Education and Social Development
Comparative and International Education: A Diversity of Voices
Volume 1

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Education and Social Development

*Global Issues and Analyses*

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Completing an edited book like this one involves the collaboration of many scholars whose contributions constitute the make-up as well as the scholarly intentions of the work. As we embarked on the design and the final realization of the book, we were cognizant of the need to create a volume that revisits the important role education should play in the social development of societies across the globe. The main reason we chose social development over the more generic term ‘development’ is based on our understanding that the former is more inclusive and directly related to the central objectives of the book, which should comprise all improvements in people’s economic, political and technological well-being. In addition, the assumption that education, at least current systems of formal education, leads to social well-being is an issue that is, despite all its imperfections, less presumptive and more tangible in the lives of peoples all over the world.

Indeed, in today’s globalized world environments where people’s capacity to harness available resources may depend on their place in the line-up of so-called knowledge societies, the role of education in these and similar processes is more important than ever. As the book’s focus is on the less developed societies of the world, an underlying assumption in advancing this project was the selective failure of many learning opportunities in many parts of the world to bring about the desired social development possibilities that should have been rightfully expected in the post-colonial era. The reasons for this failure could be multiple; some could be related to the qualitative dimension of education, others may be attached to an outright lack of educational possibilities in spaces where things should have been different; yet others may be due to the continuities of the colonial methodologies and philosophies of education.

By looking at these issues and critically analyzing the weaknesses and possibilities, therefore, the chapters in this book aim to recast and where required, realign both the descriptive and analytical categories of the case. And with the recommendations embedded here, it is expected that this work would add an important constructive dimension to current debates in global educational and social development. As such, our expansive measure of gratitude goes to our contributors who did not only heed our call for submissions, but produced excellent treatises that should have long-term effects on the way we define, analyze and critique issues that pertain to educational and social development.

We would like to thank Michel Lokhorst of Sense Publishers for his support and patience. We are grateful to Allan Pitman of the University of Western Ontario who as the editor of the series, Comparative and international education: A diversity of voices, was very encouraging and supportive. Our thanks also go to Lois Edge for her capable assistance with the preparation of this publication. Finally, we thank our families whose unconditional love and continuing support sustains so much we do in the academic and extra-academic platforms of our lives. We owe them so much, and we appreciate their understanding in this and similar
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times of extensive scholarly work. It is, perhaps, in the humanist spirit of this appreciation that we hope this work will constructively impact the educational lives of many children, and it is with such hope that we dedicate the book to our own children, Elias & Yonis Ahmed, and Edmund Guo.
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SECTION ONE
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES
The important and generally positive relationship between education and social development (or development for short), in other words education leading to, and sustaining select platforms of life that enhance people’s tangible or perceived notions of well-being, may be seen many times as a fait accompli. As we discuss below, there is, as always, more to the case than is normally assumed. In the extensive meanings of the term, social development, for us, would comprise all forms of economic, political, educational, technological, emotional and other benevolences that directly or indirectly affect the lives of people. But the fact remains that whether we accept this as already there, or not, different communities in different parts of the world would interact with diverse forms of learning programs in manners that would be specific to their social, cultural, technological and other needs of the world. This will be complemented by the specific historical trajectories that affect people’s lives which may also determine to what extent a given group or country needs comprehensive programs of education that ameliorate livelihood weaknesses that may be detected in the prevailing conditions.

Generally speaking, when one today talks about education for development or development education, as it is also called, the focus would be on the developing world. Again, the case may not always be clear as to who is to be developed, what is development, especially as an inclusive concept and practice, and how would one be certified as developed. These important theoretical concerns could be discussed ad infinitum, and we will revisit some of their main pointers below, suffice it here to say that despite all the conceptual possibilities we can extract from the situation and all the legitimate claims and counter-claims one could make, the perceptions of developed, developing and underdeveloped have important analytical transactions that are exchanged all over the world. In speaking about development also, we will be using the related term of ‘progress’, which although it may have different historical occurrences is, nevertheless, placed here and there with the same intentions. In addition, we have been actually thinking lately, although we have not done it yet, of replacing both terms with the simpler and perhaps, culturally more inclusive construct of ‘well-being’. So instead of the more academic and historically essentialist social development or progress notations, social well-being or human well-being might be theoretically, even programmatically more relevant.
In responding to the perceived realities of development and lack thereof, education for development or development education should be understood as all forms of learning that induce in the lives of people better livelihood possibilities that give them more choices and chances in relation to their world. Education is arguably one of the most ubiquitous elements in lives of societies. Succinctly, therefore, “development education would connote the instructional and learning systems that deliberately [or otherwise] seek and eventually lead to personal and community advancement through the harnessing of available human and natural resources” (Abdi, 2003). As such, education, which is an ongoing process that may start before one is born, consists of so much that we either consciously or unconsciously internalize and use to effectively function or de-function (i.e., become dysfunctional) in the contexts of our lives. Educational programs may be classified into three major categories, although there may be more. These are formal education, or formalized learning possibilities that are school based, informal education which is everything we learn rather randomly in general societal situations, and non-formal education, or short specialized, skills development programs that are used by companies, institutions and others of similar structure (see Ghosh, 1995).

The focus of this work is more on formal education, which in current contexts of life, would be seen as containing the main categories of learning that could instigate development. But we could encounter a problem here. Current mass based forms of formal education that are more or less, globalized are actually a recent phenomenon in human history. While there were tutoring programs, semi-formalized learning projects in private homes, symposia, academies for the elite, and early universities, and at the lower levels, one-room or one-building schools for millennia, current systems of schools for everybody are actually about 100 years old (Davies & Guppy, 2006). So the idea of education leading to economic and technological developments may also be a recent phenomenon. As important for our understanding are the transformations that have affected the place of informal education since the project of European colonialism that had counter-culturally interacted with many in the so-called developing world. While informal, pre-colonial traditional education was actually the ‘right education for development’ in most societies in Africa, Asia and other colonized spaces of the world, with the introduction of European ways of schooling, the relegation of this education into a non-viable entity that was to be rescinded from the productive aspect of people’s lives (Bassey, 1999; Rodney, 1982; Nyerere, 1968) was undertaken. That, of course, does not mean that the social role of this type of education has decreased, even if it has been formally replaced by the current system of education which is almost uniformly implemented all over the world.

That reality itself also expands our need to contextualize the relationship between education and development with respect to the cultural and indigenous needs of the public. As will be discussed in this book, one of the main educational weaknesses being witnessed in many ‘post-colonial’ countries may be related to
the marginalization of indigenous linguistic, cultural and overall learning worldview of these societies. To recall Thiery Verhelst’s excellent book, *No life without roots* (1991), current de-cultured systems of learning may pose a lot of problems for many communities, and to achieve cultural, educational and methodological decolonization (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Nandy, 1997; wa Thiong’o, 1993, 1986), a revaluing of traditional systems of learning (Abdi, 2006; Dei, 2000, 1998) may be important. Indeed, the colonial program of creating a class of natives whose cultural beingness is so pulverized that in Thomas Macaulay’s well-known ‘Minute on Indian Education’ (1995 [1885]), they would just look like their former self, but are in all their extra-physical formations, European men and women who should sustain the cultural supremacy of the colonizer for many years (now into centuries), may not be difficult to detect in current surroundings and relationships. As people generally respond to the educational and development problems they face, though, it is now clear that many communities are re-launching new possibilities in their education and social development, and despite the quasi-totalizing effects of technologized globalization, the efforts should be worth everything. For us, the main point is not the replacement of current structures of schooling with traditional informal or even semi-formalized systems of learning. In fact, that is not viable, and even if policy-wise formulated, it will be very difficult to implement. In our post-facto world (as to the effects of colonialism and the epochal changes that followed), even those whose cultures may be fully revived in the arrangements of any new traditional education may not welcome it so quickly. For them, the new developments may actually disenfranchise their children in a world where development education is formal school-based, and requires already agreed-upon skills that pertain to the dominant project of modernity where tests, credentialization and accreditation are the sine qua none for employment and economic liquidity. Needless to add that we are not either calling for the continuation of culture and context deprived systems of education that are not prospectively responding to the needs of many kids, not only in former colonies, but as well, in currently multicultural Western societies such as Canada where the children of immigrants and refugees may be feeling educationally mislocated. What we should suggest, with select depersonalized dispositions, is the creation of critically less isolationist systems of learning that infuse a lot of culture and related attachments of the indigenous paradigm to actual arrangements so as to create what John Dewey (1963) called inclusive spaces of schooling that reflect some aspects of the child’s background in the overall contexts of the educational experience. Indeed, it is that type of education that can achieve two important, pre-credential items for the child: the desire and the need to be recognized, and the empowerment that is partially instigated by that recognition. As is noted by some of the most important thinkers of our age (see among many others, Taylor, 1995; Giroux, 2005; Freire, 2001, 2000 [1970]), people need to consciously harness the right agency in the locations they find themselves, for that could affirm the existential consistency that inform all humanity’s needs and desires.
The main purpose of this book is discussing ways of achieving development through education. That of course, includes effective analysis of the problems and prospects of education, but again, the main objective of the story is to see better livelihood possibilities for people around the world, hence the extra discussion on the meanings and possibilities of development. As noted in the preceding section, development should represent the cluster of ameliorative notations that take place in people’s lives. In our intentions here, all development is about humanity’s interests and the intersections of these with the individual and group’s desires and demands, which are also dependent on the environmental exigencies that surround the people and their contexts. With current ideological lineages, though, how development is defined may mainly depend on where one stands on the spectrum of the analytical preferences one espouses. In the dominant literature for example, you have Samuel Huntington’s well-known essay, ‘The change to change: modernization, development and politics’ (1971), where with all its neo-liberal attachments, development is quasi-equated with modernity, and with the modernity/traditional dichotomy, the West is developed and the rest is (was then) backward and underdeveloped. Countering this type of understanding in the earlier literature are those who see development as aiming for, and achieving human emancipation and overall collective advancement (Nyerere, 1974); this should be complemented by Claude Ake’s work with criticisms falling vertical on the non-viable impositions of development in places such as Africa where it may be so culturally alien that it could not function at all (Ake, 1996). Others (eg, post-modernism, see for example, Foucault, 1980, 1972) may prefer to selectively relativize the meanings and practices of development. From our understanding, development would be contextualized, it should not be culturally alienating and it should harmonize people’s constructive relationships with their communities and physical surroundings. If this borders on the romantic, that is not bad at all, for development is not simply what happens, it also can subsume into its categories a project of expectations and aspirations that might speak about the best humanity can achieve. As such, the possibilities of having a choice in one’s life and believing in the capacity to aim for that are important. With this in mind, we still appreciate the United Nations Development Program’s 1991 definition of development:

The concept of development establishes that the basic objective is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health, and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions, and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991, p. 47).

To repeat again, one of the reasons this definition appeals to us is that it avoids the uniformization of development, emphasizes the multiple locations and intersections of the issue, and perhaps above all else, disavows the habitual narrowness of development that has been advanced in the theories of modernization we
mentioned above. This also challenges the plethora of presumptions about development when the supposedly developed define what it is and impose it on the rest of societies, including situations as those Ake (1996) powerfully delineated, where the pre-packaged and imported arrangements of the case may not work at all. As this issue is linked to power, though, sometimes the impositions of development may not be ‘returnable’ to its originators, and many times, economically weaker societies generally accept the prescriptions, and that itself can undoubtedly do some damage, for so many resources that could have been used for the right projects would go elsewhere.

SELECT HISTORICIZATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

While the conceptualizations of development and development education will continue expanding and will involve important analytical contestations that should not be empty of ideological platforms that generally colour the case, there are also some issues with the way the historical developments of development have been presented. In our understanding, development should have been a feature of people’s lives since the early formations of the first communities. Again, this point is related to the conceptual and operational completeness that we want to accord here. In a very simple way, people always wanted to improve their lives, and it seems there is a direct relationship between the level and intensity of the desired move forward and the demands that impinge upon the lives of people. Generally speaking, the academic discussions of development try to isolate development into the last sixty years or so, and in some cases, the discussion of social development is reduced into what is generally known as international development, which in many cases is limited to the exportations of ways and means of achieving better livelihood possibilities from the so-called developed parts of the world, ie, Europe, lately Japan and non-Mexico North America, to the rest of the world.

Here, the story becomes problematic, for it unintentionally, or otherwise, assumes that development started with European and Euro-American civilizations, and was to be transferred to Japan after the Second World War, and since then to all parts of the world that will be willing to take it, that is every country and region of the world. In some instances, our formal understanding and relationship with the case should have started with the American led reconstruction of post-war Europe (Black, 2007), which was later extended to poor, previously colonized zones of the world. The trouble with this Eurocentric side of development is that it purports to solve everybody’s problems, and starts with the problematic platform of pathologizing what may be termed, without any concrete categorizations, as lack of development or underdevelopment. Again, this characterization will tow the line of Huntington’s important but one-sided dichotomy. This ever-present desire to create a uniform historical line in the understanding of development is weak, according to Rist (2003), who counters that if this was the case, and then the current persistence of the problems would have disappeared long ago. The fact remains, though, Rist continues, development, despite all the totalizing analytical and prescriptive platforms, did not solve the world’s needs and expectations. This idea of
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development actually characterizes the current development dispensation of such important Western institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whose ‘progress’ policies are dictated, at times in verbatim, to many poor countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and some areas in post-Cold War Eastern Europe whose precarious economic situations have turned them into ideology driven experiments of globalization and its neo-liberal projects. Important to note here is that with the need for the mirage of development already induced in the psycho-cultural existentialities of people, this reality is now highly normalized. In commenting on this, Majid Rahnema, in his book with Victoria Bowtree, *The post-development reader* (1997), writes:

In the current state of world affairs, [via], the banner of development and progress, a tiny minority of local profiteers, supported by their foreign patrons set out to devastate the very foundations of social life in the supposedly underdeveloped world. To do so, a merciless war was waged against age-old traditions of communal solidarity. The virtues of simplicity and conviviality, of noble forms of poverty, of the wisdom of relying on one another, and of the arts of suffering were derided as signs of underdevelopment. A culture of individual and of socially imputed needs led younger men to depart their villages … for the promises of often unattainable goods and services. Millions of people were thus mortally wounded in their bodies and souls, falling en masse into a destitution for which they have never been culturally prepared (p. x).

Rahnema’s words still resonate with so much actuality, that for those of us who are familiar with the contexts he is describing, we could conclude that it actually got worse. So much so that when the millions who poured into the ‘underdeveloped’ countries’ urban centres in the 1980s and into the 1990s, could not survive in the huge slums that have been created since then, the new destitution-inspired routes in the 21st century lead from the ports of Senegal, and Morocco, among other places, where the smuggling of thousands of people whose world has already been destroyed by the call of development continues in rickety, non-seaworthy small fishing boats. As is public knowledge now, each year, thousands of these mostly young men drown, few die of hunger and dehydration, and those who reach what is now termed Fortress Europe (ie, keeping undesirable foreigners out) are herded into barb-wired camps where they are kept for further questioning and investigation. As Jaggi Singh (2007) of the Solidarity Across Borders coalition points out, though, perhaps some historical sobriety of why things are as they are in places like Africa is warranted. We agree and believe that we need to understand and analyze who was actually responsible for the physical destruction (mainly via the unimaginable robbing of resources) and the psychological de-patterning of people’s thinking and expectations (Rahnema’s points above), and from there some more concrete solutions may be found for the situation.

Indeed, the role of educational programs in achieving or at least explaining inclusive programs of development for these countries will even be more important, but to create learning platforms that circumvent the same games of the conventional
ideology, the re-culturation of these possibilities will be essential. Moreover, the recent historical machinations of development, especially the manipulations of its meaning and history, may actually be intended to highlight the achievements of certain civilizations at the expense of others. As such, with the rise of the West, which as Janet Abu-Lughod (1989) pointed out, has not yet reached the millennium mark, the select historicity of current development may actually successfully hide, for example, what Charles Mann’s excellent book, *1491: New revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (2006), calls the more advanced indigenous civilizations of pre-1492 Americas. Here Spanish conquistadors could only marvel at the great achievements of the Aztec, Inca and Mayan empires. Interestingly, instead of learning from them, and constructively interacting with these great civilizations, the invaders decided to attack and destroy them (Mann, 2006; de Botton, 2001; Cocker, 2001). As such, so much development that could have been harnessed from these greatly ‘developed’ civilizations has been lost. And it is just now, after more than 500 years, that we are beginning to appreciate these great achievements, but mainly as tourist attractions that people visit and then forget once they leave the monuments and other complex life remnants in present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, even Massachusetts and Virginia in the United States (US), and elsewhere. Interestingly, and discursively attachable to this point, is a well-know book by Howard Zinn called, *A people’s history of the United States: 1492-present* (2005). While we do not intend to make too much of this, one might still wonder of the topical expansiveness of the commissions and omissions in the historical notations that pertain to people’s lives including the many who were there before 1492. In addition, there are other numerous regions in the world including Africa and Asia that have also achieved, in different ways and emphasis, a good amount of what we might describe today as great developments. As Uma Kothari and her contributors’ note in *A radical history of development* (2006), though, the verticalized characterizations of development from colonial times to present pose an apparent danger to a more inclusive understanding and, by extension, operationalizations of development.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

The book consists of two sections, theoretical perspectives and country/area studies, which collectively have seventeen chapters. Besides this introductory chapter, the first section of the book has four other chapters. In the second chapter, Cecille DePass engages different traditions and conceptualizations of education in development, and traces the line from earlier realities of colonial education to the possibilities of achieving education for the conscientious understanding of our world. In chapter three, Ali A. Abdi and Lynette Shultz look at the continuities of racism, and the role that citizenship education can play in neutralizing this tenacious and problematic issue. In the fourth chapter, Edward Shizha examines the interplay of globalization and indigenous knowledges, and brings together a high number of theoretical perspectives that can be deployed to especially analyze the post-colonial African situation. In chapter five, Yan Guo and Gulbahar Beckett discuss the hegemony of English as a global language. In examining this issue,
Guo and Beckett analyze, among many other items, how this dominant language is imposing unfamiliar pedagogical realities on its learners.

In the second section, Shibao Guo in chapter six, examines the situation of teacher education in the new China. By describing the case as being at a crossroads, Guo analyzes the situation from a historical and philosophical context, and points out the issues and changes that exist in the current education system. In chapter seven, Dip Kapoor engages in an extensive discussion of the intersections of education and the caste system in India. In doing so, Kapoor starts with the emergence of market liberalization and the rise of Hindu fundamentalism as together increasing the tensions that were inherent in the situation, and looks at how the education system is not effectively dealing with the expansively enduring caste realities that are in place. In chapter eight, Ratna Ghosh looks at how women in India are located within and around the intersections of globalization and education. Ghosh notes how the case of women’s education and development involves such issues as access, equity and societal attitudes. It is via these realities, complemented by the many changes brought about by globalization, that Ghosh examines these and related issues. In chapter nine, Tsion Demeke-Abate discusses and critically analyzes the impact of HIV/AIDS education on the lives of women in the Sub-Saharan African context. Demeke-Abate delineates the issues that are at play and points out possible ways where women can overcome the conditions and empower themselves so as to achieve their objectives in society. In chapter ten, Paul Adjei and George Dei focus on possible ways of decolonizing schooling and education in Ghana. Despite Ghana being an independent country for over fifty years, the authors point out how the country’s education still heavily depends on the colonial ways of learning, which does not bode well for inclusive development.

In chapter eleven, Tourouzou Some examines student loan systems in Ghana and Burkina Faso. He points out how these two West African nations have had different experiences in their educational development, but have, nevertheless, developed their student loan systems in ways that ‘somewhat shift the burden of the cost of higher education from governments to parents and students.’ In chapter twelve, Michael Kariwo looks at higher education and development in Zimbabwe, and undertakes extensive policy analyses of the changes that have taken place in the system. As a young independent nation in early 1980s and since then, Zimbabwe has undergone through a number of educational changes, and Kariwo especially examines the changes from elite to mass education possibilities. In chapter thirteen, Ali A. Abdi revisits the problems and prospects of educational reconstruction and possibilities of development in civil war ravaged and negatively globalized Somalia. As the case is now, it is noted here, Somali children and other learners are still highly disadvantaged and new directions are needed in this case. In chapter fourteen, Donna Chovanec and Alexandra Benitez discuss student resistance to the neo-liberalization of education in Chile. Chovanec and Benitez point out how with the passing of the Organic Constitutional Education Law, neo-liberalism officially became the dominant ideology of education policies in Chile. To counter the problems of this neo-liberalized education, resistance came, as
Chovanec and Benitez note, in the form of the Penguin Revolution where Chilean high school students challenged the oppressive structures in place.

In chapter fifteen, J. Tim Goddard discusses the physical, philosophical and political domains of educational development and reconstruction in post-colonial Europe. Goddard points out how in these post-socialist contexts, educational leadership has played an important role in the reforms that have been ongoing for sometime now. To achieve some of these reforms, Goddard notes how, for example, school administrators could act as a bridge between the past and present, which could assure the success of the intended reforms and developments. In chapter sixteen, Tatiana Gounko examines educational modernization in Russia, and questions whether these modernizing reforms are helping or hindering education and by extension, social development, in the post-communist context. With a Russia that historically prided itself as achieving close to universal general education and effective access to higher education, Gounko notes how that situation has changed. It is with respect to these emerging realities that Gounko analyzes the right to education and related issues of societal and government actions and intentions. In chapter seventeen, Jean Walrond analyzes education and social development in the Caribbean region. Walrond starts with a historical narrative about the abolition of slavery and the subsequent personal journeys she engaged to decipher select social and cultural issues that pertain to her and to her family. From there, Walrond unpacks select educational narratives that contextualize the situation of the Anglo-Caribbean region. While the seventeen chapters may sound exhaustive in their treatment of the topics undertaken here, in the expansive platforms of education and social development, there is so much more that still needs our discursive, analytical and critical attention. And with the ongoing contestations, not only on the complex relationship between learning programs and human well-being, but as well, on the meanings of these and their multiplying historical and descriptive attachments, we can, perhaps, legitimately expect more on these and related areas of study. In the continuities of the case, therefore, we can only hope that this simple contribution will instigate more discussions and dialogues among students and researchers, which for us, will make the whole effort worthwhile.

REFERENCES


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Since the Second World War, economic development programs aligned with northern interests, and established in Western Europe’s war torn countries; the south; Japan; and Eastern Europe (after the late 1980s), have inadvertently exacerbated historical relationships between north and south. The ‘undeveloped south’, for example, was urged to modernize—to produce and export raw materials and agricultural goods—and, at the same time, to rely on importation of manufactured products, technology and expertise (Hoogvelt, 1982; Rist, 2000). For present and former southern colonies, however, these lyrics of economic development were not new but an established part of the empire’s legacy. Due to influences of multinational corporations, several southern countries, particularly ones with sizeable pools of cheap labour, have become producers of cheap agricultural and, in many cases, manufacturers of consumer products for northern markets. Generally too, in terms of applications of knowledge, during the mid 20th century, many social scientists, drawing on abstract notions of European and US history, conceptualized theories of economic development using European institutions as explicit models (Hoogvelt, 1982; Rist, 2000).2

In the south, many southern leaders, schooled at home and abroad, have worked closely with representatives of development organizations (private, public and non-government), and have implemented several variations of the development model (from bootstrap to import substitution); while at the same time, working within economic, social, cultural, educational and political structures—inherted, maintained, expanded or adopted. Accordingly, themes in the development song book given to the south have included: changing attitudes to individualism and achievement; emphasizing individual social mobility, establishing nuclear families; encouraging urbanization, consumerism, entrepreneurship; and promoting formal western education, voluntary associations, and nation building (Hoogvelt, 1982, p. 114-117). Within this framework, traditional societies were labelled conservative, rigid, hierarchical, and further criticized for inhibiting economic growth. The stated intent was to encourage acceptance of modern ways through schools, communications, media and transportation (p. 117).

Integral to the development model were notions of interdependence, or for some critics’ notions of dependency, based on the transference of knowledge, technology,
infrastructure, and expertise from the north (Berry, 1994; Kealy, 1990). For most southern countries, the resultant asymmetrical relationships have not fostered long-term economic sustainability. To the contrary, given increasing movements of capital and labour; introduction of structural adjustment programs; and continuing disparities between north and south, seriously questioned is the long-term survival, specifically of smaller fragile, vulnerable economies, which have been buffeted by widespread structural changes for hundreds of years (Levitt, 2005; Wright, 1997). Reforms introduced by international agencies often specify the required educational changes as a condition of granting financial assistance (Dei, 2000). Accordingly, countries dependent on foreign capital to finance local initiatives such as education are restricted by conditions imposed upon them.

Working within a southern perspective, and writing with sweeping, tropical brush strokes, this chapter moves backwards from general conditions identified above, to highlight in Part One some of the enduring aspects of a colonial education for social development, then called the civilizing mission. The chapter compliments earlier conceptual work (DePass, 2006), and uses implicitly and explicitly, some of the overarching concepts of, for example, London, Freire, Galtung, Hicks, and hooks. In Part Two, the chapter draws primarily, on case studies by Sims in Mexico, and Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka, in order to showcase a few alternative development approaches. In so doing, issues of development by/for the poorest of the poor, now move to the centre of discussion. The chapter shifts to Latouche’s castaways, the women, men and children who have been shipwrecked by development’s storms. Part Two illuminates a markedly different approach to southern socio-economic development and concentrates on issues of social justice, usually within non-formal educational frameworks. The chapter invites policy makers and practitioners to see, with fresh eyes, some of the strengths and limitations of structures with which they work. Generally, such structures tend to serve mainly the interests of the north, the aligned interests of centre and affiliated elite groups in the periphery; yet often, do so unfortunately, at the expense of the poorest people in the periphery of the periphery (Galtung, 1976) who sing markedly different songs with different voices.

PART ONE: SINGING EMPIRE’S SONGS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Using primary school documents from Trinidad and Tobago, western philosophical positions, and perspectives of Apple and Giroux, London (2001) explains the manner in which schools have mediated the colonial imagination, during the early to mid 20th century. Formal schooling for the working classes fostered the worldview and affiliated positive and negative concepts of self, community and culture (see also Brown, 2005). Schools influenced students perceptions of legitimate knowledge, engendered “an acceptance of specific economic structures, [and fostered] … a vision of how communities should operate, and who should have power” (London, p. 49). In this educational model, acquisition of British and western cultures represented the quintessential forms of assimilation (p. 52).
Situating his discussion within four philosophical positions (mental discipline, humanism, child study, and social efficiency), London argues that school subjects (arithmetic, geography, history, grammar literature and art) inculcated values of the western cultural heritage (p. 52-57). Examples given tend to illustrate quite trivial notions of schooling for the young: discipline was often writing mindless lines; memory work was ‘constant repetition’; basic communication skills included drafting a telegram; and needlework was taught exclusively to girls (p. 63). Learning ‘to speak properly’ meant acquiring a BBC English accent—a tradition still maintained by some in the Caribbean. Reliance on Royal Reader texts, which included extracts from Kingsley, Dickens, Goldsmith, and Swift, encouraged acceptance of the beauty of the traditional western culture, usually at the expense of the home culture. Students, as well, learned of heroes like Napoleon, Charlemagne, and of Odysseus’ legendary wanderings (p. 64). Story telling included selections from Andersen and Grimms’ folk tales, myths such as Prosperine, and biblical stories (p. 65).

Key objectives of a colonial education were “to instill conformity” and “throttle creativity and critical thinking” (p. 68). Thus, given the nature of the curriculum, it is unlikely that there were distinctions made between the English, continental Europe, and Mediterranean examples; and as importantly, the important influences of Islamic, Greco-Roman and African cultures were acknowledged. In such a tradition, recitation, rote learning, and memorization were extensively used to ensure conformity across empire’s schools. Similarly, corporal punishment, a legacy from slavery, was accepted in schools up to the 1960s (Brown, 2005). Memories of a fellow student being beaten brutally for speaking Gikuyu, perhaps, became an important influence in the later practice of the ‘aesthetics fine of resistance’ by Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Duke, 2006; Wright, 1993). Through such approaches to teaching and learning, students were to internalize patterns of compliance by singing only songs of empire. Accordingly, most working class students learned to become acquiescent, well disciplined labourers.

Interestingly enough, London’s analyses (2001, 1996) make no references to the establishment of a multi-tiered educational system, which functioned as trickle up and trickle down social mechanisms, and paralleled the socio-economic class structure. In Jamaica, for example, primary schools for the working classes were linked to teachers colleges, while private preparatory and secondary schools for the middle classes were usually associated with further educational opportunities overseas. As importantly, the established colonial educational structures, even at primary levels, were unable to physically accommodate all students. Due to the rigidities of the class structure, a very small percentage of the student population attended secondary schools, and an even smaller percentage formally graduated by ‘passing’ the external British examinations. Well into the 1970s, major characteristics of the colonial educational system remained largely intact.

Paulo Freire (1982, 1987) critiquing the legacy of dependency prevalent in the south, suggests the need to develop a critical consciousness, which has the ability to trace negative impacts of reliance on experts, and by extension, dependency on aid agencies (international and national). Negative effects of colonization remain
key topics for debate on the public agenda (e.g., Maori Development Seminar, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, August 2006). Yet the impact of such an education is neither as uniformly monolithic, nor as deterministic as London insists. Historically, many have resisted. Freedom fighters and the intelligentsia, critical of ‘the dark sides of empire’, have led political, socio-economic, and cultural decolonization movements, in several countries (e.g., India, Tanzania, Ghana, and the Caribbean) have been products of colonial systems. So too are Caribbean thinkers, writers, poets and artists such as Cesaire, Fanon, C.L.R. James, Williams, Rodney, Brathwaite, Walcott (Nobel Prize Recipient), Mordecai, Senior, Brandt, E. and R. Manley and Marley.

In Sierra Leone, and probably in many other former British colonies, an attachment to external English Advanced Level examinations, exist as an anachronism (Wright, 1993). Indeed, it remains as an invisible presence legitimizing one’s schooling long after empire’s demise. Due to an inherited bias, students state that only one Sierra Leonean author’s work has been assigned for high school study (Wright, 1993). This policy continues despite the wealth of literature produced by internationally acclaimed African authors, Achebe, Saro-Wiwa, and wa Thiong’o, to name a few. Wright’s (1993), Dei’s (2000), and Dei et al’s (2004) analyses support London’s critique of the curriculum, with respect to the devaluation of indigenous cultures and languages, and creation of a cheap labour force.

Discussion: Part One

In a northern as well as a colonial school curriculum, the ability to fairly represent and to understand the south is a formidable task. This is not surprising, given the complexity of the matter. On the one hand, there are significant differences of histories, cultures, geographies, and resources (animate and inanimate). As importantly, there are the significantly different meanings attached to the frailties of the human condition, and to existential issues of living and dying. On the other hand, the manner of identifying, justifying and implementing formal policies and programs, ranging from conquest, slavery, transportation, genocide, war, through to voluntary and involuntary assimilation of cultures and people considered subordinate have demonstrated, and continue to demonstrate, man’s brutality and inhumanity. To a greater or lesser extent, different forms of power relationships have tended to underpin interactions of northern and southern peoples for centuries. Generally, European colonizers, explorers, missionaries, and the colonial centre’s representatives, have assumed the power to classify, name, value and/or devalue southern people, cultures, landscapes, flora and fauna, and natural resources, often by relying on previous knowledge, prejudgments, wistful thinking, conventional wisdom, and even fabrications.

Unfortunately, due to Eurocentric biases, subsequent classifications, policies and programs tended to be severely flawed (Amin, 1989). With the emphasis on a European school curriculum, many southern students seldom learned little, if any, of the history, geography or literature of their own region or country during the
colonial era and, if they did, it was understandably through the eyes of the centre. Summarizing the self-congratulatory tones of empire in the 1920s, Cannadine (2001), states that the function of dominions and colonies was to produce “raw materials for the mother country”, that due to British rule “good government flourished and good administration thrived”, and that the “benefits of British civilization were widely available” (p. 192). A song typical of empire, is seen in Truman’s Fourth Point (Rist, 2000), and still perhaps, reflected, implicitly, in many southern development projects conceptualized in the north. Unfortunately, in such songs of praise, ancient and modern, major contributions to human intellectual, spiritual, social and cultural developments by cultures and civilizations in Africa, Asia, and the Americas have been largely ignored and excluded in attempts to portray the southern countries as underdeveloped/less developed/developing.

The concept of “terms of reference” as a worldview which governs the categorizing, managing, and ordering of the experienced world (Figueroa, 1991, p. 38) is particularly helpful, to understand the approaches associated with a colonial education, and to explain key concepts underpinning many development projects. Historically, policy makers and practitioners have tended to present the ‘problems’ caused by ‘others’ in a dichotomous manner. From a centre perspective the ‘others’ are classified, objectified, lumped together and labelled as ‘masses’; and interventions are designed to correct or ameliorate the perceived problems/imbalance/deficiencies. Ironically, these policies apply to real people who live in most of the world, who are neither members of the elite, nor part of the dominant centre groups in their respective countries (Galtung, 1976), and who are blamed for refusing to assimilate (DePass, 2006).

In a Canadian context, using arguments of tolerance, understanding, and managing diversity, members of ethnocultural groups are encouraged to maintain largely symbolic ties to mother culture, religion, and language. On a late night TV news broadcast, for example, a Euro-Canadian journalist highlighted his visit to Islamic, Hindu, and Jewish places of worship and asked religious leaders at each site whether decorated Christmas trees should be removed from public places (December 22, 2006). All religious leaders stated that as long as they were allowed to worship freely, that displays of Christmas trees were not considered to be problematic. The reporter, speculated that in an inclusive city, different forms of worship are accepted, however, noticeably absent from the discussion were leaders of Christian, Protestant, or Catholic churches. An implication being that differences within Christian denominations were well known, and that only some types of religious practices needed to be brought before public eyes. Unintentionally, perhaps, representations of difference in such news items tend to foster a polarization of views. Generally, differences within the ‘we’ group, as seen in the above example remain invisible and unexamined. Yet working with members of our own, ‘in group’, we may adopt a range of responses from benevolence, charitableness, indulgence, kindness, and generosity, through to compassion. Depending on perceived and real power differentials, we may also adopt more distant, tolerant, or conditional attitudes of acceptance. Within limits, even our
different perspectives, philosophies and ways of living are seen as contributing to the survival of the larger group.

In order to distinguish between the merits of one side versus the other(s), we tend to delineate clear boundaries between our side and the other side(s). Such distinctions may be embedded and sanctioned in a society’s cultural, legal, social and economic systems. In Britain, despite historical ties to the African continent and the Caribbean, people of African descent have often been portrayed in negative ways. This depiction has remained. It is generally, seen in written accounts of 16th century explorers and missionaries and in views of 19th century explorers/adventurers, such as Cecil Rhodes; found in Shakespeare’s representations of Caliban and Othello; identified in 19th century authors (eg, Carlyle and Trollope), and in caricatures of blacks during and after the campaign for abolition and emancipation of slavery (Figueroa, citing Walvin, 1973; Cannadine, 2001). Accordingly, notions of dominant group superiority, and views that the British reigned from the top of a racial hierarchy of nations and civilizations have consistently been an important part of empire’s legacy (eg, Figueroa, p. 41; Cannadine, 1997; Brown, 2006 conversation). Undoubtedly, such notions were transmitted either implicitly or explicitly in schools.

Some post-colonial writers representing dominant centre perspectives, may focus on the subordinate, oppressed roles of women and children in specific cultures, and foster derogatory stereotypes of entire cultures without identifying taken for granted practices, policies and procedures in one’s own culture which may be quite oppressive (Cannadine, 2001, p. xvi). Within a centre perspective, critiques coming from the periphery, which tend to present the empire as domination, and independence movements as freedom, are seen to be simplistic, and to reinforce images of good vs. evil, ‘us vs. them’. Further, such a centre perspective emphasizes that nationalistic struggles have been fought; and that empire was about collaboration and consensus, as well as conflict and coercion (Cannadine, p. xvi). This perspective may admit that the critique is not written from a subordinate stance, that the author has not been a member of an oppressed group, and may acknowledge that experiences of subjugation constitute ‘the darker side of empire’ (p. xxiii). Taken into international arenas, one tends to adopt such euphemisms as the south, periphery of the periphery (Galtung, 1976), developing and underdeveloped, often without acknowledging the historical and contemporary systems of dominance and oppression experienced by the majority of the world’s population on a daily basis (Benn and Hall, 2000). However, people are neither pawns of historical forces nor puppets of socio-economic systems.

Given the explicit fragmentation within countries and marked polarization of worldviews, the nature of tolerance seems particularly applicable for discussion in school curriculum and texts. At face value, the concept appears to be rather benign and embraces elements of forgiving the other (UNESCO, 1994); however, inherent concepts are also condescension, and superiority on the part of the tolerator (Poonwassie, 1995, p. 2). Conditions for tolerance are grounded in complex sets of relationships, firstly, acceptance and respect for self and others, and secondly, disguised or open expressions of disapproval, dislike, and disgust where manmade
disparities between individuals and groups have become polarized (Woodward & Ward, Guardian Weekly, December 15-21, 2006). Yet, tolerance means far more than forbearance and to merely ‘put up with the other’; it requires the development of profound understanding, based on deep knowledge, appreciation, affirmation, and the celebration of life-enhancing human qualities of self and significantly different others (p. 5). These are a few of the major challenges still faced by curriculum makers in the south who have inherited colonial forms of education from western Europe (Britain, Portugal, Spain, Holland, France and Belgium, DePass, 2006).

PART TWO: WORKING TOGETHER FOR DEVELOPMENT

Since the late 1980s, globalization is often praised or criticized for heightened emphases on a scale never before envisaged of: world trade; movements of capital, communication links, and people; direct foreign investment, and massive industrialization. Yet, some southern critics concentrate on singing alternative songs. They address new forms of slavery, imperialism and colonialism in which many southern countries have become backwaters or even slipstreams, specifically, regarding access to meaningful and affordable social, economic and technological changes (eg, Nettleford, 2000). Some speak to the further degradation of the physical environment, deterioration of women’s roles, the increased concentrations of impoverished women in sweat shop environments and the informal sector, while the pace of industrialization has accelerated (Saunders, 2002; Wright, 1997).

Of equally grave concern too, is the growth of militarism, intolerance, homophobia, xenophobia, marginalization of the periphery in the north and south. In Sierra Leone’s budget, for example, military expenditure has dominated the allocation of financial resources (Dei, 2000, conversation Pratt, 2005). More recently, at least one non-governmental organization (NGO), has introduced a non-formal education program to rehabilitate some male teenage soldiers (Shepler, 2005). While in Ghana, a different prioritization has meant the redistribution of resources at the expense of education. Educational reform situated within the rhetoric of modernization tends to be insufficient and its changes are at best, ambiguous and ambivalent (Dei, 2000, p. 40). As a result, most Ghanaian students learn neither basic, nor western curricula, let alone that of post-colonial curricula designed to legitimate indigenous knowledge and histories (Dei, 2000, p. 69; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2004). The Ghanaian experience is not likely to be unique. Furthermore, rationalization (restructuring) of public and private sectors, often initiated by international development agencies, has led to the marked increase of sizeable numbers of unemployed and underemployed, who include educated and trained men and women forced into the far less stable service and informal sectors.

Signs of Hope: In the south, dissatisfaction with colonial and contemporary economic models: increasing poverty, deterioration of international markets, failure of agricultural sector in formerly self sufficient countries, and major constraints imposed by international agencies, have encouraged several thinkers to re-examine development issues in terms of the benefits of social justice models.
The more recent thinking has far reaching implications. It has coupled economic growth with the long-term maintenance of healthy, sustainable natural and human environments. Participatory action research concepts, and the ability to distinguish between conservative, neo-liberal and critical discourses, are central components of one such project, specifically, a community non-government organization (NGO) in Nayarit, Mexico, established by the federal government (2001) after Zapatista activities (1994; Sims, 2003, p. 19-45).

Organized by community volunteers, women, men, and children from a range of socio-economic, demographic and occupational sectors, act as intermediaries between public, private and civil societies (p. 23-24), education plays integral roles in the NGO’s four related themes (development of a new inclusive civil society, sustainable development, political voice, and safety; (p. 24). NGO leaders work with marginalized communities in which social networks have been progressively disrupted due to: (i) systemic divisions in the community; (ii) individual, institutional, and structural violence; (iii) lack of productivity and trust; and (iv) negative impacts of major economic development initiatives (often, associated with NAFTA) which have little long term sustainability (p. 21-24).

In grappling with local economic conditions, Mexican NGO leaders have initiated dialogue with community and corporate representatives concerning specific economic resources to be exploited and preserved (p. 25). This represents a major departure from traditional development approaches. Shifting the traditional grounds of development, even further, the NGO intends to foster a strong civil society of healthy individuals, living in economically and ecologically sustainable communities. Sustainability in which non-formal education is vital, is conceptualized, in part, as the adoption of healthy local nutritional practices, and establishment of grass roots, ecologically sound, cooperatives for marketing and producing forestry products (p. 24).

In the Asian subcontinent, as in many regions of the south, pervasive dilemmas of lop-sided sectoral growth, environmental degradation, fragmentation, and destruction of people’s worlds, have influenced another conceptualization of development. The comprehensive, grassroots, community/people-centred approaches of the spiritual Sarvodaya movement have emerged from a significantly different worldview. Established in over 8,000 Sri Lankan villages, the movement has been inspired by ideas of Gandhi and Buddha, the belief that the universe is an integrated whole (Ariyaratne, 1990, p. 9), and that human and natural environments are inextricably webbed and interconnected. Accordingly, efforts to improve individual, community and national socio-economic problems have to be considered in terms of the project’s impact on others, the environment, and the society’s place in the international division of labour (p. 7).

Within Sarvodaya, becoming fully conscious, means a process of awakening women, men and children. It is embedded in principles of “learn[ing] to love and live with others” (see also hooks, 2006); “respect for human, animal and plant life, and … an empathetic and equitable attitude towards the world” (Ariyaratne, 1990, p. 11-12). With approximately fifty years of experience, working with community towards creating a more humane socio-economic system, Sarvodaya provides a
wide range of formal and non-formal educational activities and programs. Examples include: community meditation; leadership, health, preschool teacher training, women’s skills development, legal awareness, village management, children and community savings and credit facilities. Furthermore, members remain optimistic that global environmental problems can be solved with concerted efforts of the international community (p. 9). (An illustration of the belief in human efficacy, and the need to envisage interconnections between nation states and the larger world.) Understandably, Sarvodaya’s thinking challenges the north to restructure equitably its relationships with poor southern people (p. 7-12).

In order to provide basic necessities for themselves and their families, resilient, materially poor women have established cooperatives in many communities distributed throughout Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. Non-formal education activities include providing access to micro-credit facilities. Furthermore, many women, by tapping into and extending knowledge of cultural motifs, themes and designs have created crafts, clothes, and body ornaments for sale in metropolitan centres (Gianturco & Tuttle, n.d.; PBS, Newshour with Jim Lehrer, December 27, 2006). In a similar vein, and worthy of note are: the initiatives of the Sistren literacy, action research and popular theatre collective, for working class urban women, Jamaica (1970s-1980s); and efforts of some plantation women tea leaf pickers in North Bengal who founded a cooperative to eventually purchase land and build a health clinic which was not dependent on finance from the north or the region’s elite (Chatterjee, 2002, p. 243-262). Also requiring more careful study are south–south initiatives (Poonwassie, CCUNESCO meeting, May 2006), such as Cuba’s program of sending trained teachers and medical doctors to several Caribbean and African countries.

Discussion: Part Two

In light of the increasing size of the gap separating many northern countries from the majority of the world’s population, the new manmade world order appears quite distorted. This imbalance is even more marked when one considers the conditions of the materially impoverished third world women (Nettleford, 2000; Berry, 1994; Saunders, 2002). Further, challenging the apparent intellectual dominance by the north and devaluation of southern voices, some argue that southern interests have been poorly served (Gosovic, 2000; Levitt, 2005; Nettleford, 2000; Saunders, 2002). Generally, discussions concerning social justice, self reliance, dominance, exploitation, oppression and equity have been replaced by statements of creating level playing fields in a world in which significant artificial inequalities (within and between regions) have been largely ignored (Gosovic, 2000, p. 3-4).

Latouche, for example, is not interested in exploring why the south has failed to copy the north, but asks whether the north itself has long term viability, given its acceptance of unrestrained economic growth (Saunders, 2002, p. 22). The apparent dismissal of alternative perspectives; the weakening of UN’s international voice (Gosovic, 2000, p. 5); the ability of NGOs to present subaltern voices in...
international arenas; the inability of many development projects to achieve long term sustainability; the efforts to tie international aid to northern corporate and public sector resources and interests, all are important considerations. Such issues provide key aspects of the backdrop for identification of a few alternative community development initiatives in which many women have played important or sole roles.

A social justice, self-help approach, springing from within a community usually demands little capital. It concentrates on cooperation, and values concepts such as: critical pedagogy (Freire and hooks); self and community reliance; positive conflict through reciprocal dialogic processes; and opposition to structures (individual/systemic) of dominance and violence. In all cases, starting with one’s self and working in/with communities which foster life affirming qualities—women, men, and children question visible and invisible systems of dominance in their daily lives (hooks, 2003, 2006). Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, one dreams, hopes, and aspires to create a better world for generations of children everywhere.

Within the formal school curriculum: respectful valuing of student’s perspectives, narratives and cultures; incorporation of community/local/southern practices, and as importantly, the meaningful inclusion of narrative/literature/artwork/music/dance/theatre by local women, men, and students would be starting points. To begin the dialogue between educator-educatee (Freire), we examine with open minds vital questions such as: Whose knowledge and whose potential is encouraged, valued and validated? Whose knowledge is ignored, devalued, relegated to footnotes, and/or erased? Whose life chances and potential is stifled? Whose spirit is broken, mended, and healed? Who lives and who dies? (DePass, 1991, 2006). At the 1989 World Congress of Comparative Education, Montreal, when two women Chemistry professors from the University of the West Indies explained the manner in which they demonstrated to student teachers the scientific principles underlying traditional ways of extracting and processing coconut oil, they deliberately validated women’s traditional knowledge in a formidable academic forum. Small but important example of honouring alternative perspectives in the academy have been: (i) the collaborative forum presented by a few academics, teachers and students, at the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies conference, Calgary (1994); (ii) the seminar by women of colour professors/administrators at the Canadian Association for the Study of Women and Education conference, Montreal (1995); and the presentations by Doreen Spence, Cree elder, Cultural Diversity Institute and University of Calgary (2003-2004).

Working within life affirming communities, together we would begin to identify, and hopefully to practice, even in small ways, a range of approaches to learning and teaching which emphasize the human ability to transform ourselves, and our communities, in positive, sustainable ways. The unstinting work, for example, of NGOs in the Sarvoyada village movement; and grassroots women’s cooperatives, striving despite the odds, to create collaboratively new songs of hope with different rhythms, different words, and different instruments. Such songs of hope for a better future for the poorest of the poor—should not be ignored:
...Do you know why the seas heave  
And the young sing  
Small songs without a sound?  
(Escoffery, 1989)

NOTES

1 Dedicated to Mathew Zachariah, Evelina Ortega y Miranda, Te Kohu and Rahera Douglas, my sisters, and Kendra Grabatin.

2 For example, see Rist (2000, pp. 249-250) who quotes fully Truman’s fourth point which maps the proposed post World War II relations between developed and underdeveloped countries.

3 Draws on Freire’s ideas of the difficult task of oppressor and oppressed working together. Freire’s approach is sharply contrasted with the flip-flopping of power relationships when the formerly oppressed become the new oppressors (see classic conflict theories). This part of the paper merely hints at only a few possibilities. The title is adopted from Girvan’s book, a documentation of his father’s leadership in rural community development projects in several Caribbean and Latin American countries (1950s-1960s) in which women played important roles as community organizers.

REFERENCES


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