 (forthcoming)). If this effort proves successful, national authorities throughout the region will have a professional benchmark by which they can hold local curriculum authorities responsible. The opposite also applies: local and minority curriculum authorities will now have an international benchmark by which they can judge the degree to which national curricular authorities are fair and balanced in their views of history and civil rights and responsibilities.

**Conclusion**

It is not fair to conclude that schools, even effective schools, will inevitably prevent social tension or produce responsible citizens. Nor is it fair to suggest that a civics curriculum, even when well designed, will lessen international conflict. What it is fair to say is that, at the end of the twentieth century, public schools are asked to perform more or less the same task as they were asked to perform at the beginning of the seventeenth century—that of trying anyway.

They are asked to make young people into responsible citizens, sometimes in environments where adults and public institutions may themselves be irresponsible. They are asked to provide a safe haven from prejudice when the wider community is full of prejudice. And they are asked to generate feelings of equality when the school systems themselves are living examples of an inequitable world.

What can we learn from this *tour d'horizon* of regional experience? Can we conclude that the task of the school is hopeless? Can we conclude that the effect of the school system is marginal? The answer is no. It is not fair to conclude that schools have not lived up to their task. On the other hand, if there were no schools, would the chances of civil harmony increase? Would citizens be more likely to be responsible? Would there be more understanding of the economic exigencies?

While it is obvious that the task of schools is similar in different parts of the world, it is not identical. The task in the ECA region is to better prepare a new generation for democratic responsibility and the sense of nationhood, beyond ethnic nationality. In Africa, the task is to introduce citizens of all ethnic backgrounds to their public institutions and to create a common yet reasoned expectation for the public sector. In Latin America, the task is to combat the inordinately great distortions in the school systems themselves, instill a sense of efficacy in local and community responsibility, and establish a consensus on legitimate public behaviour. In Asia, the task is to introduce democratic concepts of accountability and transparency consistent with the regional culture. The fact that only one Asia 'tiger' had a curriculum where 'corruption' was defined and discussed suggests that one major regional challenge is the sin of omission.

In general, schools provide a necessary but insufficient civics educational experience for young people. On the other hand, at no time in history have civil behaviour and attitudes been more in demand. The future holds prospects for improvement of school effectiveness. International standards for civics education are under review.

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New institutions and organizations are becoming involved in civics education for reasons of international security and diplomacy. And UNESCO itself may be able to be appreciated by the world for one of its original and unique functions—that of promoting and evaluating the effectiveness of civics education around the world.

This paper has attempted to respond to the notion that public education in the next century will return to a concern for its purposes. From our point of view it is clear that the concern with the citizenship-enhancing role of public education, one of its original functions, will continue to be one of its most important and most appreciated functions in the future.

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